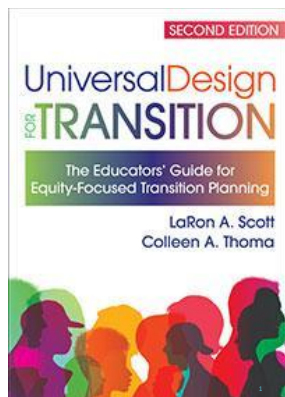


Improving Instruction for Transition-aged Youth through the Use of the UDT framework

TransCen Transition Conference

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Session Goals:

Evolution of UDT

How does UDT build on UDL principles to connect academic and transition goals?

Blending Academics & Transition

How do you identify where transition goals could be embedded within academic standards?

Opportunities for collaboration and how do we strengthen them?

When does it make sense to seek out collaborative opportunities and what are the benefits?

Strategies for pulling it all together

What strategies can be used to overcome barriers as well as improve transition outcomes?

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The Challenge Teachers Face

Special education teachers struggle to balance competing demands: teaching rigorous academic content while meeting functional and transition needs of diverse students.

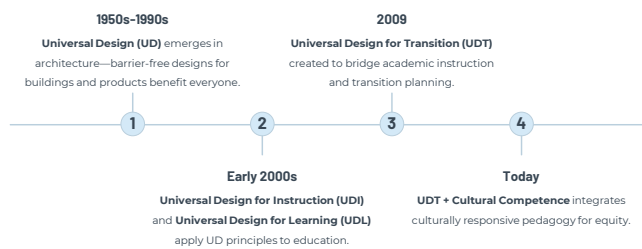
Despite efforts to improve outcomes, students with disabilities—especially those from marginalized backgrounds, and those with more significant support needs,—continue experiencing inequities in:

- Academic achievement
- Employment outcomes
- Independent living skills
- Postsecondary education access
- Self-determination development and support



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The Evolution of Universal Design



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Universal Design in Daily Life

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Automatic Doors Designed for wheelchair users, but help everyone carrying packages or pushing strollers. Universal design extends beyond original use—creating access for <i>all</i> people. | Curb Cuts Enable wheelchair access while supporting bikes, rolling luggage, and strollers. | Closed Captioning Created for deaf viewers, now used in noisy environments and for language learning. |
|---|--|---|

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Universal Design for Learning

Three Core Principles

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Multiple Means of Engagement Vary activities, use student choice, provide feedback, teach self-regulation. Why? Students learn best when actively engaged in ways that match their interests. | Multiple Means of Representation Present information through audio, visual, and tactile modalities with explicit instruction. Why? Not all students learn from the same instructional approach. | Multiple Means of Action & Expression Allow varied response types—writing, speaking, drawing, demonstrating. Why? Students show understanding in different ways. |
|---|---|--|

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From UDL to UDT

UDL provides the foundation, but **UDT adds critical transition components** to prepare students for life after school.

UDT enhances UDL by incorporating at least one research-supported transition practice:

- Multiple life domains beyond academics
- Comprehensive transition assessment approaches
- Self-determination skill development
- Community resources and diverse perspectives

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The Four Pillars of UDT



Multiple Life Domains

Address education, careers, independent living, leisure, and community involvement—not just employment.



Multiple Means of Assessment

Use formal and informal assessments in real-world settings to create comprehensive student profiles that guide the development of transition plans.



Individual Self-Determination

Center student wants and needs; explicitly teach self-advocacy and decision-making skills.



Multiple Resources & Perspectives

Involve families, schools, and communities; connect students to resources for life after school.

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Meeting Diverse Student Needs

Today's classrooms are increasingly **culturally and linguistically diverse**. Teachers must acquire new knowledge and skills to respond to individual learner needs.

The growing number of students with disabilities in general education, paired with multiply marginalized learners, makes culturally responsive instruction a **top priority**.



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Case Study: Meet Aiden



Background
Ninth grade White student from a rural area with an intellectual disability.

Interests & Goals
Mechanically skilled; dependable; enjoys hands-on tasks and teamwork.
Postschool Goal: Employment in construction or maintenance with job coaching. Would like to live in an apartment with a roommate.

Challenge
Difficulty generalizing academic skills between environments.
Few community-based work opportunities in his rural district. Also, few options for apartment living as well as transportation.

The Opportunity
Ms. Rose, his teacher, uses UDT to address both academic standards and Aiden's transition needs.

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Aidan's Community Living Challenge

| School Ends | Internship Starts | Distance |
|-------------|-------------------|----------|
| 3:30 PM | 4:30 PM | 5 blocks |

Options:

- Public transportation: 3-minute walk to bus stop, bus arrives 3:45 PM, 20-minute total travel time
- Walking: 35 minutes total
- Current problem: Aidan gets sidetracked riding the bus and often arrives late, but has never walked anywhere on his own. Parents worry about this option.

Ms. Rose saw an opportunity to teach **math standards** while addressing Aidan's **real-world transition needs**.

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Ms. Rose's UDT Lesson: Step by Step

- 1 Learning Objective**
Students work in pairs to graph transportation data on scatterplots while practicing real-world travel planning skills.
- 2 Multiple Means of Engagement**
Students choose personally meaningful destinations; discuss favorite places in cooperative groups. Instruction added to address behavior on bus, including looking for landmarks.
- 3 Multiple Means of Representation**
Visual examples of transportation methods; explicit vocabulary instruction; Google Maps demonstrations.
- 4 Multiple Means of Action & Expression**
Physical motions for transportation types; verbal explanations; graphing on paper; group collaboration.

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Transition & Cultural Components

Multiple Life Domains

Skills apply to employment, postsecondary education, community integration, medical appointments, and leisure activities.

Multiple Means of Assessment

Informal checklists, observations, exit tickets with drawing or writing options. Summaries of academic progress.

Cultural Responsiveness: Destinations reflected students' diverse backgrounds; lesson acknowledged varying socioeconomic contexts; students' lived experiences valued.

Individual Self-Determination

Students make independent decisions about destinations and transportation based on budget and schedule.

Multiple Resources & Perspectives

Collaborative groups, various apps and maps, IEP team input including family.

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Implementing UDT in the classroom

Chapter 11 Guidance: Seven Steps

1. Become critical, self-reflective professionals
2. Think about the transition components that make the most sense, given the focus of the academic lesson.
3. Think about the students in your classroom
4. Think about the assts that students bring to your classroom
5. Ask yourself: What are some ways you can involve parents in UDT based plans
6. Think about what Udt transition components you are able to address through incorporating the UDT framework into your academic instruction. What transition components are missing?
7. Gather resources that can be used to aid your efforts.



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What transition components make the most sense to incorporate into a specific academic lesson?



You don't need to incorporate all transition components into each and every lesson.

Identify what you can learn about specific students from the lesson/unit plan.

What skills that adults use in their worlds fit best with a specific lesson?

What skills can we identify that fit within transition assessment from this lesson/unit plan versus which do we need to assess separately?

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Think about students in your classroom



What are their interests?

How can those interests be used to support academic instruction?

What do they know about their goals for the future?

What skills will they need to learn to meet those goals?

What additional options can you help them consider?

What opportunities exist in their communities?

What can you learn about their strengths, needs, preferences and/or interests that can be used to guide transition education?

Remember to incorporate those into transition assessment summaries

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Think about student assets



Include their ages, cultural/racial, religious, gender backgrounds

What can they share about their backgrounds?

What are the assets in their communities?

Ask students and family members about community assets

Who are some of the people outside of typical transition partners who can provide information?

Ask students and family members about others to invite to transition planning meetings

How can you involve them?

What creative ways can you involve community partners in lessons? Outside of class experiences?

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How can you involve families?



Consider transition IEP meetings

How much do family members understand about transition planning? Can they be more informed?

Consider transition assessments

Can they be involved in collecting specific information about student strengths/preferences?

Understanding family culture, expectations, values

How can you learn more about family expectations?

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What transition components can you incorporate into lessons/units?



What are you doing already?

What do you need to supplement?

Are you meeting the needs of your students?

Can be easier to incorporate employment or postsecondary goals/skills than community integration

How can you add the other components?

Are students meeting their goals for adult life?

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What additional resources do you need?



Think honestly about what you know about transition planning for specific student goals for adult life

What do you need to supplement?

Who are the experts/resources you need to find?

Not everyone knows about all career paths or how to prepare youth for multiple life roles

What are the skills that adults use in specific roles/settings?

What are some of the cultural/racial/gender differences that should be addressed?

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Moving Forward Together



Blending academics, transition planning, and culturally responsive teaching is possible when educators commit to understanding and applying these frameworks.

Your journey begins here. Together, we can create equitable educational experiences that honor students' cultural heritages while preparing them for successful futures. What are your plans for moving forward?

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