



Universal Design for Learning

Power of Potential
Sharing Experiences from
Universal Design for Learning Journeys

Conference: 26th - 28th June 2024



Conference Abstracts

Acknowledgements

The Power of Potential, Sharing UDL Journeys across the life course is a conference that speaks to the capacities of individuals and communities to bring about change for the better. The papers, workshops, storytelling sessions, posters, and ignite ideas reflect the creativity, innovation and resilience of students, academics and senior leaders who are passionate about inclusion. The Organising Committee for this 2024 ICEQ Conference are honoured that we have been able to host the event at the University of Worcester. We appreciate the belief, encouragement and practical support provided by the ICEQ team and colleagues from Ibn Zohr University in making the event happen. Special thanks for enabling this event to take place are also very much due to the Head of the Institute of Education, here at the University of Worcester, Catriona Robinson and to the Conferencing and Accommodation colleagues at the University. The information technologists, led by Calvin Price and his crew have provided invaluable guidance and support, especially as we reach out virtually to attendees across the globe who can't be with us in person. Also heartfelt appreciation is extended to our facilities teams and dedicated administrators, especially Will Kennedy and Simone Acton.

Much of the on the groundwork has been done by the small but committed cadre of resilient colleagues and students who are part of INCLUDE and the local Inclusion by Design Research group. A special mention is merited by Dr Emma Richardson, and Michelle Malomo, who along with Tracy Galvin from Ulster University and Professor Susie Gronseth from the University of Houston, have worked tirelessly to review papers and organise the sessions. The work of Sethu Sundari, Kate Howen, Oressa Gray Mullen, Aashna Khurana and Luigia Nicholas in promoting the event has certainly paid dividends. Thanks to Kevin Fernandez for your commitment to intercultural learning from a UDL perspective. Please take the time to review some of the excellent preparatory podcasts produced by our very own Kirsty Fraser, these are available on the INCLUDE conference website. Also, while you're here, seek out wonderful colleagues Kirsty Wedgbury and Dawn Goodall whose inspired determination has been instrumental to the inclusive conference design. Thanks to Lisa Mauro Bracken for continuing to forge ahead with a commitment to realising excellent educational inclusive practice. This team's steadfast commitment to social justice and inclusion continues to inspire. We appreciate the generosity of intellect and kindness of our conference panellists and keynotes. Finally, and most sincerely, **thanks to you** for coming to Worcester to share your UD and UDL journeys and for making this book of Conference Abstracts such an exciting one! Wishing you every success at the Power of Potential Conference, Dr Seán Bracken - Chair Inclusion by Design.

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Lightening Talk Abstracts

1. Here for you – International student support pilot project at University of Worcester (UW) Raluca Sarbu, University of Worcester, UK

“Here with you, for you” project was designed to enhance the partnership between MA in social work international students, people with lived experience group at UoW and social work teaching team, in order to promote students’ inclusion and sense of belonging, whilst preserving their cultural identity. These are objectives evidencing strong adherence to pivotal points of UDL, particularly around building the space and specific avenues for effective international student engagement by creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Adopting a flexible, personalised, relationship-based learning approach has proved to successfully foster students’ sense of togetherness and community, offering them means for engagement, action and expression even before the actual start of the course “Here with you, for you”, project demonstrates how UDL principles can support creating a responsive, fast adapting learning and teaching environment, enabling international students to enhance their academic performance, retention and well-being.

2. Advancing Educational Equity: System-Level Inclusive Reforms through Universal Design for Learning Aashna Khurana and Dr Martin Scanlan, Boston College, USA

In contemporary educational discourse, achieving equity for learners labelled with disabilities remains a complex challenge, despite global initiatives aimed at rectifying disparities. This paper examines the tension within educational systems, which can both foster societal progress and perpetuate existing inequalities. Drawing from the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, it addresses the need for intentional design to counteract systemic disparities. Prevailing paradigms often fail to address the root causes of inequities, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive and distributive models that prioritize equitable access and interrogate structural determinants. A system-level lens is imperative in this context, as it allows for a holistic understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing educational outcomes for students with disabilities. By examining the interconnectedness of policies, practices, and stakeholders within the education system, a systemic approach can identify and

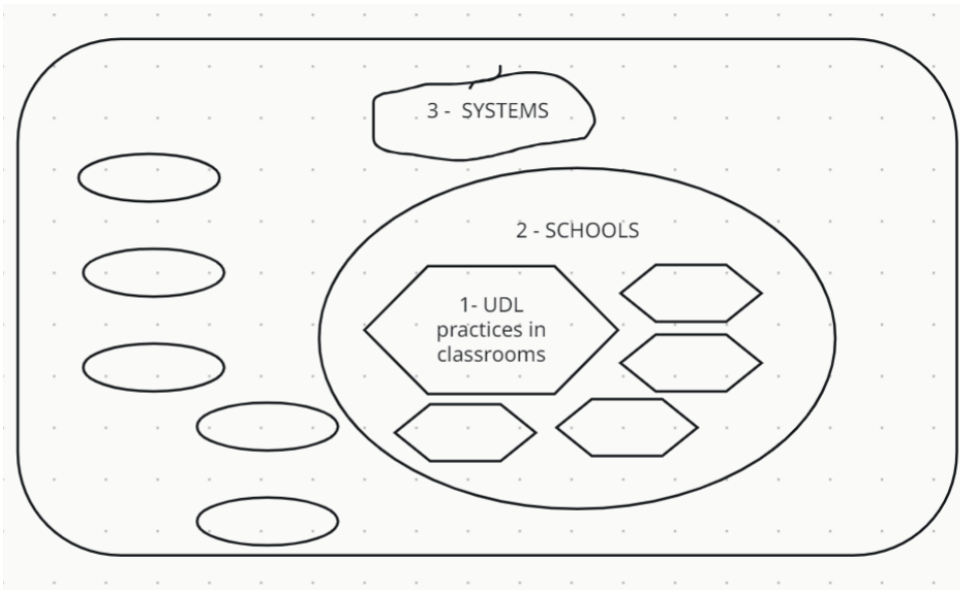
address systemic barriers that perpetuate inequities. Moreover, since most UDL frameworks primarily focus on the classroom or school as the unit of analysis, adopting a systems change perspective expands the scope of inquiry to encompass broader structural and systemic factors that impact educational equity (see figure below). This broader perspective is essential for developing inclusive policies and practices that address the diverse needs of all learners and promote equitable access to quality education.

The systematic review explores system-level inclusive reforms within educational settings, focusing on organizational learning as a catalyst for driving advancements in inclusivity. By critically examining the dynamics of educational equity and justice, it contributes to the discourse on creating equitable education systems that employ the UDL framework to carry out system change in school networks or districts. The research objective centers on identifying system-level inclusive reform initiatives that improve opportunities for students with disabilities in inclusive settings within school systems.

Through this examination, the research seeks to advance equity paradigms challenging conventional notions of justice, aiming to promote a more robust understanding of thriving within educational contexts, how school systems can improve their practices and aim to fix failing parts holistically instead of adopting a siloed approach of solving problems. By adopting a UDL lens, the study underscores the importance of collective efforts in addressing persistent educational inequalities. Thus, it advocates for a comprehensive and deliberative approach toward advancing equity within educational systems, promoting inclusive environments where all learners can thrive.

Figure 1.

Current Scope of UDL Application in Research



3. Creation and Facilitation of Communities of Practice Broaden Inclusive Design Strategies to Counter Faculty Burnout and Isolation. Dr Coridon Laws, Dallas College, USA

Systemic failures within the American education system were revealed primarily during the height of the global pandemic. The learning environment in higher education revealed issues such as lack of adequate support from administration and lack of training in technology. Faculty continuously lack the support needed to aid learners, leading to burnout. Recent surveys administered to Dallas College employees revealed that work-life balance is the top of the issues that are not fully addressed by administration. However, faculty are expected to carry on with the constant changes that affect work, including, but not limited to: changes in state laws that trickle down to higher education, changes in institutional policies that affect workflow, and changes in student cognition that affect behavior and learning. My department within Dallas College known as the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), attempts to mollify some of these challenges. The communities of practice (CoP), which is a cohort that implements specific strategies, are created and used to help prevent exhaustion faculty feel after returning to the physical classroom.

Buy-In/Methods for Recruitment: To emphasize the importance of CoP, I built and currently run a community of practice called Universal Design for Learning Cohort (UDLC). Faculty joined UDLC by completing a registration form at the

beginning of the term indicating that they would agree to attend a total of five virtual cohort sessions from February to April. Registration was marketed to and administered by administrators in Dallas College. Some faculty were and were not familiar with UDL, but all knew it would improve teaching. The UDLC provides the faculty with peer-to-peer engagement, training, and strategies. Faculty are awarded professional development training credits for every session attended in full.

UDL strategies are employed throughout the virtual sessions which includes the following:

Options for synchronous engagement: Microsoft Whiteboard, chat feature in Teams, polls, oral communication by utilizing the microphone feature during the virtual session.

Options for asynchronous engagement: Microsoft OneNote, Whiteboard, Discussion board in current LMS.

Options for action, expression, and application: Faculty have the choice to implement strategies in different ways depending on the discipline of their courses taught.

Initial Conclusions: Faculty within the cohort sessions seem to be engaged and feel supported while improving UDL-based strategies while reducing the burden of burnout. Though there is recognition that UDL-based training is vital to learner retention, no certification or programmatic course exists within the confines of the Dallas College institution. Current success of the cohort will be used to assist with implementation of UDL-based certification training within onboarding for new faculty and certification with current faculty.

Poster Abstracts

1. Universal Design for Learning: What is the Research Evidence? A Systematic Review Associate Professor Linda Plantin Ewe, Kristianstad University, Sweden, Aashna Khurana, Boston College, USA, Dr Elizabeth Dalton, Dalton Educational Services International, USA

Systematic reviews of literature allow researchers to carefully search, identify and categorize material on a wide range of topics appearing in professional literature in a manner that can be reliably replicated, as exemplified by Ewe & Galvin in 2023. In the more than thirty years since Universal Design for Learning

(UDL) arrived on the educational landscape, it has grown to be recognized as a key framework for designing and redesigning learning environments to include and benefit the widest range of diverse learners. How effective has UDL been in achieving this objective? What is the evidence of the impact of UDL and how rigorous is this evidence?

To seek answers to these questions, 3 researchers are conducting a research study in the form of a systematic review of educational literature available in key online search engines. Clear study procedures and strict search protocols were developed to identify research articles that address questions such as:

What is the UDL evidence base?

What is considered “evidence” in education?

How can evidence be categorized?

What do the trends and patterns of UDL evidence point toward?

The researchers followed the systematic review protocol of PRISMA-P 2015 (Moher, et al., 2015; Page, et al. 2021), employing a replicable systematic review process of the literature to identify qualified articles. The review rationale, objectives, and methodology (including eligibility criteria, information sources, search strategy, data collection and management, etc.) were determined and the systematic review of evidence of the impact of UDL in education began in Spring 2024. This systematic review is still in process and is projected for completion during Summer 2024.

This session will begin with a short period during which these UDL researchers will share current results and will offer their perspectives on the systematic review process and the outcome data to date, problematizing the lack of research within the field of UDL that identifies to be evidence-based. Then discussion will be opened with the audience exploring on how to move forward. Session participants are invited to share examples of other reviews or UDL evidence studies, as well as questions, reactions to, and reflections on this systematic review of UDL evidence and recommendations for further development.

2. Experts by Experience: Recommendations for UDL Practise from the People that Matter Dr Emma V. Richardson, University of Worcester, UK Kirsty Wedgbury, University of Worcester, UK Anastasia Kennett, University of Worcester, UK Alice Hopkins, University of Worcester, UK Christian T. Wilson, University of Worcester, UK Harriet Lawrence University of Worcester, UK

This poster shares the testimonies of diverse learner voices and their recommendations for facilitating inclusive learning and teaching practise. Historically, 'inclusive' education has been done on, in, or for students with diverse needs and often as an afterthought or reaction to difference in the classroom. For UDL to thrive, we must practice *with* students with diverse needs such that inclusion, dignity, and equal opportunity are inbuilt within the physical and socio-cultural fabric of the classroom, assessments, and wider school community. To achieve this, the student voice **must** be central to informing the design and delivery of education in a way that includes all, and celebrates diverse ways of learning. By integrating the voice of such learners at the foundation of UDL, all students have the ability to thrive in education and beyond. This poster provides a creative and interactive means of amplifying the student voice through links to videos capturing testimonies of students, resources for delegates to access should they deem these useful, and the presence of students with diverse needs at the poster that are eager to engage in dialogue regarding how to do UDL with these experts with experience.

3. Using UDL Principles in an Immersive Simulation of Sensory Overload
Kirsty Wedgbury, University of Worcester, UK Susan Poultney,
University of Worcester, UK

Background: Atypical sensory processing is a difficulty in regulating and managing sensory input in a meaningful way. Sensory processing disorder (SPD) is common in individuals with autism, pervasive development conditions and neurodivergence.

The Experiencing Sensory Overload simulation aims to champion inclusive practice and reduce health inequalities by encouraging student nurses to reconsider their working environments to create sensorily safe spaces for individuals who experience SPD.

This multi-modal simulation utilises UDL principles throughout in order to actively role model what we expect student-nurses to consider in their own practice. This approach also provides the best educational experience for our diverse learners.

Simulation Design: A UDL approach to the simulation was designed to provide multiple means of engagement via film, animation, virtual reality, podcasts, and an immersive simulation. These are all designed to challenge and affect a shift in the learners' affective domains (Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, 1964), impacting on the students' behaviours, attitudes and awareness.

Meaningful Difference:

The data showed that students enhanced their understanding of the challenges of sensory overload, envisaging reasonable adjustments to ensure inclusive practice. The authors believe that this simulation is effective and will positively impact on nursing students' ability to care for neurodiverse individuals. Universal Design for Learning principles help to role model different approaches to best practice enabling students to both meet their own potential and to transfer these principles to their inclusive nursing practice.

4. Building Immersive Simulation Experiences for Preservice Teachers in Classroom Design Strategies Professor Susie Gronseth, University of Houston, USA

This poster will feature a pilot project conducted during the 2023-24 academic year at the University of Houston. The project is a collaboration among faculty and graduate students from the College of Engineering and the College of Education, with support from the Faculty Engagement and Development unit of the Provost's Office. The project involves the development of 2D and 3D simulation tools that enable preservice teachers to design classroom spaces and then experience them through virtual reality headsets. This immersive learning approach offered multiple means of representation of the content (CAST, 2018), as well as opportunities for connections to classroom design strategies that are supportive of varied learner needs.

As part of the poster, the design process will be shared, which began with an exploration of augmented reality and virtual reality (AR/VR) tools. The team formed and discussed features of the existing tools that might address varied instructional problems in an educational technology course that is part of the primary grades teacher education program. Prototypes of a web-based

classroom design app and complementary virtual reality tool were then developed and refined. The resulting lesson included five aspects – 1) lecture on classroom design best practices, considerations, and examples, 2) drafts of classroom spaces using Google Drawings, 3) observations in local elementary classrooms, 4) creation of classroom design in the new web-based classroom design app, and 5) virtual simulated exploration of the preservice teachers' classroom designs using Oculus headsets. The lesson was implemented in five sections of the educational technology course over the Fall '23 and Spring '24 semesters. Insights gained through the project will be shared as part of the poster session.

CAST. (2018). *Universal Design for Learning guidelines version 2.2 [graphic organizer]*. <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

5. How do we Foster Engagement, Motivation, and Interest in Learning: What are our Educators' Self-regulation Practices in Tertiary Education? Assistant Professor Tracy Galvin, Ulster University, UK Colin Milligan, Glasgow Caledonian University, UK

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has emerged as an inclusive pedagogical framework which seeks to address the limitations of the traditional 'one size fits all' curriculum that exists in many countries (Meyer et al., 2014) by facilitating intentional design of curricula that expects learner variability and diversity (Galvin and McParland 2023). UDL emphasises the design of learning experiences to support student engagement, interaction and learning, whatever their profile (Abell et al., 2011). A core element of the UDL framework in the affective domain is self-regulated learning (SRL), as reflected in the Engagement dimension (Guideline 9). This is now more than ever one of the core areas in terms of supporting wellbeing, motivation and interest, as well as learner retention and progression (Thomas 2016). Whilst there are several key theoretical perspectives offered for self-regulated learning, all share the common stance that 'students' perceptions of themselves as learners and their use of various processes to regulate their learning' are critical to their academic achievement' (Zimmerman 2001, p. 2). But what of the educators who promote and practice UDL? Do they themselves self-regulate their learning within the context of their practice? To what extent do teachers value self-regulation of learning as a key attribute that their learners should develop? This poster is part of an iterative research process through consultation to gather further data from UDL advocates and experts on their beliefs and understanding around how SRL can enhance the access,

retention, progression of learners. The poster highlights how self-regulated learning is a well-established framework that can support learner motivation, engagement and staff support in their own professional learning. The research questions are as follows: • What are the key aspects of self-regulated learning for learners and staff in education? • Is it important for educators to know about self-regulated learning and why? • Can educators who embed self-regulated learning into their practice, enhance motivation, engagement and achievement among learners? The poster facilitates discussion around self-regulated learning: its importance to UDL ; how it can support learners and staff around learner progression, retention and success; and how to motivate and engage staff to be more aware and confident on how to embed SRL into practice.

6. Sense of Belonging at Conferences: Significance of Design or just the UDL Way! Daisy Bao, University of Edinburgh, UK, Dr Natalie Frandsen, and Prof. Rebecca Gagan, University of Victoria, Canada, Assistant Professor Tracy Galvin, Ulster University, UK, Dr Cynthia Korpan, University of Victoria, Canada, Dr Charlotte Stevens, University of Warwick, UK Matia Theodosakis, Unaffiliated, Dr Christina Van Wingerden, Western Washington University, USA, Simon Varwell, Highlands and Islands Students' Association, UK

Conferences, whether academic or professional, provide a learning environment to enhance one's professional development. However, if the environment does not provoke a sense of belonging, then that potential for learning can be significantly impacted. Literature addressing belonging has recognized that it affects several areas, such as:

- one's health and resilience (Bentrim & Henning, 2022),
- women's experiences (Biggs, Hawley, & Biernat, 2018),
- areas of accessibility (Walters, 2019),
- language (Garcia, Arnberg, Weise, & Winborn, 2020), and
- emotion and resistance (Henderson, 2015).

There has been a plethora of research about students' sense of belonging within academia (e.g., Gravett et al., 2023; Gravett & Ajjawi, 2022; Handworth, 2022; Stayhorn, 2019) but not as much about academics' sense of belonging, especially in spaces devoted to professional development. Gravett et al. (2023) identified "multiple senses of belonging," while Oliver and Morris (2020) noted that academic conferences are not a neutral space (Oliver & Morris, 2020).

In this poster, we will share research conducted by an international team of academics who investigated a sense of belonging at academic and professional conferences. Through semi-structured interviews and surveys, we took a holistic approach by asking participants about their sense of belonging in several dimensions: social, economic, identity/personal, emotional, ethical, political, spatial, and timeframe. The findings highlight the complexity associated with a sense of belonging and the multiple layers, and assemblages, that academics experience both in the online and on-campus settings. While the study did not explicitly intend to focus on the UDL framework, the principles were continuously highlighted in terms of what was expected and desired e.g. intentional design, removing barriers, offering choice, inclusive spaces, accessible content, and alternative formats, considering identities, building relationships, fostering community and agency.

Roundtable Storytelling Abstracts

1. Fostering Student Leadership: A Path Towards Social Change and Resilience Professor Hanan Bennoudi, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

As new technologies and globalization have redefined the boundaries of knowledge, intensified competition in education and employment; and challenged individuals to cultivate resilience and creativity to stay ahead; the Moroccan university needs to move beyond its traditional role as a place for academic learning and theoretical reflections on different disciplines. It should also be a site for fostering student leadership. The latter plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals as well societies. It is an invaluable experience that enhances personal growth, communication skills, teamwork and resilience. Considering the fact that most of our students at Ibn Zohr University come from disadvantageous backgrounds which limit their access to resources, and that most of them were educated in public school institutions in rural areas where opportunities for thriving academically and socially are almost nonexistent, my presentation sheds light on the importance of investing in inclusive initiatives that empower students to shape a brighter future for themselves, their community and society as a whole. Drawing on both past and present experiences, and presenting real-time examples and opportunities will allow me to share a comprehensive reflection on my students' learnt lessons and the

transformative impact student leadership had on their personality, life and community. Whether leading a club, organizing events, or participating in community service projects, students were able to explore the multifaceted dimensions of leadership and develop essential qualities such as problem solving, teamwork, communication and adaptability. Therefore, by fostering student leadership educational institutions are empowering students to become responsible, confident and effective both within their school communities and beyond.

2. UDL as Instructional Design Theory: Discussing the Evidence Dr Elizabeth Dalton, Dalton Educational Services International, USA. Professor Susie Gronseth, University of Houston.

In 2022, three researchers explored the potential connection between Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as both a design framework and an instructional design theory. As our video illustrates, we present the argument that UDL meets the specific criteria of an instructional design theory, as described by foundational leaders in the field (Pogrow, 1996; Reigeluth, 1983, 1999).

This work resulted in publication of the paper, “Maturation of Universal Design for Learning from Design Framework to Theory” (Gronseth et al., 2022). In the paper, we chronicle the development of UDL over the past 30 years and our observations about how it has “matured” from solely a curriculum design framework to be operationalized as instructional design theory. We highlight that the key components of UDL, as articulated in its principles and guidelines, characterize core situational and methodological components that define instructional design theory (Reigeluth, 1983; Rose et al., 2002).

In this session, we will share the main tenets of our argument and invite session participants to delve more deeply in the discussion to add their views about the value of UDL as instructional design theory in the field of education and for grounding UDL implementation initiatives.

3. What are the Next Steps for Europe around Inclusive Education and UDL? What we Found and where we think it should go. Assistant Professor Tracy Galvin, University of Ulster, UK Associate Professor Linda Plantin Ewe, Kristianstad University, Sweden.

The story we want to share are the results of research carried out from a Systematic Review (SR) that focused on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in formal school settings across Europe. The results contained a scarce amount of empirical research with only eight articles focusing on UDL. Nonetheless, it is evident, that there is a rapid growth and interest in the language of inclusive education and what it looks like in practice, where more often it is including UDL. Half of the articles in the SR were published within the last two years, with the oldest published in 2018. This indicates an increased practical focus on inclusive education research, in particular focusing on the UDL framework. During the session we will discuss:

- Where do we go from here?
- Why is research important across Europe to drive UDL forward?

Moreover, the study was centred on the student and/or teacher perceptions, at the expense of studies focused on student actual learning outcomes, which is in line with results of previous international research in the area. Thus, the findings indicate that principle 1 (Engagement) was the most prominent focus in the articles included in the study. During the session, we will discuss:

- Why the affective domain (social/emotional learning, why of learning) is so important for learner motivation and interest

The authors will share insights into how the articles focused on qualitative research over quantitative and the importance and relevance of what this means moving forward with the changes in the 3.0 version of the UDL framework. The storytelling session will end with some important questions through dialogue with the participants, such as:

- What can we do individually and what do we need to do together?
- How can we support and share high-quality research globally?
- What are the next steps?

4. The Lived Reality of UDL – a Student Perspective Chris Osbourne, University of Worcester, UK. Dawn Goodall, University of Worcester, UK

The Foundation Year in Healthcare is a relatively new course at UW and was

designed with UDL at the heart. Assessments are varied and inclusive using group assessments, podcasts and academic poster presentations alongside more traditional assessment options. The efficacy of our underpinning design was tested when we had a visually impaired student attend an open day wanting to find a route into Physiotherapy. We were able to reassure them about the inclusive nature of the teaching and the possibility of achieving their goals. Staff also shared with them about the PhD undertaken by our Deputy Head of School who explored the support of Visually Impaired Physiotherapy students reassuring the family that we work with all students to find the best way for them to flourish.

They joined the course and staff have seen them thrive in way that has been a joy to observe. Key for their successful development has been the ongoing conversations where staff and student work in partnership to design effective learning and assessment modes using the starting point of the assessments that were designed for accessibility. They have regularly achieved A+ grades in their assessments with small adaptations. For example, one of their modules is assessed using a poster conference format and the student asked for another approach which was not reliant on visual posters. They presented, along with their peers, a piece of work at level 3 that included synthesis and criticality that astounded their markers. This was deeply affecting for the assessors, and they have asked the student to tell their story about the experience of being taught and assessed using a UDL approach. Their success has allowed the student to gain the knowledge and skills that have seen them accepted on to the BSc Physiotherapy for next academic year.

For the conference session, the course lead Dawn Goodall will support Chris but the story telling will be led by them.

5. UDL: The Unexpected Outcomes of using Podcasts as an Assessment. Kirsty Fraser, University of Worcester, UK

This story explores the innovative integration of student-produced podcasts as an inclusive authentic assessment method in health, well-being, and community courses. We will showcase the direct and indirect benefits of employing podcasts as a dynamic and inclusive approach to assessment.

The Foundation Year in Healthcare is a relatively new course at UW and was designed with UDL at the heart. Assessments are varied and inclusive using group assessments, podcasts and academic poster presentations alongside more traditional assessment options.

When faced with the concerns about the growth of AI in student assessments, staff wanted to explore creative ways to encourage students to engage with their independent study material by employing authentic assessments.

In a level 3 module which explores health and well-being in today's society, students who will be progressing to professional courses, are encouraged to explore equality and diversity in access to healthcare.

They had to explore a case study from different perspectives of healthcare. They needed to illustrate the ways in which various factors might impact health and well-being for that individual and address the impact of diversity accessing healthcare for a range of stakeholders.

Students were provided with a podcast each week so that they could access the information through multiple means of representation and gain an appreciation of the different ways in which they like to receive their learning.

Evening, Wed 26th , Workshop Abstracts

1. Networking to INCLUDE: Establishing and Extending the Global Impact of an Institutional Research Group Dr Sean Bracken, University of Worcester, UK Associate Professor Richard Jackson, Boston College, USA

In this facilitated workshop, the founders of the International Collaboratory for Leadership for Universally Designed Education will chart possible next steps for the network. Taking on board the Power of Potential concept of journeying, the workshop will reflect on past achievements while mapping possible future directions for the Collaboratory. It will do so by using a World Café format to address questions such as, 'What might the future focus of leadership look like for INCLUDE, and what might be the implications for leadership of the network?' Additionally, in an era that requires a research base to inform policy and practice, a major question for INCLUDE is, 'How can the current and future network of researchers assist in generating and sustaining organisational networks that are mutually supportive and beneficial?' And, in realising that objective, what are the measurable and demonstrable benchmarks for success? Join Richard and Seán in orienting next steps for INCLUDE.

2. Improving First Submission Rates Using Student Learning Time Specification Dr. Misrah Mohamed, and Dr. Rozailin Abdul Rahman, Coventry University, UK

A recent preliminary study on curriculum design and delivery revealed that students' learning time and effort requirements were not appropriately considered, leading to excessive workloads. This demonstrates that the concept of notional hours for degree completion is seldom scrutinised to ensure that educators' expectations towards learning and assessment activities are realistic. For example, in the design of assessment tasks, educators often overlook the time and effort students need for task completion and skills development. Additionally, there is a concerning reality around the volume of summative and formative assessments, the proportion of examinations to coursework, and the number of variations of assessments assigned to students (Tomas and Jessop, 2019). Consequently, students frequently struggle to manage the demands of their degree assessments alongside their learning contact hours, leading to increased stress levels, distance from the course material, and a rise in extension requests and mitigations, ultimately resulting in lower submission rates.

To ensure that students fully engage in the learning process, they should be provided with manageable learning and assessment loads. To do so, it is important for educators to consider students' learning time when planning instructions and designing assessments. While many educators indicate that they do consider students' learning time, some may not realize that the workloads they assign are indeed excessive. Thus, underpinning UDL principles, a student learning time (SLT) specification was developed to guide educators in planning module components. It was also designed based on the time students engage inside (learning contact hours) and outside the classroom (guided and independent study hours).

A study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the SLT specification. It involved 98 multidisciplinary postgraduate students who undertook an education module for 12 weeks. The findings revealed that all students agreed they were provided with appropriate learning and assessment loads throughout the semester, and all students managed to submit all assignments on time. The SLT specification has become a practical tool that guides educators in planning their module delivery and ensuring that students have manageable learning time.

Further research exploring the applicability of the SLT specification across different disciplines and student populations would benefit the relevant stakeholders. Thus, the workshop aims to introduce the SLT specification to the participants and gauge their interest. They will engage in a brief activity to identify student learning and assessment loads using the specification. Based on the activity, participants will be encouraged to reflect on the specification and how it could be used for their own students. By the end of the workshop, participants will know how to utilise the SLT specification in developing manageable workloads for students.

3. Belong and Thrive: “You can Maximise your Potential when you Feel Part of a Community”. Diane Asimoah, University of Worcester, UK Joanne Lewis, University of Worcester, UK

Taking the ethos and principles of the UDL approach to learning with students. A group of academics wanted to conduct a piece of research to further understand and fully appreciate the lived experience of students from ethnic minorities backgrounds who choose to study at the University of Worcester (UW). This project also aimed to capture the views and experiences of academic staff to understand if there were any perceived or actual barriers to embracing a UDL approach.

This piece of research sits within a regional context in which UW attracts a number of local students to study but the local ethnic minorities population of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, according to 2011 census data is an average of 6.75%. The UW ethnic minorities student participation rate is approximately 12% which is significantly lower than the sector participation rate of 31% (University of Worcester 2020)

The project, ‘Belong and Thrive’ has two interlocking themes that captured data through distinct lenses. The project has conducted focus groups to gather students’ perspectives on their learning journey. This has provided a valuable opportunity to explore students’ experience of learning and the challenges that they may face whilst studying. The researchers aim is to identify what support the students think is needed to address any oppression and discrimination in the learning environment. This project should offer an insight into the extent to which students have a “sense of belonging” when studying at UW.

The second aim of the project was focusing on the academic staff perspective. An anonymous questionnaire explored staff’s confidence in incorporating anti-oppressive practices, diversity and inclusion into the curriculum and their perspectives on attainment gaps and retention.

Data from both students and staff have now been collected and the workshop delivered at this conference will enable the research group to share with participants some of the voices of students and staff who have taken part in the research. Quotes related to voices of staff and student who participated in the research will be presented using the acronym 'Belong and Thrive'

B background
E emotive
L labelling
O origin
N non-judgemental
G galvanise action
T threat
H holistic
R anti-racist
I individuals
V valued
E environment

Workshop participants will be asked to reflect on these quotes, what feelings, emotions and thoughts do they conjure? Participants will be asked to capture their responses in small working groups. This workshop will be facilitated by members of the research group and will a safe space in which to explore individual, group and academic community perspectives. It will provide an opportunity through which UDL think and action can start to become fully embedded

4. Decolonizing UDL Dr Frederic Fovet, Thompson Rivers University, Canada

UDL has gained in popularity over the last decade both in the K-12 and the post-secondary sectors. The usefulness of UDL to create inclusive learning experiences for the full array of diverse learners has been well documented in the literature, and there is now increasing scholarship examining the process of integrating UDL strategically across organisations. One concern, however, remains under-reported and under-researched. Much of the scholarship on UDL ironically remains white and Eurocentric. Even if UDL, as a discourse,

considers the decolonization of the curriculum, it is abundantly clear that the research and advocacy related to UDL originates almost exclusively from the Global North and from a Euro-Caucasian authorship. It is argued that it is high time for the way UDL has been monopolized by Global North scholars and practitioners to be challenged. Voices discussing and framing UDL, from the Global South and Indigenous communities, must be amplified and showcased in order to rectify this glaring imbalance and contradiction.

This session represents an opportunity for the author to reflect on a volume he has just finished editing entitled *Decolonizing UDL* and to highlight and share insights into the key innovations, promising practices, and calls for change, originating from the Global South and Indigenous Communities, that have woven the canvas of this book. The session seeks to create a space for critical dialogue, for the challenging of existing power dynamics within the UDL scholarship, and for the emergence of transformative voices from underrepresented communities. The workshop will use the UDL principles scrupulously to engage participants in diverse ways (challenging single story approaches to the narrative that surrounds UDL implementation), as well as offer multiple means of action and expression for them to gain ownership over the key themes and concerns of the session (by encouraging a broad range of interventions, contributions, and stances). Multiple means of representation will also help offer participants a wide array of insights and voices from the book contributors and the narratives it contains, within the time allowed (using technology to support brief user-friendly windows into the various chapters).

The targeted outcomes of the workshop are:

- develop awareness in relation to the euro-centric nature of the UDL discourse
- explore perspectives, voices, and experiences that ground the UDL reflection in Global South and Indigenous contexts
- examine the barriers that hinder the visibility and momentum of Global South and Indigenous initiatives and narratives around UDL
- identify actions that can support the broadening of the UDL narratives and scholarly discourse to include non-Global North perspectives

5. Creativity and Wellbeing in the Classroom Lara Baker-Power, University of Worcester, UK

This workshop introduces delegates to the power of integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles through an art and crafting approach. An

example from practice will be shared to demonstrate a successful implementation of using this approach in a HE teaching session. Delegates will be invited to participate in a similar activity and related group discussions. Through this experiential learning delegates will gain skills to implement art and crafting into their own teaching sessions.

Using Art and Crafting in a Postgraduate Teaching Session The author is currently studying towards a PGCE in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and was inspired to incorporate active learning, using art and crafting, to students on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner (MHWP) postgraduate course at The University of Worcester. A recent session tasked students to identify signs of burnout and compassion fatigue in their own clinical practice whilst exploring ways to maintain and enhance their own wellbeing. Students are taught the critical nature of working collaboratively with patients (Dattilio & Hanna, 2012) to help strengthen the therapeutic relationship and empower patients in their own learning and recovery. To mirror this applied clinical practice to the students' own learning process, the session was created to align with active learning principles and move away from a didactic teaching session.

How does this link to UDL and its 3 Principles? UDL is an educational framework focused on cultivating an inclusive learning environment for all, where meeting the nuanced learning needs of individuals is a given and not a challenge requiring numerous adaptations (Bracken & Novak, 2019). Multiple Means of Engagement: to capture imagination and can help stave off feelings of boredom as individuals are actively involved in their learning and can build connections between the teaching topic and themselves (Rapp, 2014) Multiple Means of Representation: offers a variety of visual perspectives to learning, facilitating the freedom to generate metaphors through imagery to communicate understanding of a concept (Glass, Meyer & Rose, 2013). Multiple Means of Action and Expression: provides a multimodal alternative to meeting this principle by injecting a richness of creativity for students to convey their understanding of a subject (Hall, Meyer & Rose, 2012). Experiential learning tasks allows individuals to present their own interpretations of a concept *before* the educator provides definitions of such.

Workshop Purpose This workshop aims to: provide an opportunity to share the experience of HE teaching and learning through the integration of art and crafting; offer a development of new skills to implement UDL strategies into teaching sessions and improve student engagement; encourage participation

in open discussion about how and why incorporating art and crafting into HE teaching sessions might become a focus for future research.

6. Constructing Culturally Safe Learning Spaces Sethu Sundari, University of Worcester (UW), Lisa Mauro-Bracken, UW, Kevin Fernandez, UW, UK

Workshop key objectives:

- To raise the conscious awareness of educators about the need to design culturally safe and reliable instructional materials.
- To foster in the participants a cultural curiosity that permits challenging one's own practices and, in the end, results in a detachment from one's own perspective.
- Encourage participants to consider sensitive local and global issues from a global perspective by posing questions that speak to their interests.

Workshops Aligns:

- UDL - CHECKPOINT 2.1- **Clarify vocabulary and symbols**
- UDL - CHECKPOINT 2.4- **Promote understanding across languages**
- Culturally Sensitive Pedagogy

Workshop Agenda:

- *Section 1:* – Introduction and Pre-Workshop Questionnaire (5 minutes)
- *Section 2:* – Reflection on how we construct sessions, modules, or course materials. Title – Is there a need for change? (10 minutes)
- *Section 3:* – How to make cultural connection explicit? Title – When we open the can of worms, can we handle it? (40 minutes)
- *Section 4:* - Cultural Pledge. What are your takeaways from the workshop and what do you pledge to follow through in your practice. (5 minutes)

Summary: While drawing on existing literature on culturally sustaining pedagogy and Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT) for professional cultural competency, we advance our conceptualization of an ever-changing cultural continuum that moves between cultural curiosity and cultural competence. The session will provide a practical forum for discussing everything culture and learning.

Thursday 27th Parallel Presentations

Session A (Online and in-person)

1. A UDL Approach to Academic Stress Elizabeth Hitches, The University of Queensland, Australia

Internationally it is recognised that students across secondary and tertiary education experience high levels of stress related to their education (i.e. academic stress). The UDL guidelines prompt us to consider how we can minimise threats and distractions (7.3), support beliefs which optimise motivation (9.1) and facilitate personal coping skills and strategies (9.2). In this presentation, Elizabeth will draw on current research and explore why it is crucial we consider students' academic stress in working towards these checkpoints, not only to support students' learning, but their physical and mental health too. It is hoped participants will be empowered to see the role they can play, drawing on UDL to proactively reduce unnecessary academic stressors in our learning and teaching environments. It is essential academic stress does not impede students' potential, and UDL offers a means to assist us in this challenge.

2. Towards Inclusive Learning Spaces: Unravelling Teacher-Student Dynamics in Moroccan High Schools Nouh Alaoui Mhamdi, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Morocco

The proposed research seeks to investigate the dynamics between Moroccan teachers and students within the context of promoting student agency in high school classrooms, especially when it comes to English classes. As an educator in a Moroccan high school, I have witnessed the many roles teachers can take in classes, and how pivotal such roles are for either fostering or constraining student agency and influencing the overall learning environment. This qualitative study aims to shed light on the sometimes very complex nature of teacher-student relationships in Moroccan high schools and explore strategies, especially within the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and its many potentials for cultivating these relationships to empower students in their educational journey and beyond.

This research will seek to answer the following questions:

- What is the role of Moroccan teachers in promoting or limiting student agency?
- How can teacher-student relationships in Morocco be cultivated to empower students in their learning journey?

The study will employ semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method, complemented by insights derived from the researcher's extensive experience as an English teacher in a Moroccan high school. The qualitative approach is chosen to provide a rich understanding of the teacher-student dynamics, allowing participants to share their perspectives and experiences freely.

A purposive sampling method will be employed to select teachers and students from diverse backgrounds, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the Moroccan high school landscape. Moreover, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with both teachers and students. The interview questions will be designed to elicit responses that explore the perceived roles of teachers in shaping student agency and the factors influencing teacher-student relationships in classrooms.

Thematic analysis will be employed to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights emerging from the interviews. The qualitative data will be systematically coded, categorized, and interpreted. In addition, the study will adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' anonymity and lived experience.

This research seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge on teacher-student dynamics in Moroccan high schools, with a specific focus on how these dynamics impact student agency. By uncovering the roles teachers play in either fostering or constraining student empowerment, the study aims to provide actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and educational practitioners seeking to create inclusive learning spaces.

To add more, this research project aligns seamlessly with the overarching theme of the conference on Universal Design for Learning, emphasizing the importance of socially just approaches to education and the empowerment of learners in diverse cultural and economic contexts.

3. A Scoping Literature Review of UDL Principles Embedded in Subjects in Secondary Education Danielle Phelan, Atlantic Technological University (ATU), Ireland Dr Helen Maguire ATU, Dr Clare Finnegan, ATU

Responding to student diversity is regarded as a key policy priority in education systems worldwide. Universal Design for Learning is a transformative pedagogical approach in promoting inclusive and equitable education as a response to student diversity. UDL has the capacity to facilitate the removal of barriers, making curricula accessible to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds, learning preferences and abilities. To date, much of the research has focused on UDL in the higher education sector. There is a dearth of research surrounding UDL and its potential impact for inclusive practice in secondary education. UDL integration is paramount as a foundation for learning in secondary education, ensuring all students have an equitable chance to success, by ingraining a passion to continue learning, either by progressing to third level or when in employment. The aim of the study is to identify the application of the principles of UDL into the teaching, learning and assessment practices of secondary education curricula at a national and international level. The study conducted a scoping review of the application of UDL in secondary education to offer an overview and guide for future research. The PRISMA ScR (2020) methodological framework was used. EBSCO, SAGE and JSTOR were used to source relevant literature. The data analysis process used was Rayyan, organising the articles throughout the screening and full text reviews. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, three researchers screened articles based on their title and abstract. The articles accepted were analysed based on the full text. Consensus by the three researchers was used in including the research articles for the scoping review. Numerical summaries and thematic analysis were used to describe the data quantitatively and qualitatively, respectively. Of the 1,912 article courses, nineteen met the inclusion criteria. Results show that most of the studies were based in North America, used an intervention method, and reported positive results on student engagement post intervention. While all articles displayed evidence of UDL pedagogical practices, some articles did not specifically identify these practices as UDL. This could suggest that 1) awareness of UDL as an inclusive pedagogical framework is lacking in current educational research, and 2) UDL may be incorporated into teaching practices more frequently than is currently being identified. The findings therefore suggest that many studies which explore inclusive practices are not naming these practices

specifically as UDL which may suggest a need to further bolster awareness of UDL for educators given the potential role it can have for inclusion in secondary education. Additionally, there is a scarcity of research on UDL in secondary education from a European context suggesting that further study in this region may provide novel insight into operationalisation of UDL in different educational settings.

4. ENABLE Framework: Contextualising UDL at UCT Lauren Butler, University of Cape Town, South Africa Nadine Hamman, University of Cape Town, South Africa

In this presentation we will share the Enabling Accessible Blended Learning for Equity (ENABLE) framework developed to address accessibility, inclusion, and equity issues in teaching and learning at UCT. By applying strategies and suggestions from [the ENABLE framework](#), our hope is for teaching and learning experiences to become living examples of social justice in practice. In the presentation, we will share examples from specific courses which illustrate the elements of the ENABLE framework.

The ENABLE framework brings into conversation the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and specifically the [CAST UDL Guidelines](#), with curriculum and learning design processes for different types of blended learning in higher education, namely:

- Deliberative course planning
- Student-centred learning
- Responsive teaching and online engagement design
- Flexible assessment and feedback
- Expansive evaluation and reflection
- Accessible course materials and technologies
- Unambiguous communication

The ENABLE framework was developed primarily for teaching staff at the University of Cape Town (UCT) as part of a project funded by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) from 2021-2023. The project was hosted by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) and the work was supported by the Including Disability in Education in Africa (IDEA) research unit in the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. All the materials have been released as Open Educational Resources (OER) for use under a Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC-BY).

5. Disrupting Ableism in STEM with UDL Sam Johnston and Dr Luiz Perez, CAST, USA

Join Sam Johnston and Luis Perez from CAST for a discussion of Universal Design for Learning strategies for creating more inclusive learning environments in STEM fields by reducing barriers in classroom instruction, lab-based learning, research and fieldwork placements. CAST pioneered accessibility in education and the UDL framework and continues to update the UDL Guidelines to ensure they reflect the latest findings from the learning sciences and the needs of the field. Sam and Luis are part of CAST's Postsecondary and Workforce Development team that works to increase access to middle- and high-income careers for populations underrepresented in the workforce, including people with disabilities. Their work is informed by lived experience as a person with a disability (Luis) and the parent of a learner with a disability (Sam).

6. Integrating Working Memory into UDL and inclusive education: A Comprehensive Approach Hamid Meziane, Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Morocco

Working memory is a limited-capacity cognitive system responsible for temporarily holding and processing information required for complex cognitive tasks, such as learning. Students with diverse learning needs, including those with learning disabilities or attention difficulties, often face challenges in working memory capacity and efficiency. Universal Design for Learning, on the other hand, offers a proactive approach to address these challenges by providing multiple means of representation, action, and engagement. This paper reviews the literature on working memory and UDL, highlighting their interconnectedness in inclusive education. The review includes empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and practical applications of working memory in UDL-based learning environments.

Providing Multiple Means of Representation: To accommodate diverse working memory capacities, educators can present information in various formats, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic representations. This approach allows students to select the format that best suits their working memory needs, ultimately enhancing their learning experiences.

Offering Multiple Means of Action and Engagement: By providing alternative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge, educators can accommodate individual differences in working memory. For example,

allowing students to choose between writing, drawing, or presenting their ideas can cater to their working memory strengths and preferences.

Emphasizing Executive Function Skills: Working memory is closely related to executive functions, such as cognitive flexibility, inhibition, and planning. Integrating strategies that target these skills into UDL-based instruction can further support students with diverse working memory capacities.

Implications for Educators and Students:

Educators: Understanding the role of working memory in learning can help educators design more effective and inclusive learning environments. By incorporating working memory principles into UDL practices, they can cater to the diverse needs of their students, ultimately promoting equitable learning opportunities.

Students: Incorporating working memory strategies into UDL-based learning environments can benefit all students, particularly those with diverse learning needs. By providing multiple means of representation, action, and engagement, students can access and process information more efficiently, leading to improved learning outcomes.

Integrating working memory into UDL and inclusive education can significantly enhance learning experiences and outcomes for students with diverse needs. By understanding the relationship between working memory and UDL, educators can create more inclusive and effective learning environments.

7. Toward Inclusive Digital Education: Integrating UDL in E-Learning Platforms Dr Sana El Jamly, Khadija Eslifani, and Prof El Makhtar El Maouhal, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

In a digital age characterized by the proliferation of e-learning platforms, there is unprecedented access to education. However, this growth raises questions about the adaptability of these platforms to the varied needs of students. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offers a solution to this issue by providing a framework to make education more inclusive and accessible. This research examines the integration of UDL principles within e-learning platforms, seeking effective strategies to accommodate learner diversity.

Using a qualitative approach, the study relies on semi-structured interviews with UDL pioneers and e-learning platform designers. The goal is to gain insights into the implementation of UDL principles, particularly in terms of engagement, representation, and action/expression, and to gather data on challenges and potential solutions.

The findings reveal a consensus on the importance of UDL's three core principles. For engagement, successful strategies include personalized learning and the implementation of motivational systems such as gamification. Regarding representation, the integration of multimodal educational resources (textual, audiovisual, interactive) is crucial to address different learning styles. Finally, for action and expression, providing students with various ways to demonstrate their knowledge, such as creative projects or multimedia presentations, is essential. These discoveries emphasize the need for a flexible and adaptable architecture in e-learning platforms to effectively meet the diverse learning needs.

In-Person Presentation Abstracts Session B

1. Celebrating Autism as a Neurodiversity: A Crucial Component of UDL Dr Julie S. Prentice, University of Worcester, UK

Although every person on the autism spectrum is unique, autistic people have a cognitive processing style that is shared with other autistic individuals. This results in different ways of interpreting and interacting with people and the environment, when compared to those without autism (Autism Education Trust, 2021). This presentation advocates the importance of integrating celebration of neurodiversity within a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach to establish inclusive environments that enhance autistic young people's views of self.

The rationale is informed by PhD research that explored the impact of autism diagnosis from the perspectives of children and young people on the autism spectrum, parents of autistic children, and professionals involved in diagnosis and post diagnosis support (Prentice, 2022). Key findings highlighted the negative impact that children and young people's experiences in education had on their self-views, especially before their diagnosis. Young people described feeling different and of struggling to understand their differences. They often compared themselves to their non-autistic peers, perceiving themselves negatively, especially in terms of academic and social self-efficacy. Autistic young people

often described themselves using the language of deficit or disorder, as also identified by other researchers (Huws and Jones, 2008; Baines, 2012; Jones et al. 2015). Problematic learning experiences, perspectives and social interactions within education negatively impacted young people's self-views and their mental wellbeing, emphasising the importance of change.

The use of the term neurodiversity is increasingly advocated as a way of discussing individuals who process cognitive information differently (e.g. British Dyslexia Association, 2018; Griffin and Pollak, 2009) and has it has been advocated as a response to negative labelling associated with medical model perspectives of disability. UDL is based on neuroscience that evidences a variety of cognitive processing and learning styles, which require a response that is flexible and varied to meet the diversity of approaches to learning (Rose and Meyer, 2002). To facilitate this, the key principles in UDL aim to provide multiple ways of engagement, representation and expression so that students have different ways to access, process and demonstrate their learning (CAST, 2018).

Drawing together the principles of UDL with an embedded celebration for neurodiversity could positively change the experiences of autistic young people and the self-views that they develop. This could be achieved by raising educators' and school pupils' awareness of neurodiversity, with an emphasis on the celebration of difference and diversity, alongside curriculums that are based the principles of universal design, which do not emphasise difference. Such an approach would ensure that all learning environments were truly inclusive and conducive to the development of positive self-views.

2. Cross-Pollination of UDL and Neurodiversity Frameworks to Improve Opportunities for Expression of Learning Aashna Khurana and Professor Kristen Bottema-Beutel, Boston College, USA

The transformation in global perspectives on knowledge transmission due to globalization necessitates a re-evaluation of educational assessment practices. Current systems prioritize uniformity over embracing the diverse neurological and cultural backgrounds of students, often leading to exclusionary assessment methods. This paper argues for a shift toward neurodiversity-affirming and universally designed assessment practices, drawing on the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework and advocating for cross-pollination with neurodiversity frameworks.

Emphasizing construct relevance and neurodivergent literacies, assessments should align with students' unique strengths and competencies. This involves providing diverse content and expression options that accommodate individual needs and contexts, echoing UDL's principle of multiple means of action and expression. Additionally, assessments must consider the needs of multilingual learners and incorporate diverse cultural and linguistic contexts to prevent marginalization.

The paper advocates for providing options for physical action, expression, and communication in assessments, leveraging technology and performance-based methods to optimize access and accommodate diverse learning styles. By aligning with UDL guidelines, educators can ensure that assessments cater to the varied needs of neurodivergent learners, fostering inclusive environments that celebrate diversity.

Furthermore, the integration of neurodiversity-affirming approaches with UDL principles supports the development of executive functions and promotes engagement by aligning assessment goals with students' interests. This inclusive approach not only benefits neurodivergent learners but also fosters understanding and acceptance among neurotypical peers.

To sum up, by acknowledging the inherent diversity of learners and embracing the principles of both Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Neurodiversity, educators can revolutionize assessment practices to better serve all students. The convergence of these frameworks offers a holistic approach to assessment design, one that prioritizes flexibility, relevance, and equity. This inclusive paradigm not only accommodates individual differences in learning styles, neurological profiles, and cultural backgrounds but also celebrates the richness of human cognitive diversity. Through cross-pollination between UDL and Neurodiversity frameworks, assessment practices can evolve to provide multiple pathways for expression and engagement, ensuring that every learner has equitable opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities. This paradigm shift in assessment practices contributes to the cultivation of supportive and inclusive educational landscapes, where every learner, regardless of neurodiversity or cultural background, can thrive and succeed.

3. Using UDL Principles in an Immersive Simulation of Sensory Overload Kirsty Wedgbury and Susan Poultney, University of Worcester, UK

Background: Atypical sensory processing is a difficulty in regulating and managing sensory input in a meaningful way. Sensory processing disorder (SPD) is common in individuals with autism, pervasive development conditions and neurodivergence. The Experiencing Sensory Overload simulation aims to champion inclusive practice and reduce health inequalities by encouraging student nurses to reconsider their working environments to create sensorily safe spaces for individuals who experience SPD.

This multi-modal simulation utilises UDL principles throughout in order to actively role model what we expect student-nurses to consider in their own practice. This approach also provides the best educational experience for our diverse learners.

Simulation Design: A UDL approach to the simulation was designed to provide multiple means of engagement via film, animation, virtual reality, podcasts, and an immersive simulation. These are all designed to challenge and affect a shift in the learners' affective domains (Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, 1964), impacting on the students' behaviours, attitudes and awareness.

Meaningful Difference: The data showed that students enhanced their understanding of the challenges of sensory overload, envisaging reasonable adjustments to ensure inclusive practice. The authors believe that this simulation is effective and will positively impact on nursing students' ability to care for neurodiverse individuals. Universal Design for Learning principles help to role model different approaches to best practice enabling students to both meet their own potential and to transfer these principles to their inclusive nursing practice.

4. Developing an Inclusive Ecology in Higher Education using UD – A Pragmatist's Perspective Thomas O Shaughnessy, University of Limerick, Ireland

The growth of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design (UD) practices across educational literature has the potential to reshape inclusive Universal Design education across Ireland. However, despite publications, including the UD ALTITUDE Charter for tertiary education earlier this year, concerns about UD practices and implementation strategies in higher education still reverberate. These concerns include the lack of research on UD, higher

education culture and structure, virtue signalling and other aspects including teacher education.

The lack of research in higher education's UD and UDL space is a great cause for concern. Despite practitioner experience showing the tangible benefits of more inclusive practices like those underpinning UDL, concerns about the capabilities of UD practices like UDL won't abate. In addition to the research, there is a lack of dialogue and discourse around the potential shortcomings of collaboration and resources needed to implement more UD practices in higher education. This has resulted in some academics undermining the planned progress in this space. Moreover, others have associated these inclusive frameworks with the educational myth of learning styles. The call for more rigorous and robust research in this space has been repeatedly echoed but remains answered.

The structure and culture of higher education institutions can also create a barrier to progress in this UD space. The silos and demarcations which are ever present in large educational institutions can significantly impede an approach aimed at developing a more inclusive culture. Moreover, despite the teaching and learning developments during the global pandemic, many higher education institutions are slowly trying to revert to their traditional, less inclusive approaches, which are no longer sustainable. This can be further exacerbated by the marketisation of higher education, where temporary contracts are the norm, and promotion and a promise of permanency drive academics in the direction of research over teaching.

A lack of advocacy for accessible practices is another concern. Accessibility and UD are mutually inclusive; you cannot have universally designed structures or practices without accessibility. However, accessibility is often seen by many in this UD space as an optional add-on. This has been regularly echoed in practices where accessibility is completely absent across UD events, digital content, and communications despite the legal obligations that enforce it.

With the ever-growing numbers of diverse students across higher education, the only sustainable and practical solution rests with inclusive approaches underpinned by the principles of UD. This presentation is designed to drive discourse in this space, identify potential barriers and identify potential pathways forward.

5. Using UD and UDL to Reconceptualise Career Guidance Dr Mary Quirke and Dr Conor McGuckin, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

This paper explores how Universal Design (UD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) might contribute to a more active inclusive approach in career guidance; how UD(L) might contribute to a reframing of career guidance for a greater diversity just as it aims to do in education. Frank Parsons, identified as the godfather of career theory established the significance of a more scientific approach when making learning and career choices recognising that career decisions required careful consideration (Jones, 1994). Sears (1982) identified guidance as a lifelong activity – and further thinking has continued to evolve in relation to sociological, chance, and individual factors. Career Guidance theory is constantly developing; constantly influenced by economies, technologies, globalization, and developments in education (Brewer, 1942). The 1980's saw the role of women being considered in relation to work, and the mid 1990's explored cultural differences (Farmer 1985; Leong 1995). More recently career guidance and theory has been considered in relation to cultural context (Sultana, 2011) and racism (Souto & Sotkasiira, 2022). In 2001, Herr (2001) credited career guidance as a contributor to the equality agenda, while more recently Hooley and Sultana (2016) positioned career guidance as a critical contributor to social justice discourse. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015), demand we rethink inclusion for a diverse population in changing world, in education (SDG04) in work (SDG09) and across communities (SDG11), actions Career Guidance directly links into.

Methods: This paper shares the results of a doctoral study that explored inclusion in career guidance, both adopting and learning from the philosophy and practice of UD and UDL (Rose & Meyer, 2006) within a Bronfenbrenner (1979) bio-ecological framework, that was inspired by the work of Freire (1970).

A Delphi Study influenced by a literature review and a qualitative study that engaged with a small cohort of “successful” learners with a disability was conducted. The objective was to seek expert opinion on “Inclusive Approaches for Career Guidance”.

Findings and Discussion: Key findings identified how a deeper understanding of guidance relationships is necessary if a more sustainable approach for inclusion is to be developed. Having engaged in three rounds, the Delphi Study realised consensus. “Powerplay” was identified as a central theme with six key areas for consideration identified for a UD(L) approach in career guidance. The overarching

findings identified that Career Guidance is a powerful relationship directing learners' choices in relation to learning and work. Career conversations have the power to include or exclude, to encourage or discourage. How capability if considered can be overshadowed by beliefs about disability. Knowledge of inclusion in learning and work is necessary for Career Guidance, the professional engaged in Career Guidance has the power to redefine their role in terms of inclusion, and an understanding of inclusion in context of Career Guidance is necessary – UD (L) demands an appreciation of context. A deeper consideration of the career guidance relationship in relation to the six findings necessitate a renewed focus on concepts of self-advocacy, self-efficacy, and other-efficacy, with career conversations needing to appreciate the lived experience of disability. The findings identified that inclusive approaches in Career Guidance necessitate a deeper appreciation of “inclusion” itself and exclusion in not just learning environments but work and across contemporary societies.

Conclusion: The findings of this research can be used to inform research, policy, and practice and make a valuable contribution for a new diversity of learners engaging in career guidance relationships. Moreover, the paper will share how an exploration of the career guidance relationship demands that UD(L) be reconsidered in the context of all professionals engaged in contemporary lifelong learning inclusive relationships. Otherwise, the risk is that UD(L) itself becomes a one size fits all approach.

In-Person Presentation Session C

Symposium A

Empowering Diverse Learners: Integrating Universal Design for Learning in Moroccan Education
Coordinator: Professor Mustapha Aabi, ICEQ Co-Chair,
Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

The LARLANCO research group from Ibn Zohr University, Morocco, presents a comprehensive exploration of inclusive education and assessment practices in diverse Moroccan educational contexts. The symposium titled "Innovative Practices in Inclusive Education and Assessment in Morocco" captures the essence of seven individual studies, each focusing on different aspects of the

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to enhance educational outcomes across various levels and settings.

The studies range from inclusive education in primary schools, highlighting the realities, pedagogical practices, and social representations of teachers and parents towards children with disabilities, to revolutionizing assessment methods in multilingual Moroccan higher education. The emphasis is on adopting UDL principles to ensure equitable evaluations that reflect the diverse learning needs of students, considering Morocco's rich linguistic and cultural diversity.

Key findings across these studies underscore the significant benefits of inclusive education for students with disabilities, emphasizing the role of the learning environment, especially the contributions of classmates and teachers using innovative approaches. However, challenges related to socio-economic inequalities, sociocultural representations of disability, and the need for comprehensive teacher preparation are noted. In higher education, innovative assessment strategies such as performance-based and portfolio assessments are advocated to accommodate different learning styles and linguistic backgrounds, aiming for more equitable and effective practices.

This symposium not only sheds light on the current state of inclusive education and assessment in Morocco but also proposes actionable recommendations for educators, policymakers, and researchers to foster an inclusive educational environment that embraces the linguistic and cultural diversity of the student body.

1. Revolutionizing Assessment in Multilingual Moroccan Higher Education: A Path towards Inclusivity Dr Amal Ben Attou, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

Conventional evaluation methods are faced with unique challenges when evaluating the Moroccan educational system's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. To critically examine and propose advances in assessment practices, this paper uses empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks from recognized academic discourse. The project emphasizes the importance of adopting Universal Design for Learning (UDL), as advocated by Rose and Meyer (2002) in their foundational text "Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning", to ensure equitable evaluations that reflect the diverse learning needs of students. Through a qualitative methodology, this research examines the perceptions of Moroccan educators

regarding current assessment practices in multilingual settings. This investigation focuses on the interaction between linguistic and cultural factors and their effect on the reliability and validity of assessments, drawing insights from the works of *Cummins (2000)*, who discusses the challenges of language assessment in multilingual environments in "Language, Power and Pedagogy". The study further explores the potential of UDL-based assessments in accommodating different learning styles, influenced by the practical applications discussed in *Meyer, Rose, and Gordon (2014)* in "Universal Design for Learning: Theory and Practice". This inquiry highlights innovative assessment strategies, such as performance-based assessments, which allow for the demonstration of skills in real-world contexts, and portfolio assessments, which provide a comprehensive overview of student learning over time. These strategies are supported by the research of *Black and William (1998)* their significant contribution to formative assessment, "Assessment and Classroom Learning", published in "Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice". The study advocates for assessment formats that tailor to students' strengths and preferences, and these calls for personalized learning environments are also echoed in the research by *Tomlinson and McTighe (2006)* in "Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design". By integrating these innovative strategies, the paper aims to contribute to the development of more equitable and effective assessment practices in Moroccan higher education. Through a synthesis of theoretical insights and empirical evidence, this study proposes a framework for reimagining assessment practices in Moroccan Master's programs. It calls for a collaborative effort among educators, policymakers, and researchers to foster an inclusive educational environment that embraces the linguistic and cultural diversity of the student body.

2. Advancing Inclusion in Online Assessment Practices in Moroccan Education Professor El Makhtar El Maouhal, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco Dr. Brahim Abaragh, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

As educational institutions in Morocco increasingly integrate digital technologies into their pedagogical approaches, the imperative to ensure inclusive online assessment practices has never been more critical. This paper examines the current landscape of online assessment within Moroccan education, focusing on the strategies and methodologies employed to accommodate diverse learners, including those with disabilities. Utilizing a comprehensive literature review and analysis of existing online educational

platforms and policies, this study identifies both the progress made and the challenges that persist in achieving truly inclusive online assessments. The analysis reveals a significant growth in the adoption of online learning tools and methods but underscores a gap in the implementation of inclusive assessment practices that cater to the needs of all students. Key issues include the lack of universally designed assessment tools, insufficient training for educators on inclusivity in digital environments, and the need for more robust policy frameworks that advocate for accessibility and equity in online learning assessments. The study proposes a set of recommendations aimed at enhancing inclusivity in online assessments. These include the development of guidelines for inclusive assessment design, the integration of accessible technologies, and the promotion of professional development programs for educators on inclusive teaching and assessment practices. By addressing these areas, Morocco can make significant strides towards creating an equitable educational environment that supports the success of every learner in the digital age.

3. Navigating Autism Spectrum Condition in Morocco: A Document Analysis of Current Challenges and Future Directions Dr. Mohamed Boufous, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

This study synthesizes findings from a comprehensive document analysis exploring the current state of autism spectrum condition (ASC) in Morocco. This investigation employs a document analysis approach, reviewing a range of materials including academic studies, government reports, policy documents, and non-governmental organization (NGO) publications to construct an overarching view of autism awareness, diagnosis, treatment, and support systems within the country.

In Morocco, awareness and understanding of autism are on a gradual rise, yet the condition remains under-recognized and under-diagnosed, particularly in rural areas. The analysis reveals significant gaps in the availability and accessibility of specialized healthcare services, educational facilities, and trained professionals equipped to support individuals with autism. Despite the Moroccan government's efforts to improve healthcare and education systems, families of children with ASD often face considerable challenges in accessing the necessary services, leading to a reliance on NGOs and private institutions for support.

Furthermore, the study highlights a pressing need for comprehensive training programs for healthcare providers and educators to enhance the early detection of autism and the implementation of effective intervention strategies. Cultural perceptions of autism and the stigma associated with developmental disorders pose additional barriers to seeking and providing support.

This document analysis underscores the urgent need for a multi-faceted approach to improve the state of autism care in Morocco. Recommendations include increasing public awareness, expanding training for professionals, enhancing government policies and funding, and fostering community-based support networks to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with ASC and their families.

4. Empowering Inclusive Democracies: Bridging UDL Strategies with Political Socialization for Youth Engagement in Morocco Associate Professor Hassan Oubelouhy & Rachid Amadane, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

This communication explores the intersection of inclusive education, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies, and political socialization to empower youth engagement in democratic processes, with a focus on the Moroccan context. Highlighting the critical role of education in shaping informed and active citizens, the presentation unveils the potential synergy between UDL principles and political socialization initiatives. Emphasizing the importance of community and family engagement, the discussion delves into collaborative models that foster inclusive educational environments and cultivate civic literacy. Quantitative and qualitative surveys illustrate successful integration, providing insights into the challenges and opportunities for the construction of inclusive democracies. The abstract concludes with a call to action, urging continued collaboration to bridge the gap between UDL strategies and political socialization for a more vibrant and participatory Moroccan society.

5. Inclusive Education and Classroom Practices: A Case Study of Multi-Level Class Management in Primary Schools of Agadir Idda Outanane Region – Morocco Professor Nacer Idrissi, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

This study delves into the intricacies of implementing inclusive education within the context of classroom practices, with a particular focus on the management of multi-level classes in primary schools of Agadir Idda Outanane, Morocco. Managing a classroom where students exhibit a wide range of skills and knowledge levels presents a significant challenge for educators, necessitating the adoption of diverse and effective teaching strategies to cater to each student's unique needs and foster their academic advancement. This research aims to shed light on the practical realities of this pedagogical approach by identifying the specific challenges faced by teachers in this setting. It draws upon case studies and interviews with seasoned educators to capture their experiences and strategies in navigating the complexities of multi-level class management. The findings aim to contribute valuable insights into effective practices that support inclusivity and learning for all students, offering implications for educators and policymakers within the Moroccan education system and beyond.

After Lunch Parallel Presentations, Thursday 27th

Session D Online and Blended

1. UDL in Early Childhood Education: Planning with a Design Thinking Approach, Learners Interests /Voices and Cooperative Work – A Successful Approach to Inclusion: SLP Nitza Guzmán Herrera, Colegio Hebreo Unión, Colombia

Expanding on the proposal, we emphasize a neuro-psychological perspective linked with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for early childhood educators. In Colombia, where inclusive education initiatives are crucial, this fusion of UDL principles with Design Thinking, learner voices, and cooperative work is pivotal. The presenter, boasting 20 years of experience as an inclusion advocate and former educator/director of childcare centers, brings a wealth of knowledge. As a speech therapist with a focus on neuro-psychological approaches in education and coaching, she offers a comprehensive understanding of children's needs. session equips educators with practical tools grounded in europsychological

insights. By integrating Design Thinking into lesson planning, educators create accessible experiences catering to all children's voices and interests. Collaboration with teachers fosters diverse perspectives, enhancing engagement and motivation. Attendees gain strategies to seamlessly integrate UDL practices, fostering inclusive educational environments in Colombia.

2. Socioeconomic Factors and University Dropout Rates: A Comparative Analysis of Morocco and the United Kingdom Dr Barbara Mitra, University of Worcester, UK Dr Hasnaa Chakir, Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Morocco Dr Abderrahman Essakhi, Chouaib Doukkali University, Morocco

This study investigates the impact of socioeconomic factors on university dropout rates in Morocco and the United Kingdom, shedding light on the nuanced challenges faced by students in both contexts. With higher education serving as a key driver for individual and societal advancement, understanding the factors contributing to dropout rates is crucial for educational policymakers and institutions. This research employs a qualitative approach based on focus groups and semi-structured interviews with students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in both Morocco and the United Kingdom to gather insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding university dropout in each country. Preliminary findings reveal that in Morocco, where socioeconomic disparities are pronounced, financial constraints, inadequate academic preparation, and limited access to support services are significant contributors to university dropouts. In contrast, initial findings from the United Kingdom, despite its relatively more robust economic landscape, found that students face similar issues of financial constraints alongside inadequate inclusion and awareness of specific needs. As well as this, preliminary findings suggested that some students with specific needs faced barriers and difficulties that could have been addressed by implementing UDL principles, particularly flexible learning adapted to the individual which could have motivated these students to stay at Worcester. Awareness of UDL principles and implementation of this would greatly benefit students to succeed in their learning and may help sustain them to stay on their courses. By comparing the experiences of Morocco and the UK, this research provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of university dropout rates globally, offering a foundation for evidence-based policymaking and strategic interventions to promote inclusivity and success in higher education.

3. Exploring UDL: Insight from Faculty and Students in Universitas Indonesia Fellianti Muzdalifah, Prof. Farida Kurniawati, Dr. Frieda M. Mangunsong, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia Astri Setiamurti, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

The successful implementation of inclusive education within higher education institutions hinges on the extent to which lecturers employ appropriate teaching strategies. This statement applies universally, including in Indonesia. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) emerges as a pedagogical framework fostering the creation of adaptable learning environments catering to the diverse needs of all learners. Through the application of Universal Design for Learning in inclusive education settings, lecturers can develop instructional materials, methodologies, and assessments that offer multiple avenues for representation, expression, and engagement, particularly for students with disabilities. Consequently, this research focuses on examining the degree to which lecturers have integrated the three principles of UDL into their teaching practices within classroom settings that include students with disabilities. Employing a qualitative approach with thematic data analysis, this study aims to elucidate the implementation of UDL principles by interviewing six lecturers with experience teaching students with disabilities alongside six students with disability. It is important to note that this research is still in progress, and data collection is currently underway. The findings of this research will enhance our understanding of the implementation process of UDL principles from both the perspectives of lecturers and students. This will inform the design of training programs aimed at lecturers' continuous professional development, particularly in Indonesia.

4. Charting the UDL Voyage: Transformative Practices at Atlantic Technological University (ATU) Maureen Haran, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland Dr Niamh Plunkett, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

Historical Context: Born from the amalgamation of three legacy Institutes of Technology—Institute of Technology Sligo (IT Sligo), Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), and Letterkenny Institute of Technology—and later joined by St. Angela's College Sligo, Atlantic Technological University (ATU) was established in April 2022. The university encompasses nine campuses with over 20,000 students and employs more than 2,200 staff. Pre-merger, both IT Sligo and GMIT had embraced the UDL framework, recognizing its adaptability to changing

technological and industry demands. ATU's legacy Institutes expressed dedication to transformative student experiences and fostering inclusive environments, setting the stage for UDL integration into the university's strategic vision.

Foundations of UDL in ATU: UDL awareness at ATU began with an information campaign and gained momentum through workshops led by prominent figures in the country. Grassroots efforts further propelled UDL adoption, leading to the establishment of the ATU-UDL Working Group. This group, inclusive of all ATU partners, ensures a systematic approach to UDL implementation through various initiatives, workshops and digital badge programs. In 2021, a staff survey revealed overwhelming interest in further integrating UDL into practice, prompting the establishment of the ATU UDL Centre of Excellence. This centre facilitates UDL adoption across the university.

UDL Programme Development: The university offers the Post Graduate Certificate/Masters in UDL—the first of its kind in Ireland. Additionally, various initiatives, such as the Inclusive Programme Review pilot, demonstrate ATU's dedication to embedding UDL principles across academic programs. The formation of the UD Regional Hub Network and collaboration between ATU and education training boards further extend UDL practices regionally. Academic peer networks on each campus foster a culture of sharing best practices, ensuring continuous improvement in inclusive education.

Meaningful Difference to UDL: ATU's student engagement efforts, including university-wide surveys and the development of the UDL Student Digital Badge, aim to raise awareness and promote student involvement in inclusive education. International collaborations, research endeavours, and celebratory conferences contribute to the sustainability of UDL practices at ATU. Moreover, top-down support from senior management, evident in the strategic plan integration and endorsement of the ALTITUDE Charter, ensures the longevity of UDL within the university. ATU's journey towards UDL integration exemplifies a commitment to transformative education and inclusivity. Our presentation will discuss how grassroots initiatives, institutional support, and national collaborations can make a meaningful difference in paving the way for sustainable UDL practices in higher education.

5. Analysing Videos with UDL – an Example from Teacher Training in German Malte Delere, TU Dortmund University, Germany

Professionalisation for inclusive teaching requires a wide range of efforts that impart both the necessary knowledge and attitudes of prospective teachers (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2022). Universal Design for Learning can play a special role here. It shows pre-service teachers a variety of aspects that are important for inclusive teaching. The consideration and appreciation of diversity from the outset which is a central requirement of UDL, can also serve as a medium for prospective teachers to examine and adapt their attitudes.

The planned presentation will present research on a task in teacher training in German for all types of schools. In the preparatory seminar for the Master's practical phase, the UDL is used as a framework for video analysis. We work with the newly created accessible video platform *degree* for the video analysis. The students apply the principles of UDL as codes in collaborative analyses of a third-party video. They also have the task of proposing alternative approaches for better implementation of the UDL in the classroom. Both processes are part of fostering their professional vision in the field of inclusion and the UDL. Afterward, the students individually reflect on their results and the significance of UDL for their future teaching in a written or oral memo to find a stronger personal relation to the new learned knowledge.

The results of the accompanying research to date show the potential of UDL in this design. The presentation presents both the conception of the task and the results of the accompanying research. Both the video analyses (the students are filmed during their video analyses) and the memos are evaluated qualitatively for this purpose. The aim is to further develop the design and explain its effect.

6. Developing and Strengthening Executive Functions for Strategic Learning. Alexis Reid, Reid Connect, USA

Through research and practice, Alexis Reid and her co-author, Lisa Carey are aware of how few teacher education programs address executive functions and how frequently educators hold misconceptions of how executive function can be supported in the learning environment. In their newly published book with CAST Publishing- *Supporting Student Executive Functions: Insights and Strategies for Educators*, Alexis Reid and Lisa Carey, unpack the collection of neurocognitive

skills that comprise executive functions, explain how these skills develop over time, and provide examples of ways to support and develop learners' executive functions. This talk will touch on these same themes to support UDL practitioners in more deeply understanding the UDL guideline: "provide options for executive functions". Alexis will draw on current research to discuss executive function support and development across a multitude of learning environments including in-person, in-person high-tech, and virtual.

Four core questions will be addressed:

- 1) What are executive functions?
- 2) How do executive functions develop?
- 3) How can we support executive functions in learning environments by reducing and removing barriers?
- 4) How can we assist learners in developing executive functions through strategic instructional design?

If there is time, participants will be encouraged to ask questions about executive function with a focus on addressing a multitude of learning environments and contexts. Additionally, for those participants who do not have time to ask their questions, or who think of their question after the session has ended, there will be multiple means of asking questions virtually.

7. Using AI to Enhance UDL in the Context of Language Learning in Morocco. Hasna Mekkaoui Alaoui, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

This study explores the integration of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance language instruction for science students in a Moroccan university context. Language teaching at the university level faces numerous challenges, including differences in language proficiency, learning styles, and specific learner needs. An adaptable approach is essential to ensure an inclusive and effective learning environment. ChatGPT offers the opportunity to tailor lessons to meet the needs of individual students. However, its integration poses challenges, particularly with regard to its use to support learners at different levels of proficiency. The study sample consists of two first-year classes. Assignments were formulated in accordance with UDL principles to address the specific needs of learners with academic difficulties. Students engaged in AI-

based activities and provided survey responses and completed assignments to assess academic impact. The research suggests that the alternatives provided in the training were effectively used by the students, indicating a successful integration of UDL principles. This highlights the importance of this approach in fostering an inclusive learning environment where students can express their understanding through multiple modalities.

Session E: Centring Learner voice and Building Partnerships

1. Utilising UDL Principles through Student Co-creation and Engagement Dr Misrah Mohamed and Dr Rozailin Abdul Rahman, Coventry University, UK

The growth of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design (UD) practices across educational literature has the potential to reshape inclusive Universal Design education across Ireland. However, despite publications, including the UD ALTITUDE Charter for tertiary education earlier this year, concerns about UD practices and implementation strategies in higher education still reverberate. These concerns include the lack of research on UD, higher education culture and structure, virtue signalling and other aspects including teacher education.

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slowly trying to revert to their traditional, less inclusive approaches, which are no longer sustainable. This can be further exacerbated by the marketisation of higher education, where temporary contracts are the norm, and promotion and a promise of permanency drive academics in the direction of research over teaching.

A lack of advocacy for accessible practices is another concern. Accessibility and UD are mutually inclusive; you cannot have universally designed structures or practices without accessibility. However, accessibility is often seen by many in this UD space as an optional add-on. This has been regularly echoed in practices where accessibility is completely absent across UD events, digital content, and communications despite the legal obligations that enforce it. With the ever-growing numbers of diverse students across higher education, the only sustainable and practical solution rests with inclusive approaches underpinned by the principles of UD. This presentation is designed to drive discourse in this space, identify potential barriers and identify potential pathways forward.

2. Empowering Students: Creating a Study Skills Portal through Universal Design for Learning and Community Collaboration Michelle Malomo; Kate Courage; Sarah Purcell and Jenny Watkins, University of Worcester, UK

This presentation will share our experiences in redesigning a study skills portal in a UK university using UDL principles, and through cross-departmental collaboration. The presentation will highlight good practice and explain the software used to develop the portal, which includes both Starting at University and Studying at University themes. We will show how bringing the skills of colleagues from academic departments and support services - all focused on improving our students' engagement in becoming student in higher education - enabled this portal to be created. Join us as members of the University's Study Skills Community of Practice, as we share how this project was achieved and launched in September 2023. Tentative findings from a student-led evaluation of the study skills portal will also be explored, which have resulted in a plan for future developments to encourage and empower students to succeed at university.

3. The Impact of MLS and CCM on Preservice Teacher Education for Collaborative and Inclusive Practices Dr Carmem Silvia de Souza Lima, São Paulo State University; Dr Elisa Tomoe Moriya Schlünzen, University of Western São Paulo and Professor Klaus Schlünzen Junior, São Paulo State University, Brazil

One of the major challenges in working toward inclusive education is introducing improved teaching processes into preservice education. We present a collaborative research experience aimed at engaging preservice teachers in innovative collaborative teaching practices from an inclusive perspective. The purpose of this study was to explore whether participation in Microteaching Lesson Study (MLS), underpinned by the Constructionist, Contextualized, and Meaningful (CCM) approach, facilitates collaborative learning and practical experiences toward inclusive education for preservice teachers. The CCM approach views teaching and learning as a holistic endeavour, valuing collaboration and diversity, and situating learning in the learner's context. According to the CCM approach, effective education and inclusive education are synonymous concepts, grounded in the belief that learning is for all. It emphasizes

the importance of meeting learners' needs and constructing knowledge based on their meaningful experiences. This research involved nine MLS case studies conducted in a teacher-preparation program at a public university in Brazil. MLS groups, including 33 preservice teachers, collaboratively planned research lessons to be conducted in in-person sessions. Each group completed one cycle of MLS during one academic semester. Three knowledgeable others were invited to provide feedback and connect the lesson to larger issues involving the participants' initial education. The study employed a qualitative, exploratory, and inductive methodology. By conducting a thorough examination of the data produced, preservice teachers' perceptions and constructions underwent analysis, interpretation, and categorization resulting in four thematic units. Beyond providing authentic teaching experience, preservice teachers demonstrated enhanced teaching skills, ability to reframe original teaching concepts, enhanced collaborative learning, increased confidence and sense ownership of their work, higher levels of understanding of student needs and effective teaching strategies, and increased awareness of theory and practice integration and inclusivity. The most common constraints perceived by participants refer to difficulties in understanding the MLS process, lack of teaching experience, collaboration with peers, feelings of isolation, and its unrealistic teaching context. This research underscores that international experiential studies employing LS to enhance inclusion exhibited commonalities with the CCM approach in terms of fostering teacher collaboration for effective professional development and emphasizing the importance of students' voices in enhancing and transforming teaching practices for inclusion. Additionally, the interconnectedness of LS and the CCM approach revealed the potential to enhance inclusive teaching practices, thereby facilitating education that caters to the diverse learning needs of all students in inclusive educational environments.

4. Exploring Potentials through the British Council Project 'Strengthening Higher Education in Indonesia and the UK through UDL' Dr Sean Bracken, Helen Wilson and Dr Emma V. Richardson, University of Worcester

Engaging in transnational collaboration and research, with UDL as a conceptual framework, provides scope for mutual growth and learning. This presentation identifies how a British Council funded research project between Higher Education (HE) colleagues at Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta, and the University of Worcester in the UK, has created learning opportunities as both challenges and

affordances have been encountered. The project aims to use qualitative research with learners and lecturers in HE to inform the design of two professional development UDL modules, the efficacy of which will be ascertained through the application of Lesson Study. As the formative stages of the project have been realised, the focus has been on the development of effective intercultural and communication strategies as a foundation for future action.

5. UDL and UD Beyond Badges: A Success Story from Ireland Erica Meslin and Danielle O'Rourke, AHEAD, Ireland

At AHEAD Ireland, we want UDL to be a household name, and we believe that we have come up with a great and dynamic method of getting UDL thinking and practices embedded at an individual level throughout tertiary education institutes in Ireland. This session will take a deep dive into what has been a very successful development of an online-based and peer-lead course, leading to the adoption of UD practices for thousands of tertiary education practitioners.

AHEAD alongside the University College Dublin have partnered up to create the most successful UD and UDL CPD course in Irish history. The initial UDL Course now has over 4000 graduates, making up a large chunk of tertiary education providers in the country. With the success of the primary badge, the collaboration has partnered up to create a secondary UD Beyond the Classroom badge to emphasise the professional development of staff working in students supports and engagement.

This session will highlight the positive work achieved by these badges, talking through various aspects of the project:

Structure of the courses

For the digital badge for Universal Design in Teaching & Learning course, there are three key elements that one has to undertake to achieve the badge. This session will talk through these elements.

Facilitation of the Courses- Regional and optional peer-group facilitators

One of the innovative approaches taken for the UDL badge has been the creation and adoption of an optional supplemental facilitator add-on piece to badge materials. In such, we have trained over 800 facilitators who have helped us to spread the reach of the UDL badge to participants all around Ireland. Peer group facilitators can help to roll-out the badge either during the annual national roll-

out, or at their own time in their individual institutions, proving to exponentially expand the reach of the Courses and Badge.

Embedding of the courses under a Creative Commons license

Recognising the importance of spreading the work of UDL as wide and as far as possible, badge and course materials are freely available to institutions interested in rolling it out locally by volunteer course facilitators.

The idea of a 'Digital Badge'

Unlike ordinary certificates, the digital badges come with a weight of other useful information such as a descriptor of the badge, a set of criteria met in order to receive the badge and in some cases, links to evidence of how the criteria has been met (e.g. an actual course assignment).

Partnership with the Learning Forum

To give the courses a bit of weight and recognition, the AHEAD and UCD partnership has certified these courses with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, a government organisation funded by the Irish Department of Education.

Development of the UD Beyond the Classroom Course

With the success of the UDL badge primarily aimed at teaching professionals, the UD Beyond course targets professionals working 'beyond the classroom', particularly those working in Student Support and Engagement.

Overall, this session will take a deep dive into what has proven to be a very successful project in the UDL sphere, ensuring the uptake of UDL practices by thousands of individuals. It will look at the aspects of what has made this course so successful, examining its creation, structure, and method for dissemination. We hope that this badge can encourage other organisations to partake in similar CPD processes and think outside of the box to not only increase the knowledge of UDL, but to ensure that it is being practiced.

Session F - Symposium B

1. What's Next for Universal Design for Learning? UDL 3.0 and Implications for Diverse Settings. Assistant Professor Tracy Galvin, University of Ulster, UK Assistant Professor Margaret Flood, Maynooth University, Ireland, Professor Susie Gronseth, University of Houston, USA

This symposium / workshop provides an overview of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) refresh initiative (3.0) draft version of the framework by CAST (2024). Using dialogue and storytelling, the session facilitators will describe the implications of the revised framework from their own contexts across the Island of Ireland (RoI and NI) and the US. Having gathered pre-recordings from global UDL advocates, the presenters will share what UDL means to them.

Then, participants will have opportunities to engage in discussion to share their insights and opinions on their own diverse experiences and what these changes would mean in terms of their own practice, with the draft 3.0 version.

The session will elicit participant feedback on the revised framework to identify perceptions of strengths of the UDL 3.0 language, and applications for practice in varied settings, such as early years, formal school settings, tertiary education and, alternative education contexts. The discussion would also flag potential challenges depending on cultural differences. The workshop will be interactive using polling and round table discussions, following a UDL approach by providing options for discussion.

We propose this workshop to be 90 minutes (it could be adapted to 45 minutes). Below is an estimated outline of the workshop.

CAST. (2024). Proposed updates for UDL guidelines 3.0 graphic organizer draft.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nIh1b4c2i9a95g6zPjmQOXfljwTbGuEFgljAimM0jfw/edit#heading=h.rsegxhuyh8u4>

Thursday 27th afternoon Workshops

1. **Disturbing Practice: How UDL Transformed a Community of Practice Teaching an Early Years Foundation Degree** Michelle Malomo, University of Worcester, UK, Sethu Sundari, University of Worcester, UK, Amanda McCully, Heart of Worcestershire College

This workshop will consider how UDL was used to frame the work of a community of practice. Learn how this community of practice embeds UDL into the design and delivery of an Early years Foundational Degree in a UK university. Gain an insight into how the community practice has placed UDL principles at the heart of its way of being. Discover how developing this habitus has been a journey of transformation both for those that teach the programme and the students. Gain an insight into the challenges, hope and development of this teaching community of practice. This will include snapshots of varied assessments, applying UDL principles to the teams practice and ethos, glimpses of a team away day and reflecting on what's next in our UDL journey. There will be opportunities for participants to participate in reflective pauses throughout the workshop.

2. **Framing UDL within the Sustainable Development Lens Across Institutions: Examining Opportunities and Challenges through a Canadian Case Study** Dr Frederic Fovet, Thompson Rivers University, Canada

Accessibility in higher education has thus far been addressed through a medical model approach focused on retrofitting. Teaching is designed for the 'traditional learner' and support services take on the task of assisting students who experience barriers in design, using remedial services outside the classroom. The demographics of higher education, however, have changed widely over the last two decades, and retrofitting approaches are no longer sustainable. The volume of demand is growing exponentially, wait times increase, and the cost of accessibility services rise in a way that becomes unmanageable. UDL, as an emerging model for the management of diversity, equips instructors to remove most barriers to learning and support the needs of diverse learners within the classroom itself. The need for a sustainable lens is tangible and pressing. Accessibility services and faculty are all painfully feeling first-hand the inability of the current structure to address the volume of service requests. UDL has the

potential to reduce this strain on support services and to re-empower faculty to create inclusive provisions. UDL adoption has immediate resource and funding implications. UDL integration represents a clear example of sustainable transformation: an initial focus on professional development with faculty leads to a reduction in spending on services that are non-renewable. This workshop will guide participants through a reflection as to the optimal ways to position UDL development within a sustainable development lens across a campus. It grounds its activities on a project which recently explored how UDL can fit within an innovative facet of the momentum around sustainability, one that goes beyond the focus on environmental and operational preoccupations and concentrates on social and pedagogical sustainability. Outcomes of the workshop are (i) explore how to explicitly frame UDL growth within sustainability goals; (ii) examine how this osmosis with the sustainability agenda can invigorate UDL development and integration; (iv) analyze the barriers that can hinder this intentional overlapping of UDL and sustainability; (v) formulate action items that can empower UDL and sustainability stakeholders to break this status quo.

3. Experts by Experience: Amplifying Diverse Learners' Voice to Inform UDL Practise Dr Emma V. Richardson, University of Worcester (UW), UK, Kirsty Wedgbury, UW, Anastasia Kennett, UW, Alice Hopkins, UW, Christian T. Wilson, UW, Harriet Lawrence UW.

This workshop is a panel informed discussion led and informed by diverse learners. If practitioners are to maintain the integrity of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), then the student voice must be central to informing the design and delivery of education in a way that includes all, and celebrates diverse ways of learning. By integrating the voice of such learners at the foundation of UDL, all students have the ability to thrive in education and beyond.

A panel of five university students with diverse learner voices will share their experiences of education, including the 'best' and worst' practise they have experienced.

This panel will be structured as follows:

Part 1: Preassigned questions set by the panel members to amplify questions they should be asked and answers that must be heard.

Part 2: Delegate generated questions submitted via QR code to ensure timely questions are asked and panel members can provide meaningful, thoughtful answers to these queries.

Part 3: An opportunity for all attendees to ask questions of the panel.

While we have a structure for this workshop, we encourage open, rich discussion between the panel and delegates that will inform improvements and developments for UDL, and inclusive education as a whole. Our desire is for educators to be inspired by these voices and facilitate a better learning environment for all students, staff, and wider university communities.

Friday 28th Morning Parallel Presentations:

1. Sustaining Global Initiatives in Educational Anthropology in Africa: Reconsidering New Perspectives of Leadership Styles, Morocco as an Example Professor Abdelaaziz El Bakkali, University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdulah, Morocco

In the act of sustainable global development, leadership education in Africa remains germane to overcome urgent political, economic, and environmental crises that stretch across the globe. Like other states of the continent, Morocco deploys various strategies to respond to the growing casualization of labor and knowledge production by bringing new light to leadership educational styles. Inspired by global youth initiatives, educational stakeholders deploy collective efforts to solve obstacles for a just world and sustainable future. Because the educational system has flopped with setbacks despite the reform stages and failed to approach the heart of this issue, African pedagogical actors try to redress the crux of the problem to allow learners access to a world of leadership and business with enough transferable skills and competencies. As this paper examines effective leadership in the educational sphere, particularly in the Moroccan context, it unravels the opportune challenges facing leadership progress in educational institutions. This paper discusses some perspectives that foreground potential advancements in educational anthropology. It adopts a meta-analysis design, whereby a special examination of the various studies that have already been conducted came with conclusions: perspectives and challenges. The typical meta-analysis method consists of articles, books, and any

scholarly academic source related to school effectiveness concerning leadership. Owing to its descriptive, diagnostic, and generative nature, this method allows the researcher to explore the wide range of pitfalls and weaknesses that provide potential opportunities for alternative conclusions to be adopted in restructured and well-run approaches to leadership and school effectiveness in educational anthropology. This paper's significant results and conclusions are to be qualitatively discussed and analyzed. The primary goal of this paper is to analyze effective leadership in international educational contexts, where Africa is no exception. In this continent, Moroccan, for example, school leaders examine problems and perspectives for establishing a new and future innovative school culture. Discussions on leadership styles in educational effectiveness will be used to build a framework that demonstrates the role of leadership in developing future leaders with adequate educational skills. These skills and values of the social sciences are deployed to empower international citizens to seek the truth, to deliberate together on current problems, and to shape a just and equitable future for global development. Through the 7th International Conference on Education Quality, I aim to engage in a venue for the deliberation on how the social sciences can advance the sustainable development goals to achieve justice and equality for all global citizens in the educational sphere, mainly advancing leadership styles. Thus, implementing education leadership has long been the core of the quality system of any innovative learning traits, where leadership and management overlap, according to different emphases over time and in different contexts, varied across countries and professional cultures. Also, the role of the leader is seen as of prime importance in raising standards and promoting school improvement. To this, the considerable emphasis reflects variations in the functioning of education systems and their historical, regional, and international policy contexts that will exert different stages of impact on institutions' work and, therefore, on the role of leaders in a universal design.

2. Empowering Student Support Professionals through UD Lisa Padden; Daniel Elliott and Kathryn Orr, University College Dublin, Ireland

This presentation will outline the recent development of a national CPD opportunity for student support and engagement professionals in Ireland: the Digital Badge for Universal Design Beyond the Classroom. This micro-credential has been designed to inspire staff to universally design their practices, regardless of their roles, so that all students and staff can engage successfully with their work.

The authors will explore what led to the development of the Badge, and the main steps in the development process, particularly highlighting the importance of collaboration across the traditional higher and further education sectors. Key components of the training course will be demonstrated and how it has been designed for widespread adoption, highlighting how the format can be easily implemented in other national contexts.

The authors will then examine how colleagues in their own institution have used their learning and knowledge gained from the Digital Badge to implement Universal Design in student supports and services. Central to this success is a partnership programme which enables this implementation and widespread Universal Design capacity building. The practical elements of this partnership programme will be shared as will key learnings from colleagues on how to implement Universal Design in a variety of student support contexts and across different teams.

Attendees will learn how the authors are expanding the reach of Universal Design from a teaching and learning focus to be widely adopted by all staff and colleagues in higher and further education organisations. This presentation focuses on the empowerment of student support staff utilising the Universal Design framework to provide an inclusive university experience beyond the reaches of the classroom setting.

3. Inclusive Education and UDL: Conceptualizing, Developing and Comparing Three Innovative Texts Dr Elizabeth Dalton, Dalton Educational Services International, USA; Professor Susie Gronseth, University of Houston, USA and Associate Professor Linda Plantin Ewe, Kristianstad University, Sweden

Following an international higher education conference in 2018, two colleagues pondered the idea of developing an edited book focused on inclusive instructional design and UDL. They recognized a need for such a resource and while neither had book publishing experience, but they did have many international connections. By leveraging these connections and working with several professional organizations and a world-wide book publisher, the colleagues successfully produced the edited volume entitled *Universal Access Through Inclusive Instructional Design: International Perspectives on UDL* in 2020 (Gronseth & Dalton, 2020). Later, these colleagues expanded their editing collaborations and in 2023 developed two additional books (with a different publisher) that focused on inclusive education

policies and practices around the world: *Building Inclusive Education in K-12 Classrooms and Higher Education: Theories and Principles* and *Developing Inclusive Environments in Education: Global Practices and Curricula* (Koreeda et al., 2023a, 2023b).

Throughout the process of developing and finalizing these books, each of the editors learned a great deal about working with authors from different countries, helping non-native English-speaking authors best “hone” their writing to meet professional standards, and how to coordinate with different publishers to meet deadlines and produce a final professional product. The books hold examples of international UDL policies and practices, inclusive instructional design processes and projects, inclusive educational theories and strategies at varied levels, and global design practices and curricula for developing accessible and inclusive educational environments. To explore one of the books further, see the interactive Prezi at the book website. <https://internationaludl.weebly.com/supplemental-materials.html>

In this proposed session, a representative chapter example from each book will first be presented and discussed. Then, the editors will share positive highlights and potential pitfalls of publishing edited books from their experiences. Participants will be invited for questions and discussion at the end of the session.

4. Amplifying UDL through the Implementation of Inclusive Student Voice Approaches Anastasia Kennett, University of Worcester, Worcester, UK

Student voice partnerships are consistently discussed for the challenges experienced when involving students with diverse needs in hierarchical partnerships (Bovill et al., 2016; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Seale, 2010). Research to date has never explored the depth of students’ experiences or provided a solution to improve accommodating for diverse students’ voice in partnership approaches (McLeod, 2011). This PhD research has sought to conceptualise inclusive student voice in higher education using a heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990). The PhD research has identified five key themes that articulate the diverse students experience when attempting to use their voice in partnership with staff. The five themes were: needing a trauma-informed safe space to regulate emotions, removing judgement through implementing trauma-informed practice, understanding and representation to enable authentic interaction, removing fear

by humanising those in positions of power, and needing choice and autonomy. This presentation will contextualise the literature pertaining to diverse students' experiences in student voice processes and outline the objectives and methodology of the research. A closer inspection of the five key themes will be undertaken to reflect on the additional incorporation of multiple means of trauma care in higher education practice in supporting inclusive student voice and partnership with diverse learners.

Session H: Global Case Studies

1. UDL - Building a Culture of Inclusion at Maynooth University Assistant Professor Margaret Flood; Dr Marian Crowley-Henry; Dr Alison Farrell; Professor Denise Rooney and Professor Moynagh Sullivan, Maynooth University, Ireland

Maynooth University (MU) is an increasingly diverse campus, with the largest number of pioneer students in Ireland, many students coming from other cultures, a welcoming LGBTQI+ culture, and a strong commitment to neuro-inclusion, as well as other protected identities. Integration, compensation for intersectional disadvantage and reduction of barriers to learning is key to the flourishing of the inclusive learning environment and is a priority of the Maynooth University Strategic Plan, 2023-2028, which positions the university as 'providing life-changing opportunities for all who can benefit from higher education' (2023, p. 6). This echoes the spirit and intentions of key UN Sustainable Development Goals through its purpose towards imagining and creating 'better futures for everyone, without discrimination, without judgement, without bias.' (2023, p. 6).

As part of a national Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) in Ireland, Maynooth University secured government funding to develop UDL at MU. One aspect of the institution's PATH projects was the UDL Teaching and Learning Fellowship initiative entitled 'UDL - Building a culture of inclusion in Maynooth University'. Working in collaboration with the Maynooth University Access Office

and the Centre for Teaching and Learning, four dedicated Faculty UDL Teaching and Learning Fellows are developing a transdisciplinary Resource Hub and an all-university awareness campaign. As well as producing open resources to share how teachers/lecturers may make small changes to be more UDL-oriented, this project also engages with professional and support offices and units across campus to ensure a university culture of inclusion is normalised. Our proposed presentation will discuss the development of this cross-faculty UDL Fellowship project to support staff with embedding UDL in their teaching, learning and assessment practices, as part of a broader commitment to inclusive education which involves the university community as a whole. It will outline key learnings in terms of creating and building an all-campus culture of inclusion through the lens of UDL. It will start by setting the global and national context for embedding UDL in Higher Education Institutes in Ireland before outlining the strategic value of UDL within Maynooth University. Next, it will outline the rationale for a cross-faculty collaborative fellowship approach to creating and sustaining an awareness and culture of UDL for inclusion on campus. We will outline and reflect on the steps taken thus far, the challenges and successes, and the vision for the future. We will integrate time and space into our presentation for conference participants to respond to our work and to consider how our model might support or inform their approach to UDL within their own settings.

2. The Effect of UDL on Students' Educational Satisfaction Assistant Professor Shadi Hijazi, The Emirates Academy of Identity and Citizenship, United Arab Emirates and Mahdaoui Wissale, Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

The purpose of this study was to investigate the universal design for learning (UDL) principles and students' educational satisfaction and the relationship that exists between these variables. The theoretical framework draws on pedagogical theory Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Hijazi & alshamsi (2022) Students' Educational Satisfaction Model (SESM). The study was conducted in two higher educational institutes located in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Three research questions were answered using quantitative data collected from 86 undergraduate students registered in the spring term of 2023-2024 academic year. During the courses, UDL was utilized as a teaching model in the English language classroom. The study was carried out throughout 10 weeks. Data cleaning, descriptive statistics and reliability statistics were run using IBM SPSS

Statistics Version 22. The findings indicated that teachers implemented the principle of multiple means of representation more than expression and engagement. In addition, the UDL principles (multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement) had positive significant relationships with students' satisfaction. In addition, multiple means of engagement principle found to increase the student's educational satisfaction more than multiple means of representation and action and expression. Consequently, English language instruction based on UDL may enhance students learning outcomes in English course. Based on these findings, recommendations for educators and policy makers were provided and ideas for further research were identified to explore the topic of interest further.

3. The Potential of UDL in Confronting Reductionism in Special Education: Highlights from ACESSI Study Group Dr Elizabete Cristina Costa Renders, University of São Caetano do Sul, Brazil

The Agenda 2030 defends the “inclusive and equitable quality education” (UNESCO, 2015). This calls teachers and researchers to a constant search for pedagogical support for special education from an inclusive perspective. ACESSI (research group) has studied special education and sought to design technical pedagogical proposals based on inclusive education and universal design for learning. It is understood that UDL, by offering guidelines for an accessible curricula approach, became an important support to committed teachers with equitable education. Therefore, we present, in light of this group's studies, a reflexive synthesis of UDL potential in the work with special education from an inclusive perspective.

Methods: It was chosen an integrative review supported in two Brazilian databases, with the temporal extract between 2018-2022: Scielo and BDTD (Brazilian Digital Library of Thesis and Dissertations) added to the findings of ACESSI studies.

Findings and Discussion: In the BDTD database, 18 scientific publications were found, being 12 master's dissertations and 06 doctorate thesis, with a focus on the interrelationship between universal design for learning and special education in 12 cases. Five of them handle teachers training (Zara, 2022; Anjos, 2022; Mendoza, 2022; Prais, 2020; Zerbato, 2018), highlighting the formative and collaborative research methodology, as also the understanding that UDL contributes to the

practice of inclusive teaching. One research relates UDL with Differentiated Instruction (Zara, 2022), seeing both as supports for the inclusive teaching practice. In Scielo, 10 articles were found. Two of them handled the teaching practice based on UDL and brought it closer to special education (Costa-Renders et al., 2021; Zerbato & Mendes, 2021).

In comparison, ACESSI has dedicated to research with formative methodologies (narrative and design-based researches), aiming at the teaching professional development in the perspective of inclusive education. Between 2018 and 2023, 23 master's dissertations and 08 Scientific Initiation researches have been concluded. In 2024, we also started doctorate level researches. In this set of investigations, it is highlighted the predominance of researches that start with the case regarding school inclusion of students eligible for special education, but not sticking to them.

Conclusion: The education researches in Brazil clearly showed, on the one hand, the persistent reductionism of inclusive education and UDL for special education, something pointed out by Griful-Freixenet et al (2019) in another literature review. On the other hand, the research shows the necessary search of pedagogical and technological support for the teaching practice based on the inclusive paradigm, aiming at special education in the inclusive perspective. Regarding ACESSI, we have opted for UDL and pedagogy of seasons in the sense of avoiding these reductionisms.

4. Implementing UDL in Arushi: Unlocking the Potential of Learners with Intellectual Disability Prof. Sujata Bhan and Dr Apoorva Panshikar, SNTD Women's University, India

Arushi- The Learning Centre is a self-supporting experimental unit for children with special needs at the Department of Special Education at SNTD Women's University, Mumbai, India. The Centre's primary goal is to provide specialized education to children with special needs who are not able to cope with the competitive existing mainstream education system. The learners in Arushi have disabilities like intellectual disability (ID), and autism spectrum disorders (ASD) with co-morbid conditions.

The present case study focuses on implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in one group of five students at Arushi. This article presents the UDL framework as one way to understand how to support learners with ID who

have high support needs. The pedagogy adopted is aimed at providing access to functional curriculum to these learners to make them motivated, knowledgeable, and goal directed.

Thematic curriculum approach is being followed at Arushi. The theme selected by the class teacher of this group is 'Modes of Transport'. The teacher uses multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression while teaching. She uses creative ways of making teaching learning process relevant and meaningful for the learners. It has been observed that there is a shift in the classroom behaviour of these learners. They are more curious, motivated and participative in the class. Their communication skills are improving and they share a better relationship with their teacher and peers. The class teacher is documenting the performance of her learners since she started to follow UDL in her class. She is also maintaining her personal journal wherein her own reflections on her pedagogy are being documented. She feels more enthusiastic and passionate about her planning of each class.

The article shows how UDL is being used to support enhancement in learning of this group and how all learners can access and engage in learning that recognizes them as expert learners. Considering the positive outcome of following UDL in one group, it is being planned to implement the same in all the groups of learners and ascertain how learner variability is a resource that improves education for all at Arushi.

Session I: Sharing Best Practice

2. Building Expert Learners through Goal-setting and Formative Feedback: Strategies and an Example from the International Research Experience for Students Program. Professor Susie Gronseth, University of Houston, USA

This best practice session will highlight recommendations for incorporating learner goal-setting as an intentional part of lessons or other formal educational experiences. Goal-setting is a strategic planning component of executive functioning in which long-term goals are broken into short-term goals that learners can attain and build upon (Navaitienė & Stasiūnaitienė, 2021). Universal Design for Learning (UDL) aims to “build expert learners who are purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal-directed” (CAST, 2018). At the *Internalize* level of the principle of providing multiple means

of action and expression, the UDL guideline of providing options for executive functions contains checkpoints for guiding appropriate goal-setting and enhancing learner capacity for monitoring progress. Goals that are more likely to be achievable are “SMART,” that is specific (target a specific area for improvement), measurable (quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress), assignable (specify who will do it), realistic (state what results can realistically be achieved), and time-related (specify when the result(s) can be achieved).

The session will describe an international research experience for undergraduate and graduate students in computer science called “IRES Scholars.” The summer program involves a collaboration between educators at universities in the south-central US and Mexico. In the first week of program orientation, participating US students are guided to set individual goals relating to 1) research in the automated analysis of multimodal and multilingual content, 2) working in a cross-disciplinary and multi-cultural research setting; 3) professional skills; and 4) engaging in a community of native Spanish speakers. To track their progress toward their goals, the students complete two journal logs during each of the six weeks at the research site in Mexico. The journal logs are open-response opportunities for the students to write about their experiences, thinking, and next steps for action regarding their developing interests, ideas, and understandings as they emerged through the program. During their final week at the research site, each student is interviewed by the project evaluation lead. As part of the interviews, students are asked to reflect upon their goals and describe the outcomes that they felt were influenced by or resulted from their participation in the program.

The session will conclude with ideas for supporting learner progress toward goals through instructor feedback, mentoring, and self-reflection.

3. Unlocking Potential: The Shri Ram School's Journey with UDL and Inclusive Education. Gurpreet Kaur, The Shri Ram School, India

The mission of The Shri Ram School is to provide each student with unique educational experiences in a safe, supportive environment that promotes values like self-discipline, motivation, and excellence in learning. The school collaborates with parents and the community to assist the students in developing skills that enable the students to become independent, self-sufficient adults who will succeed and contribute responsibly to a global community.

Embedded within the school's philosophy, encapsulated by the motto "Vidya Dadaati Vinayam" (from knowledge comes humility), are values of sensitivity, integrity, pride in one's heritage, and the pursuit of excellence. Additionally, central to its educational ethos is the robust Inclusion Programme, designed to seamlessly integrate students with diverse needs into mainstream classrooms.

This inclusive framework is implemented by a multidisciplinary team comprising mainstream teachers, special Educators, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and behaviour therapists. Through individualized curricula tailored to address each child's specific learning requirements, the school endeavours to unlock and maximize the potential of every student. A hallmark of The Shri Ram School's approach is characterized by its inclusive classrooms, where children with neurodivergent traits learn alongside neurotypical peers.

Embracing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the school adopts evidenced-based practices aimed at ensuring equitable access to education for all students. In these settings, accommodations are seamlessly integrated into the learning process to cater to the diverse needs of each child. For instance, during an English lesson, some learners are provided with PDF read-aloud options, while others are paired with more knowledgeable peers for collaborative reading exercises.

Moreover, the presence of special educators during classes ensures that all students receive adequate support in understanding the lesson content. Subsequent assignments, administered through platforms like MS Teams, offer multiple submission formats including audio recordings, video recordings, typing, or writing, thus accommodating varying learning preferences.

To assess comprehension and performance, exit slips and quizzes on platforms like MS Forms are utilized, providing valuable insights into each student's learning journey. Additionally, dedicated after-school classes are organized to address any learning gaps identified, ensuring that all learners receive targeted support tailored to their needs.

In essence, The Shri Ram School's commitment to inclusive education extends beyond words, manifesting in tangible practices that prioritize the holistic development of every student. By embracing the principles of UDL and sharing experiences from their journey, the school aims to inspire and empower educators globally to create inclusive learning environments where every child can thrive and succeed.

Therefore, the presentation will focus on presenting the case of The Shri Ram School by presenting the work of teachers, and explaining how they differentiate and adapt instruction according to the diverse needs of the learners. Furthermore, it will showcase the implementation of UDL across various domains, such as administration level, leadership level, teaching level.

4. Beyond Barriers: Implementing Universal Design for Learning to Promote Digital Literacy. Professor Annjanette Bennar and Professor Brandon Daily, Goodwin University, USA

In today's digital world, effective digital literacy skills are essential for academic, professional, and personal success. However, traditional approaches to digital literacy education can leave behind students with diverse needs and backgrounds, particularly those learners from underserved populations. This presentation explores the development and implementation of a digital literacy course at Goodwin University, a private, non-profit institution serving a large population of first-generation college students (59%) with a median age of 29 (72% over 25). Created in 2022, this course was designed with specific UDL principles and guidelines in mind to create a more accessible and inclusive experience for learners of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

This presentation will focus on incorporating specific UDL principles and strategies in the course's design to create an inclusive experience that aims to bridge the digital divide. Some of these strategies include providing multiple means of representation, action & expression, and engagement to cater to diverse learning styles, abilities, and prior technology experience. In creating the course, specific care was taken to heighten the salience of goals, promote expectations and self-assessment, and allow for the customization of learning material and student assessments. This session will showcase the positive impact of the UDL-designed course on student learning and engagement. We will discuss how the course empowered students to develop essential digital skills for academic success, professional preparedness, and personal growth. Though informative for all instructors, this presentation will be particularly relevant for institutions serving diverse student populations and those interested in leveraging UDL principles to bridge the digital divide.

5. The 3T's: Tips, Techniques and Tools of UDL (online delivery). Nicole Levina Maria Demos, International School of Helsinki, Finland

Teaching is considered to be the noblest of professions and with this in mind, consider this timeline. Each year teachers participate in orientation meetings where the latest trend is presented as the item that directly depicts the schools mission and vision with great enthusiasm. First a brief overview which may include a participatory activity, an article to be read or an inspirational video to watch, is only followed by a brief reflection or discussion that leads to promises for future professional development. However in the interest of time our focus reverts to facilitating a smooth start of the year, lesson planning begins and the school routine. Covering curriculum, testing and assigning menial tasks are intertwined with behavior management, meetings, observations, endless paperwork amidst a mountain of emails. As a quiet consequence the latest trend fades into a distant memory, brushed under the carpet.

Is this the timeline that we teachers wish to follow without question? How do we prepare our students to succeed in an ever changing and challenging world? Do we have the resources and stamina to ensure that our profession is still the noblest of all?

In an effort to answer the above questions I hope to offer UDL or Universal Design of learning as a viable, necessary avenue for continued consistent growth.

Universal Design for Learning is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. Recognizing the value of being in an equitable and accessible learning diverse environment should be a core belief of any inclusive educator at this present time. In my presentation I will share the following:

Overview of UDL - definitions, purpose,(WHO,WHAT, WHY) four principles

Research - highlighting the benefits, data driven statistics,available articles

Showing and Sharing of Successful Tips, Techniques and Tools of UDL for all learners in classroom including how to prevent possible challenges

Resources - websites, UDL planning guide, links, vidoes