

Tip Sheets

Embedded Learning and Universal Design

Architect Ron Mace, who coined the term **universal design**, defines it as “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for additional adaptation or specialized design.”

Examples of universal design include:

- Curbs adjusted for wheelchairs
- Accessible doors
- Closed captioning
- Hands-free communication systems
- Audio books

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)



The difference between universal design and universal design for learning is that universal design makes information and materials available to children, whereas universal design for learning considers the actual gain of knowledge or skills.

Universal design for learning includes curriculum, teaching strategies, and assessment modifications and adaptations that are implemented not for one child, but universally for the group, benefitting all children. This can include multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement.

For children without disabilities, UDL makes things easier. For children with disabilities, UDL makes things possible.

Examples of UDL

- Offering three different mediums to obtain the same knowledge, such as a hands-on activity, a reading activity, and a listening center activity, all giving the same content but through different learning experiences or styles
- Offering different options for completing assignments, such as writing or drawing, as long as students meet the lesson goals
- Offering flexible workspaces such as those for both individual and group work
- Offering digital and audio text

Embedded Learning

Embedded learning is specifically designed practices that are used to promote children’s engagement, learning, and independence in everyday activities, routines, and transitions in the classroom, home, and community.

Examples of Embedded Learning

- Incorporating counting activities into snacktime
- Using trays to designate space/possession
- Color coding materials and stations to assist children with where things go

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