



Graduate School of Education Penn GSE

PLN 41B: Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Today's Classrooms

1.13 Course Units = 4.5 Continuing Education Graduate Credits

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce the key concepts of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and give you the knowledge you need to approach planning through the lens of UDL, regardless of your learning environment. Whether you teach students, adult learners, or are in higher education, the principles of UDL will support the development of learning experiences that allow all learners to access high-quality teaching and learning that is empowering, innovative, culturally sustaining, and linguistically appropriate. Whether you teach face-to-face, in a hybrid environment, or remotely, proactively identifying barriers and eliminating them through design will help to create more equitable learning environments for all learners. Each module will include a variety of resources to increase options for representation and increase engagement throughout the course. Additionally, there will be numerous options for action and expression so all course assignments are relevant, authentic, meaningful.

The Four Lenses of Learning framework reflects a comprehensive perspective on language, literacy, and learning. These lenses identify teaching and learning as:

- Meaning-centered - Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is focused on activating the affective network of the brain - which seeks meaning and engagement. A consistent focus of this course is helping participants take evidence-based

strategies and connect them to the design and delivery of meaningful, empowering teaching and learning.

- Social - In Universal Design for Learning (UDL), it is critical to foster collaboration and community to build engagement. The power of social relationships, both in-person and online are critical pillars for building effective learning communities.
- Language-based - we learn through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This course offers numerous opportunities for rich literacy experiences as participants grow as expert learners and consistently engage in the **five reading, writing, and talking processes**.
- Human - at the core of leading and learning are relationships. This course will focus on making meaningful connections among leaders, educators, and the communities they serve to ensure that all learning experiences create equal opportunities for learners to meet rigorous goals, create personalized learning experiences, and embody the Innovator's Mindset.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, participants will:

- Understand the core components of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and how they can apply to all design work to foster equity and inclusion.
- Learn why UDL is critical to ensure all learners have equitable access, opportunity, expectations, and feelings of belonging.
- Understand what UDL is, and what it is not, and how to apply the principles, guidelines, and checkpoints to teaching practice.
- Design learning experiences that foster expert learning and innovation and ensure that all learners have pathways that both challenge and support them to reach rigorous and meaningful goals.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is important for creating an equitable, inclusive, innovative learning environment.
- Each of the characteristics of the Innovator's Mindset and the core components of social-emotional learning can be fostered through the implementation of Universal Design for Learning.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The final course grade is based on the following criteria:

- Active participation in online class discussion boards in each module
- Comprehensive & quality completion of the final project

READINGS AND RESOURCES

- Couros, G. & Novak, K. (2019). [Innovate inside the box: Empowering learners through UDL and the innovator's mindset](#). Impress.
- Posey, A. & Novak, K. (2020). [Unlearning: Changing Your Beliefs and Your Classroom with UDL](#).

COURSE POLICIES

Drop & Add Deadline: The university has implemented a new drop & add deadline policy for the upcoming semester. If a student is missing from the roster at the end of course, the student cannot be added to the class roster. Students are no longer able to drop the course after session #2. If a student drops the class after the second-class session, their transcript will reflect a “W” indicating that they withdrew from the class. If a student fails to complete the required work in a course, you may assign an “I”, indicating an incomplete. Incomplete grades must be reserved for those who intend to complete the course requirements and is not a placeholder for a dropped course. An incomplete must be completed within 3 months. It is imperative that all PLN facilitators communicate this information to their respective students at or before the first-class session and include this policy in all syllabi. If you have already distributed the course syllabus, please email this policy to all participants. We are no longer able to make changes to rosters at the end of the semester, so this deadline is very important.

EXAMPLE COURSE AGENDA

Module availability and live lecture dates to be shared in the final agenda within the course.

Topic

Module 1: The Case for UDL - Equality, Equity, and Expert Learning
Module 2: What is UDL (and what is it not)?
Module 3: The UDL Unlearning Cycle
Module 4: Engagement Spotlight, Building Motivated, and Self-Directed Learners
Module 5: Representation Spotlight, Fostering Resourceful and Knowledgeable Learners
Module 6: Action and Expression Spotlight, Empowering Creators and Reflectors
Module 7: Equity, Culturally Responsive Design, and UDL
Module 8: The Power of Community and Collaboration to Scale Inclusive Practices