



Would you rather?

UDL EDITION

Would you rather?

Compiled by Teachers in WEA and Katie Novak

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that helps educators establish firm goals and flexible means, so all students have equal opportunities to access grade-level instruction in inclusive classrooms. UDL is a standards-based curriculum framework that ensures that all students have options and choices for learning, the materials they use, and how they share what they know as they work toward firm goals. Often, UDL is characterized by its focus on student voice and choice, but many educators struggle with where to provide choices without compromising rigor. Additionally, some educators struggle with the question, “How much choice is too much choice?” which creates barriers to developing more inclusive learning opportunities.

Luckily, there is a concrete answer to the question, How much choice is too much choice? The answer, according to research, is more than 6, with the ideal number being 2-4 choices (Patall, Cooper & Robinson, 2008). The focus is not so much on the choice for the sake of choice but rather on eliminating barriers to one-size-fits-all practices that exclude students or prevent them from learning. For example, all students must access grade-level text, yet we can predict that some learners will struggle with decoding that text. To eliminate that barrier, educators can activate student background knowledge with visuals and multimedia and then provide students with an option to read or listen to the text. With those two options, more students can access the text.

This technique of “Would You Rather?”, when examined through the lens of UDL, allows educators to recognize and eliminate barriers to traditional practices to provide flexible pathways for students to build purpose and become more resourceful and strategic.

Three UDL principles support the development of flexible learning experiences that allow students to self-differentiate. In universally designed classrooms, teachers provide:

- ▶ **Multiple means of engagement**
- ▶ **Multiple means of representation**
- ▶ **Multiple means of action and expression**

There are a series of strategies, or Guidelines, that help educators recognize and minimize barriers. [You can learn more about the UDL Guidelines here.](#)

In the following sections, teachers in the Washington Educator Association (WEA) share “Would You Rather?” strategies aligned to the [UDL Guidelines](#). These tried and true practices will help to create more inclusive classrooms that optimize expert learning.

Provide Multiple Means of Engagement



PROVIDE OPTIONS TO RECRUIT INTEREST

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Class is either silent or music is played	A single condition may not meet the needs of all learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather work silently or would you rather use earbuds and listen to music?
Students sit at desks	Learners may struggle with restless energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather sit at your desk or on the floor? ▶ Would you rather sit or stand? ▶ Would you rather use a traditional desk or would you be more productive at a standing desk? ▶ Would you rather sit at a traditional desk or choose a more flexible seat? (hokki stool, soft chair, etc)
Assign every student the same text	Doesn't address varying student interests or differentiation needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather read this paper copy, read on a device, or listen to the book? (you can provide an audio version or allow students to read aloud together) ▶ Offer a selection of grade-level stories (same genre) based on what the standard wants them to do. Then you can prompt students with questions like, "Would you rather find the main idea on "Wild Weather" or "How Weather Affects Us?"
Teachers determine all options/choices	Pathways may not be relevant to students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Share standards with learners. Note: "How can you show me you understand or can do this? Help me create three choices." Once the choices are established, you can ask, "Would you rather..."



PROVIDE OPTIONS TO SUSTAIN EFFORT & PERSISTENCE

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Turn and Talk	Linguistic barriers and social communication barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather discuss it with a partner, do a quick write or draw pictures?▶ If discussion is necessary, ask, "Would you rather partner up and begin talking or take 5 minutes to prepare for the discussion?"
Give students a worksheet for math practice	Students may benefit from digital scaffolds or struggle with writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather practice your math facts on this worksheet, with a partner, or on the device?▶ Would you rather complete the worksheet or create your own word problems to help me to know that you understand the concepts that I taught?
Partner Read	Linguistic barriers, different reading levels/speeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather read independently, read with a partner, or join a small group?
Math Story Problems	Students may struggle with the language demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather work with a partner and talk out the math problem or work by yourself and check your work with another mathematician that worked on their own?▶ Would you rather have the story problems read to you or hear the recording of the story problems?
All students receive the same direct instruction lesson	Pacing may not be appropriate for all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather follow along with my example or do it on your own?



PROVIDE OPTIONS TO SELF-REGULATE

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
All students take a break at the same time	Students have different sensory needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather take a break before or after you complete your assignment? ▶ Would you rather have quiet time for yourself or socialize during the break?
Students are expected to start a writing task	Some students may not have ideas and need inspiration but others are ready to begin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather discuss with a group before writing or work independently and get started? ▶ Would you rather draw a picture first before writing or write to start?
Students are expected to know how to cope with the pressures of standardized testing	Students benefit from different strategies for testing and coping with stress/anxiety	<p>For standardized testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather chew gum or have mints? ▶ Would you rather have scrap paper or not? ▶ Would you rather take mini-breaks with deep breaths or roll your neck?
Students sit at their desks in regular chairs and work independently	Students may need a variety of body positioning to stay focused while working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather: Work at your desk, “wall work” (using the wall as an easel), sit on the floor with a lap desk, or lay on your stomach and work on the floor?
Tell students to take a deep breath or to stop maladaptive behavior	Sensory processing needs vary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Present a menu of strategies for coping. Would you rather ____ or ____ (selecting strategies known to be effective for the student).

Provide Multiple Means of Representation



PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR PERCEPTION

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Provide audio books	Doesn't allow for interaction/relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather listen to an audio recording or have a partner read the text aloud?
Listen to a podcast	Audio processing barriers, hearing impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather listen to the podcast, read the transcript, or listen while reading the transcript? ▶ Would you rather sit and listen to the podcast or take a walk while listening?
Read printed text	Need for decoding support/translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather have the printed text or access the text digitally? ▶ Would you rather read the text or listen to audio while reading the text?
Project slides in the classroom	<p>Does not allow for customizing information</p> <p>Students may not be able to see clearly depending on where they sit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather follow along on the projected screen or access the slide deck on your own device? ▶ Would you rather have a printed copy of the slides at your desk or follow along digitally?



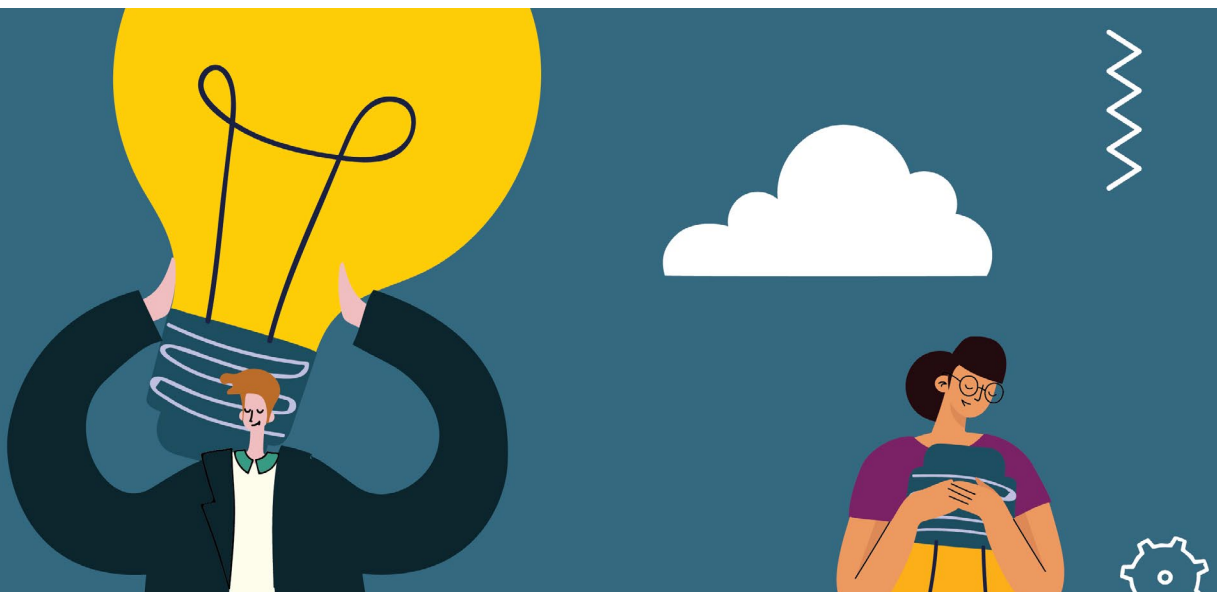
PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR LANGUAGE & SYMBOLS

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Give all students a writing prompt and a piece of paper	Students have different levels of writing skills and different levels of prior knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather use a word bank or use a model for your writing?▶ Would you rather write, type, or use speech-to-text or dictation?



PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Students fill out KWL chart	Students may not have background information yet to share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather fill out a KWL chart or take 5 minutes to explore resources to build some background knowledge?
Assign students to read a text and then provide "quiz questions."	Students benefit from different test-taking and reading comprehension strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather review the text-based questions before reading or read first to build background knowledge?▶ Would you rather annotate the text, take notes, or take sketch notes?



Provide Multiple Means of Action & Expression



PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACTION

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Using manipulatives	Students may struggle with fine motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather use cubes or your hands to count? ▶ Would you rather use a 100 chart or linking cubes? ▶ Would you rather use Algebra Tiles or a virtual application of algebra tiles to model the math problem?
Students must stay at their desks during partner work	Need for motion/movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather walk and talk or talk in your seat?
Paper/Pencil Tasks	Students may have poor hand/finger coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather take notes in your notebook or on your device? ▶ Would you rather type this or use a pencil and paper? ▶ Would you rather respond to the prompt in writing or with an audio recording?



PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR EXPRESSION & COMMUNICATION

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Write the answer (when not working on a writing standard)	Struggle with written expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather write or type it out, use Vocaroo to record it, or discuss it with a partner? ▶ Would you rather write a report or create a PowerPoint presentation? ▶ Would you rather create a visual representation or would you rather write an essay?

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Student independent writing without scaffolds	Some students may need additional support to share their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather use the sentence frames provided to answer in a complete sentence or create your own? ▶ Would you rather use a word bank or craft your writing or draft
Students are expected to complete a writing task using the same methods	Weak typing/fine motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather write in pencil or pen or use a whiteboard? ▶ Would you rather write in pen or in Peardeck? ▶ Would you rather write this, type this or talk into the computer?
Worksheets	Fine motor skills, visual tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather complete a worksheet to show that you understand the material, or would you rather teach somebody how to do this skill? ▶ Would you like to complete the worksheet on the overhead using the whiteboard, and we can take a picture of your work, or would you like to use larger paper (legal-sized copy)? ▶ Would you rather complete the worksheet or use an app where you can take a picture of it?
Class presentation	Anxiety with public speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather present to the whole class or to me 1:1? ▶ Would you rather make a video or present it to the class in person?
Everyone creates a poster, infographic, etc.	Lack of access to materials outside of class or lack of space to work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather create a website, write and sing a song, make an infographic, write a poem, etc? ▶ Would you rather draw or create an image on Jamboard or Slides where you can use digital pictures instead of drawing?



PROVIDE OPTIONS FOR EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Graphic Organizers	Students who struggle to organize their ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather use a graphic organizer or write it out on your own?▶ Would you rather use a graphic organizer, create a concept map, or create an outline to organize your thinking?▶ Would you rather fill out the graphic organizer independently or with a partner?
Students are required to take notes using a single method	Students may not benefit from a single note-taking strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather take sketch notes, Cornell notes, or annotate on the text?▶ Would you rather take notes on your laptop using a word document or OneNote?
Students are required to keep a physical notebook	Struggle with keeping notes and papers organized in one place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather use a notebook or loose pages in your binder?▶ Would you rather have a physical notebook or use a digital notebook?
Student Planners	Paper planners are difficult for students with various handwriting challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather write in your planner or create a voice memo on your phone?▶ Would you rather write in your planner or make a note in your online calendar?
Give multi-step directions for task completion	Students with Executive Dysfunction struggle with short-term memory and multi-step directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather have a list of written instructions, or would you prefer audio or visual support?
Assign long-term projects with only an end date	Difficulty with planning and organizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you rather plan out tasks daily, weekly, or create a scope for the full project now?
Expecting students to manage their time	Misunderstanding of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Would you like me to check in with you halfway through the class or allow you to keep working?▶ Would you rather have a personal timer or have a classwide timer to keep you on track?

Traditional Practice	Barrier	Would you rather?
Pass out a multi-part test all at once	Students may be overwhelmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would you rather have all the parts simultaneously or finish one part, check-in with me, and then get the next part?

REFERENCES

Patall E.A., Cooper, H. & Robinson, J.C. (2008). The effects of choice on intrinsic motivation and related outcomes: a meta-analysis of research findings. *Psychology Bulletin* 134(2) :270-300.



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