

# Title: "UDL Assessment Flowchart"

The flowchart begins with Question 1

## 1. Q1: Do you provide diagnostic and formative assessments to your learners?

- 1.1. If "No" to Q1 - A summative assessment is just part of the full story. It is critical that learners have numerous opportunities to share what they know to support self-assessment and teacher instruction before completing summative assessments, which may be marked and may contribute to a student's grade in the course.
- 1.2. If "Yes" to Q1 - UDL grading starts way before you give out an assignment or test or even before you begin the lesson. It starts with finding out where your students are with the content or topic at hand. This usually means that you do some sort of diagnostic and formative assessment. Starting with a diagnostic or formative assessment is particularly important during (and after) this COVID crisis. The California department of education states that "deep concerns about learning loss have triggered an urgency that district and school staff have in place useful diagnostic assessments that can identify where students are in their learning within key content areas when they return to school so teachers can teach them most effectively." The [Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#) website adds: "The goal is to get a snapshot of where students currently stand - intellectually, emotionally or ideologically - allowing the instructor to make sound instructional choices as to how to teach the new course content and what teaching approach to use."

Now, let's face it, you can't wait until you have the results of these assessments to plan out the lesson and the rest of the assessments, but



as an experienced teacher, you can use the results of diagnostics to customize the plan that you have already created. A UDL lesson already has options and choices embedded because you have already proactively planned for variability, but the diagnostic can give you very important insight into adjustments you will need to make or choices or assessments you might need to add or remove to make the learning experience more accessible and engaging. It will also provide the students with an important progress monitoring tool and help them self-differentiate based on what they already know or can do.

2. **Q2: Are your assessments aligned to stated standards and objectives and designed with multiple means for action and expression?**

- 2.1. If "No" to Q2 - Identify potential barriers within "one-size-fits-all" design and redesign using UDL best practices so students have numerous options and choices to learn and share their learning.
- 2.2. If "Yes" to Q2 - Your assessments need to be based upon the standards and objectives that you stated at the beginning of the lesson, and it also needs to provide options for the students to choose so that they can best show you what they have learned. These options and choices will also help reduce or eliminate "test anxiety."

Dr. David Rose, one of the original creators of the UDL framework, states that "when we consider learner variation in affective, recognition, and strategic networks, we realize that in order for assessments to focus accurately on what is being assessed, they need to be adjustable to meet learner variability. To get the most accurate data about what students understand and can do, assessments should not offer only one means of response but should provide



multiple opportunities in varied media for learners to demonstrate skills and express themselves.”

Additionally, “such flexibility in assessment also has a role in encouraging students to seek knowledge beyond the requirements of the assignment they are being asked to do, especially as they have chosen what interests them. Furthermore, the integration of UDL into assessment is not only beneficial to students, but also to faculty, as these practices would enable them to look more deeply at the course's goals and objectives, to determine what students should show during the learning process, and to notice the students' enthusiasm and creativity in their courses”(Alsalamah, 2020).

### 3. Q3: Do you provide students with multiple attempts to resubmit evidence of learning/revise formative and summative assessments?

- 3.1. If "No" to Q3 - Revisit your assessment procedures to encourage a growth mindset and ensure that student learning reflects their current learning, not previous attempts (i.e., averaging original marks and retakes).
- 3.2. If "Yes" to Q3 - It is often stated that “we learn from our mistakes,” but we can only learn from our mistakes when we are given opportunities to correct them! It's suspect that anyone deeply learns from their mistakes when assessments provide nothing more than checks, “x's,” and non-specific comments. Students need to go back into the assessment and correct what needs improvement. Some educators feel that this process is unfair to the students who get the answer right the first time, but when we believe in standards-based or mastery-based grading, we recognize that the outcomes of the learning are more important than how quickly students reach those outcomes. In standards-based grading, grades reflect current learning and not past mistakes.



#### 4. Q4: Do you have a UDL-inspired rubric clearly outlining how a student will be assessed?

- 4.1. If "No" to Q4 - Build a rubric that can be universally applied to all options regardless of the mode of delivery so that learners truly understand how mastery will be assessed.
- 4.2. If "Yes" to Q4 - Students need to know how a particular assessment will be assessed, and they need to have a tool to help them self-assess their work and monitor their progress toward reaching a goal. "Students can use the rubrics to self-assess. The students can answer the essential questions with their own big ideas. This empowers the students." (OCALI, n.d.) The type of rubric you use is less important than the fit that the rubric has to the assessment. UDL does not have an ideal rubric type, that is to say, the ideal rubric for UDL is the one that can accurately support the measurement of student knowledge for the course learning outcome(s) without constricting the options of how a learner can show what they know. A rubric designed with UDL in mind takes into consideration:
  - That the assessment, and therefore the rubric design, will be based on the learning outcome(s) being measured, not the assessment method chosen.
  - That the rubric will be provided to students with the assessment outline to ensure they know how they will be assessed for a specific assignment, and what knowledge is being measured. (Mohawk College, n.d.)

[Learn more about the different types of rubrics here.](#)

#### 5. Q5: Are grades/points explicitly aligned to standards and outcomes?

- 5.1. If "No" to Q5 - Consider revising assessments and rubrics so that the outcomes truly measure whether or not the student has met the standard/outcome.



5.2. If “Yes” to Q5 - You can’t assess a student's work if you haven’t evaluated the standards and goals first, and you can’t assign a mark on an assessment if you are not clear about what fulfills the standards or goals when the students show what they know. The University of Illinois (n.d.) Center for Teaching Innovation has a full website of “Assigning Course Grades” that offers some helpful suggestions as you transition to competency or standards-based grading.

- Course goals and standards must necessarily be defined clearly and communicated to the students. (*a UDL foundation*)
- Most students, if they work hard enough and receive adequate instruction, can obtain high grades. The focus is on achieving course goals, not competing for a grade. (*UDL high expectations*)
- Final course grades reflect achievement of course goals. The grade indicates "what" a student knows rather than how well he or she has performed relative to the reference group. (*UDL Expert Learning*).

## 6. Q6. Do assessment rubrics accurately reflect priority standards?

6.1. If "No" to Q6 - Consider revising assessments and rubrics so that the outcomes truly measure whether or not the student has met the standard/outcome.

6.2. If "Yes" to Q6 - If we don’t embrace and fully understand our standards and objectives, our rubrics may not be meaningful, may assess criteria that are not construct relevant, and may result in marks that don't reflect student learning. Carefully constructed rubrics, when aligned with standards, will help students and teachers determine the quality of the work and its alignment to mastery.

In his book, "A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades," O'Connor, our new assessment bestie, provides detailed guidance on how to create effective rubrics, including advice on what to include in a rubric, how to write clear and specific criteria, and how to involve students in the process of developing the rubric and using it for planning and self-assessment.



💡 This would be a great topic for your next department meeting or faculty professional development day!

## 7. Q7. Do you allow students to “self-report” marks on their assessments?

- 7.1. If "No" to Q7 - Consider adding the opportunity for each student to reflect on their performance and assess themselves while also reflecting on how their choices throughout the unit impacted their learning. (You will always have the right and responsibility to disagree!)
- 7.2. If "Yes" to Q7 - In *UDL Theory and Practice*, Meyer, Rose, and Gordon state, “Most importantly, explicit formative assessment can provide a basis for individual learners to become more self-aware-more metacognitive -- about their learning. By modeling continuous prompts for reflection, teachers can begin to support students in monitoring their own progress. Effective scaffolding and mentorship helps students learn to assess their individual effort and persistence over time and ultimately gain a sense of autonomy over their own learning. The data collected from formative assessment can also be valuable to other teachers and parents as they work with that same learner. Intentional, ongoing assessments benefit not only individuals but also whole school communities.”

Dr. John Hattie confirms this in *Visible Learning MetaX* (Corwin Visible Learning Plus, n.d.). His research shows that self-reported scores have a very positive impact on student outcomes. His meta-analysis of 250 studies on over 79K students shows an effect size of 1.33 and a high confidence rating (anything over .4 is a considerable effect and is in the top 10!). Allowing students to self-report is also a great opportunity for a “teaching moment” where you can review what the student self-reports and discuss the reality of their knowledge



or skill; this becomes a great opportunity to provide mastery-oriented feedback.

8. **Q8. Have you removed penalties for non-essential (construct irrelevant) errors in scoring?**

8.1. If "No" to Q8 - Removing the penalty does not mean you can't identify an error; it just means that the student won't be penalized for an error not aligned with the standard or goal, like a spelling error in a math test.

8.2. If "Yes" to Q8 -It is critically important that marks and grades reflect a student's learning. [UDL Theory and Practice](#) explains this perfectly, "Whether formative or summative, assessments need to be on-target to measure the construct-the affect, concept knowledge, or skill-they are intended to measure. It is common for factors that are irrelevant to the goal of an assessment to interfere with its accuracy. For example, requiring a response to be hand-written may conflate handwriting or spelling difficulty with lack of knowledge about a subject. Similarly, requiring students to take a test in a fixed amount of time may conflate stress-management skills with level of understanding."

9. **Q9. Do you give mastery-oriented feedback on the assessments or have an individual or group discussion about how the assessment is scored?**

9.1. If "No" to Q9 - Consider adding time to give this mastery-oriented feedback so that students will not only know why they received a particular score but also know where to get more information or increase their knowledge.

9.2. If "Yes" to Q9 - Every assessment is an opportunity to continue the learning process of the lesson. Mastery-oriented feedback is essential to support ongoing learning. An assessment may happen at the end of a lesson, but it is not the end of the learning on the topic. Feedback should "guide learners toward mastery rather than a fixed notion of performance or compliance; towards



successful long-term habits and learning practices" (Nguyen, 2021).

Furthermore, feedback under the [UDL Guidelines](#) must make sure to:

- encourage perseverance, efficacy, and self-awareness
- emphasize effort and improvement rather than relative performance
- be frequent, timely, and specific
- be substantive and informative rather than comparative or competitive
- model how to incorporate evaluation, including identifying patterns of errors and wrong answers, into positive strategies for future success

(Nguyen, 2021)

10. **Q10. Do you return the assessments to the students quickly and allow for discussion and resubmission?**

10.1. If "No" to Q10 - Students need to be able to learn from the assessment too! Just a score is not enough.

10.2. If "Yes" to Q10 - This may be the simplest step in the process, but it is sometimes ignored due to time constraints or department policies. The students need to be able to discuss what they got right and missed, and they need a chance to rework and resubmit whenever possible. I know that time is precious and that there is never enough of it, but learning should be more than a race to cover as much material as possible so that we can help build independent, resourceful, and knowledgeable students who become expert learners.

