Engaging Students

UDL CYCLE, PART 2

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Today:

1. “Homework” on barriers
2. What does “engagement” mean?
3. Review of UDL principles: Engagement
4. Three important aspects of engagement:
   - Relevance of material
   - Interest/excitement
   - Motivation (self-investment; purpose)
5. Ideas for engaging students

Who is responsible for student learning?

Teacher creates conditions for learning:

- Offer different paths for learning, but with clear set of goals (“outcomes”)
- Reinforce learning and related behaviors (goals; self-assessment)
- Provide feedback that helps students assess their progress towards goals
- Understand student difficulties and reduce barriers

Student takes responsibility for:

- Understanding and choosing learning options best for him/her
- Inputting effort to meet course goals set by instructor (”outcomes”)
- Setting goals and self-assessing progress towards goals
- Seeking help/explanations/support/additional feedback

Engagement?

What does this word mean to you?

- Desire to learn
- Interested
- Attentive
- Put forward effort; try
- Demonstrate that they are thinking about course materials
- Motivated to do the work, and even do their best work
- Passionate; enthusiastic; “proselytize” to students outside class
- Are able to articulate personal interest and meaning for what they are learning

What can faculty do?

- Provide:
  - Clear goals (for assignments, course)
  - Feedback that supports progress towards or mastery of goals
  - Examples and explanations that build on prior knowledge and indicate the value of information, concepts, applications

- Support:
  - Goal setting that emphasizes relevance of materials
  - Self-assessment of progress (using feedback, other information)
  - Understanding of value of the class

Review of UDL principles

What is “Universal Design for Learning”?

- An approach to intentional course design that ”builds in” flexibility so that you can help more students learns

- The goal of UDL is to lower barriers to learning for all students = don’t lower your expectations, but help students meet them

- Provide supports that help students develop skills and become independent, self-regulated learners

Access

↓

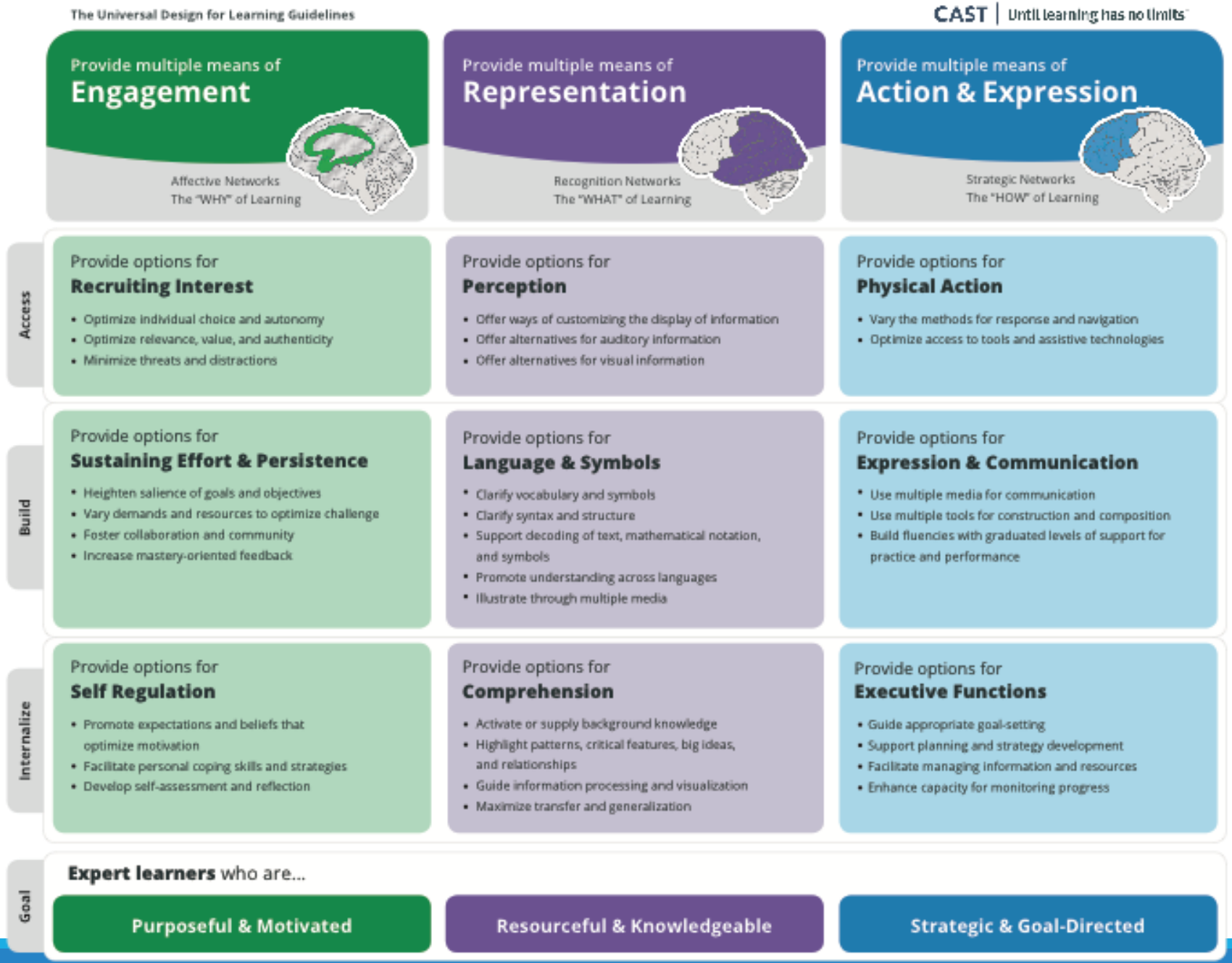
Build

↓

Internalize

↓

Goal



The goal of Engagement is

Students who are Purposeful (goal-oriented) and Motivated

Three important aspects of engagement:

The “Why?” of learning

- Relevance
- Interest
- Motivation (purpose; goal-orientation)

What helps students be interested?

- Material is related to/builds on previous material
- Material is relevant (applicable; related to personal interests or goals)
- Presentation excites students – helps them make connections, “wakes up” the brain
- Presentation is accessible – students can understand material and see it as learn-able or achieve-able

What creates motivation in students?

- Belief that the goals for the class/assignment are valuable to themselves and others (NOT “busywork”)
- Belief that they can be successful/meet your goals
- Belief that their effort to learn will be rewarded (with knowledge, practical skills, good grade)

Why is goal-setting important?

Eventually, students must be able to approach a task, assess it, break it into parts or tasks, and stay on goal to complete those tasks while self-assessing progress

That is a lot!

New students may need a lot of deadlines, reminders and structures, more mature learners can provide much of this structure themselves.

Goals and strategies

- Provide more supports at the beginning of the course
- Provide feedback EARLY and OFTEN
- Use the ”gradebook” in your system or provide other ways for students to assess their progress
- Offer opportunities to improve based on feedback – REQUIRE self-assessment as part of these opportunities

Ideas for engagement

How can we engage students?

1. Demonstrate relevance to prior knowledge and future goals (personal or professional)
2. Create interest by connecting to students' lives, concrete situations, applied uses, important questions in your field
3. Support motivation to learn :
   - support steady progress and helpful feedback towards goals
   - reinforce that students can achieve these goals, and how they can do so

Relevance: Activate background knowledge

- Always start class by reviewing where you finished, or offering more information on areas where students had trouble

- Relate the topics for the day to other coursework in the program, or explain how it is related to future work in the course, or in students program

- Emphasize how specific topics relate to large themes in the course – remember that students are not experts and may not understand how topics are related

Idea #1: Background knowledge probe

Use a short quiz or questions to understand what knowledge or understanding students have at the beginning of a course, a course "theme" or to review what students remember from the previous class. Examples: Name parts on a blank diagram; describe a process; offer a definition that contrasts two similar terms.

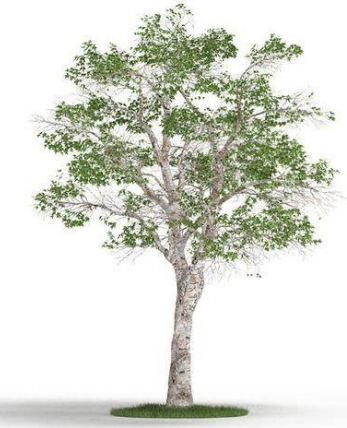
You can also do this as an exercise for small groups or pairs. You can have students hand in the material, or have them keep the handouts and correct the information themselves.

Relevance: Roadmap for each class

- Start each class by saying what topics will be covered and how the topics relate to previous and future content
- Include information about how a topic or skill relates to course goals, competencies, or future applications
- If possible, add information about why this is interesting to you, why you included the topic, or what you hope students will do with this knowledge

Idea #2: Classify

Help students understand the relevance of important categories and how examples fit into them. (deciduous vs. evergreen trees)



Interest: Start with a problem

- When possible, start classes (every time, or once in a while) with an example or problem that is related to the material for the day
- You can explain how the problem is related to the course content, or you can introduce the problem at the beginning, and then show how the materials for the day help make sense of your example at the end (or have students complete an exercise)

Idea #3: What's the Problem?

One large challenge for students is to recognize the type of problem they have been given. Once they understand the type of problem, they can choose or create a better approach to the problem.

Create several examples. Then ask students **to identify what kind of problem each example represents.** This works well for science and mathematics, but can also work for foreign languages, writing, philosophy, and applied fields (case studies). You can also ask students to propose a solution.

What interests you?

At the end of class, students hand in a card or piece of paper with their name and one thing that interested them and one thing they did not understand and would like more lecture or practice on.

You can also add a question: What did other students in the class do or say that increased your interest or distracted you from the class?

Interest: Stimulate creativity

Creativity is a higher order learning task that requires a full understanding of material. Instead of repeating material, students need to redesign or create new materials.

However, by varying supports and isolating smaller areas for creativity and choice-making, you can also create interest for students who are bored with memorizing lots of new material

Idea #8: Variations

Present a stimulus (a solution to a problem; a physical object; a piece of music; an example sentence; a picture or painting). Ask students to come up with ideas for variations on the presented item. For example:

- Other solutions
- A different application for the same object
- Changes that alter tone, meaning, impact
- Design changes that make the object more or less useful
- Alterations in perspective that can change how we understand the stimulus

Motivation: Set a personal goal

Suggestion: Have all students set a personal goal for the course. The goal can not be related to their grade!

The goal may be related to understanding difficult material, relating course content to personal life goals or professional goals, or to improving skills like public speaking

Have students give you feedback on their progress towards their goal between 2 and 5 times in the course

Motivation: Require position-taking

Students must understand the material more deeply, and invest more of themselves in a discussion that requires them to take a position, not just repeat other's ideas. Many structures such as position papers and debates require position-taking.

If you choose these kinds of exercises, be prepared to correct misinformation or push back against views that conflict with course materials.

Idea #4: Quotes for debate

When you assign reading, each student must bring to class at least one quote that they agree with, and one quote that they disagree with from the article or chapter.

Depending on class size, students share their quotes in a small group, or with the whole class, and summarize their position. Other students can ask questions or offer different positions.

Idea #5: Role plays

Students are assigned to groups in a historical or contemporary situation (or even play the roles of parts of a natural environment or equation). Each group researches information about their role. The students or the teacher then creates a scenario, and students from each group represent and play the role according to their research.

Examples:

A natural environment in equilibrium where a dam is built, changing the water level in a river. (plants, animals, people, boats etc.)

A city government where a fire at a waste processing plant results in an inability to collect garbage. (residents; government officials; waste management professionals; animals; streets)

Motivation: Use peer pressure

Responsibility to peers as well as healthy competition can help motivate learners who are not seeking to impress their teacher.

In using these types of exercises, it is important to ensure that all students participate, and that students are not badly penalized if a partner or group member does not complete part of the work.

Idea #6: Jigsaw ("Learn 1, teach 1")

In this exercise, you have a set of similar texts to read, but on different topics. For example, four different case studies illustrating one set of principles. You divide up the class into groups (here, 4) and each groups reads one item (here, one case study). Everyone who read case study #1 (2, 3, 4) gathers together to discuss the main ideas they want to teach others. After this, you rearrange into groups of 4, so that there is a person representing each case study. Each person briefly presents their case study and discusses.

The responsibility to others motivates students to be prepared. The ability to learn without having to read all 5 case studies means that students are motivated to listen to peers' presentations.

Idea #7 “Викторина” (Team Jeopardy)

Divide into teams. Teams must answer questions that review material prior to an exam or before moving on to a new unit. You can limit how many times one person can answer for a team.

Less intensive peer pressure:

- Share a personal goal for a course, then report on the other student's goal
- Work on a problem in pairs
- Create a drawing or diagram of a process or situation that reflects understanding of several people

Questions and Discussion