California Community Colleges

SYSTEM WEBINAR SUMMARY:
From Compliance to Culture: Reframing Accessibility Through UDL (October 2026)

This webinar provides. Guest presenters included Luis Perez of CAST, Sarah Wilker of De Anza College, and Elli Constantin, a visiting advisor on accessibility at the Chancellor's Office.

What is Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?

- UDL is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences that guides the development of flexible and accessible learning experiences that promote agency for all learners.
- Under UDL, *access* refers to removing barriers that hinder participation, learning and growth, while *agency* is defined as designing opportunities for learners to pursue meaningful, challenging goals with support, resources and community.
- The three core concepts of UDL are to 1) honor learner variability as the rule, not the exception; 2) look for barriers in the design, not in learners; and 3) design for agency with the CAST UDL Guidelines.
- These Guidelines are organized into columns around three principles aligned to brain networks: 1) **engagement** (the "why" and "who" of learning); 2) **representation** (the "what"); and 3) **action and expression** (the "how").
- The Guidelines are also organized into three layers: 1) **access,** or creating a welcoming environment; 2) **support**, or making learning meaningful and usable for learners; and 3) **executive function**, or building self-understanding and learner agency.

How Do We Shift from Compliance to a Culture of Inclusion?

- We are used to thinking of accessibility in the context of ADA Title II, a federal law that requires that people with disabilities have equal access to programs, services, and activities, including those provided online. The law includes requirements that affect instructional content, student services, and the digital tools colleges use.
- ADA Title II establishes the required access so that we make accessibility the default. UDL takes it further so we think about how learners will experience the learning environment, ensuring that students can use what they access.
- UDL can help us shift from compliance to equitable, anticipatory design, to move beyond meeting minimum standards to designing flexible, proactive learning experiences that work for the widest range of people. This will promote equity, engagement, and student success.

What are Some Strategies for Using UDL in Instruction?

- Some ways to incorporate the three UDL principles in online courses include:
    - *Engagement of Learners* - demonstrate curiosity in students through "get to know you" discussions; cultivate peer-to-peer engagement through online discussions; and use warm check-ins or "nudges" with students.
    - *Representation of Information* – provide information in written, visual, and oral formats; use responsive online content like videos to address student questions; and involve students in the creation of online resources.
    - *Action and Expression of Learning* – set varying deadlines to avoid end-of-week pile-up for students; offer choices in submission formats (audio, visual, written); and build in formative, low-stakes weekly check-ins through the LMS platform.
- Some examples of using UDL to address the principle of engagement in specific disciplines include:

Traditional Practice	UDL-Adapted Approach	Example Application
All students work on the same problem or case study.	Offer choice of case, data set, or scenario aligned with student interests.	**Business:** Students choose a company (nonprofit, local business, etc.) and analyze its marketing strategy.
Class begins with a content overview.	Begin by connecting topics to real-world issues or goals.	**Sociology:** Start a unit on inequality by discussing a local housing or wage-gap issue that students may recognize.
Instructor-only feedback.	Encourage peer collaboration and self-reflection on learning goals.	**Design & Manufacturing:** Students post prototype designs for peer review before final printing.

Where Can I Learn More about Accessibility and UDL?

- Visit the CCC Accessibility Center
- Participate in Access Office Hours, and informal drop-in on October 28th 12-1 pm
- Attend monthly UDL Learning Series
- Engage with the CCC ADA Access Coach chatbot
- Visit the Chancellor's Office UDL web page
- Sign up for WebAIM accessibility trainings and CVC trainings on accessible course content
- Review CCC Teaching and Learning Cooperative videos