

## Supporting Students from the Ground Up: Universal Design to Support Students with LDs in the Inclusive Classroom

- [Cindy] The LD@school team is very pleased to welcome our guest speaker, Candide Dovey, whose presentation this afternoon is entitled Supporting Students from the Ground Up: Universal Design to Support Students with Learning Disabilities in the Inclusive Classroom. The Ministry of Education has provided funding for the production of this webinar. Please note that the views expressed in this webinar are the views of the presenter and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Education, nor the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario.
- [Cindy] We will also be tweeting throughout the webinar. So if you would like to participate, you can send us a tweet by using our handle @LDatSchool or the hashtag, LDwebinar. That takes care of housekeeping for this afternoon, so let's get started. It is now my pleasure to introduce our speaker, Candide Dovey. Candide is a special education consultant with the Toronto District School Board. Prior to her current role, Candide was seconded to the Trillium Demonstration School for students with severe learning disabilities. As a classroom teacher, resource teacher and consultant, she has worked with students, teachers and schools to support the needs of students with learning disabilities throughout her teaching career. Welcome Candide, the cyber floor is now yours.
- [Candide] Thank you Cindy. According to data from the Ministry of Education in the 2015-2016 academic year, approximately 40% of students identified as exceptional by an IPRC, Identification, Placement and Review Committee were identified under the category of communications learning disability. These numbers do not include the large number of students who have not been formally identified and who are also receiving special education support. Although some students with an LD identification attend specialized programs, the vast majority of students with learning disabilities are in their own community in mainstream classes for all or part of the day. Although the diversity in our classrooms is not new, teachers faced with meeting the wide range of learning needs of their students can feel overwhelmed and frustrated by the challenge. This does not have to be the case. There are ways that we can plan for accessibility from the start instead of always trying to play catch-up. Universal Design for Learning or UDL is a powerful yet simple approach

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that allows educators and schools to be proactive about building on student strengths and meeting student needs.

- [Candide] The learning outcomes for today's webinar are to gain an understanding of the principles of Universal Design for Learning. To learn how to apply these principles in a variety of learning contexts. And to understand the vital role that technology plays in Universal Design for Learning. Teaching diverse learners. As classroom teachers, we want to be able to engage and inspire all learners to do their best. This can be a daunting task in a class with a wide range of abilities, interests and backgrounds. How do we reach all students? Shelley Moore, an inclusion consultant and speaker from British Columbia suggests that we need to aim for the hardest to reach students, much like a professional bowler would aim to hit the outside pins, not the one in the middle. Moore states that if we reach those students on the margins, the ones who require the greatest support, it will benefit all students. To do this requires a shift in thinking, but an important and powerful one to make. This approach creates a classroom where all students are valued, and where all students are active members of the learning community, and represents the idea of Universal Design for Learning where we create an environment which gives all students the opportunity to thrive. This approach fits well with strategies such as inquiry and project-based learning, teaching critical thinking skills and developing student voice.
- [Candide] What it does is give all students a platform to share their thoughts and ideas. By providing multiple ways to engage with, represent and express learning, this creates a much richer and more interesting classroom environment. An important consideration in all aspects of learning is viewing students through an asset lens. When planning learning activities, consider student interests, strengths and abilities instead of focusing only on what is difficult for them. In special education, we often get stuck on the deficit model. As educators, it is of course necessary for us to understand and program to support students in their areas of need. For example, if a student has a learning disability in the area of reading, the teacher needs to know that and provide the necessary accommodations. Once we have provided the necessary accommodations however, we then need to move away from the focus on deficits. A student who is reading significantly below grade level is aware of this. They don't need reminders that this is an area they struggle with. They don't need lowered expectations and they don't need to be constantly singled up for their areas of need. Using an asset lens does not ignore the challenges that students face. What it does is allow teachers and classmates to see

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beyond the challenges to the whole amazing, interesting student and their interests, strengths and abilities.

- [Candide] Experienced teachers know that students will reach the bar you set for them. So why not set the bar high for all students and provide the support and teaching required for everyone to reach it? This is where Universal Design for Learning becomes a vital part of your educational toolkit. UDL allows a teacher to consider the wide range of student strengths and needs in the class, and plan for that right from the start. Universal Design for Learning was developed by researchers at CAST, the Center for Applied Special Technology. Their goal was to improve education through the use of flexible methods and materials, and based on insights gained through scientific research and knowledge of how we learn. UDL grew out of design principles in architecture. The idea behind Universal Design in Architecture is that when you design a space to accommodate specific needs, you create a more usable space for all. The most common example is access ramps. These ramps are a necessity for people who use wheelchairs, but are also important for people using strollers or with small children and others who may not be able to use stairs for a variety of reasons. Design features like curb cutouts, elevators and subway stations and ramps made my life as a new parent much easier despite the fact that none of those things were built or installed with me in mind.
- [Candide] Universal Design for Learning has a focus on flexibility. As we will explore later on in this presentation, Universal Design allows teachers and students to move beyond only one way of engaging, learning and showing learning. Above all else, the goal of Universal Design for Learning is to create an environment where all students can become expert learners who participate actively in meaningful, engaging, challenging classroom learning opportunities. Universal Design for Learning consists of three principles. Multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation and multiple means of action and expression. These can be used as a tool to design engaging and relevant learning experiences for all students. UDL is student-centered. It starts with an understanding of student needs, and creates a safe, engaging learning experience for all students and enhances opportunities for participation and inclusion. UDL aims to minimize barriers and maximize learning. One way to think about this is to consider where the challenge might lie for a student in a given learning experience. The challenge should be in the learning experience, not in accessing information or sharing their knowledge. An example of this might be a student for whom working memory is an area of need. The teacher may have designed an interactive, dynamic math activity, but if the student is spending all of

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their time trying to remember the new information from the lesson or even just the instructions, they are not able to access the real learning. This requires advanced planning and the use of Universal Design for Learning.

- [Candide] Before diving into the three principles and how they can be applied to support students with learning disabilities, let's take a brief look at UDL and the learning brain. Universal Design for Learning has always been based on neuroscience. UDL integrates what we know about the brain to inform how we design environments to support all learners. UDL principles are organized to align with the different areas of the brain.
- [Candide] The first principle is engagement. Engagement aligns with the affective networks in the brain. The affective networks are the center of the brain where information is processed and relayed for meaning. This area affects interest, effort and persistence and self-regulation. Engagement is the why of learning. Representation aligns with the recognition networks in the brain. The recognition networks are the back of the brain, the occipital and temporal lobes. This area processes incoming sensory information that is what we see and hear. This includes perception, language, symbols, comprehension. Representation is the what of learning. Action and expression aligns with the strategic networks in the brain. These are the frontal lobes. This area manages action and response including physical action, expression and communication. This area also manages executive function. Action and expression is the how of learning. In the referenced article, UDL and the learning brain from the cast website, the author writes, the concept of neuro variability is important for educators because it reminds us that learners do not have an isolated learning style but instead rely on many parts of the brain working together to function within a given context.
- [Candide] Let's now look deeper at each of the three UDL principles, and consider how they can be used to support the student with a learning disability and all students in inclusive classrooms. The first principle of UDL that we will examine is engagement. Engagement focuses on the why of learning. When considering engagement, educators should provide a variety of ways to focus and engage students, to stimulate interest, to activate prior knowledge, generate questions, sustain student effort, clarify learning goals and success criteria, and increase self-regulation skills. Effective engagement aims to develop students who are purposeful and motivated to learn. The following slides contain some suggestions for ways to provide multiple means of engagement for students with learning disabilities. These

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are by no means the only strategies to support engagement. I highly recommend visiting the cast UDL website and reading through their detailed UDL guidelines, as well as other UDL support materials that are widely available.

- [Candide] The first strategy is meaningful choices. Whenever possible, provide opportunities for meaningful choices. This should go beyond allowing students to pick which book to read, although that is a good start. Providing meaningful choices would be things like allowing students to co-plan or co-design learning experiences and encouraging students to set their own goals for behavior and academics. This includes things like co-creation of learning goals and success criteria, but also involves including students in setting goals for behavior. This type of goal setting should always be done using clear, student-friendly language. Another way to provide meaningful choices is to provide a variety of options for activities and sources of information. An example of this might be to provide a few options for initial research on a topic. For example, a website, video or text and allowing students to choose the format that most appeals to them. Before I proceed with the next two strategies, a note about explicit teaching of skills and other supports. We will discuss scaffolding, chunking and explicit teaching later on in the presentation.
- [Candide] But it is important to note at this point that in order to participate in many of the meaningful, relevant and student-centered activities related to Universal Design for Learning, many students with learning disabilities and without will require explicit instruction on the skills involved. An example of this would be creating personal goals. Students will need to be taught how to do this and given opportunities to practice before they will be able to do it in a meaningful way for themselves. This explicit teaching of a skill is in itself an example of Universal Design for Learning. Educators must consider what their students will need to be successful and build it into the educational experience. Another way to provide multiple opportunities for engagement is to ensure that learning experiences are relevant and meaningful. When planning an activity, educators should consider students backgrounds, interests and lived experiences. Consider what is relevant to your students. Many areas of the curriculum are flexible enough to adapt to student interest. An example might be using a variety of statistic sources in a math probability activity. Some students may be interested in sports statistics, others in music, population or weather. Another way to provide relevant learning experiences is to create opportunities for real-life implications of tasks. Project-based learning supports this type of activity. Instead of solving a made-up problem, help students find a real one and work to develop solutions. Remember that many students

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including but not limited to those with learning disabilities will require explicit instruction in group work, research and other skills associated with inquiry and project-based learning.

- [Candide] The third strategy to provide multiple means of engagement is to create a safe, learning environment. As you have hopefully realized, many of the strategies of Universal Design for Learning are things that you are already doing in your classroom. Using UDL is not about completely changing your approach to teaching, it is about adjusting your focus to recognize the things you can do at the start to support all students through a flexible learning environment. Having a predictable class structure and routine is vital for many students including many with learning disabilities but also students with autism spectrum disorder and anxiety. Using a visual schedule for example is not just for the primary grades and can help students stay organized and be prepared. Routines can also minimize stress so that students know what is to be expected from them in a variety of situations.
- [Candide] Being aware of student sensory needs is an important strategy to create a safe learning environment. Be aware of how students are affected by noise and visual stimulation. Another way to support student sensory needs is to ensure that breaks and quiet spaces are available for students who may need them. Encourage students to have a growth mindset when it comes to learning. Mistakes are a part of how we learn, and advances don't happen without mistakes. Work to build a supportive classroom culture that values trying and support students when they aren't successful. This includes teachers sharing their own mistakes as well and showing students how they learn from them. Using Universal Design for Learning will go a long way towards creating a safe, inclusive classroom environment because students will have their needs met from the start. They won't be waiting for the teacher to rescue them or be sitting quietly in the back hoping not to be noticed. Students will not be disrupting the class because they are struggling with the work or are not interested or engaged. To go into a bit more detail, I'll provide some examples of how you might use Universal Design for Learning in planning for engagement in a science lesson. We'll use a grade three science expectation, assess ways in which plants have an impact on society and the environment, and ways in which human activity has an impact on plants and plant habitats. In order to engage students and sustain interest, the teacher may want to use a variety of techniques. The teacher might show a video clip about plants. The class might discuss information about plants in the school neighborhood followed by a nature walk, or scavenger hunt. The class could examine photos of various plants or read a

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story or picture book that includes plant life. In order to maintain a safe and accepting space in the classroom, the teacher must ensure that any texts are also either read aloud or available with text-to-speech options. Some other ways to plan for engagement might be to have a plant expert come and visit and speak to the class. The class can generate inquiry questions about plants and create a wonder wall. For student research, a site such as Britannica Online can be used. This site has research articles available at three different reading levels, and built-in text-to-speech and images. So much of what we are doing in Universal Design for Learning are things that teachers are already doing. The point is to plan to do it from the start and to make mindful decisions about how to best support learners.

- [Candide] The second principle of Universal Design for Learning that we will examine is representation. Representation focuses on the what of learning. When considering representation, educators should provide a variety of ways to interact with educational content, to understand language and symbols, to activate or supply necessary background knowledge, to construct meaning, to generate new understandings and to maximize transfer and generalization of information in new contexts. Effective representation aims to develop students who are resourceful and knowledgeable. One strategy to support multiple means of representation is the use of multiple modalities. In the learning environment, it is important to provide alternatives for auditory and visual information such as using multiple forms of media, having speech to text, and text to speech options available, using visuals to support instructions and other information, using hands-on learning supports and reading aloud to the class. For all learners, we should present information in a variety of formats. Some examples are using concrete manipulatives, presenting in one form an expository text or math equation and then an alternative form, illustration, diagram, table, model, video, photograph, manipulative. Using digital materials that are customizable and flexible.
- [Candide] A second strategy to support multiple means of representation is to build in and plan for supports for students with language and symbols. Pre teach necessary vocabulary. Not only does this support students with learning disabilities, but it also supports English language learners, and students with knowledge gaps. It also helps to activate prior knowledge on the topic. Provide visual supports for written and oral texts such as illustrations, diagrams, photos and videos. Explicitly, teach text structures. Many students will require explicit instruction in the way different types of texts are structured. Building in time to teach that will allow students to better use the text they are given and go out greater access to the

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learning. We should not assume that students will just pick it up. As with all of the principles, access to assistive technology is vital. In this case, text-to-speech will go a long way to supporting students with language and symbols. Also consider the use of audio books to support comprehension. Having a voice actor be to text is still much more pleasant than digitized text-to-speech despite advances in that technology.

- [Candide] To support students in perceiving information, understanding language and symbols, and comprehension, there are a variety of strategies that could be implemented. Let's use the math class as an example. Hands-on manipulatives allow students a different way of solving and approaching a task. An interactive whiteboard can be used to present information in a variety of formats: audio, visual, text. It can also be used to support visual understanding of a math task. Virtual manipulatives are also available and can be used on an interactive whiteboard. Online resources such as those available for smart boards and promethium boards can support math learning. Provide students with opportunities for paired and leveled work in the math classroom. Create a safe space and welcome opportunities to discuss and share ideas. There are a multitude of ways to share information in a math lesson. Some examples include a short video on the topic, a short activity for students with hands-on manipulatives, narratives or picture books, pictures, photos, interactive activities on the white... On the interactive whiteboard. Pre-teach review and ensure that students understand all mathematical symbols and vocabulary used in the lesson. Consider color coding. Reduce the clutter on any handouts or visuals being used. Focus on the quality of work, not quantity. Build an extra time from the start rather than having to find it later. Allow for verbal explanations of problem-solving. Have math word walls with visuals in your classroom. Provide scaffolding for working for through math activities.
- [Candide] The third principle of Universal Design for Learning that we will examine is action and expression. Action and expression focuses on the how of learning. When considering action and expression, educators should provide a variety of ways to interact with materials and tools, to share learning, to use assistive technology, to communicate, to set goals, to monitor progress and manage information and resources. Effective action and expression aims to develop students who are strategic and goal-oriented. One strategy to support multiple means of action and expression is to build scaffolding and support into activities from the start. Examples of this would be the use of exemplars. For example, providing students with a sample of a finished product. Modeling and co-creating models with students



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including activities like shared writing. Chunking information and instructions into smaller pieces. Building scaffolds into the design of a lesson or unit. Gradual release of responsibility model where at the start, there may be more scaffolding and support but after practice and feedback, students begin to take on more responsibility for the learning, and the teacher begins to step back. Timely, relevant, descriptive and differentiated feedback. And brainstorming solutions to problems together.

- [Candide] The second strategy that can be used to support multiple means of action and expression is the explicit modeling, teaching and practicing of executive function skills. Many students with learning disabilities struggle with executive function skills such as organization, time and materials management, planning and goal-setting. Many students who have not been diagnosed with learning disabilities also struggle with these skills. Explicit modeling, teaching and practice of these skills is necessary for some, but would be beneficial for all students. Some examples are practicing goal-setting, provide prompts and scaffolds, models, guides, checklists and support students in how to use and monitor goals. Teach students how to break long term goals into smaller, more achievable steps. Teach students how to use graphic organizers and how to select the ones that work best for them. Teach all students how to use planning tools such as online calendars and agendas. Provide checklists and guides to support students in staying organized. Provide students with physical evidence of growth such as the continuum before and after or portfolio to help support them in self-monitoring and future goal setting. And encourage self assessment through checklists, rubrics and annotations.
- [Candide] Another strategy that can support multiple means of action and expression is the use of multiple media. It is important to provide materials with which all learners can interact. consider alternative means for response, selection and composition. Support students in how to use assistive technology tools which we will come back to in the next slide. Unless specific materials are necessary, for example in an art assignment, provide alternate media for expression. Have students compose in multiple media such as text, speech, drawing, illustration, film, music, dance, drama, et cetera. Use interactive web tools such as discussion forums, websites, storyboards, animation. Compose in multiple media such as speech, drawing, storyboards, film, visual art. Provide multiple means of expression both to level the playing field and to allow learners to easily express ideas, knowledge and concepts in the learning environment. Aside from providing multiple means of expression, this also supports learners in developing a wider range of expression.

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- [Candide] The next strategy is the use of assistive technology. Assistive technology should be integrated seamlessly into the classroom environment. The use of technology should be proactively planned for as part of the teaching and learning process. Access to assistive technology is vital for many students with learning disabilities but all students can benefit from access to speech-to-text an organizational software. Considering issues like a quiet space to use speech to text, access to the resource room, availability of headphones can be done before the planning begins so that it can be worked into the plan for teaching and learning. Normalize the use of assistive technology as much as possible. Many people use speech-to-text now through their phones teach how to use it and encourage all students to try.
- [Candide] Let's look at an example of how we might use Universal Design for Learning to provide multiple means of action and expression in a writing task. Our first featured strategy is to build in scaffolding and support from the start. This is essential for many students with writing tasks. It is important to explicitly show students how to break a large task into more manageable pieces. Chunk the assignment into sections. Set the timeline and show students how they might break the task up. Consider checklists and check-ins at each stage of the writing process. Assess the process of writing not just the finished product. Not only does this support students throughout the process, it meets curriculum expectations and provides you with far more assessment data to inform instruction and evaluation. Let's break down some ways to build in support at each of the stages of writing. At the prewriting brainstorming phase, we can provide graphic organizers, engage in teacher student conferencing, provide opportunities to brainstorm with peers. Stress tasks specific information.
- [Candide] For example, in a persuasive writing task, that the point must be debatable in order for them to share an opinion. Check and give descriptive feedback on all topics. At the planning outline stage, continue to provide graphic organizers, engage in teacher student conferencing. Provide timely and descriptive feedback on their outline. Stress the importance of the thesis statement. Review an outline of a persuasive essay. Share models and examples. Lead the class in shared writing of an introductory paragraph or any other elements of the text that would be helpful. At the drafting stage, provide quiet spaces for students to work. Find ways for students to use speech-to-text and make sure they are trained on how to effectively use the software. Allow for scribing if that is preferred. Continue to use teacher-student conferencing. Consider explicit lessons on elements of writing. For

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example, transition words. At the editing revising stage, explicitly teach peer editing skills. Explicitly teach descriptive feedback skills. Model effective peer editing. Model through shared writing of a concluding paragraph. Access text-to-speech for editing.

- [Candide] I frequently recommend that all of my students use Read and Write or a similar program to have their writing read back to them. Not only is it a powerful self editing tool, it normalizes the use of assistive technology in the classroom. Consider having flexibility about the finished product. Be clear about the expectation you are assessing and be as flexible as possible with final product. Could students write a blog, create a slideshow, write a newspaper editorial? In some cases, the forum for example, an essay is what you would like all students to create and you will need to build in as much flexibility and support for students in the process stages. But in many cases, the final product is not set. In which case you can give the students freedom to express their thoughts and opinions in the way that best suits them. Be clear on what you are assessing and give students as much choice as possible within those parameters.
- [Candide] Why is Universal Design for Learning so important? All students deserve to feel welcome at school. As outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Commission's policy on accessible education for students with disabilities, ensuring integration and full participation means designing the education system for inclusiveness. Universal Design for Learning has been identified in both this document and the Ontario Ministry of Education's Learning for All. As well as by the United Nations Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities as a way to remove barriers to student learning right from the start. The use of Universal Design for Learning including the effective use of technology is a vital and important way to value diversity and to build inclusive classrooms. The main goal of Universal Design for Learning is to minimize barriers in order to maximize learning. This does not have to include the use of technology but UDL and Technology fit well together. Technology allows for more freedom in terms of sources of information, and ways to share and present information. This then gives teachers an easy-to-use tool to provide multiple means of engagement, representation and action and expression. When technology is integrated into the regular classroom experience right from the start, it reduces the stigma for students that may require the use of assistive technology. If everyone is using tech in some form or another, it becomes a normal part of the classroom experience. Technology can be used to level the playing field so that all students can be active members of the classroom environment. This creates a more vibrant and diverse learning experience for all. Some examples of technology used in concert

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with Universal Design for Learning are using technology to present course content in a variety of ways.

- [Candide] For example, video to support text, a mind map, text-to-speech options for reading text. The availability of speech to text and text-to-speech software, this can support students in accessing teaching and learning materials as well as creating their own learning responses. The use of apps or programs that support organization. The use of mind mapping software. This allows for a variety of ways to show what you know, is student-centered, deepens engagement, and supports organization and planning. The use of tools such as interactive whiteboards. Using a technology with UDL can enhance learning for all students.
- [Candide] Now that we've looked at what Universal Design for Learning is, some examples why it is so important and how it works with technology, you may be asking, "How do I do this?" I hope that as we went through the strategies associated with Universal Design for Learning, you were able to identify some of the excellent work you are already doing in your classrooms. The goal of this presentation is not to overwhelm you with new things to try, but rather to point out how you are already using aspects of UDL. And encourage you to build on those already existing elements. The first step in this process would be to get educated about the students in your class. Read through their OSRs and any reports or relevant information. Do some work with your students to find out how they learn best. Ask them what works for them. Create a class profile noting student interests, strengths, areas for growth and short-term and long-term goals. Collaborate with students to co-create goals for learning and behaviour. Consider the space in your classroom. Is it working for all students? Could it be more flexible? Does it allow easy access to assistive technology? Can support staff easily work with students? As you plan your units and lessons, carefully consider the curriculum and your plan for teaching and learning, and consider what barriers might be posed to student learning. As you think about individual lessons or units, remember to consider what barriers need to be removed in order for all students to have the same access to learning.
- [Candide] Considered a bit challenges with reading and writing will impact almost all other areas of the curriculum. If we take the time to set our students up for success and allow them to show all that they know, our classrooms will be more vibrant and exciting places. Another important step is to take some time to consider any biases or preconceived notions you might have about accommodations, the use of assistive technology, alternate of demonstrating learning or any other concepts related to

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Universal Design for Learning. As educators, we need to provide the best environment for each student to learn. This will look different for different students and will require flexibility and creativity on our part. My last thought regarding how to implement Universal Design for Learning is to remember that there are many others working to implement these same strategies. Teaching can be a lonely profession. Don't forget to connect both in your school or board, and also virtually.

- [Candide] There are many valuable websites and online resources on Universal Design for Learning. Social media can also be a good source of information and ideas, and there are also Universal Design conferences that you can attend to learn more. There are many resources available online to support UDL, but I have included three here to get you started on the journey. Learning for all is a document produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 2013. It is a guide to effective assessment and instruction for all students, kindergarten to grade 12. The document outlines three evidence-based effective instructional approaches which are differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning and the tiered approach. The section on UDL gives a nice overview with examples. This document also contains information about and samples of class and student profiles. The entire cast UDL website is very useful. It has a short video on UDL that sums up the principles clearly and effectively as well as research articles including UDL and the learning brain which I referenced in this presentation. The UDL guidelines are great tools to support you in using Universal Design for Learning. They break the three principles down into detailed strategies with links to the available research. There is so much information here that it can be almost overwhelming, but if you are looking to get a detailed overview or to explore one principle in more detail, the guidelines are a great place to start.
- [Candide] The last resource that I'm sharing with you is a video from Shelley Moore, an inclusion consultant from British Columbia. In this video, created as part of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Storytellers Challenge, Moore uses the analogy of bowling to explain how in order to reach all students, we need to aim for those on the edges, the hardest ones to reach. It is a powerful video that I encourage you to share. I'd like to end the presentation with this quote posted on Twitter during last year's UDL conference. The idea that ability leads to opportunity needs to be reversed. Give people opportunities The more authentic and engaging opportunities students have in the classroom, the more they will be able to show us the depth of their thinking, and the more diverse and exciting our classrooms will be. Universal Design for Learning provides students with opportunities to engage with

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their learning, to understand and make connections and to share what they know.  
Thank you.

- [Cindy] Thank you so much Candide for sharing your knowledge and expertise, and for providing our webinar participants with extensive suggestions and strategies on Universal Design for Learning for students with learning disabilities. Okay, let's move on now to the question and answer part of today's webinar. If anyone has questions, please type your question into the chat box on your GoToWebinar dashboard. And I will read your question to Candide. Okay, I have a first question here for you. Candide, you presented incredible information in this webinar today, and I am feeling a little bit overwhelmed but very encouraged. Are there resources or resource staff in our school boards who can help?

- [Candide] That's a great question. I would say your, I mean, as a special education consultant, in my board, I would work with staff to help implement these strategies. I think if your board has any coaches, like teaching and learning coaches, they would be a great place to start because it's not... Universal Design for Learning is not just a special education concept as I'm sure you know was made clear. It is relevant for all students so I think any of those roles that are working with teachers to try and work on programming and improve student learning, they would have some knowledge about Universal Design, and that would be where I would start to look for support. And I know that it is a lot of information and I would say pick one thing and start small.

- [Cindy] That's great, thank you very much. Another question. Okay, this one is a little bit more involved. It has to do with UDL and technology. You mentioned in your presentation that if students, all students are using technology in the classroom, it reduces the stigma for the students who actually need it. How would you go about encouraging a student who has to use specialized technology to use it if he or she does not see peers using the same technology?

- [Candide] That is a challenging situation because you're right, they're going to be using something different. I would say there are a couple of ways you could approach it. I think if you have access to a more private space, that might be one approach that I would take. But I would also depending on the age of the student really have a conversation with them around why they have this technology, what it does for them, and what value it has for them. And you know help them understand that no, they're not like everybody else but this is important for their learning and you know encourage

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them to use it from that perspective. Because unfortunately, you're not going to always be able to you know have it blended with everybody else.

- [Cindy] Great, thank you. Next question. This individual would like to receive more ideas or strategies for helping students who have processing and working memory challenges. Could you suggest a resource?

- [Candide] I would say just in terms of working memory and processing, I don't have off the top of my head a resource but where I would always start is examining what the challenge is going to be with the task. Or so if this... If the challenge is going to be with the memory piece, then I would... We would want to provide the student with visuals, with a word bank, with the formulas for math, with whatever they need to take away that piece because we don't want that to be the cognitive load. We don't want them to be struggling to remember. We want them to be working hard on the actual learning. So I would say that's where I would focus on is examining a task and asking myself you know a student with the processing challenge or with the working memory challenge, where's the challenge going to be for them and how can I alleviate that.

- [Cindy] Right, okay. Next. Well this is first a comment and then a request for information. Thanks for an awesome presentation. You mentioned a resource which presents science info at three different leading reading levels. Would you please remind us what that resource was again?

- [Candide] Yes, that's, it's called Britannica Online, and I know my school board has its, has a subscription to it through the virtual library so I imagine other boards do as well. And what's really nice about it is the layout stays more or less the same. So you know if the student is scanning around the room, it's not really obvious who's reading which reading level, and it's the same information whatever they're researching but they have three different reading levels. So I would check out with your board, the virtual library, if they have a subscription.

- [Cindy] Okay, thank you. Next question. In your presentation, you talked about actively involving your students in the learning and the assessment process. I'm wondering, do you talk to your students about Universal Design for Learning? Do they understand about UDL?

- [Candide] That's a good question. I don't know that I've ever put it into words like that with my students to be honest. I certainly would talk to my students about how they

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learn, and you know help them understand. I'm really a believer in students understanding their own learning profile. But no, I haven't. I don't think I've ever really talked about the design of my lesson or my program from that perspective with them. It's an interesting idea though.

- [Cindy] Well and it might depend on the age grade level of your students as well and their ability to conceptualize.

- [Candide] Yeah and I think it would actually be interesting to ask them you know how they would design a lesson from a class standpoint. I think that would be really informative.

- [Cindy] I actually think it would be too. Okay, there's a comment here that has come in saying that Britannica is OSAPAC funded. So all boards at Ontario have access. Thank you Chad.

-[Candide] Perfect.

- [Cindy] Okay, next question. Thank you for the presentation. Thinking of resources, have you encountered any Canadian based resources that are similar to newsela.com.

- [Candide] Newsela or Newsela also has the level of reading. I don't know, I haven't encountered a Canadian one. I have looked around through the library resources. And Britannica and that Newsela one are the only two that I know of that have the level of reading, and I don't think either of them are Canadian content or Canadian in the source.

- [Cindy] Okay, thank you. Next question, what are your thoughts on tiered assignments? Any ideas on how to implement them?

- [Candide] I'm not... I'm not sure exactly what is meant by tiered assignments.

- [Cindy] I'm not sure either. The person who posed the question, if there's time, perhaps she could expand a little bit on that but what I will mention, okay, actually, thank you. She has typed in a little bit more information. Differentiated levels for example for student identified as gifted.



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- [Candide] So looking for, I think it's really important. It's always important to kind of know what it is like what your... What expectation from the curriculum, you know what's your big idea, what are you looking at? And from there then it's been easier to kind of level or differentiate the work. That's kind of where I always come from. Yeah I don't have a resource off the top of my head for leveled assignments but I would say it's I always start with the big idea and kind of work from there.

- [Cindy] Okay, thank you. We do have a webinar participant who has provided some additional information saying this isn't leveled reading but CDC kids news has new stories at differentiated reading levels. Another resource to look at would be What in the World but it's subscription based.

- [Cindy] What in the World, it does have two levels I believe, yeah.

- [Cindy] Okay. All right, well we are actually going to be moving on now because that is all the time that we have for our questions today. But I do want to make mention of the fact that if you have, if anybody has any additional questions, that did not get, that didn't have an opportunity to ask, you can send the questions either by email [info@tldatschool.ca](mailto:info@tldatschool.ca) or using our hashtag on Twitter, #LDwebinar, and we will ensure that your questions get answered. Please mark your calendars for the next LD@school webinar on Tuesday May 7. Richard Parker will be presenting Math and LDs; Using Assistive Technology and Project-based Learning to Support All Students. Directly after today's webinar, you will receive an electronic link to register for this upcoming webinar. Please also mark your calendar and save the day to join us at LD@school's Sixth Annual Educators' Institute which will be held on August 20th and 21st in Mississauga. Information on the program, registration and hotel accommodation will be available on the LD@School website later in April. On behalf of the LD@school team, I would once again like to thank Candide for her presentation. And thank you to all of our participants for joining us. Please remember that we will be sending out presentation slides and a short survey following today's webinar. The feedback we received through this survey provides us with important information for producing future webinars. And as a reminder, we will be sending out a link to this recorded webinar in approximately three weeks. Thank you again for participating, and enjoy the rest of your day.