THE UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING PRACTICUM

The Universal Design for Learning Practicum was a three-week cohort-based program designed for all instructors to explore in-depth each of the three principles of UDL—multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement. The practicum offered practical ideas, support, and consultations on implementing UDL principles in course design to create more flexible and supportive learning environments for students and instructors.

This practicum equipped participants to better understand the evolving student and instructor needs, particularly around creating more inclusive and supportive environments for all students.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- **3-Week Program** designed with opportunities for three individual consultations with a learning designer to help instructors implement UDL ideas.
- **4 Core Sessions** co-facilitated by at least two subject matter experts using a range of interactive strategies and discussion tools.
- **3 Cohort Meetings** facilitated by cohort leads and focused on reflection and application of concepts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Reflect on the impact of the pandemic and current events on student and instructor mental health and well-being, as related to the teaching and learning experience.
2. Understand how utilizing UDL principles can reduce instructors’ need to implement individual solutions for students experiencing barriers.
3. Recognize how aspects of current course design may unintentionally exacerbate challenges faced by students.
4. Explore ways to redesign assessments offering multiple means of expression to optimize opportunities for all students to accurately demonstrate their learning.
5. Explore ways to incorporate multiple means of representation of course material into course design to ensure all are able to access and understand key topics.
6. Apply specific UDL practices to syllabi, Canvas sites, course materials, assessments, and learning experiences.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- **3 Iterations** (summer, fall, winter)
- **250 Participants** (faculty & staff)
- **Wide Representation** from University Schools & Units

Understand how utilizing UDL principles can reduce instructors’ need to implement individual solutions for students experiencing barriers.

Recognize how aspects of current course design may unintentionally exacerbate challenges faced by students.

Explore ways to redesign assessments offering multiple means of expression to optimize opportunities for all students to accurately demonstrate their learning.

Explore ways to incorporate multiple means of representation of course material into course design to ensure all are able to access and understand key topics.

Apply specific UDL practices to syllabi, Canvas sites, course materials, assessments, and learning experiences.
In October 2022, Northwestern University and representatives from Dartmouth, Pennsylvania State University, and Johns Hopkins participated in a virtual panel discussion to promote UDL initiatives, attracting around 30 attendees.

Over the past year, presentations at the Assistive Technology Conference at California State University Northridge (CSUN) and the Accessing Higher Ground Conference in Colorado showcased the UDL practicum and garnered participation from over 100 attendees.

In May 2023, the UDLP faculty and staff launched an Open Educational Resource (OER) presenting UDL concepts with practical applications, tools, and discussions through readings, videos, and recorded sessions. By July 2023, the Northwestern version with references to specific courses had attracted 169 visitors and the public version had received 418 visitors.

“I thought the UDLP was phenomenal. I had decently high expectations, since I found the Inclusive Teaching Practicum last year to be pretty useful, but I feel like the UDLP exceeded all those expectations.”

“The practicum is a great resource and I plan to recommend it to my colleagues.”

Visit the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching website or email us at teach@northwestern.edu for more information.