

UDL Instructional Planning Process

As a framework, UDL requires educators to think proactively about the needs of all learners. In consideration of the UDL Critical Elements, educators implementing UDL should use a backwards design instructional process that incorporates the following five steps.

Step 1: Establish Clear Outcomes

Establish a clear understanding of the goal(s) of the lesson (or unit) and specific learner outcomes relate to:

- The desired outcomes and essential student understandings and performance for every learner. (What does learning look like? What will students be able to do or demonstrate?)
- The desired big ideas learners should come to understand and their alignment to the established standards within the program of study.
- The potential misunderstandings, misconceptions, and areas where learners may meet barriers to learning.
- How will goals be clearly communicated to the learners, in ways that are understandable to all learners.

Step 2: Anticipate Learner Needs

Prior to planning the instructional experience teachers should have a clear understanding of the learner needs within their environment. Understandings should minimally include:

- Learner strengths and weaknesses specific to lesson/unit goals.
- Learner background knowledge for scaffolding new learning.
- Learner preferences for representation, expression, and engagement.
- Learner language preferences.
- Cultural relevance and understanding.
- Curriculum barriers (e.g., physical, social, cultural, or ability-level) that could limit the accessibility to instruction and instructional materials.

Step 3: Measurable Outcomes and Assessment Plan

Prior to planning the instructional experience, establish how learning is going to be measured. Considerations should include:

- Previously established lesson goals and learner needs.
- Embedding checkpoints to ensure all learners are successfully meeting their desired outcomes.
- Providing learners multiple ways and options to authentically engage in the process, take action, and demonstrate understanding.
- Supporting higher-order skills and encouraging a deeper connection with the content.

Step 4: Instructional Experience

Establish the instructional sequence of events. At minimum plans should include:

- Intentional and proactive ways to address the established goals, learner needs, and the assessment plan.
- Establish a plan for how instructional materials and strategies will be used to overcome barriers and support learner understanding.
- A plan that ensures high-expectations for all learners and that the needs of the learners in the margins (i.e., struggling and advanced), anticipating that a broader range of learners will benefit.
- Integrate an assessment plan to provide necessary data.

Considerations should be made for how to support multiple means of..

- **Representation:** Teacher purposefully uses a variety of strategies, instructional tools, and methods to present information and content to anticipate student needs and preferences
- **Expression & Action:** Student uses a variety of strategies, instructional tools, and methods to demonstrate new understandings.
- **Engagement:** A variety of methods are used to engage students (e.g., provide choice, address student interest) and promote their ability to monitor their own learning (e.g., goal setting, self-assessment, and reflection)

Step 5: Reflection and New Understandings

Establish checkpoints for teacher reflection and new understandings.

Considerations should include:

- Whether the learners obtained the big ideas and obtained the desired outcomes. (What data support your inference?)
- What instructional strategies worked well? How can instructional strategies be improved?
- What tools worked well? How could the use of tools be improved?
- What strategies and tools provided for multiple means of representation, action/expression, and engagement?
- What additional tools would have been beneficial to have access to and why?
- Overall, how might you improve this lesson?

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