

**SPEAKER:** The broadcast is now starting. All attendees are in listen-only mode.

**MICHAEL STOEHR:** Good afternoon. I'd like to welcome everyone to today's session on transition and universal design for learning. My name is Michael Stoehr, and I work here at PaTTAN in Pittsburgh.

Today's session is designed for parents. We've had three sessions prior to this afternoon's session. Last week, we had a session for administrators and schools and then provider organizations, agencies. And then we had another session for teachers and direct service staff. And this morning, we had a session that was geared towards youth and young adults. So again, the focus for today is really looking at information for families.

Before we get started, I wanted to let folks know where to find the handouts for today's session if you haven't done so already. You can find them on the PaTTAN website, and that's what I have on the screen now. You go to the calendar section under training. And then you're going to scroll down to today's date, which is January 30<sup>th</sup>. And then you're going to click on making connections for secondary transition.

And then you'll notice there are two sets of handouts. The first, as I mentioned this morning, we had a session for youth. You'll want to click on the second handout listed there for families. And then that will take you to this handout page. Then you go down to the download this item. When you click on that, you'll notice that there are four resources for today. There's the PowerPoint and then three additional pieces that -- resources documents on universal design for learning.

Today we are -- we have with us Juli Baumgarner and Patti McGowan. Juli and Patti are going to be presenting the content information for the day. And I'm actually going to now turn this over to Juli, and she's going to pick up with talking about the objectives for today's session.

**JULI BAUMGARNER:** Welcome, everybody. It's so nice to have you. and I also want to thank my colleague, Ronnie Russell, who helped develop these materials as well as Patti. And just very happy to be talking about universal design for learning and how that might apply to our students of transition age.

So we're going to talk about what it is, what it means, how can we connect this to many different kinds of learners, and then what might we do specifically for transition. So those are our three main objectives.

So some of the key points that we're going to cover today is about the curriculum. So universal design for learning, and I'm going to call it UDL, is really about looking at the curriculum. That's what we teach, how we teach, how we assess, what kinds of materials we use. So it's really planning ahead, looking at that from the beginning so we can support a variety of students, with the goal that they're going to become lifelong learners who are skillful, knowledgeable, and purposeful in their lives. So it's really about independence.

UDL is also about reducing barriers. So sometimes curricula are not designed to meet the needs of all learners. And we can look at that and we can revise what we're doing so that we reduce those barriers that are going to help many different students learn. And it's also about understanding our diverse learners. So if we understand diverse learners, that can go to informing UDL.

So UDL is a -- is a way of thinking. So the principles of UDL can be applied to lessons. So that's what the teacher is planning to teach with a lesson plan. It can be applied to curricula to ensure that the goals, the materials, the methods, and the assessments are applicable to all students. And I actually pulled this from an article for families and educators of students who are deaf-blind. So the article was talking about applying UDL to learners who are deaf-blind, who are a pretty complex set of learners. So this is something that we can do for all students, with and without disabilities.

So our first objective is to just give some basic information about UDL. And I've been thinking about this because, as I sat through the session this morning with young adults discussing what it meant to them, I realized a little bit of an age gap, that I can kind of appreciate universal design for learning and just universal design in general. And this has -- this is a term that may not be really kind of as meaningful to younger folks, so I want to make this practical and meaningful for them.

So universal design for learning is a model that looks at how we approach the curriculum. And it's the idea that there are different kinds of learning. So there's not just one kind of learning. There's not one kind of learning that's right or wrong, but there's many different kinds. And we need flexibility from the start.

It's also a framework that assumes high expectations for all students. So we start out assuming competence. We start out assuming that students can benefit from information, from participation in the curriculum. So it kind of goes back to the idea of universal design. And even today, I know that many people experience difficulty in physically accessing buildings. People that use wheelchairs may experience barriers to that. However, we have come a long way.

And so universal design actually came from architecture, or actually designing products so that people with different needs and abilities could enter that building, enter that area, or use the product. So we want -- we wanted products and buildings to be accessible to the greatest amount of people possible, regardless of their age or their ability. And it's assumed with universal design that many different kinds of people with different needs are going to use that product or need to enter that building.

And so I was thinking about this just even on a personal basis of, you know, having somebody in a wheelchair in my home. And you know, not all the doorways were wide enough for that wheelchair. But if I had built that home with that in mind, I certainly would have made those doorways wide enough.

So here's some examples that, you know, we may even just take for granted. But the curb cuts in a sidewalk, or ramps so that people -- originally designed for people in wheelchairs. However, you know, we all benefit if you have a baby stroller, if you have a suitcase on wheels. We benefit from that as well.

Digital books with text-to-speech, that's something that was originally designed for individuals with visual impairment or blindness, or individuals with print disabilities. And now we -- this is something that's used very commonly, and I know I certainly enjoy my audio books. Television and video captioning, again, originally designed for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, but also very useful when you are in a noisier environment, if you may benefit from seeing the captioning. So again, used on a wider basis.

Easy-grip tools, just ways of changing the grip on a tool, changing the materials of the textures. Now it's been shown that, you know, we all enjoy and benefit that, and so the products are sold because we buy them. Electric doors and the lever doorknob. You know, the sliding doors, how many times with your arms full, you're walking through? But if you are also in a wheelchair, that would be so helpful. And I know I just had to replace a door at my house. And I love my lever doorknob that I can just hit that with my elbow and walk in and not have to put stuff down to open the doorknob. So I know how much these little things in life can make it easier. So they're kind of planned from the beginning, and that's what we want to do.

So I want to give you a little bit of information just about the laws and the processes in place that have led to universal design and universal design for learning. So the Americans with Disabilities Act was originally signed in 1973, but reauthorized in 2009. And it was out in place so that individuals with

disabilities would have physical access to accommodations, buildings, employment, services, and telecommunications.

So as a result, you know, we have the relay service now, for example, in every state. But in Pennsylvania, it's called the Pennsylvania Relay, that an individual who's deaf or hard of hearing can -- or we, if we have a disability in being able to communicate with a person who's deaf or hard of hearing, we can use that relay system as well to connect with that person.

So it was originally put in place for kind of these physical access or telecommunications access, employment access. And then it expanded to access to information, so access to media with captioning, with speech-to-text. And I mentioned the telephone and now video services. We have a video relay as well in Pennsylvania.

And then that then transferred to universal design for learning. So it's thinking about, how do people access information? How -- what's the best way that somebody might learn? What are the expectations that we want to have that are high for all students? And it's really also kind of come about because, with the explosion of technology just being more and more available, being lower cost and being more flexible, we do have ways that we can plan up front to make learning and the curriculum accessible to all learners.

So some of the laws and the policies I mentioned, the Americans with Disabilities Act. And then section 504 specifically explains what disabilities are and the kinds of situations that you might apply the need for accommodations. And we know that we have 504 plans in our schools for students who may need accommodations, but do not require special education.

We also have No Child Left Behind. And one of the basic foundations of No Child Left Behind was the need to consider high expectations for all students. We have the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard. That was put in place so that as textbooks are written or purchased, that they are put into a language or a format that's going to be accessible by people that may be using different kinds of software, that may need enlarged print, that may need braille. So we have a standard format now for textbooks and for books that are used in instruction, and also for books for pleasure reading. So NIMAS is actually a federally funded process for that to happen.

We also have IDEA, our law that drives our services and our supports in special education. And again, IDEA puts forth high expectations, and specifically targeted access to the curriculum. And you know in the IEP process, there's that question about, can the student participate in the general ed

curriculum? And we have to explain if not. We have to provide an explanation of that. So that's very, very important that we think about all of the ways that students can access that general education curriculum.

And now we're talking about common core standards. And we've all heard about academic standards. That's the content, the skills, and the knowledge that all students in Pennsylvania need to learn from kindergarten through grade 12. But we also have now a set of nationally accepted common core standards. And this is a process where the states have decided that it would be a good idea to have a common set of academic standards.

First of all, to have a standard set of expectations, but also to make it easy if students need to go from one state to another. For example, military families that may need to move frequently, or just families that are moving, that the standards for grade 11 are not going to look different in Pennsylvania than the state from which that student came.

So the other focus of the common core standards is to be very specific about college and career readiness. So college and career readiness means that we want to think about what we're doing with our students to get them ready to be successful citizens when they leave school. Will they be able to enter college? Will they be able to enter employment? So the common core standards are really geared to preparing students for that.

So universal design for learning builds in flexibility at the beginning. So rather than retrofitting to adapt, it builds it in from the start. And part of that building in is to remove barriers by anticipating the needs of all students. So it's not a one size fits all. Teachers know that the first day in their classroom, they're going to have many different kind of learning -- learners in that classroom. They may not have been able to prepare because they might not have known their students.

But universal design for learning is a process that says, let's think about the possibilities in variation in learning, and let's prepare for that so that we're not on the back end of trying to respond to a difference in learning, but instead we have planned ahead to address that.

We also know that our classrooms are looking different. We are seeing students with many different needs in the classrooms. And so that's one of the advantages of UDL. UDL also incorporates research about the brain. And of course, learning is about the brain, but we want to make it a really practical thing, that we keep kids interested. So we want to use what we know about the brain.

So the research about the brain looks at how we process information. And all of us process information in very unique ways. So if I said the word cat, and you and I were each having our brain scanned with, you know, like a PET scan, our brains would be processing that differently because we all have different experiences with what cat means. We've learned different connections about cats. And so that information is going to look very different, and it's going to engage many parts of our brains when we think about a concept or something that we know.

So universal design for learning looks at that brain research and reinforces the idea that we have to kind of build in some engagement with learning, knowing what we know about the brain, making multiple connections. So UDL provides multiple means of engagement for an individual to recognize information, to use that strategically, and to respond with emotion to the learning process.

Responding with emotion helps us remember. And if we, you know -- you know, if we think about something that we really enjoyed learning, we are -- we know that we remember that information really much more effectively.

So universal design for learning and the brain research looks at the what of learning. So those are the details. How do we get information in? What is the perception of that information? It also looks at, how do we use it in kind of a skilled way? So how do we plan and perform tasks? How do we organize and express ideas? So it's about expression.

But it also looks at, how do we remain excited about learning? So that word affective is about emotion, and it's the why of learning. Why do we want to learn about this? How can we get engagement and have our students stay motivated? Because that's one of the challenges that we find in secondary transition, that as students get older, it is harder to keep them motivated and engaged. And so we want to think about, how can we stimulate interest? How can we stimulate motivation for them so that they are engaged?

So universal design for learning is all about the planning. So it's about frontloading for all tasks and all learners. And I'm going to ask Patti McGowan, who is on our webinar today, to talk a little bit about some tips for parents to ensure that their son or daughter has access to the curriculum, just about that pre-planning. So Patti, would you mind answering that question?

**PATTI MCGOWAN:** Sure. Thanks, Juli. My name is Patti McGowan. And as Juli said, I do work as one of the family liaisons with the PaTTAN Pennsylvania Deaf-Blind Initiative. But I am a parent to a 17-year-old

son who has deaf-blindness due to the etiology of Usher syndrome. And he is a junior in his home district high school.

And we started many years -- you know, with Pennsylvania, we talk about transition at 14, but I think even before that, you know, the wheels started spinning. My son had been educated at First, and then through private schools for the school for the deaf. And we knew that he would be leaving to go to the general education setting, so we really came together as a team to plan. And when I say a team, because we were in different counties, we had both intermediate units to the two counties. We had the staff and educators from the approved private school as well as the general educators from the school district. Of course, we had the consultants from PaTTAN and the Deaf-Blind Initiative. And we just all came down, and the family and the student, and began to really plan.

And I think one of the hardest things, but one of the most important things, is to really know the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the student, or my son in this case. And that's sometimes difficult for parents, and especially the weaknesses. But I think the reality of it can get you past some of those barriers.

And if you come together and sit down and really plan -- and documentation was a very big thing with us. We would have team meetings. We would take notes. We began to have different documents. For example, my son uses a lot of assistive technology, and so every time he would perhaps use or receive a piece of equipment, we would document that, whether that was purchased by the district or the intermediate unit or us as a family. We would talk about how that may work in one educational setting, but maybe not in another.

And I think as we went along -- and this process has -- we're still currently doing it, and so it has taken years. But to also bring in my son or to bring in the student to begin to have his thinking and what worked for him in certain situations, but perhaps not in another. And we have just kept that documentation, and we add and we update it. And so the planning has helped us greatly as we went even from the approved private school setting into the general education setting. It just has allowed that diverse learning.

And you know, it's funny because as a parent, sometimes I don't think about the -- all the titles. I just know it's happening within the classroom, whether it's learning in a tactile way for him, if the assistive technology brings things. And it is interesting to see how it does help students in the classroom. And a great example for that was last year in his sophomore English lit class, the teacher began to record

some of the very important classes. And my son would come home and re-listen. And soon enough, a lot of the other students were saying, I would like to have a recording and go back and listen. And so it was helping not only my son, but the other students. So planning is a very key issue.

**JULI BAUMGARNER:** Thank you, Patti. That was really great information about planning. And it does seem like a lot of time is needed for that planning. And you know, that's always a concern for families and the student and the educators. But that time spent in planning pays off. It pays off not only for that individual, but it also, as Patti just gave one example, can be very beneficial to many different learners.

So you know, one of the other components of UDL and that planning is, you know, as simple as what books, what materials, what resources are we going to be using? What are the classes? So if we think about transition and the course of study, what are the classes? Are we thinking ahead to what they're using in that class? What can we do to plan ahead, to make that curriculum, that resource, that tool, that strategy accessible to many different kinds of learners? So planning is really an important component.

Okay. So we're going to move on to our next objective, which is to think about meeting the needs of diverse learners. And universal design for learning is for all learners. So it includes learners with disabilities. It includes learners who may be English language learners, who may be gifted learners, who may be struggling learners, and learners who may not be as motivated to be in a certain class. So it's about meeting those diverse -- the needs of those diverse learners.

So why are we talking about UDL? It's because we're looking to improve academic performance for all students. And we know that our classrooms include many diverse learners. And we need to find better ways to meet the needs of all students.

Just some of the benefits. Patti talked about planning up front. Having curricula, which is the set of skills and knowledge and the materials and the resources and the assessments, to have that flexible and supportive from the beginning so that it can be responsive to variability across students.

We also want to think how students are interacting with that curriculum. Are they challenged? Are they motivated? And are they encouraged to question and explore? Because those are ways that they can become independent learners, that they can become motivated and more intentional learners.

So we'll talk a little bit about the definition. And this is the definition that's pulled from the federal funding for our national center on UDL. And we'll give you a website at the end of this webinar for that. So it's a framework to guide educational practice. It's really about flexibility and how we



present information and how students learn, and how they show what they know, and how students are engaged. And it's also about reducing barriers from the beginning so we don't have to go back and address that barrier because the barrier will not even be there. So, and it's about maintaining high achievement.

So there are guidelines. And this is from CAST, which is our federally funded center for using technology in education. So CAST provides for us many great tools. And one of the framework tools that they have been able to develop is to look at representations, action and expression, and engagement. And if you would actually do go to their website, you can link to each of these items. And it will take you to many different resources that are attached to give you examples, to give you websites that are supporting each of these different items that can be used in the UDL framework.

So the guidelines are organized according to representation, which means, how can I present information to a student? How can I show that student what I want them to know? It also is about, how can I have the student show me what they've learned or what they are learning? And engagement is about, how do I connect this in a meaningful way that the student is going to use that information, that they're going to use it at a higher level of learning, and that they're going to be interested and motivated to continue to be engaged in that topic?

So it assumes that we are going to have different students. And it assumes that what we are using to teach and assess those students has to address that diversity. So if you can remember back, we still use the blackboard. And the blackboard's a great tool. And that's a way that teachers could take what they were speaking and put that into a visual format, and students could look at that and could be involved in that conversation.

And then we came up with the electronic whiteboard. And so the electronic whiteboard has used technology to help us explore and share ideas more effectively. And now we have software like the PowerPoint software that we're using today that can help transform what we're teaching into dialogue, that we can embed video, that we can help students become more engaged and interested. And students themselves are using that software to demonstrate what they know.

So technology is a really great tool. However, technology is not a necessary component of UDL. So we can have UDL without technology. But with just the greater variety and availability and lower cost of technology, it certainly is helping us. And you know, that blackboard also can be a great tool for many different students.

So I did want to mention a couple of things about assistive technology. So UDL is not the same thing as assistive technology, but UDL and AT do support each other. They are complementary supports. And what I mean by that is UDL is about instruction from the beginning to illuminate barriers. And we know AT eliminates barriers. But AT is about providing access for individual students. So that's the difference between UDL and AT. However, we always want to consider the individual student's need for AT devices and services.

So I want to talk a little bit also about accommodations because that's a word that we hear a lot when we are in 504 meetings or in IEP meetings. Accommodations. How can we make accommodations so that the student can access the general education curriculum?

Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations. But they may provide easier ways to get to the information, to allow the student to show what they know. So curriculum and assessments that use UDL can, first of all, reduce the need for accommodations because that may already be built in. Or -- and they also can reduce the dependency of an individual to need to provide those accommodations.

So if we're planning up front, we may think of some creative way to plan for instruction and assessment to meet a variety of needs. So for example, rather than requiring that students use paper and pencil to complete an assignment, we may think of different ways that students can demonstrate what they know. They may use posters. They may use software and type, and use software to make typing easier. They may use word prediction to find the word or the spelling that they're looking for. So UDL can help reduce the need for accommodations.

So Patti, I want to ask you about accommodations. And one of the important components of understanding accommodations is that the student him or herself understands what accommodations he or she needs. Because that's what they're going to need to do, both in the school setting, but also as they may pursue college, as they may pursue employment, and even in their daily lives. They need to be, first of all, aware of that, and secondly to be able to describe that. So Patti, would you mind talking a little bit about your son's experience?

**PATTI MCGOWAN:** Sure. And I think just starting off, it's very important for both us as parents, and I think as our kids and our students, really understand the difference between adaptation and accommodations. And I often explain to my son, accommodations is changing the how, not the what. So the content doesn't change, it's just how he's going to receive it.

And I try to encourage him, and again this -- you know, it's a process. As he is older and becomes more mature, I try to encourage him to be the one that can state when those accommodations are needed. And it's interesting to watch because there are some times that something works better for him, say in a history class, but that does not work as well in his math class. And so it is important for him to first know that so that he can articulate that, and then work with the teachers or the supports and try to really bring that down.

And it's been interesting because, over the years, and I think a lot of students develop different ways for this, some through resumes. I know the last time I was on the making connections and we were talking about portfolios and resumes. And you know, it's interesting because my son actually developed a PowerPoint to show or present to his teachers because, in the typical high school setting, you know, from freshman to sophomore to junior to senior year, he gets new classes and new teachers. And although, as a junior, I think everybody sort of knows who he is, until you really have him as a student.

So it's an opportunity for him to express to his new teachers. He tells a little bit about his etiology and about deaf-blindness. But he really -- it gives him a chance to tell about his learning and UDL, and what helps him, what doesn't. And so that's been a very positive thing. And it's funny because he's even taken that PowerPoint that he uses for his teachers. He has also tweaked it a little bit for classmates and peers because when he first entered the high school, and of course he comes in with lots of different gadgets and CCTV, a closed-circuit TV for his visual impairment.

And he said, I just got to get this [inaudible] of the room, you know, to make it easier. Because if the kids have questions and he's very open about it, and that has worked. He also can take that into the community and help people understand and bring that awareness.

Another thing from the SAS toolkit, the supplementary aid and -- toolkit, we would bring that to meetings where we would sit there and talk about each class and have the teacher say what they may use and where there may be some, again, obstacle and barriers and how to make it work for Hunter under a UDL situation. And of course that would align also with the standard-aligned systems, the SAS section through the IEP.

And so I think creativity on the parent and the student side, and to share that with the team. And it's always good to have that open discussion of, again, not to be redundant, but what does work and what doesn't work, and to have some brainstorming amongst all the team members to really find what does work.

**JULI BAUMGARNER:** Thanks, Patti. You had a lot of really great ideas, and I want to kind of talk about, you know, one of your -- the last comment you made, what works and what doesn't work. Because one of the things that I've seen with this situation with your son is that it's also allowed him to consider that there may be accommodations that are not his favorite thing, that you know, he has realized because of the impact of his disability that he may need to learn how to use some accommodations. And that has really helped him.

So you know, it might be a particular software, or it might be a particular piece of equipment. But through this process, you know, he's gotten so mature in his own realization of what works and what doesn't work for him. And he's just been really more open to that idea.

Also, you know, just the idea of -- you mentioned over the years that every year, you know, this grows and Hunter tweaks. But he also has taken this to the point of his own self-advocacy. You know, you mentioned communicating with teachers and with peers. And I wanted to add also that he is now helping to coordinate and run his own meetings. So at his IEP meeting, he's there and he's talking about himself and present levels, rather than somebody else talking about him. So it really has supported Hunter's ability to understand his disability, his need for accommodations.

And using -- you mentioned the supplementary aids and services toolkit. And that's a tool that if folks haven't heard about it, it's a way to look at that section of the IEP where we talk about, what kind of instruction would be really good? What does the setting need to look like? What kinds of behavior supports might need to be in place, and what kinds of collaboration might need to be in place like team meetings with notes that document your discussion, or professional development for team members?

So supplementary aids and services is already part of the IEP process, and we can really use that. And so when we're talking about the toolkit, it's an actual tool and a process. We can -- we look at, what's the teacher already looking at -- or using in that classroom? So you know, we actually ask the teacher, you know, what kinds of books are you using? What other kinds of materials are you using? Are you using worksheets? Are you using video? Are you using computer software? So we ask them to think about that.

And we look at those resources first as a way that we can accommodate, a way that we can meet the needs of diverse learners. And we look at that in comparison to the individual student's needs. So we plan up front for that with the supplementary aids and services process.

And Patti also mentioned the standards-aligned system. So I mentioned earlier about our academic standards, but you know, we're really always going back to, what is it that the student needs to learn? What's the essential information that's going to prepare that student for college, for employment, for independent living. So with UDL, teachers can plan for instruction and assessment that meets a variety of needs.

**MICHAEL STOEHR:** We have a question that came in, and it actually kind of piggybacks on what you've been saying. The question is -- a couple statements first. Isn't UDL a philosophy of framework by which instructional process is based? Isn't it an umbrella for which all learning occurs, where students can use multiple tools and have choices, and where teachers use multiple tools and methods to deliver instruction and assess students? The question then is, doesn't a true elimination of barriers start at the curricular level so that all teachers are not reinventing the wheel?

**JULI BAUMGARNER:** Absolutely. First of all, very well said. Yes, it is a framework and it does encompass every kind of learner. So yes, it is a way to approach the needs of all students. The reality is that we still have curricula that are not developed for diverse learners. So that is one reason why I think we are now in the process of really talking about UDL.

Because UDL, it's actually been around for quite a while. It's not really a new idea, but with the advent of the common core standards, the No Child Left Behind, the access to the general curriculum effort, we know that UDL can be such a useful tool. But we also know, on the other hand, that, you know, our classrooms right now are -- many of them are equipped with textbooks that may be a hardcopy book. And there may not be other tools right now in place.

So with the UDL framework, we can look at, what do we have? How can we make what we have work by reducing, you know, the barriers that may exist? And as we continue to do this, we know that things will become much more flexible. That's why we have the NIMAS, the Center for Instructional Materials, to make all of our textbooks accessible to all learners.

So we are in the middle and as this is going on. So it is true that curricula should be designed and developed to meet the needs of all learners, but the existing curricula that we may be using at our school level, it may not yet be there. So with UDL, we can -- we can look at that and we can figure out how to plan.

And in our webinars with administrators and with teachers and other direct service providers, we talked to them about the planning process. And one of the first steps would be to have especially

teachers think about what their needs are. So do they need more flexible ways of representing information? And that can guide the implementation of the UDL process.

So schools and classrooms are in very different places across our commonwealth, but one of the first steps is to examine what you already have, determine if there are gaps in meeting the needs of all different learners, and then figure out, you know, what are the resources? Whether that's professional development, whether that's materials or access to technology that can support diverse learners.

So CAST actually has some really great resources. And I would encourage you to look at those resources if you're, you know, wanting to get a little bit more information. They have a new learning series that is going to be added to on an ongoing basis. And it just began. So they have some video and supporting materials for teachers and for administrators, and just a basic what is UDL presentation for anybody.

And I would take the time to look at these materials. And it doesn't take, first of all, a whole lot of time. A couple or about 45 minutes. And another one is a couple hours, but it's really very engaging. But I really encourage you to look at that because it gives you real people who have done this in their schools. They give you their experience and they also give you tools and a step-by-step process to look at implementing UDL at a school level.

So yes, it is a process, and we would love to have curriculum that addresses the needs of diverse learners, but we do still have some barriers that are really coming out of the curriculum. And also, we do have some barriers in the way that our standards are written. Because we want to think about the -- what is their goal that we are striving for? What's the learning objective? So the learning objective may be that the student understands the impact of the Civil War. The means to doing that can be through writing a paper, through doing role play, through a poster, through a group project. So the means to that can be many different methods.

But some of our standards are still written a little bit that are more specific to the means. We want to really look at that and make sure that we are building in multiple means of representation and expression and engagement, and that we're really focused on what's the information, what's the skills, what's the knowledge that we want the student to learn?

So with UDL, teachers can plan ahead for instruction and assessment that meets a variety of needs. And if you have an understanding of UDL, it can also help you take a critical look or an analytical look at what your resources are, and see if they are meeting the needs of all those diverse learners.

So we know that teachers provide information. And with UDL, we want to think about flexible ways of presenting that information. We also want to think about students that have options for how they receive that information. So for example, Patti mentioned that her son benefitted from a tape recording from a class, but then other students found that to be beneficial. So that was an option that they had to receive content besides taking notes, besides being in class.

We also want to look at flexible means of expression. So on the student end, that means how can they demonstrate their learning? And I was really impressed this morning with the Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network because they actually presented this information to other youth. And they boiled it down in very simple terms. So they talked about, what are the best ways for me to learn as a student or as a young adult with a disability? What's the best way for me to learn? Then what's the best way for me to show what I've learned? And then finally, how can I think about the why? Why do I need to know this? How can that be engaging to me? How can it help me make choices that are going to support my continual learning?

So as we look at the transition process, we want to build that in that students are taking responsibility for understanding their learning methods, what's the best way for them to learn, what works for them, and also what doesn't work for them. If it doesn't work, why is that? Might they need more practice, or might it be a preference? But ways for them to demonstrate what they know. What are some ways that students can demonstrate?

And so they talked about on the Youth Leadership Network webinar today that that could be an actual role play. You know, it was also leading into flexible options for student engagement. You know, and I think about, you know, the opportunities that I had when I was in middle school and high school. And what I remember, you know, what's most memorable -- yeah, it's been a few years, but I can still think about, you know, some of those projects that we worked on in school. And just that they were a little bit out of the ordinary, that they were very engaging and very fun.

And I had mentioned on another webinar, I remember having to do Greek mythology, which can be very boring, very dry. It can be very complicated. But we had a great teacher, and she allowed us to tell a story in our own way. And I chose to tell it with a comic strip. And that's actually a tool that now there's great software out there that you can go for free and, as a student, you can use that software to make your own comic strip. Or if a student is really interested in graphic novels, they can go and make their own avatar and tell a story that way. Teachers can also use that to present information to students, so to represent information. It just gives you a lot more flexibility.

So just to review, so the ideal curriculum is in place to support learners to become lifelong learners so that they're prepared for independence, prepared for what happens after they leave school. It also prepares them while they're in school, while they're in middle school, high school, college, vocational training, that they can talk about what they need in order to best support their learning.

UDL also reduces the barriers found in curricula, because we will find that curricula may have barriers. And it also gives us information that we can plan on our end of knowing about diverse learners, we can then think back and in the planning process, take what we know about diverse learners and let that inform our plans for instruction.

So we're going to talk about identifying strategies and tools that are specific to secondary transition next. So this process, and we've really already touched upon this quite a bit, but it expands the definition of universal design for learning to think about transition planning. So we really want to think about higher education and training, employment, and independent living. And you know that those are the areas that we see in the IEP process in that grid in the IEP where we have to think about, what's the goal for the student after they leave school?

What -- and how are we going to get them there? So how are we going to teach them? How are we going to assess their learning? How are we going to help that student through self-determination and self-advocacy learn how to become more independent?

So if we look back at the six-step process for addressing transition, it really ties into universal design for learning and transition as well. So first of all, in this process -- and this is the process that we use in Pennsylvania for planning. So if we look at assessment, could that assessment include information about how the student likes to learn? Yes, that would be very helpful. Is the information in the present levels in the IEP that really explains the student's disability and the impact of that disability on how the student learns and participates? But also the student's strengths.

But partnerships. Do we have a variety of people who can help? Who's helping now? Who can help in the future? Could it be that there may be folks out there who can support employment, who can support higher education? What are specific plans? So I just talked about employment, higher education, and training, independent living. How are we going to get there? And we're going to get there with goals that are going to address the strengths and the needs of the student. And we're going to need to be looking at how we assess that. So monitoring progress and then changing what we do so that we are meeting the student's needs for learning.



So we want to look about -- look at the accessible opportunities, and how we teach and how we assess. And so this is going to link our academic content and transition planning with instruction and goals. So we have these three areas that you do see in your IEP. And college and career readiness are embedded in all of these domains. So as we look at our standards, that's what we're about. We're about preparing students for transition.

So there's our six-step process again. And it relates back to our planning that's so important that Patti talked about earlier. So next, I want to kind of go into an example that we took from an actual -- it was already on a website, that looks at an example for instruction that's focused on natural disasters. And we could take that academic content and we could think about higher education and training, or employment. So what's the knowledge that we need to know? What might be the professions or the careers that are related to weather disasters? And what might one need to know for independent living, like how do you prepare for a disaster or how can you be ready to volunteer to help others?

We also look at self-determination as being so very important. So self-determination might be related to the academic content. It might be related to organization. It might be related to how we work with others. So again, the idea that we can plan ahead to address multiple learners.

So as we think about this and plan ahead, we want to think about, what are we teaching? And how can we integrated transition planning into what we are teaching? And how can students be provided with multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression?

So some ideas here, and we've kind of covered some of this: software, visual presentations, using technology effectively, using tools like audible books, using grouping. So we think about, how can we look at how students are working together? If students have behavioral needs, how might we look at grouping and cooperative learning for those students? How might we look at how students are going to show what they know? So Patti, would you mind talking about some tips for parents as they might think about UDL?

**PATTI MCGOWAN:** Sure. Well, once you download your PowerPoint, you can certainly go to this website, which will tell you a little bit about UDL. A good thing is either at a team meeting or perhaps at your student or child's next IEP, to bring it up at the table with the educators at the school and your team supports. And just see, you know, what they know and what they would like to share about UDL. It's a great thing to promote it. And you could always even ask if a PTA or a PTO could bring it to the school in some type of forum for other parents as well.

Talk about it at the IEP. Are the goals connected to the academic standards here in PA? Of course, the goals reflect the learning expectations for the student upon their grade level, what's keeping them on grade level. And is there a distinction between the goal and the means to achieve the goal? So the flexibility and, again, the planning.

Expect a variety of instructional approaches, different materials, and multiple ways to measure that learning. And again, bring the student in. Have their input. Help support adoption of the UDL framework by becoming involved at your school, local, or state level.

**JULI BAUMGARNER:** Thanks, Patti. So it can be an endeavor that a parent might consider just in relation to their own son or daughter. But also, you know, the big picture that you mentioned, you know, all parents would really feel good about teaching about curriculum that is going to be pre-loaded to meet the needs of those diverse learners.

So that was one of our objectives today, just to have a common understanding of UDL, to really convey the idea that it's about the planning, it's about a framework for providing instruction up front. And I bet it can really be used in the transition planning process.

So do, if you get a chance, explore these resources. And this is where you can find additional information, as well as the learning series that I mentioned with the videos that would be, you know, really very interesting. And also keep in touch with us at PaTTAN about this.

So we really thank you for your time, and we hope that you found this information to be beneficial. And have -- and we will sign off at this point. Michael, I didn't know if you had any --

**MICHAEL STOEHR:** No, just really wanted to thank everybody for joining us today, and especially to Patti and Juli for presenting today's content. This session will be recorded, as well as the other three sessions. And in about four to six weeks, they'll be posted on the PaTTAN website. And again, thank you both for presenting, and thank you all for joining us this afternoon.

**JULI BAUMGARNER:** Thank you.