in novel ways; perhaps some of what actually happens in the workshops might be adapted for direct application with student groups.

We are currently well into a series of nine workshops which include projects such as making a visual diary, using art materials and technical equipment in unorthodox and esoteric ways, interpreting the orthodox cultural objects to be found in the University's Sainsbury Centre, and investigating chance as a means of enlivening modes of teaching and learning. Other themes include looking at the influence of specific places on how we teach, the use of games, puzzles and play in educational strategies, and a consideration of what it might mean to develop a strong sense of self-reflexivity as a teacher.

I began the delivery of the workshops by relating playfulness to the essential issues that creative learning could address. As one participating colleague observed:

"Rebecca showed us relevant objects – including some of her own artworks – and books, media and techniques to explore these, and invited participants to make connections with their own teaching practices. She suggested how the materials she provided might be used, while leaving things open for participants to take risks and have fun. The emphasis was very clearly on exchanging practices, with participants sharing ideas and insights derived from creative activities."

This response was very encouraging, as it shows that through these workshops a range of insights applicable to teaching were indeed being developed. Another colleague praised the diary-making session, reporting that:

"While using paper, thread and scissors, academic colleagues explained how they might use their diaries themselves and shared ideas on how they might ask students to put together and write in a diary."

This is a good example of workshop material being directly carried across into teaching.

To paraphrase the title of David Gauntlett’s 2018 Polity Press volume on the social power of creativity, ‘Making is Connecting’. Given the ever-increasing incursion of reductive corporate values into the education system at the present time, creative approaches to teaching require nothing less than the most dedicated recognition and support.

Find out more about Creative Learning UEA at http://ow.ly/kmt030mhFzV.

References
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Developing a systematic whole School approach to inclusive practice through Universal Design for Learning

Sean Bracken, University of Worcester

Anniversaries provide a useful juncture to cast a critically reflective eye on journeys travelled. With this in mind, just over a year has passed since the University of Worcester college minibus began its early morning sojourn heading some 100 km northeast with a destination of De Montfort University (DMU) in Leicester. There were eight colleagues aboard who came from a diversity of discipline schools along with several student services representatives. The shared aim among the wayfarers was to discover more about how the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework could respond to the learning requirements of an increasingly diverse student body at our University. DMU has been particularly successful in developing a whole organisational approach to UDL as a means of ensuring inclusive practice. Such was the national interest in the implementation of the UDL framework that representatives from around 20 other universities also attended the information seminar.

The desire among colleagues at the University of Worcester to enrich their understanding of UDL initiatives in Higher Education had emerged from an earlier national conference hosted at the University in June of 2017. This event had showcased how systematic whole organisational approaches to inclusive practice might be designed and implemented. Building on the
Department for Education report entitled ‘Inclusive teaching and learning in higher education as a route to excellence’ (DfE, 2017), it was clear that UDL was emerging as a powerful conceptual framework to underpin positive change processes. A critical attribute of this framework is that it provides scope to unify planning among differing strands of the student HE experience, including student services, library and information services, estates, information technologies, and the wider academy. Thus UDL has potential to act systemically and strategically to ensure the learning requirements of the vast majority of students have been addressed.

Colleagues through exemplification of the Student HE experience, of particularly those with audio access from those who have been marginalised. With the support of Library and Information Services, a formative research project is being developed to investigate how the use of audio books may support a diversity of learners including those with visual impairments, those who come from first generation backgrounds and other learners who may benefit from access to audio learning. Increasingly, accessibility apps have been built into the Talis reading resource lists thereby enabling students with dyslexia to access and use a diversity of digital colour overlays.

Colleagues in the Department are using UDL as a systematic approach to inform the revalidation of all courses. Collaborative planning has ensured that colleagues have agreed to adopt a similar template for all course Blackboard VLE formats, thus adding coherence and quality to the student experience. In a similar way, the team responsible for the PGC in Secondary Education have also focused on the development of consistent, accessible design in the use of VLE learning and teaching platforms so that students can navigate their way around, and interface productively with, tools that can enhance the learning experience. To further complement this work, the team has piloted the early release of learning materials so that all students can access and engage with critical content prior to the scheduled lecture periods. Other technological learning tools such as Pebblepad portfolios have also been reconfigured to include some UDL principles.

Meanwhile, colleagues from the Department for Education and Inclusion along with colleagues in the Primary Education Department are collaborating on the use of Lesson Study to promote a collegiate form of peer-supported professional development that reviews and strengthens implementation of the University’s ‘Policy and procedures on inclusive assessment’ (University of Worcester, 2016). The research project is particularly mindful of the multiple means of expression strand within UDL: this encourages educators to design a diversity of ways in which assessment as and for learning can be evidenced. This small-scale British Academy funded research project is also purposefully focused on anticipating student variability in learning and assessment requirements, thereby ensuring that assessment processes purposefully tackle inequalities in outcomes through a research-informed socially just perspective (Hanesworth et al., 2018).

UDL also provides a conceptual framework to chart a reflexive review of practices in postgraduate courses. As the MA Education suite of modules and the overarching programme are undergoing review, there is scope to identify and learn from and adapt inclusive design strategies being adopted at the undergraduate level, for example by incorporating a diversity of assessment modalities that reaches beyond the ‘one size fits all’ traditional approach to curriculum design. Significantly, the UDL framework now constitutes part of the first module on the PG Cert HETL, so that there is potential for a shared understanding of the ways in which UDL can complement learning for all students.

In order to ensure wider take-up and greater sustainability of this model of inclusive change management, colleagues who wish to update modules and courses within the School of Education are urged by leaders responsible for course quality to reflect on the ways in which they may be made more accessible through consideration of the UDL framework (CAST, 2018). Ultimately, as shared by Hanesworth et al. (2018, p. 10), an ever-increasing emphasis on shared collegiate understandings of what constitutes UDL-informed inclusivity may be best actualised when four dynamically interacting dimensions of change management are brought together—these include:

1) Setting of an organisational vision for inclusive curriculum and assessment design. This would involve clearly articulating the ways in which strategic leaders encourage novel learning and teaching perspectives

2) Developing avenues and mechanisms for all educators and student service providers to encourage a collaborative, partnership-based approach, especially by seeking to include the voices of students and staff who have been marginalised;

3) Investing in the resources of: time, technological hardware and software for staff and students and ensuring there is professional development capacity to engage effectively with curriculum and assessment change processes

4) Through praxis, extending the culture of change to incorporate exemplified minimum standards and best practices for inclusive, socially just curriculum and assessment design both within and external to the institution. For example, by informing and involving external examiners of the positive implications for UDL on student learning outcomes, thereby impacting more widely on external cultures of HE praxis.

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A useful way to reflect upon, and to further develop, the initiatives shared earlier would be to illustrate how colleagues can extend and strengthen their UDL planning and practices by considering the interplay between the attributes of inclusive change management as outlined above. Such an approach would enable exemplification and prioritisation of next steps and would further enable planning ownership among course teams and their students. A sample of such a dynamic planning framework is provided in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universal Design for Learning Features</th>
<th>Organisational vision and strategic leadership</th>
<th>Developing shared approaches</th>
<th>Resources and professional development</th>
<th>Extending the culture of change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple means of engagement</td>
<td>Identification of strategic UDL champions in senior leadership.</td>
<td>Collaborating to articulate a strategic vision for inclusivity that recognises systemic nature of inequalities.</td>
<td>Guidance and guidelines for establishing minimum standards of inclusive anticipatory design.</td>
<td>Inclusion of accessibility literacy into all programmes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Top down and bottom up synergies: including students and middle leaders.</td>
<td>All stages of course development and implementation incorporate reflection using the UDL framework.</td>
<td>Use of joint practice development to enhance sustainability of UDL.</td>
<td>Choice and diversity of assessment processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple means of representation — how do we disseminate?</td>
<td>Involve students’ unions in defining what a UDL approach to HE pedagogy might look like.</td>
<td>Investment in accessible technologies for student use, for example, use of formative online assessments.</td>
<td>Incorporation of unconscious bias professional development.</td>
<td>Establishing communities of practice to collaborate on driving change for a social justice approach to assessment and feedback.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ensure Learning/Teaching and Quality Coordinators are UDL champions.</td>
<td>Consideration of how inclusive assessment is facilitated through pedagogical accessibility, for example lecture capture and notes in advance.</td>
<td>Including multiple identities in pedagogies and assessment.</td>
<td>Developing toolkits and flowcharts to illustrate inclusive assessment policies and processes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Engagement with external expertise in the field of UDL.</td>
<td>Providing scope for personal academic tutors to strengthen assessment literacy.</td>
<td>Providing insights into how peers have developed consistency in VLE format and content for all learners.</td>
<td>Internal and external facing websites hosting all policies and practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple means of action and expression — what do we do to embed?</td>
<td>Formation of key strategic action groups, for example BAME assessment, achievement and retention, with student leadership.</td>
<td>Consistent checking of formative learning through interactive assessments (in action).</td>
<td>Encouraging targeted research to investigate the impacts of differing strategies at course and module level.</td>
<td>Developing systems and processes to ensure that UDL features on annual enhancement plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identification of inclusive assessment and pedagogy as priority area in strategic planning.</td>
<td>Providing online and hard copy case studies of how inclusive assessment policies have been realised in practice.</td>
<td>Consistent checking with diverse student body.</td>
<td>Collaborative contributions to research to strengthen internal culture and inform external practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition and rewards for inclusive assessment and pedagogies.</td>
<td>Sharing of key strategic decisions beyond working groups through blogs and accessibility of minutes.</td>
<td>Using attainment data for marginalised groups as the basis for CPD and action.</td>
<td>Engage external examiners with new assessment and feedback policies and practices that embed equality and diversity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1  UDL dynamic planning framework

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Conclusion
The UDL framework is increasingly being recognised by HEI practitioners and as providing a well-researched and meaningful conceptual framework for enabling joint meaning-making among students, support staff and academics in order to address inequities in learning outcomes. What is promising is that the comprehensive nature of the resulting pedagogical strategies engenders student autonomy, so students become 'purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, strategic and goal oriented' (CAST, 2018).

At the same time, the framework architects were keenly aware of wider systematic and societal biases and prejudices that can militate against all students realising their true potential. The UDL framework encourages practitioners to become more aware of how these challenges to success operate at a strategic and practical level as students learn. In becoming ever increasingly aware of how to equip marginalised students with the knowledge, skills and capacities to overcome these challenges, the framework provides a tool for pedagogical hope and success.

References


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Essentiality of humour in class

Mousir Khan, Aljouf University

How many of you still remember the teacher of your college days who had more to offer than just those nondescript, soporific lectures: someone who had to offer a wispy humour in his/her class? I'm sure there are quite many of you who still remember him/her fondly. Teaching methods or pedagogy have grown so complex and cumbersome for most teachers, these days, that the simple and most essential things in teacher-student interactions are being missed out, especially humour.

Though it is accepted that a successful class is the one that is interesting, it is hardly ever said that humour/amusement should be an essential element in the classrooms (which a teacher should employ appropriately so as not to turn themselves into a complete comedian).

Throughout my teaching experience as a language teacher and a lecturer in literature, I have always sought an opportunity to employ humour as a condiment in almost all of my classes for the students to absorb the information that's being given out. Yes, it does indeed mean intermittently cracking a joke in the midst of your lecture, or making a funny face (however ludicrous it may sound), using buffoonery, irony, etc., to generate a comical effect.

I have always found positive benefits of this practice and I recommend employing it to every teacher who has until now been struggling with writing up numerous lessons plans only to be on the verge of being stressed out. Cheer up and cheer up your students!

The positive benefits are as follows. A good joke is bound to grab a student's attention whether it's in the start (where he or she is interested to hear the joke) or at the end when the students, who have heard it, are amused by it and as a result there is laughter in the class. This is when you can tell the student has connected with what is going on in the class. The second benefit is that cracking a few jokes makes you appear more of a friend (someone you can approach) and being a serious unsmiling pedagogue makes you nothing but a despicable villain. This doesn't mean you are friendly only if you crack jokes, no. You could be friendly as well as being serious. However, it is not going to be the same as you being friendly and at the same time, someone who tells a few jokes. The difference is that you're going to be more approachable in the