

M7-S3: Building the foundation for TALE with Universal Design for Learning

CLH	<p>Hello, Gina and welcome, listeners! This is the third session in Module 7 of the TALE Academy, Building the foundation for TALE with Universal Design for Learning.</p> <p>Word to the wise: in this session, we will directly reference learning from Module 3, Sessions 2 and 8. We encourage you to review those sessions before engaging in this one.</p>
GK	<p>So Christina, one of the top lessons we learned from the pandemic is how to creatively overcome barriers to learning. Ask any school leader and they will likely tell you that one of the first barriers was technology. School and district leaders drove house-to-house delivering laptops and tablets. They partnered with internet providers to get hotspots out to their communities. They built online classrooms overnight with Google Classroom, video conferencing apps, and Bitmoji classroom. Within a few short weeks, New York State’s educators constructed an entirely new infrastructure for learning.</p>
CLH	<p>As amazing as these efforts were, we know that the shift to emergency remote teaching worsened the existing inequities in our public schools. And for every barrier we removed, such as connecting students to digital learning, we encountered even more barriers, such as accommodating student and family schedules with synchronous and asynchronous learning, student and family readiness to use digital tools, identifying and supporting students’ social and emotional needs, and much more. Fairly quickly, the heroic efforts of our educators became eclipsed by public frustration with these barriers.</p>
GK	<p>You know I’m a history buff, right?</p>
CLH	<p>Are you going to lay some history knowledge on us?</p>
GK	<p>Of course.</p> <p>Let’s put in historical context the enormity of the work educators did during the pandemic to rebuild our schools as remote/hybrid learning environments.</p> <p>In 1791, the first public school in New York opened its doors.</p> <p>In 1812, two decades later, a public school system was established.</p> <p>In 1867, a half century later, public schools became completely free. Prior to this, many schools charged parents fees.</p> <p>In 1920, there were still more than 8,000 one-room elementary schools across the state.</p>

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	<p>Over the next 100 years, our state’s public school system evolved, consolidating school districts and erecting new school buildings until more than 2.4 million students were enrolled in more than 4,300 public schools.</p> <p>It took 229 years to build a statewide system of public schools and just two years to rebuild the state’s public schools as remote or hybrid.</p>
CLH	<p>Nice context development! And I agree: we could easily just abandon what we created during ERT and return to the pre-pandemic schools and systems. We could see the two years of the pandemic as a blip on the historical trajectory of education in New York State. Or we can consider these last two years the early stages of a new era in education. If we opt for the second perspective, which is the mission of the TALE Academy, then the next step is to build a strong foundation for this transformation.</p> <p>Drumroll, please:</p>
GK	<p>To this end, we propose establishing the foundation for a new era in education through universal design.</p>
CLH	<p>Okay, leaders, so as a quick recap: we learned in Module 3, Session 2, that “universal design” originated in the field of architecture. The first step of universal design was to identify barriers to access, such as entrances to buildings that made it challenging or impossible for someone in a wheelchair to enter. After identifying these barriers, architects redesigned buildings so that they would be accessible to all individuals, regardless of their ability. In the world of education, universal design for learning, or UDL, engages in the same process, but in relation to the construction of learning environments.</p>
GK	<p>If we make UDL central to creating the “new normal” of education, we can design more equitable learning environments. In this session, we will look at UDL from the teacher’s perspective, then consider UDL from the school leader’s perspective. We will then explore strategies and resources that school leaders can use to put UDL at the center of their work to redesign learning environments.</p>
CLH	<p>UDL guides the development of flexible learning environments and learning spaces that can accommodate individual learning differences. UDL focuses on three domains. Doesn’t it seem like everything focuses on three domains?</p>
GK	<p>At least three domains.</p>
CLH	<p>So these three domains are engagement, representation and expression. Let’s break that down.</p>

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GK	The first domain is engagement. UDL provides multiple means of engagement by recruiting interest, sustaining effort and persistence, and supporting student self-regulation.
CLH	The second domain is representation. UDL provides multiple means of representation in terms of perception, language and symbols, and comprehension.
GK	The third domain is action and expression. UDL provides multiple means of action and expression through physical action, expression and communication, and executive functioning.
CLH	The Center for Applied Special Technology, known as CAST, has developed a series of resources, including UDL guidelines, to help teachers implement UDL in their classrooms. The UDL guidelines offer a set of concrete suggestions that ensure that all of our students can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning experiences.
GK	Yup, to learn more about this topic, please return to Module 3, Session 2 to review the UDL Guidelines and recommended teacher approaches for implementing UDL in the classroom.
CLH	Let's turn our attention now to the school leader's perspective on UDL. In a 2018 study of barriers to implementing UDL in schools, researchers found five main issues. Four of the issues related to the need for general education teachers to better understand the value of UDL, be fully trained in UDL, and collaborate with special education teachers to implement UDL effectively. The remaining issue was the need for administrative support, specifically school leader support. One special education teacher described a common sentiment expressed in the study: "It is hard to feel effective with implementing new practices like UDL when it is either not supported or your principal is not aware of what you're doing."
GK	So I guess the question is, what can school leaders do to support teachers' implementation of UDL and avoid these problems? Fortunately, CAST provides a phased process for implementing UDL schoolwide with specific tasks at each phase. Let's take a look at this approach. We've linked CAST's implementation handout in the transcript, but Christina can you get us started on phases and tasks?
CLH	You start with the need for instructional changes in your school. Once you've acknowledged the need for change, you enter the pre-phase for this work, which includes deciding as a team if you are ready to engage in the UDL Implementation process. Next you move into Phase 1, which is to prepare for making the change through professional learning and capacity-building. In Phase 2, you integrate the change into your practices and processes - for example, infusing UDL into instruction and engaging in implementation trials and data collection cycles. Then, in Phase 3,

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	<p>you scale your change across the school. Finally, you optimize your approach in Phase 4, which can include documenting and sharing your process and findings.</p> <p>Gina, let's talk through CAST's phased process to note how TALE strategies and resources can support UDL implementation.</p>
GK	<p>In the Pre-phase or Explore stage, you</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate UDL as a potential schoolwide decision-making framework. 2. Build awareness about UDL with key players within and outside the school. 3. Determine willingness and interest of staff to begin schoolwide UDL implementation.
CLH	<p>Here are a few TALE strategies and resources for this the pre-phase or explore stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can use online, asynchronous training resources to support staff exploration of UDL. Along with the resources provided in the TALE Academy, consider linking to CAST and Understood.org. • You can also establish professional learning communities that integrate general education and special education teachers to focus on collaboration. See Module 3, Session 8 for more on collaboration. • You can also recruit interest by using the online resources provided by the website LearningDesigned.org. These resources can found under "Resources," then by selecting "UDL Guidelines" and "Recruiting Interest." • Finally, you can use online polls and surveys that allow staff to provide anonymous feedback on their exploration. Consider using CAST's UDL Implementation Readiness Indicators Tool, which is also available on LearningDesigned.org.
GK	<p>Phase 1 is the preparation stage. In this phase, you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a climate that is flexible but maintains high expectations for all. 2. Map needed resources and processes, such as specific personnel, structures such as planning time, materials, curriculum, and professional development. 3. Define a strategic vision, plan of action, and expected outcomes.
CLH	<p>Here are a few TALE strategies and resources for Phase 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can use free online mind-mapping tools from mindmapping.com to involve all stakeholders in the mapping of needed resources and processes.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can use online idea management software that helps you collect, analyze, focus, and implement organizational brainstorming. You can use this software to go from “ideas” to “vision.” Check out the “idea management” category on the website g2.com for software platforms.• You can also use online project management software such as Monday, Asana, ClickUp, SmartSheet, or Wrike to turn the vision into a living action plan where you can assign roles, view deadlines, and track progress. <p>Please note the word “online” in these examples is intended to connote cloud-based tools/software that support collaborative processes.</p>
GK	<p>The second phase is to Integrate. In this phase, you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create individual and schoolwide structures and processes to support implementation and evaluate its effectiveness.2. Develop educator expertise and apply UDL to instructional practices and decision-making.3. Foster collaboration and support to integrate UDL broadly.
CLH	<p>Here are a few TALE strategies and resources for Phase 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can create online structures that allow for asynchronous collaboration so that staff do not have to meet “live” (in person or online) for every aspect of implementation.• You can also support staff in earning CTLE credits and microcredentials to develop expertise in UDL.• You can consider using online curriculum mapping software that allows collaboration, sharing, and mentoring.• And you can consider using the UDL Progression Rubric provided in the UDL Playbook for School and District Leaders to continuously assess where your staff are in terms of integration.
GK	<p>The third phase is to scale. In this phase, you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Promote ongoing professional growth by supporting a UDL community of practice that is responsive to individual and systemic variability.2. Expand effective practices, processes, and structures through advanced professional development and technical assistance.3. Enhance an integrated, schoolwide approach to UDL implementation through continuous evaluation of gaps and needs.

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CLH	<p>Here are a few TALE strategies and resources for Phase 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can use professional learning communities, or PLCs, to engage in the Plan-Do-Study-Act (or PDSA) cycle with a focus on UDL implementation.• You can support teachers in advancing their understanding of UDL by participating in online PLCs that extend outside the school.• You can also partner with Boards of Cooperative Education Services, known as BOCES, to establish networks and/or encourage extended learning through professional organizations, such as CAST, and universities.• Finally, you can revisit and renew the strategies you used in Phase 1 so that all staff members can help identify gaps and needs.
GK	<p>In the fourth and final phase, you optimize. In this phase, you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enhance a schoolwide culture that maximizes improvement of teaching and learning practices in a way that reflects and aligns with UDL principles.2. Predict, prepare for, and respond to potential internal and external changes that could impact UDL implementation in the future.3. Maximize improvement by embedding processes that respond to variability that exists within the school.
CLH	<p>Here are a few TALE strategies and resources for Phase 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can practice UDL with your staff by providing them with choices and multiple modalities to engage in professional development, collaboration, and curriculum development. (Check out Chapter 4, “Modeling UDL Through Professional Learning,” in <i>The UDL Playbook for School and District Leaders</i>.)• You can also use game-based learning and simulations to engage teams in change management related to UDL.• Finally, you can encourage staff to document and peer review the processes and practices they have used to effectively respond to learning variability in your school. Check out the peer review protocol in the book <i>The Power of Protocols</i> for guidance on this practice.
GK	<p>Now let’s zoom back out and look at the big picture.</p> <p>Implementing UDL is an intensive process that requires the commitment of all members of a school community. What is unique in this moment is that UDL implementation can be easier if done within a TALE framework. Indeed, a 2021 article by Kavita Rao published in <i>The Journal of Applied Instructional Design</i>, recently noted, “Online learning environments that inherently require the use of digital tools as</p>

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	<p>a means for delivery and instruction present many opportunities for incorporating and applying UDL.” The shift to UDL as the foundation of equitable learning environments will require strong leadership. And it won’t happen overnight. But if we use a TALE framework, it certainly won’t take the two centuries of public education design and development that predated the pandemic!</p>
CLH	<p>Now it’s your turn! After you’ve had a chance to explore additional resources in the choice board related to building the foundation for TALE with UDL, you will explore the shifts in practice that you might want to consider in order to implement UDL schoolwide for TALE.</p> <p>The goal of the TALE Academy is to help teachers rethink education so that everyone—students, families, educators, school leaders, and communities—all have the opportunity to succeed. You’ve just added another tool to your toolbox when you build the foundation for TALE with universal design for learning.</p> <p>Thanks for listening!</p>