



National Center and State Collaborative

Tips for Using the NCSC Wiki to Support Your Child's Education: UDL Instructional Units

The NCSC curriculum and instructional resources are publicly available for free on the NCSC wiki at <https://wiki.ncscpartners.org>. They were designed to be used together to help educators teach grade-level aligned mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) content to students with significant cognitive disabilities. The resources are based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). However, they can also be used in states that are not using the CCSS. Much of the content that is covered on the wiki will also appear in other mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) state standards. If you need help navigating the NCSC wiki, you can access a one page navigation tool and a more detailed navigation guide, designed for parents, from the main page of the wiki.

This document is about the NCSC Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Instructional Units and how they can be used by parents to support your child's education. It is part of a series of documents based on seven of the NCSC curriculum and instructional resources. Using the NCSC curriculum and instructional resources at home and talking about the wiki with your child's teacher(s) are great starting points for increased parent-teacher collaboration.

What is UDL?

UDL is an educational framework for ensuring meaningful access to the curriculum for the widest range of learners. UDL has three principles that relate to the goals of instruction, instructional materials, teaching methods, and assessment. The three UDL principles require that there be multiple ways of presenting information ("Representation"), multiple ways to gain and demonstrate knowledge ("Expression"), and multiple ways to get your child motivated to learn ("Engagement"). See www.udlcenter.org for more information on UDL.

UDL and NCSC

As the NCSC curriculum and instructional resources were being developed, one of the measures for evaluating their quality was the application of the UDL principles. Therefore, there are UDL influences throughout the resources. For example, you can

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find a UDL table that provides possible adaptations and modifications to address a variety of student needs in each Curriculum Resource Guide and each Content Module (resources covered in other papers in this series).

What are UDL Instructional Units?

The UDL Instructional Units are based on general education lessons that are universally designed to be accessible for all students. They walk the educator through the process of adapting materials and providing accommodations that assist emerging readers and emerging communicators in the classroom. Each unit is made up of several lessons and a “culminating” activity that ties them together, all of which provide examples for meeting the needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities. This information can be used to work with your child at home and collaborate with your child’s teacher(s). There is one UDL Instructional Unit in mathematics (on measurement) for each grade-span (elementary school, middle school, and high school) and one unit in ELA for each grade-span. These units are intended to provide models to help teachers learn how to universally design their lessons for other mathematics and ELA topics.

UDL Instructional Unit Content

When you click on a unit from the UDL Instructional Units main primary page you will see links for each lesson, as well as links to printable materials.

Each lesson in a UDL Unit first presents the objectives and essential questions for the lesson and then walks through the following parts of each lesson: vocabulary, materials, introduction (with a section for activating prior knowledge and one for establishing the goals for the lesson), body, practice, and closure (with a section on reviewing lesson objectives and one for an exit assessment). Links to the resources used in a particular lesson appear in the last section of that lesson.

In each of these parts of the UDL lessons there are various steps the class is supposed to take. Throughout the description of these steps there are “Additional Considerations for the Emerging Reader and Emerging Communicator.” For example, in one step of the “Introduction” of a mathematics lesson for Elementary School, the students are asked to write a list of the tools they used for a measurement activity in their journals. An “additional consideration” provides the following options:

The student can record these measuring tools in his/her journal by:

- Writing, tracing (if the student is working on fine motor skills), or keyboarding
- Drawing
- Cutting and/or pasting pictures, symbols, icons, text, or any combination thereof
- Selecting pictures, symbols, icons, text, tactile representations, concrete objects, or any combination thereof, which a partner scribes (writes for the student)
- Saving symbols, icons, pictures, etc. into a digital journal using assistive technology