
**St. Michael's College Graduate Course
Universal Design for Learning**

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Course Description

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has been nationally recognized as best first instruction for all learners. The basic precept of UDL is to first remove barriers in learning environments before resorting to curriculum modifications and accommodations. UDL is a framework to advance equity because its research-based, learner-centered approach emphasizes engagement, access, and expression for all learners.

But as a classroom teacher, where to begin? This course will provide teachers with a foundational understanding of UDL and actionable strategies for making their classrooms more inclusive. Course participants will deepen their understanding of UDL through course readings, professional dialogue, peer observations, and classroom practice.

Course Goals

The goals of this course are:

- Exhibit a general understanding of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework
- Use UDL Guidelines to implement classroom strategies for inclusion
- Make meaningful connections between UDL and current school initiatives (e.g., proficiency-based learning, personalization, Multi-Tiered System of Supports, English Learner programs)

Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework and its connections to ongoing school initiatives.
2. Relate brain-based UDL Guidelines to equitable, inclusive learning environments.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of *learner variability* and the concept of *expert learners*
4. Apply UDL strategies in their own classroom practice.
5. Incorporate *culturally responsive teaching* into their UDL practice.
6. Assess impact of UDL strategies applied in their own classroom and identify new areas of growth in their practice.

General Course Information

Course Policies and Expectations

The policies of the course overlay with those expected of all teachers of Winooski School District. Teachers will be professional, respect privacy and confidentiality, work appropriately and respectfully with colleagues, and comply with all school and district rules and policies. Course-specific expectations are outlined in the sections below.

Attendance Expectations

Course participants are expected to attend all in-person course sessions as well as the online course meetings. In the event of a missed course meeting or assignment, course participants should make arrangements with the course instructor to make up work in advance, or immediately after the scheduled course meeting or deadline. Attendance is factored into the Participation portion of the course grade; multiple absences will make it difficult to earn full credit in this category.

Reasonable Accommodation

Any learner eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability should consult with the course instructor at the outset of the course.

Course Structure and Learning Activities

This is a practice-based course that uses regular meetings to support teacher practice through readings, reflection, and discussion. Before each online course meeting date, participants will need to have completed the week's reading. Starting on Tuesday of each week there will be an *asynchronous* online discussion forum where participants will log on and weigh in at their convenience any time before the start of our in-person meeting time on Thursday (3:30 – 6:00) in Winooski. Our in-person meetings will give us the

opportunity to explore the challenges and opportunities of UDL implementation, with time to begin work on a weekly Classroom Practice activity. Each week, participants will adapt a UDL strategy from our book to try out in their own classroom, and then reflect on its impact and how it could be further improved. While these course assignments are small-scale and fairly prescribed, we will discuss ways that teachers can exercise choice in the way they deploy these strategies in their own classrooms.

This course is designed to avoid the classic problem of learning theory first, and only starting to apply new learning at the very end of the course. Instead, we will have a cycle of trying out new UDL strategies in manageable pieces on a weekly rolling schedule that looks like this:

Before Tuesday	Tuesday & Wednesday	Thursday	Anytime prior to next Tuesday
Chapter Reading & Reading Response	Discussion Forum	In-person meeting & plan classroom practice activity	Classroom Practice activity & UDL Reflection

Course participants will need to fight perfectionist urge to linger over lesson planning and adhere closely to the fast-paced schedule of classroom experimentation followed by discussion and reflection. Participants who fail to do the scheduled Classroom Practice activity prior to the following in-person meeting will not be able to fully benefit from the course discussion or provide timely and meaningful reflection. **Only teachers who are willing and able to incorporate small-scale UDL strategies into their classroom routine immediately should take this course.** The course sequence and study-practice-reflect cycle requires that the Classroom Practice activity be completed in the interim between each Thursday course meeting. It is important to note that the approach to reflexive practice is one of brief, high frequency reflections to consolidate new learning. In the spirit of UDL, the reflections may be recorded as a voice memo or short video, or may be in writing. Reflections that are not text-based are also an option, provided they are discussed in advance with the instructor for prior approval.

Course participants who complete all course work according to the course schedule will see an impact in their practice and have ample evidence of proficiency towards the course learning goals. The course instructor will provide continuous feedback to course participants, both in person and electronically as course work is completed. This feedback will be timely, specific, and growth-oriented, and it will not use traditional grade notation or a Marzano scale. Instead, course participants will use a Progress Scoring Guide, a single-point rubric to measure continuous improvement toward the Learning Outcomes, in order to self-assess new learning. At the beginning of the course, participants will also be provided with a single-point rubric with criteria to self-assess their course Participation. The final course grade will be informed by the Progress Scoring Guide and Evidence of Learning, which will consist of a compendium of course work: Reading Responses, Discussion Posts, Class Practice & Reflection, Participation Self-Assessment, and a Final Course Reflection. Time will be provided during the course to review the process for converting these proficiency-based course assessments into a traditional grade to meet the graduate credit requirements of Saint Michael’s College.

Required Text

Novak, K. (2016) *UDL Now! A Teacher's Guide to Applying Universal Design for Learning in Today's Classrooms*

Recommended Texts

Hoerr, T. (2017) *The Formative Five: Fostering Grit, Empathy, and Other Success Skills Every Student Needs*

Jensen, E. (2016) *Poor Students, Rich Teaching: Mindsets for Change*

Novak, K. (2017) *Let Them Thrive: A Playbook for Helping Your Child Succeed in School & Life*

Ralabate, P., and Nelson, L. (2017) *Culturally Responsive Design for English Learners: The UDL Approach*

Ricci, M. (2013) *Mindsets in the Classroom: Building a Culture of Success and Student Achievement in School*

Suggested Texts

Budge, K., and Parrett, W. (2018) *Disrupting Poverty: Five Powerful Classroom Practices*

Gorski, P. (2013) *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap*

Gregory, G., and Kaufeldt, M. (2015) *The Motivated Brain: Improving Student Attention, Engagement, and Perseverance*

Jensen, E. (2009) *Teaching with Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It*

Pollock, M. (2008) *Everyday Anti-Racism: Getting Real about Race in Schools*

*Additional course texts & resources will be made available electronically or in print by the instructor.

Coursework

Class Participation

Participants will self-assess their class participation according to these criteria:

- collaboration & teamwork
- connections between research & professional practice
- active listening
- positive contributions to the professional learning community
- application of new learning
- course discussion preparedness

Reading Responses

Before participating in each discussion forum, participants will read a chapter from *UDL Now!* (Novak) and choose and respond to *one* of the Discussion Questions found at the end of each chapter. Reading responses should be 200-300 words (or 1-2 minutes of audio or video) and seek to connect new learning to personal beliefs and/or professional practice.

Online Discussion Forum

After reading the week's chapter from *UDL Now!* (Novak), participants will post a response to the week's Discussion Forum Question online in 100-150 words and reply to at least one other participant's post.

UDL Classroom Practice

Participants will try out weekly UDL strategies in their classrooms in the spirit of improving their professional practice through practice. Priority will be given to risk-taking and experimentation over perfection. The approach to using new strategies will emphasize integration of small-scale UDL activities into existing lesson plans and units.

UDL Reflections

Following each application of UDL strategies in the classroom, participants will complete a short reflection of 200-300 words (or 1-2 minutes of audio or video) based on the following prompts each time:

What did you notice? What surprised you? What's next?

Final Course Reflection

This final piece of work is an opportunity for participants to bring together aspects and construct meaning from new learning in the course, notably from:

- Course readings
- Classroom Practice
- Course discussions with fellow educators
- New insights into professional practice

Course Work	Percentage of Grade
Participation	15%
Reading Responses	15%
Online Discussion Forum	15%
Classroom Practice	25%
UDL Reflections	15%
Final Reflection	15%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Instructional Sequence

Classes will meet Thursdays from 3:30-6:00 pm. Readings, Reading Responses, and Discussion Forum Posts need to be completed each week before the in-person course meeting. UDL classroom practice & reflections need to be completed for the following week's in-person course meeting.

Date	Readings & Learning Activities	Assignments	Discussion Forum Questions
Week 1 March 6 online	<i>UDL Now!</i> (Novak) Introduction & Chapter 1: UDL & Reality TV Collide	<u>Reading Response #1</u> Choose a Discussion Question (p. 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When should teachers learn together and when should they learn on their own?
Week 1 March 8 in-person	School & Social Reproduction (Bourdieu) UDL & MTSS: breaking down the Special/Regular Ed binary Learner Variability Who are you as a learner?	<u>UDL Classroom Practice #1</u> Have your class take a self-assessment of their beliefs relating to learning. [9.1 Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation] <u>UDL Reflection #1</u> What did you notice? What surprised you? What's next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is school fair or unfair for learners, and why?
Week 2 March 13 online	<i>UDL Now!</i> (Novak) Chapter 2: The UDL Guidelines for Educators	<u>Reading Response #2</u> Choose a Discussion Question (p. 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does an inclusive learning environment look like?

<p>Week 2 March 15 in-person</p>	<p>Unpacking the UDL Guidelines & Checkpoints</p> <p>UDL 2.0 Engage, Access, Express</p> <p>UDL & Brain Research: Affective, Recognition, and Strategic Networks</p>	<p><u>Classroom Practice #2</u> Create, display, and refer to a visual schedule for your daily class routine or a multi-step activity</p> <p>[2.4 Promote understanding across languages]</p> <p><u>UDL Reflection #2</u> What did you notice? What surprised you? What's next?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we remove barriers to learning in the classroom?
<p>Week 3 March 20 online</p>	<p><i>UDL Now!</i> (Novak) Chapter 3: Shining a Light on Engagement</p>	<p><u>Reading Response #3</u> Choose a Discussion Question (p. 39)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important to <i>start with the why</i> in learning?
<p>Week 3 March 22 in-person</p>	<p>Self-Efficacy (Bandura)</p> <p>Learner engagement & agency (Jensen)</p> <p>Seeking & Making Connections (Gregory & Kaufeldt)</p> <p>Using Essential Questions (Wiggins & McTighe)</p>	<p><u>Classroom Practice #3</u> After reviewing your learning objectives, start a unit (or lesson) with an essential question to spark engagement</p> <p>[7.2 Optimize value, relevance & authenticity]</p> <p><u>UDL Reflection #3</u> What did you notice? What surprised you? What's next?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is UDL different than Differentiated Instruction (DI)?

<p>Week 4 March 27 online</p>	<p><i>UDL Now!</i> (Novak) Chapter 4: Recruiting and Engaging Students as UDL Partners</p>	<p><u>Reading Response #4</u> Choose a Discussion Question (p. 81)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which norms & rules in school are explicit and which are tacit?
<p>Week 4 March 29 in-person</p>	<p>The Hidden Curriculum Teacher Beliefs about Learners (Hattie) The Expert Learner Redesigning the classroom for inclusion</p>	<p><u>Classroom Practice #4</u> After reading the UDL Lesson-Planning Process (pp. 46-47), plan & provide a boring-to-engaging lesson as described on pp. 44-46. OR Cultivate learner ownership by asking students to help you redesign “Our Classroom Routines” (pp. 51-53) OR Try out one or more of the concrete strategies to provide options for representation under Representation Guidelines (pp. 66-73) [1.1 Offer ways of customizing the display of information] <u>UDL Reflection #3</u> What did you notice? What surprised you? What’s next?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should teachers co-design curriculum with their students? Why or why not?

<p>Week 5 April 3 online</p>	<p><i>UDL Now!</i> (Novak) Chapter 5: Next-Generation Skills in Today's Classrooms</p>	<p><u>Reading Response #5</u> Choose a Discussion Question (p. 96)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should we call transferable skills “soft skills”? Why or why not?
<p>Week 5 April 5 online</p>	<p>Transferable Skills (AKA “21st Century” or “Next-Generation skills)</p> <p>Multiple Ways to Show Proficiency</p> <p>The 6 Facets of Understanding (Wiggins & McTighe)</p>	<p><u>Classroom Practice #5</u> Develop a task-neutral summative assessment of a transferable skill including options for action & expression.</p> <p>[7.2 Optimize value, relevance & authenticity]</p> <p><u>UDL Reflection #5</u> What did you notice? What surprised you? What's next?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What connection, if any, is there between equity and transferable skills?
<p>Week of April 9-13</p>	<p>SPRING VACATION (no course meetings)</p>		
<p>Week 6 April 17 online</p>	<p><i>UDL Now!</i> (Novak) Chapter 7: Choice Assignments</p>	<p><u>Reading Response #6</u> Choose a Discussion Question (p. 140)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the relationship between choice and engagement?

<p>Week 6 April 19 in-person</p>	<p>Personalization vs. Customization</p> <p>Strategies for Teaching Metacognition (Duckworth, Dweck, Hoerr, Jensen)</p>	<p><u>Classroom Practice #6</u> Try out one of Novak’s “20 Fabulous Ideas for Choice Assignments” (pp. 115-25) with your students.</p> <p>[7.1 Optimize individual choice and autonomy]</p> <p><u>UDL Reflection #6</u> What did you notice? What surprised you? What’s next?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we encourage learner choice and also ensure a general education?
<p>Week 7 May 1 online</p>	<p><i>UDL Now!</i> (Novak) Chapter 8: Scaffolding</p>	<p><u>Reading Response #7</u> Choose a Discussion Question (p. 169)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will students learn less if teachers spend more instructional time on reflection, goal-setting & metacognitive skills?
<p>Week 7 May 3 in-person</p>	<p>Formative Assessment (Hoerr, Wiggins & McTighe)</p> <p>Scaffolding Strategies</p>	<p><u>Classroom Practice #7</u> Pair up with another course participant and film 15 min. of a lesson to capture scaffolding in action. Write your reflection on what you observed.</p> <p>[5.3 Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance]</p> <p><u>UDL Reflection #7</u> What did you notice? What surprised you? What’s next?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does high-quality formative assessment look like?

<p>Week 8 May 8 online</p>	<p><i>Culturally Responsive Design for English Learners: The UDL Approach</i> (Ralabate & Nelson) Chapter 3: Culturally Responsive Teaching & UDL</p>	<p><u>Reading Response #8</u> Choose a Reflection Question (p. 48)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What cultural barriers are inherent in traditional classroom settings?
<p>Week 8 May 10 in-person</p>	<p>Celebration of Learning Wrap-Up & Closing</p>	<p>Sharing out key takeaways and thinking about next steps for UDL implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does a culturally inclusive learning environment look like?