

Katie Taylor, MA, is a specialist with the Promoting Achievement through Technology and INstruction for all Students (PATINS) Project, concentrating in the areas of deaf/hard of hearing and transition: primary age. She is a professional deaf educator and has worked as an itinerant teacher, a teacher of record services, and an educational consultant as well as in a variety of settings, including preschool, e-learning, K-12 classrooms, and higher education. Taylor welcomes questions and comments about this article at ktaylor@patinsproject.org.

ONE-STOP LESSON PLANNING:

How Universal Design for Learning Can Help Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

By Katie Taylor

Tony's bed shakes from the Supersonic alarm clock set to wake him up at 6:30 a.m. He rubs his eyes, quickly remembering that today's the first day in his new school after moving to a new town with his mom. A light starts to flash, telling him that he needs to get up. Getting dressed for the brisk November morning, Tony thinks about what his new teacher, classroom, and peers will be like. Will he have to explain why he wears hearing aids, needs background music and noise to be minimized, needs vocabulary in advance of the lessons, captioning on videos, and more things that help him access the curriculum that he usually has to ask for? What will the other students be like? Will they be accepting of him? His mind won't stop worrying about his new school and the barriers he may encounter.*

Step into Tony's world for a moment. Then imagine that he doesn't have to advocate for himself. Instead, he gets to choose how he is going to receive the class content. He gets to choose how he is going to show the teacher what he has learned. Imagine that the barriers of a traditional classroom have been eliminated. The best part is that Tony and students like him fit in with others because they are not doing anything different from anyone else; everything that deaf and hard of hearing students do, other students do as well. Accommodations are built into the general

Illustrations courtesy of Katie Taylor

Every Student Succeeds



Left: UDL is an “educational framework that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences” (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

education lesson seamlessly. The tools they need are available to all. The students who don’t need them are not forced to use them. This is the idea behind Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

A Look Back And Many Steps Forward

About 50 years ago while designing cockpits for fighter planes, Air Force engineers discovered the “average-sized” pilot did not exist. Each pilot was unique—each had unique measurements in every aspect. As a result, the engineers modified the

cockpit to include adjustable seats and adjustable access to flying instruments (Rose, 2015). Similarly, in an ideal world, classrooms are not designed for and educators are not trained to teach the average student because the average student, like the average pilot, does not exist. Just as every fighter pilot has unique measurements, each student has unique measures, unique strengths and weaknesses (Rose, 2015). UDL allows teachers to easily accommodate every student; it blurs the lines of special education and general education. All educators work

together, making the classroom and curriculum accessible in such a way that everyone is included. In fact, UDL allows teachers to set up classrooms, design lessons, and teach with every student in mind by addressing three main areas:

1. Engagement and motivation of students
2. Representation of content
3. Expression of what the students have learned

When planning for a student who

DHH IN THE UDL WORLD



THE 5 TIPS FOR INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DEAF/HARD OF HEARING THROUGH UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

FLEXIBLE SEATING

Students with hearing loss need sight of everyone's face to follow the conversation. U-shaped desk/table arrangements are best.



REPRESENTING CONTENT



A visual representation (open/closed captions and descriptions) of the spoken language on all media and presentations/lectures is suggested for full access to auditory information in the classroom.

SMALL GROUPS

Students with hearing loss often participate and learn from peers best in small groups. Provide device for live captioning software and ear level fm/dm systems be utilized. Allow student with hearing loss and their group to move to a quiet room or hall wall to work to ensure optimal signal to noise ratio.



OPTIONS FOR REPETITION



Students with hearing loss often to need options for how the information is represented and may need early access to materials before the information is presented in the classroom. Pre-teaching vocabulary and early access to reading materials and media content

EXPRESSION OF KNOWLEDGE

Flexibility in the ways that a student with hearing loss can express what they have learned will increase engagement and motivation to participate in activities. Provide back channel to ask questions, visual presentation in slides, google draw, etc.



VISIT PATINSPROJECT.ORG FOR MORE!

is deaf or hard of hearing, five ideas are critical in creating a UDL classroom. Teachers concerned with UDL should:

1. **Establish flexible seating.** Deaf and hard of hearing students are dependent on visual access to the whole classroom. Teachers should give many options to allow students to find a seat that works for them.
2. **Find, create, and use visual representations.** Visual representations include captions on videos and movies; these have been shown to help all students, but they are critical for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
3. **Allow access to quiet locations.** To facilitate communication, allow students working in small groups to move to quieter locations, such as the hallway or another room. Communication in groups can be difficult for deaf and hard of hearing students, especially when it is compounded with background noise.
4. **Present the content in multiple ways.** Have materials available in print, video, and through teacher and peer interaction. Ensure vocabulary words are repeated in class discussion. Digital discussion formats are also effective. Numerous technical advances, like Padlet or lino, provide backchannels that allow students to equally and anonymously participate during discussions. This can reduce fears and ease participation for deaf and hard of hearing students.
5. **Allow multiple options for expression of knowledge.** These may include presentations with slides, Google Draw, and curation of videos. These may also include use of backchannels for questions and feedback (Taylor, 2019).

In Indiana, the Promoting Achievement through Technology and INstruction for all Students (PATINS) Project was set up to promote UDL for students throughout the state, bringing information, training, and services at no cost to educators (2017). We work in collaboration with national organizations such as the Center for Applied Special Technology, which works to improve education using flexible methods and materials through UDL.

The PATINS UDL Lesson Creator (tinyurl.com/UDLLessonPlanner) is posted online and available to all. This tool allows users to walk through many aspects of creating a more inclusive lesson. It can help educators prepare for students, even before they know who the students will be. It includes a lesson plan that is designed to allow teachers to reach students with the widest range of

abilities, significantly minimizing the need for further accommodations.

While this may be a more in-depth lesson plan than some teachers might be used to, it offers a thorough walk-through of many UDL considerations. Using this lesson plan as a template to create individual lessons can help teachers develop a meaningful process for crafting future lessons. Teachers may plan one unit this way and repeat it weekly until they feel comfortable. Then they can expand the process into other subjects, units, or sections. Once educators master planning their lessons in this way, there is no need to use the lesson plan every time.

The concept of UDL has been integrated into the Every Student Succeeds Act, the federal legislation that was signed into law in 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This is a concept that is here to stay.

References

- PATINS Project. (2017). *PATINS UDL lesson creator*. Retrieved from tinyurl.com/UDLLessonPlanner
- Rose, T. (2015). *The end of average: How we succeed in a world that values sameness*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Taylor, K. (2019, February). *UDL in the DHH world* [poster]. Available at tinyurl.com/UDLinDHHposter
- U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2017). *Amendment to Indiana's consolidated state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Retrieved from <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/essalindiana-essa-amendment-final.pdf>

Universal Lesson Design

PATINS
PROMOTING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY AND INSTRUCTION FOR ALL STUDENTS

PATINS UDL Lesson Creator

A Universally Designed lesson is purposefully designed from the start to meaningfully include the widest range of abilities, significantly minimizing the need for further accommodations. This tool is intended to walk the user through many of the aspects of creating a more inclusive lesson.

This is intended to produce a model UDL lesson with resources and additional information. While this may be a more in-depth lesson plan than some teachers might be used to, it offers a thorough walk-through of many UDL considerations. Creating a lesson using this template a few times could help teachers develop the necessary process mentally for future lesson planning.

After you click "submit" at the end of this lesson, you will have the opportunity to go back and edit your responses here. You will also receive your completed lesson plan in a much more readable format as your own Google doc, to which you can make further edits to the content as well as the format.

* Required

When thinking about the design of classrooms, consider UDL—removing barriers to reach each student, increasing engagement, motivation, and retention. UDL can ensure students have access to their curriculum and that they do not need to advocate for that access. UDL allows students to choose the ways in which they receive the classroom content; it allows teachers to design lessons to reach every student. Educators will see that what may benefit one student will benefit others. Why not have UDL available for all students?

**Tony is a composite representing deaf and hard of hearing students the author has known.*