Positive Outcomes of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

How, as part of inclusive education, does Universal Design for Learning (UDL) promote fairness and inclusivity by reducing bias and supporting more effective teaching, learning, and assessment for all students, regardless of their background?

A UDL environment, which provides multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression, in teaching, learning and assessment, helps build belonging through inclusive and accessible work and study spaces. UDL minimizes barriers to learning and supports learner variability, diversity, intersectionality and protected characteristics of race, ethnicity, class, language, neurodiversity, being physically or otherwise disabled, gender, sexuality or other obstacles.

UDL can be used to minimise bias and contribute to inclusive education through key actions.

Incremental change

UDL actions through the 'plus-one approach' (incrementally adding UDL actions to module design and learning, teaching and assessment practices) build inclusion into the learning experience at the level of design, gradually and consistently.

Designing for diversity and learner variability

Because UDL integrates diversity at the level of design it supports educators to be aware of the variability in learning experiences in every classroom; UDL provides scaffolding and guidance for those involved in course design.
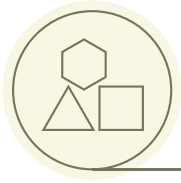
Strengths-based model

UDL embraces, celebrates and expects diversity and difference as the norm in any learning environment. It is NOT a deficit model so there is no need to retrofit a course design to belatedly include students who experience barriers to learning. This has the added benefit of avoiding student isolation and stigma, confusion, and extra labour for all involved in retrofitting.
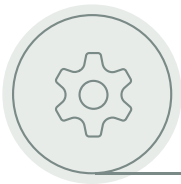
Necessary for one/some, benefits/good for all

When UDL actions are intentionally embedded, all students benefit, not only those who have experienced barriers to their learning, as more intuitive pathways, more choice and multiple means of engagement and action enhance self-directed learning for all students.

Supports student success

UDL supports faculty in providing the best possible learning experience for the greatest number of students in each learning situation. This results in modules that maintain high expectations for students while accounting for the variability in learning processes that exists within and between students. In this way, UDL actions can support the attainment of higher grades, good academic outcomes and equitable learning opportunities for all students.
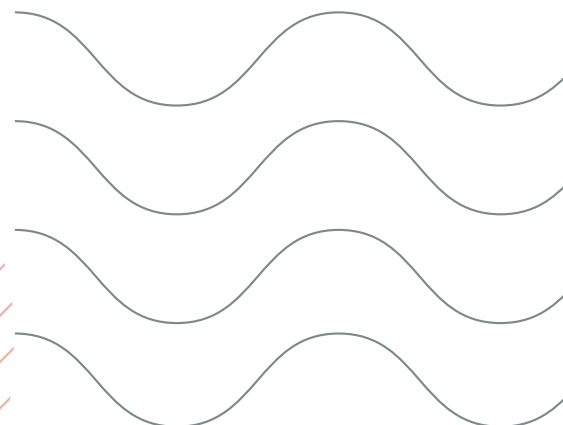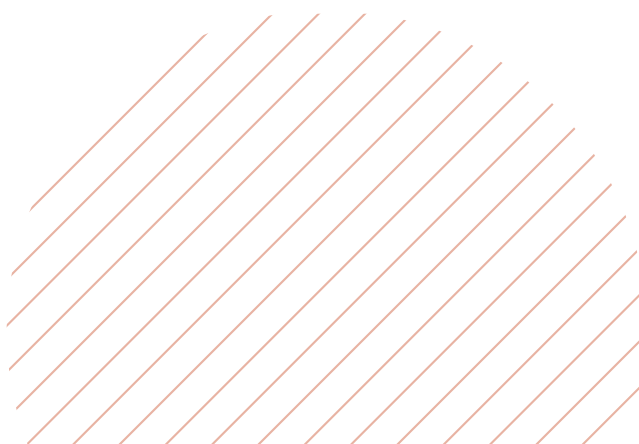
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