



## Universal Design for Learning



### 3 Essential Qualities

ENGAGEMENT

REPRESENTAION

EXPRESSION

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) allows educators to adapt the curriculum, to customize the delivery of instruction and to assess students using methods that allow them to demonstrate their learning in their own way. UDL accomplishes this by preplanning multiple means of engagement (content), representation (process) and expression (product). The key is to build adaptations into the program versus add it in later as needed, thus *always* giving every student the options he/she needs to be successful in all aspects of his/her learning. One of the ways these adaptations are implemented is through digital technologies such as text-to-speech computer programs and vision support programs. For a broad list of digital technologies options please visit <http://www.udlresource.com/>.

## Engagement

Digital technologies help aid students to adjust learning topics to their interest and cultural backgrounds by giving them more options for interaction. Maybe a student can focus and retain information better when presented via video, audio or a combination of both modalities. Maybe a student needs the print on a website to be larger, or for the presentation of a webpage to be simpler ... technology provides these options. Furthermore, digital technology allows students to make and keep their learning goals at their level of desired complexity and difficulty. Keeping students in their “Zone of Proximal Development” (the sweet-spot between too easy and too hard) ensures they stay motivated and achieve success.

## Representation

Digital technologies also help students customize how they process information by providing options in how information

is presented to them. Topics can be presented visually, orally, in a different language, accompanied by pictures/diagrams, etc. For example, we can use digital texts that can be read aloud, translated, and/or simplified. This type of digital technology not only reduces language and perceptual barriers, but also sensory and physical barriers to give equal access to all students.

## Expression

Lastly, digital technologies provide flexibility for students in how they present their learning and knowledge. Output formats can be changed according to one’s learning preference (visual/verbal, tactile/kinaesthetic, auditory/verbal, visual/nonverbal) and ability. For example, students could make an audio recording, write/sing a song, create a Podcast, design a PowerPoint, etc.