

First of all, thank you everyone so much for joining us.

We're really excited about this session.

We have an incredible panel of speakers here

for you today to talk about

the Universal Design for Learning.

We know this is an incredibly hot topic right now across

all different universities, from

online learning to offline learning,

and we know that this is a really trying time

for a lot of schools and a lot of

learning environments right now as

everyone is quickly shifting to online.

But we have the experts here who

really know the ins and outs,

everything about the Universal Design for Learning,

who've done incredible research on

this and really started to implement it.

So with that, I'd love to

ask you to submit your questions for us.

Throughout this whole session,

we'll be taking your questions live and addressing them.

Also, please feel free to take

advantage of the fact that we do have live

captioning and we do have

a live transcript available

to meet accessibility measures.

So we encourage you to take advantage of that.

All you'll need to do is to click on the arrow next to the CC button, which is at the bottom menu bar, and then you can click "View full transcript", for example, if you wanted to view the full transcript.

So with that, I'll first turn it over to you, Eric, to introduce yourself.

Sure. So my name is Eric Moore.

I am a Universal Design for Learning and Accessibility Specialist at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

I am also the co-founder and co-facilitator of the UDL Higher Education Network, which is a subsidy of the UDL Implementation Research Network and a consultant through [innospire.org](http://innospire.org). Jen?

Hi, everybody. I'm Jennifer Pusateri.

I'm with the University of Kentucky.

I am a Universal Design Consultant there with our Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching.

I'm on the CAST National Faculty, and I also join Eric with the UDLHE Higher Ed network.

Danny?

Good morning, everyone. My name is Danny Smith, and I am a Faculty at George Brown College in Toronto, Canada, and on the side,

I do a little bit of extra UDL consultant work

with other colleges in the GTA area.

Luis.

Good morning, everyone. I'm Luis Perez.

I'm a Technical Assistance Specialist

with the National Center on

Accessible Educational Materials or

the AEM center at CAST.

That's a federally funded technical assistance center

that is based at CAST.

All right.

So today, we wanted to give you a couple of options.

When we began preparing this webinar several months ago,

we were looking to take

more general look at

Universal Design for Learning and higher education.

But we also recognize that a lot of people need

some resources right now for our current situation.

So we want to present you with a poll

so you can choose which path we go on.

It's a choose your own adventure.

You should have a poll that has popped up here.

Just go ahead and click on one of

those two options for what your preference would be.

Danielle, are the results coming in? I don't see them.

Yes, absolutely. So it looks like 90 percent of

individuals want option number 2,

to address the current situation

and also the proper methods and times to introduce the Universal Design for Learning approach.

Got you. Well, I'm glad we gave you that option.

So let's skip over to Option 2.

Option 2 is Support for

UDL design and implementation.

Is that right? That's the option that [inaudible 00:04:01] ?

So exploring how to implement UDL approach effectively based on leading research and improvement of the learning experience for all students.

So that's what we'll be exploring here, and we have prepared some questions.

Again, you're free to go ahead and put your own questions into the Q&A, and Danielle can call those out as you see them.

But we also have a few questions that we prepared to give you some time to think about it, and please also feel free to ask follow-up questions for the questions that we're asking.

So the first question is, who should be the one to "lead" a UDL movement on campus?

I think this was going to Jen. Is that right?

Yeah.

Okay.

Yeah. So at the University of Kentucky, when I arrived in my position first, there was a position for a Universal Design consultant.

So people on the campus were generally aware of Universal Design, but I think they were getting mixed up with accessibility.

Of course, it is both of those things, but there's a lot of other things that you add on with the Universal Design for Learning.

So now, we're in a position where we're ready to really take people from this idea of yes, we can caption our videos and yes, we can make our documents accessible to all of our students.

But what's really the next step?

So our next step is that we're looking at how we can move from that place to a place where we're really an access first university, where we're thinking about accessibility ahead of time instead of coming back later and fixing things.

So we have put together on our campus a group of people from really all over.

We have 16 different colleges, College of Medicine, College of Education, etc.

In our 16 colleges, most of them have an instructional designer in their college.

So we have a lot of instructional designers on our campus.

So we have several of them.

We also have folks from our Disability Resource Center, folks through administration, from all over the university together in this one group, which we call a UK for all.

That group's job right now is, we started really, none of us had any money.

None of us had really a lot of power.

But we all wanted to do these things on campus and we didn't really know where to start.

So we decided to bind ourselves together.

So we, as this group,

have now applied for a grant.

With this grant, we're hoping to go forward

and find one or two departments that we

can help to transform

that department into an access first department.

So the answer to the question,

who should be the one to lead a UDL movement on campus,

in my opinion, is whoever is most

passionate about and ready to fight for UDL

because if you're passionate about it,

and it's something that you really believe in,

and you believe in the feasibility

of doing that on a university campus,

then you're the one that needs to step up and lead.

Great. Any comments from the other panelists on this?

Yeah. I would agree that it should be a team effort and also, the more that we can move it out of just the disability services office or any of the offices that focused on compliance because then it is limited to compliance, and we really want to engage whatever faculty development organization you have on campus because UDL really is about good teaching, good teaching by design, and for everyone. So we want to make sure that we're focusing on those areas that develop faculty and that bring UDL into the instructional design process as well.

That's a great point, Luis.

One thing we occasionally see coming from administrators that can be effective, but oftentimes in higher-ed, we find it more effective when it begins with faculty who work together to get something going and then ask administration for support for what they're already doing.

So that tends to be more successful.

Is UDL explicitly for including students with disabilities?

Luis, do you want to start with this one?

Absolutely not.

Universal Design for Learning, as I just said, is for everyone because what we know is that the supports that we put in place for students with disabilities, they often benefit other learners.

So a great example of that is the captions that we're experiencing today.

Those who are developed for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, but it turns out that English language learners, which I am one myself, benefit from those,

or if you just have a subject that has specialized vocabulary, like in the sciences or in law, it's really helpful to be able to see those specialized terms displayed on the screen as the professor's speaking about them as well.

So basically this, accessibility is foundational to Universal Design for Learning, but Universal Design for Learning is much more than just accessibility.

It's accessibility for what, which is really about developing learner's abilities in all the different areas.

Their ability to write, to read,  
to be expert learners in how they develop themselves.

I'm going to say that there's  
a business application to this.

So I teach Marketing, and one of the things  
I promote in  
my social media classes is create  
highly accessible artifacts to share online.

If you create a video and you  
post it on your social media for a brand,  
it's going to get this many views.

But if you caption it and provide texts on it,  
the engagement increases and  
that's what you want from a brand perspective.

So there are practical business applications.

I'm thinking in my higher-ed space here,  
I got to make sure my students are ready for employers.

It's a practice that they can also use to be  
better employees and produce better work  
for their employers.

Yeah, Danny. I'm going to piggyback  
a little bit on your idea about marketing.

I really feel like the idea that UDL is just for  
students with disabilities is simply a branding issue.

The reason that it has gotten that name,  
it makes sense, but I think we've all seen,  
at least those of us who have been

in UDL for a little while,  
have seen the power of UDL  
not necessarily associated  
with students with disabilities.

So I think that it's that marketing  
piece that is a lot of what I  
do on my campus  
is trying to get the message across that, no,  
this is not just for students who have  
the accommodations letter that they bring to you.

If you make these changes for  
that student but then give to everybody,  
you're going to be eliminating a lot of  
work for yourself in the future as well.

It helps us work together.

If we're on a call  
and there's captioning right now, real time,  
that's going to help us as employees  
working with each other as well.

So the Universal Design really applies to,  
externally and internally, to the institution, I think.

Some research I was able to participate with  
with a doctoral student that I work with  
was talking about the lived experience  
of students with disabilities and how many steps they  
need to go through to get to step 1  
where the rest of their peers were last week.

So though UDL certainly is not only for students with disabilities, it has significant benefits for reducing the amount of ground they have to cover to get where their peers are or even reduce, in some cases, the need to wait on disability services to provide what they need to gain access, not on all cases.

So it's been hugely beneficial socially, in terms of energy, and so and so forth to really level the playing field and give everybody their best chance to be successful.

I'll make one last point before we move on, Eric.

It's also that a lot of our students are on the go and they're using mobile devices, and when we create accessible content, we're also creating content that can be consumed in a variety of different environments.

Whether the lighting is not good, the sound is not good, we're all in some ways experiencing a temporary disability in those environments.

So it's important that when we design for accessibility, we're also designing for mobility, if you will.

So that's helpful as well.

Absolutely. I am seeing

couple of questions coming from the Q&A.

Those will fit better with the later question.

So I'm not ignoring you.

We'll come back to those in a moment here.

Can you explain the difference

between variety and choice?

I think I signed this one to me to start.

So when we talk about UDL,

we talk about often multiple means of

representation, multiple means of engagement,

multiple means of action and expression,

and those are often presented in terms of variety.

So the instructor gives

these different options to the students.

It is important to

provide those options for the students,

but it's also important for them to be equipped

with the skills they need to make choices.

The goal of UDL, ostensibly,

is to develop what we call expert learners,

learners who are good at learning.

When you're an expert learner,

you can learn anything you want.

So whatever else we happen to

be teaching, chemistry, sociology,

whatever, we should also be

teaching our students how to learn better.

So that choice element is  
of critical importance for this,  
not just the provision of choice,  
but coaching the students in how to make good choices.

So, for example, if I provide  
students three different ways that they can  
demonstrate their ability to analyze  
a particular problem in my sociology course,  
so you can write an essay,  
you can do a podcast,  
you can do a PowerPoint presentation,  
then what I find is that without coaching,  
students oftentimes gravitate to what they typically  
do in all of their other classes  
where they're not given those choices.

So it helps oftentimes to develop  
these meta-cognitive capacities in our students.

This can be very simple,  
like, before you make a choice,  
I want you to articulate in  
one paragraph why are you making this choice,  
what is the advantage of choosing a PowerPoint  
over an essay or a podcast for you.

It's very simple to get them to start reflecting on this  
and to giving rationales for their decision-making.

So we need to have that variety of  
those choices given to the students,

and you need to give them opportunity to choose from among them skillfully and intentionally.

Anything else from other panelists?

One of the things I would mentioned is, I try to provide a little bit of coaching around, when you make this decision, podcast, PowerPoint, written, choose the one that you feel will help you express yourself the best and demonstrate your learning the best, and if you know that you're solid or really strong in one, maybe try another if the timing is right.

Now, I wouldn't say,

I'd say go with

the one that you

express yourself best with at this point.

But understanding that and

understanding where you express

yourself best is something that they could

talk to potential employers about to say,

"I'm really good at writing,

I'm really good at presenting,

I'm really good at distillation

of information," what have you.

But understanding what their strengths

are, coming out of our institutions,

I think, this is one way how we

do that,  
that reflection on, "Why did I choose one or the other,  
where are my strengths, where could  
I be growing some skills,  
and then how am I going to bring those to  
my employer when I leave here?"  
I think we're also teaching them at the same time that  
me advocating for myself to say,  
"Hey, is there another way that you could  
give this to me?"  
When they're moving on to  
other areas to work further on into the higher degrees,  
being able to be a self-advocate is so important,  
and it's something that I think  
at least a lot of our younger students that  
we see almost don't feel like they have the right to do.  
They feel like there's something wrong with them  
having to ask that question or to  
say, "Could you give this to me in a different way?"  
So I think it's important that we're coaching  
them on how to make these choices and  
also how to be that self-advocate.  
Yeah. I was just going to add that  
also something that I've seen in a lot of  
UDL implementations is also  
thinking that everything has to utilize technology,  
and sometimes, it's important to provide

low tech options and

also everything doesn't have to be media.

Writing should be one of those choices

because that may be what works best for some students.

I know I'm one of those people that my writing,

my thinking just works best when I write it down.

So making sure that we don't eliminate some of

those choices just because

there's some biases that we have.

Then the other thing is, I try to provide

a wildcard when I provide choices.

So making sure that there is an option where

as long as you meet the criteria that I set forth,

it's up to you how you do that.

So it's not always a teacher

or instructor provided choice.

They have some say in what those choices are.

Absolutely.

Just one last thing to add, and

somebody made a point of it in

the discussion, is this is totally intrinsic motivation,

and their eyes light up.

When you first present,

one of the things that I'm known

for is, you can either write

your exam or you can type your exam in the classroom.

Choose which one works for you.

As soon as they hear that,  
they're like, "Oh my God,  
take away the paper,"  
or, "Oh my gosh, I'm going to write  
because I know that I can  
write better and express myself."

It's so amazing to see people light up  
when they're able to make  
that choice and they're going to do better  
because they're going to feel  
confident and they're going to express themselves  
and translate that learner and  
demonstrate their learning. It's amazing.

Absolutely. Rose is asking if lessons or assignments can be  
designed in a variety of models so  
the students can learn each model.

How do you know students have  
experience and what options are available?

These are really good questions.

It depends on the nature of the course.

So I tend to see courses that are  
more geared towards skill development,  
like composition courses,  
public speaking courses, and  
courses that are more focused on content,  
chemistry, sociology, and so forth.

When it's a skill-oriented class,

I think you do spend a lot of time developing their capacity and those skills and looking at different ways that they can approach the skill.

So, for example, if public speaking is a required course for graduation, we know that some students are going to come into that course with anxiety in public speaking, and sometimes, that anxiety is going to be very significant.

So it's worth looking at how bringing up those questions explicitly as part of the Universal Design for Learning model.

How do you deal with anxiety in public speaking?

So we might think about, you can do public speaking without it having to be live as well.

Can we do a podcast public speaking?

Because if this is not something that you want for your lives, why are we forcing you to go through it in college?

How can we teach you how to be successful with who you are and still be a professional and a citizen and so forth?

So it's not really necessarily about finding which specific models are going to work for all of my students,

but providing the flexibility and, in some cases, the wildcard, like Luis was saying, so that they can customize their learning experience for themselves, they can find what it means for me to be successful instead of having to adapt to arbitrary standards.

Yeah.

I know I've seen a couple of professors who are familiar with UDL who will build in maybe something that's a little bit low stakes in their course.

So maybe a weekly discussion board or something that's not worth a lot of points.

So they say,

"You can type and text if you want, you can do an audio version of this."

We have Canvas, that's our LMS, Learning Management System, on our university.

"But you can do your response in text, like in actually typing it in.

You can use an audio format or you can use a video format, and you can choose whichever one you want to use for 8 out of 10 of the times.

But I want you to try at least one of them as an audio file,

and I want you to try at least one as a video file.

So if you want to get those out of the way first,

you can do the ones that

you're not comfortable with, great.

But if not, save

them up and give it a shot because it may be

something that you really

enjoy and you just didn't know to try."

We have an attendee asking,

"How do we offer

choice right now when everything is online?"

This person is saying, they have students

who would like to write rather than type,

but they don't have a scanner to upload the materials.

How can we offer choice in the current environment?

There are a number of apps out there that you can

tell students about like, Office Lens, for instance,

is one that is free from

Microsoft that allows you to scan text

and then provides text to speech.

So once the text is in an accessible digital format,

they can turn on text to speech with

a variety of display choices.

So again, it addresses a variability of our learners.

Some may need high contrast,

some may need the words to be spaced out a little bit

because maybe they have a reading challenge,

some may need different colors.

So there are options out there with technology.

Even though UDL is not really about technology,

it's about flexible design,

but technology in some cases,

as Eric started mentioning earlier,

for some students it is the entryway into UDL.

Without technology, there is no UDL for

them, so it's like a welcome mat.

Would you put a link to that tool you

mentioned in the chat?

Sure, absolutely.

I'll mute myself so you don't hear me

typing while you all discuss the next point.

I'll give some other tips.

I'm right in the thick of things.

We've reduced our semester by two weeks.

So this is the final week of

my semester at Polytechnical College in Toronto.

A couple things I did in terms of UDL.

Their exam, it was open-book.

They had 24 hours to complete it.

So there was lots of time in

there, understanding that they have

other exams happening this week.

So give them some flexibility as to

when they could complete their exam.

Two, they had flexibility in question types as well as content within questions.

Within the case question, they got to choose between case A or B.

Again, do they gravitate to this?

Do they feel more comfortable talking about this or this?

So giving them some choice around that.

The other thing that I did right off the bat when I knew we were going back to school is

I actually asked my students,

"How do you want to proceed?"

We had this big presentation day.

So I said, "Knowing that we're using virtual meetings, do you want to present just within your group or do you want to present it to the entire class and have everybody watch the presentations?"

I was surprised, but they actually said they just wanted to present to themselves.

They were already anxious about using the new technology, driving the presentations, all the things that we, as workers, know.

We practice this kind of stuff.

We practice it, but they don't.

So they said, "You know what?"

We already have enough anxiety.

We already are learning a new tool and we're presenting in

a way that's not typical in higher-ed.

So let's not do that."

So they told me about that through

a polling feature in the LMS,

and I adapted the course to meet their needs.

So those are a couple little things that I've done

to try to weave in UDL

in a variety of ways to support even

what Luis was saying in terms of some of those tools.

Excellent. We're running short on

time. I'm going to go back a slide.

This reflects some of the questions that we're

seeing in the chat.

What are some of the top resources that we can use right

now to support UDL implementation,

and especially for classes that would benefit from

students being able to do more tactile,

hands on experiences?

I have a faculty member who's teaching

a course on bean to bar chocolate,

and how do I get them to do

those tactile experiences when

we're all over the country right now.

What are some resources that are available that

you would highlight for this use?

I am typing one in right now.

It's called UDL On Campus.

So this is a website that CAST designed a while back,  
but we've been updating it,  
and it has resources, for instance,  
thinking about the syllabus  
and how to make it accessible.

Thinking about the executive functioning  
challenges related to being  
an online learner and the additional demands that it  
places on attention and so on,  
and Jen could really speak to that.

She's an expert in this area.

But just those different areas that have to do with  
the instructional design of the experience in the course,  
and then, of course, accessibility  
of different media types.

So how do we make texts accessible?

How do we make images, video, video conferencing?

We have those considerations on that website.

So I went ahead and shared that in the chat.

So I think that's a good place to start.

I'm biased though because I work at CAST.

Sorry about flipping back and forth.

That was an accident. Good. What other resources?

Some of the things we're seeing our students  
struggling with right now is not  
necessarily the coursework,  
but it is the executive functioning things

that Luis mentioned.

It's the, "How do I

tune out my dog barking and

my sister working in another room and

the notifications I continue to get

on my computer and phone wrist?"

So some of the things that we're designing right now

are some resources to go out to students to say,

"Okay, if this is something that you're struggling with,

here's some of the things that you can do.

If you have an iPhone, if you have an iPad,

here are some of the things you can turn on.

There's a focus assist feature that you can

turn on on those Apple devices.

If you don't have one of those,

here's another way that you can do that."

So we're trying to provide some of

those resources because I think what's

happening is students are recognizing that

those distractions that are around them are

much bigger than they thought they were going to be.

It's something that they maybe didn't face

in a face-to-face class situation.

I think I'll just add

on to that in terms of distractions.

So I teach online. Half of my course load is online.

One of the things I find

really beneficial in terms of addressing  
the distractions from an analog perspective  
is giving them a moment to  
pause and to reflect and be present.

So how do you do that?

One, sometimes, I just share my screen with  
the Calm app, C-A-L-M, at Calm,  
and they have these

30-second little timing windows that just say

"Breathe" or "Try to

escape your brain for a second for 30 seconds".

You might try that, or one thing that's fun is I say,

"Go to your kitchen, get a snack,

whatever it is, grab the first thing you've got,

and then let's write

down how you think this snack is going to taste.

Then you taste it, and then you write more."

At first you're like, "Oh, this cracker tastes good."

Great. But now, be mindful,

be present in the moment,

and tell me how that cracker really tastes.

Is it gritty?

Is it salty?

Does something scratch the inside of your cheek?

Really get into the details of it.

I start the class off with that

because then it says, "Okay,

for learning to work online,  
all that stuff has to go to the wayside and you really,  
really have to focus this much."

Then you go for  
a little spurt and then you finish and say,  
"Everybody, digital break." Then bring them back.

Another one of those activities is,  
you ask them to draw a circle  
or a spiral on their page,  
and then you ask them a question,  
and then they continue a spiral,  
and then they ask another question.

So I love analog.

I think it really disrupts the disruptions that we have.

Sorry, go ahead.

I was just going to say, some of the faculty

I'm working with,

including the chocolate faculty member,  
is sending care packages to their students and obviously,  
being careful about how they package it,  
with sanitary methods and so forth.

But then sending things so that when we Zoom together,  
we have manipulables in front of us  
so we're actually doing  
something together in real time,  
and that has been a good semi-analog approach.

I posted in the chat there,

something I'm always trying to get out in the world, but there's this implemented UDL on Canvas, massive open online course, that does look into how UDL interfaces with the learning management system, specifically Canvas. Though I encourage people who use Blackboard, etc., to adapt that.

I gave it a CC license so people can take it and remake it for their campuses and their different platforms and so forth.

So that's available as well.

It's 12 o'clock, little after 12.

I don't want to take away a speaker at the end here.

But if you have other questions, please do feel free to reach out to us directly if you're able to or through Danielle.

We'll get back to you directly so we can continue those conversations.

Please feel free to check out CAST on the UDL Implementation Research Network, UDL IRN, and the UDL Higher Education Network, UDL HE network.

These are three great organizations that are great for connecting with, that will support you in this continued work of bringing UDL to higher education.

Thank you all for joining today,

and we hope to see you around.

Yeah. I just want to say on behalf of Verbit.

Thank you, everyone.

Thank you so much, Luis,

Jennifer, Danny, and Eric.

This was such an amazing session

and so great to hear all of

your perspectives and how you've been

working with UDL and implementing it.

So thank you for taking the time to share that with us.

We will make this session available on demand after.

A lot of the resources that you saw posted in the chat,

we, of course, will send those around as well.

So you'll have access to everything.

Thank you so much for joining.

We encourage you now to exit out of

this Zoom session and enter the last session of the day,

which will be led by Katie Blot,

who is an EdTech specialist.

They'll be talking about the future of EdTech.

So we encourage you to join that too,

but thank you all so much and thank you to our panelists.

Thanks, everybody.

Thank you.

Bye.

Thank you, everyone.

Bye bye.

