

**SOFIA LEIVA:** Thanks for joining this webinar entitled, Universal Design for Learning-- the Hidden Chapters. I'm Sofia Leiva from 3PlayMedia, and I'll be moderating today. And today, I'm joined by Thomas Tobin. He's the conference programming chair and faculty associate in the Learning Design, Development, and Innovation Department at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, as well as an internationally recognized speaker and author on quality and technology, enhanced education, especially copyright, evaluation of teaching practice, academic integrity, and accessibility/universal design for learning.

He holds a PhD in English literature, a second master's degree in information science, and professional certifications in Project Management, Online teaching, Quality Matters, and Accessibility Core Competencies. His books include *Evaluating Online Teaching-- Implementing Best Practices*, *The Copyright Ninja-- Rise of the Ninja*, *Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone-- Universal Design for Learning and Higher Education*, and in press *Going Alt-- a Guide to Alternative Academic Careers*.

We have about an hour for this presentation, and the presentation itself will last about 45 minutes, and we'll leave 15 minutes at the end for questions. And with that, I'll hand it off to Tom, who has a wonderful presentation prepared for you all.

**THOMAS TOBIN:** Thank you very much, Sofia, and thank you to 3Play for inviting me to come and share some time with all of you folks. Let's get our screens flipped over here. And I'm very grateful to be here with everybody on the live webinar, as well as everybody who's going to be watching or listening to the recorded version.

And we just wanted to introduce you. You heard Sofia. But behind the scenes, we have Elisa. We have our captioners from A La Carte Communications. That's Kara behind the scenes. And if you want to turn on the closed captioning, you can see that, if you hover your mouse or move your indicators, that you can use the CC button to turn on the closed captions.

This is also going to be an interactive webinar. Sofia said 45 minutes and then 15 minutes for question and answer. We're actually going to have a lot of interaction way before 45 minutes. So if you're on the live webinar, please make sure that you have somebody at your location who is near a keyboard or an input device so you can share your ideas, and we'll build some knowledge together today.

And if you're watching the recording, make sure that you have a way of taking notes, like a laptop or a pen and a piece of paper, so that you can play along with us and make sure that you are able to do some reflection and some learning along with us. So we're grateful about that.

And to get us started, I'd like to share a little bit of technology control with you. We're using the Zoom platform today. And wherever it is on your screen, you can get access to those controls. You have that Closed Caption button.

But there's also a chat feature. And I'd like if you can take a look and find that chat feature. A lot of you have been using it already to ask questions and share ideas. That's where we're going to go for interactions during the webinar today.

And as we get started, I'd like to find out who's here with us today. And we're going to do a very unscientific chat poll feature. I've got the chat open on my screen. And just if you have folks in your area who are administrators, disability services folks, faculty members, human resources, just throw those letters into the chat.

And I'm seeing a whole bunch of faculty members and trainers. We've got some risk management folks. We've got IT managers, human resources, disability services, instructional designers, administrators of other stripes, so that's really cool. And I'm seeing lots and lots of folks taking part.

So that's awesome. And I'm really grateful to see so many people who are interacting here. We've got just about 300 or so different locations who are dialed into the live webinar. So this might take me a second, but I definitely want to have an opportunity to get everybody's input here, and we're going to share some questions as well as we go along. So thank you for both testing out the technology and for letting me know who's here.

I saw almost every letter here in the choices represented. And I'll try, in the examples that I use, to make sure that we have something definitely that you can take away as we go through our time here together today.

So a little bit of background to start us off. My colleague Kirsten Behling from Tufts University and I recently wrote a book called *Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone-- Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education*. And in that book, we dove in with lots of different folks-- and I know a few of them are here on the webinar-- and we asked them how are they actually doing

inclusive design in their institutions.

And we're actually not going to dive in on that topic today. What I'd like to do today is to go beyond what's in the book. Every time people write books, there are lots of stories that didn't make it into the book or things that came out after the book was published. And you think, boy, I wish that was in there, but we just didn't have space. That's what we're going to be working on today. And I'd like to share some stories with all of you and collect a little information from you as well as we start thinking about how do we get traction for something that most of us who are here on the conversation know is a good thing.

One of the big challenges for us as faculty members, instructional designers, department chairs, deans, provost, CIOs, as people who are in higher education, one of our challenges is that inclusive design is often seen as something that is just for people with disabilities. And oftentimes, the loudest voice or the strongest voice on campus for doing good design is coming from the folks who are in the Disability Services Office.

Now, I give those folks an awful lot of credit. My co-author, Kirsten Behling, is a disability services director at Tufts University. I'm a faculty developer and a faculty member for many years. And I have to say, though, when the people from the Disability Services Office are in conversations with the senior leadership, I can just about guarantee you that the other senior leaders are thinking, oh, when that person talks, that person is representing the viewpoints of only a few percent of our students, only a few percent of our learners.

I've heard administrators say things like, well, I don't see very many people in wheelchairs or with canes on our campuses, and so we probably don't have that many people with disabilities. So what I'd like to do with everybody today is I want to share some ways that you can talk to your senior leaders and get them to push for more inclusive design and get them to bring you people, time, and resources to start doing things right right off the bat. And in order to do that, we're going to go beyond the book.

So here's a little bit of a thought exercise. And I'd like for you-- if you'd take a couple of seconds and do some thinking and then responding. So your bosses don't know what universal design for learning is. What do you tell them?

Now, of course, this is the elevator conversation. You know, you're on your way from one meeting to another, and you happen to be walking next to your CIO, or you happen to be walking next to your provost, and they say, oh, what is that universal design thing that you

keep talking about? What would you tell them about universal design for learning?

Leslie says it's a way to connect with all learners. Excellent. UDL is a goal that puts high values on diversity, equality, and inclusiveness. So DEI, yep-- I'll say it's like universal design for instruction. It's painful and hard to describe. I like that one. Designing content in a way that meets learners where they are, expanding access for all learners. I'm reading excellent ideas that are coming in through the chat here.

It's hosting a dinner party for friends who have restricted diets but way more than that. Designing for everyone, content be available for everyone, regardless of ability. Equal access equals equity. So there's that DEI focus or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Access for all students of all abilities, leveling the instructional playing field. I'm seeing really good responses here.

A set of guidelines and tools that help faculty student services to design services that expand the experience for students. Excellent. Let's see, making instructional environments open and easily accessible, like with video, addressing individual strengths, designing content from the beginning that's flexible and adaptable.

Everyone has different learning styles. I'm going to push back on that in just a second. Meeting instructors and students where they are-- we see that coming in here again. And connecting diverse students to content equally. And somebody says, I showed the cartoon entitled, "Clearing the path for people with special needs clears the path for everyone." If you haven't seen this one, it's Michael Giangreco. That cartoon has been around since the late 1980s.

And it's a snow day. And there's a gentleman who's shoveling the stairs to get into a building. And there are students waiting to go into the school. And the man says, I'm shoveling the stairs, just a minute. And one of the people says, well, if you would shovel the ramp, we could all get in. So making sure that our accommodations are for the people who need them, but also that our broader approach is for everybody. And we've got making information understandable to everybody.

These are all really good responses, so thank you for taking a minute and keying in your one idea. And, oh, here's a great one. Have you ever used an elevator? Pushed a shopping cart over a curb cut? That's universal design. So imagine the possibilities for learning. Excellent,

excellent, excellent. I see a couple of them are still coming in, and please continue thinking while we go on with our webinar here.

But when we're talking to our senior leaders, one of the challenges that can happen is they are thinking about universal design for learning in terms of accommodations, in terms of making one change, one time, for one person. So what they're thinking about is a very narrow slice of our service population of learners.

And I'd like to offer you some ideas. And I'd like to take two things that people said in our chat so far and expand those. One of them was, have you ever been in an elevator? Have you ever used curb cuts to push your shopping cart or your bicycle over? So a lot of your senior leaders are going to know about the concept of Universal Design, just UD. And universal design is taking the physical environment, the built environment, and making it accessible to as wide a section of the public as possible.

So this is putting things like curb cuts at the corners of intersections. This is having sliding doors to get into your grocery store instead of a door that has a lip over it. This is building ramps that allow you to get up into a building. And universal design is the genesis of something called universal design for learning. And there's also UDI, Universal Design for Instruction, and a few other letter acronyms that came out of a US Department of Education Grant back in the late 1980s.

Universal design for learning, though, is something that came out of the folks from CAST, C-A-S-T. That's the Center for Applied Special Technology. And Sandra Law is talking about UD with the POUR principles-- Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Relatable-- and UDI from the University of Washington, UDL. She says, I think people are confused by the different acronyms and what they mean.

Actually, the grant that came out of the US Department of Education, many different colleges and universities came up with their own systems and had different acronyms for them. And that was really confusing because they were based on different principles. That one has seven principles of accessibility. One has four. So universal design for learning is kind of the 800-pound gorilla in that whole range of different systems that came out of that grant proposal program.

And the neuroscientists at CAST, they figured out that, when we learn anything, whether we are six years old or 60 years old, we need to have a reason to learn it. We need to have a

why. We need to have information that we can encounter and take in. We need to have a what. And we need to be able to show and practice that we actually know it, or we can actually do the processes, the how of learning. And each of those are actually connected to a different brain network, a different piece of our neural anatomy.

Now, we can talk about the acetylcholine uptake pathways in the hippocampus. But we're not going to go that far away. And I apologize to the cart folks for going a little technical there.

But let's turn it back around to what our bosses don't know. We can tell them that it is the right thing to do to design our interactions inclusively. And I will almost guarantee you that in that elevator talk or that hallway talk, they might not listen so well. So universal design for learning, here's the definition that the folks at CAST have put together for it. And a lot of you here on the webinar know these, but I want to make sure that we have a common ground for our understanding so far.

Universal design for learning means that when we design the interactions that we have with one another-- and this is true not only for us faculty members and instructional designers, but it is also true for people at the Registrar's Office, people in Financial Aid, at the Tutoring Center, in the counselor's office, anybody who has a touchpoint or an interaction with students. You can design those interactions so that there are multiple ways of people staying engaged with that interaction.

There are multiple ways of representing information. This is what we think about when we think about accessibility oftentimes. This is putting captions on videos. This is making sure that we have text transcripts for our audio podcasts. This is making sure that our web pages are accessible and follow those WCAG or "wick-ag" standards.

And multiple ways of demonstrating skill-- asking our learners to write us an essay or turn on the video camera. Write something out longhand or use a keyboard and a device to actually compose their responses. Giving them choices about how they respond to our learning. And Robert is talking about-- I think, missing from this, though, I assume a bit within the engagement aspect-- is the motivation part. I've been thinking about how UDL works together with a growth mindset of ideas.

Let's take just 30 seconds and address that. It's an excellent comment. Multiple means of learner engagement-- this is often a part of UDL that gets overlooked.

And here's how you we're going to talk about how we can talk to our bosses about this. And hold on to this idea from Robert Voelker-Morris. When we're talking about multiple means of learner engagement, how do we demonstrate to learners that they should pay attention and that they should stick with the interactions we're asking them to have even through difficult parts and especially through the difficult parts?

And this can be as simple as motivating through giving them a choice, giving them real-life scenarios. In fact, Darlene Agiar just put that into the chat-- so excellent idea there. We're thinking the same way. And it can be as simple as telling your students how long they should expect to take on a given interaction. If you ask them to read a journal article or you ask them to perform an experiment at home in order to get prepared for the next time they come into a classroom environment, give them an estimate about how much time that's going to take.

So if you've got a 45-minute expectation on something, and somebody only has a half an hour between dropping the kids off at school and driving over to their job, they won't try it at that point. But if they've got a one-hour commute, they could turn on the Bluetooth speakers in their car and have their phone read out the PDF of that reading assignment to them. And then they found more time for study that they didn't have before.

And I'm seeing a lot of comments in the chat about motivating by making it meaningful, motivating by helping them with self-regulation, like time management, metacognition, encouraging them to reflect on their own practice. So we've got a lot of UDL rock stars here on the webinar. And I'm grateful for those ideas.

Also, this definition from CAST-- and can I say this to all of you folks-- don't tell your senior leaders this definition. Because you're going to get into neuroscience. You're going to get into all this how, why, and what? And their eyes are going to glaze over.

So let's think about universal design for learning in a slightly different way. Universal design for learning, at its base-- not the advanced stuff but the basic idea of universal design for learning-- is plus-1 thinking when it comes to the interactions that we have with our learners. And think about all those interactions, the interactions that learners have with the materials-- yes, that's how we usually start, as content-- but also the interactions that students have with one another. The interactions they have with their instructors or the people who are serving them in the service areas of our colleges and universities, like librarians and registrar's office folks. And how do they interact with the wider world when we're asking them to go out there

and do service learning or do active learning?

So if there's one way that those interactions happen now, give our learners one more way for that to happen. Universal design for learning is not, as many of our senior leaders might assume, about trying to cover every single possible base. They've been listening to the campus lawyer too long. The campus lawyer will say, we have to reduce the risk, and we have to cover every single possibility.

Universal design for learning is not actually a way to meet any legal requirement. It is a way to reach out to students and offer them choices. And here's what we start telling our senior leaders.

And somebody is asking, is there a way to print a transcript of the chat? This transcript will be included in the permanent format version with the recording and the transcript, as well. So we'll definitely preserve all of this information. Because we're getting really good stuff in the chat, and I'm grateful for it.

And then here's Robert Voelker-Morris, again, saying, I also like how we're getting away from the other administrative thought that it's all about this or that technology solution to make things more accessible. Yeah, have you ever talked to your president or your CIO and that person has said, well, we bought this tool, and this tool just makes everything more accessible. It automatically creates alternative versions. And so we can completely check the box and say, we're all done.

And so one of the things that we can tell our administrators is we need to be able to reach out to all of our students, not just students who have disability barriers or other challenges. Here's the secret. And I don't even want you to tell your administrators about plus-1.

How do you talk to your president? And we've got an excellent comment from [? Gwenelle O'Neill ?] here. She says, not everybody have cars with Bluetooth connections or sophisticated devices. Are there options available for people who can't afford the fancy stuff?

This is how you talk to your president about universal design for learning. And [? Gwenelle's ?] comment is right on the money. Think about how we can move the needle on student persistence. What that means is more of your students will be there-- who were there on day one-- more of them will be there to take the final examination at the end of the term-- retention. More students who were there this time will come back and continue their



educations next term.

And then satisfaction-- our students who take interactions with us-- courses, seminars, labs-- they will be more satisfied with their experiences, and they'll be more likely to recommend us to their friends. And we've got a shout here from [? Luz Cardena ?] saying, yes, that is what administrators care about-- retention, persistence, and satisfaction. Speak their language.

So how do we translate universal design for learning into administrators' language? These are the kinds of things they are concerned about all day, every day. Here we go. And let's interact here.

I would like to turn all of you on this webinar into secret, sneaky evangelists. What I mean by that is I would like for you to be able to sit down in a faculty meeting, an administrative staff meeting, a meeting where you're talking with your president or senior leaders, and I would like for you not to talk specifically about universal design for learning, and not to talk specifically about people with disabilities. I have to be really careful when I say what I am about to say, because I am an advocate for the rights of people with disabilities.

At the same time, we're turning off the ears of our administrators when we talk first or only about students with disabilities. And we've got a few people getting into the spirit here in the chat. Robert [? Payne ?] says, hey, let's pass out all the code names now. Ha ha, I love it. This is good.

Hang on. We're going to get into some useful stuff here. And [? Patricia Clug ?] is asking, what about enrollment? Shouldn't they be interested about attracting a broader demographic of student? Oh, you are absolutely on the right track.

So let's dive in together here. Everybody, if you would please, be near a keyboard if you're on the live webinar. And if you're looking at the recording, please pause in a second and write down your answer to this question.

Let's put together a beautiful problem that lots of presidents and provosts are wrestling with. If you asked your faculty colleagues or if you teach classes yourself, here's one question out of a few that you can ask your senior leaders. How many of the learners at your institution come to class having done the assigned readings or preparation, and they're ready to engage in a Socratic dialogue, and they're just raring to go to participate?

I see 20% to 25% online and face-to-face, less than 10%, 25%, 30%, 30%, less than 50%,

25%, 30%. Not enough is actually the correct answer. I love that. Similar proportions of faculty as students-- few, sometimes none, less than half. I see one person who said 75%. And boy, do I want to work at your college or university.

So the point here is if you had to guess based on your experiences, nowadays students don't come to class well-prepared. And there are many reasons for that. Our students have work responsibilities, family responsibilities. They're probably taking care of aging parents themselves-- military responsibilities.

The animal that is a student who is a traditional aid student, taking a five-class load every semester, and has nothing else to do but be a student-- I don't think I've ever encountered that animal out in the wild. I think that might be a myth, like Bigfoot. And so all of our students have challenges about how many students are completing the required readings.

So that's a pain point that our faculty colleagues feel, our instructional design colleagues feel, and it's a pain point that is felt at the registrar's office and in the president's suite. Because that's a retention problem. If our students aren't coming to class well-prepared, they're more likely not to earn good grades, more likely not to demonstrate the skills that we want them to demonstrate, and they're more likely to drop the course or not come back next semester.

The two biggest challenges for student retention-- the first one is always money, is always funding. And there are things we can do about that. But that's a different conversation.

Number two on that list is always time management. So if we can give our students a way to take part and prepare for our face-to-face interactions or the all-get-together interactions in our online courses, anytime they are outside of the formal interactions that we have with them, if we can give them just 20 more minutes for that studying and preparing during the day, that can be the difference between struggling and keeping up. So that 20 more minutes, that's part of that beautiful problem.

And I see people talking about having SMART goals, making materials more relevant, and having instructors that are caring. Students are more engaged and prepared-- yeah, absolutely. So this is a beginning step in that process.

Here's a second part of the beautiful problem if you have a couple of seconds. How often are our learners under-prepared for the interactions that we are having? There is a useful analogy that, back in the day, if you wanted to be a blacksmith and you wanted to be able to repair

wagon wheels and put horseshoes on horses-- that the real way to study to be a blacksmith was to work with another blacksmith. And you would see, day to day, what that person did in order to put iron around wagon wheels, how that person would take horse shoes off of horses and put new ones on.

Right now, in higher education, oftentimes we are helping our students to understand the processes, and the data, and the content. And we're not really helping them to apply it to their everyday lives. Mary Jones says, we need more formative quick assessments or quizzes to check for learning retention, using micro-learning or short training exercises to check for understanding. And businesses are using these types of trainings online. Absolutely.

And part of universal design for learning is helping students to see that relevance. In that analogy about becoming a blacksmith, it's like we're creating people who know all about hammering out horseshoes. But if they saw a horse limping at the side of the roadway, they would never know how to put a horseshoe on or take care of that horse. So one of the things that we want that our administrators also want is we want to help show interdisciplinary relevance and relevance to the real world. That's another problem where we can actually help with good, inclusive design to help our students see that relevance and do application, so they have choices there, as well.

So Scott Johnson-- seeing the relevance; and then all caps, do something with the information. Excellent. And Jennifer Kelly, UDL is equitable andragogy in practice. You're absolutely right.

One other fun question to ask your administrators-- and this gets back to a comment that we had in the chat a little while ago-- what percentage of our learners would you say own smartphones? Now, I actually do know the answer on this one, but take a guess.

At your institution, what percentage of your learners own smartphones? I see 90%, 92%, 95%, 100%, 95%, 99.9%-- excellent. A couple of people in the 70s and 80s. But most people are saying north of 90%.

And some of them are guesses, and some of them have data behind them. [INAUDIBLE] says, 200%. And thank you very much, but that is an incorrect answer. So we've got a lot of guesses here that are very high.

And one of our comments earlier was, well, what happens for our students who don't have the

latest and greatest gadgets? Well, actually, one of the challenges is that with universal design for learning, we can help to reach out to students wherever they happen to be without requiring them to have fancy gadgets. And here's a little data that might be shocking to you but might be useful for your administrator colleagues.

Pearson does a study every couple of years of students' mobile device ownership and habits. And what they discovered was, back in about 2010, we reached 86% of students in colleges and universities in the United States and Canada owning a smartphone. By 2012, we had reached 90%. And by 2015, which is the last set of information that we have, that was 96%.

This makes sense, actually. So if you start thinking about your students who are on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum, are they going to have a laptop or a PC at home? Probably not. But is everybody in their family going to own a phone? You bet. It is less expensive to own a phone than a laptop or a PC. You can pay it off over time.

And it does more things for you and your family. It's a way to keep engaged. It's a way to stay in touch with each other. And it's a way for your folks to stay in touch as they move around in their day.

And so we can use that idea in order to reach out beyond our formal interactions with our learners. And that helps with-- you guessed it-- persistence, retention, and satisfaction. We have 30 years of data that help us to show this.

And when you're administrators think, oh, well, if I can reach out to my students when they're on their mobile devices, that means it's more inclusivity. That means it's more than feeling a part of rather than apart from. And for those students who really don't have access to technology, that's where you say, go to your local coffee shop that has Wi-Fi. That's where you say, please come to the campus lab.

So we've got solutions for those folks. But for the vast majority of our people who are taking courses with us and learning with us, we can reach out to them on their mobile devices. And Rob Gibson is underscoring this point. He says, for many students, it's all they can afford, and it's their primary device. Absolutely.

And Nancy says, how is it less expensive for phones when iPhones are \$1,000, when a good computer is \$600? The iPhone X is an outlier. You can get a smartphone for under \$200 with a data plan. So yeah, the iPhone X is ruining my example-- but absolutely good to bring that

in.

And some people are pushing back. Is a smartphone really cheaper than, say, a Dell laptop? And the point here is not-- is this more expensive than that? It's-- how many people own smartphones versus carry around their laptops on a regular basis?

All of us, whether we are adults, students, K-12 folks, elders, we are all carrying our phones around with us. And if we can use those as a way to reach out to people beyond the interactions that we formerly have, that's an argument to your senior leaders for inclusive design. So let's actually go forward into that.

Thank you for all the interaction in the chat. I know I missed a bunch of them. And we'll have an opportunity to go back and take a look. We've got a really good second conversation happening in the chat. And I'm grateful to see that.

So if you haven't figured out by now, one of the things I'm going to suggest when you're talking to your senior leaders is to reframe universal design for learning as outreach to your mobile learners. Here's a gentleman who might be taking some graduate courses. And he's reading the readings for his course on the Kindle while he's on the bus across town.

I'd also like you to make the argument to your colleagues-- this is where you talk to the person who's in charge of media services, the person who's in charge of the library, everybody who has a leadership role over academic affairs and student services-- that, when we are talking about our learners, we should think about how they interact with materials, with each other, with their instructors or the people who are facilitating their interactions, and with the wider world. And if we can start thinking about plus-1 design in these areas, these are the kinds of things that students say, I felt that my instructor really understood me, gave me some choices. I was able to navigate my own path through the learning as we're going here.

And one other thing when you're talking with your senior leaders-- I've kind of stopped talking about accessibility anymore. Accessibility gets tied up in accommodations, making one change, one time, for one person. Accessibility gets tied up in legal requirements for your website, making sure that you're mitigating risk. And that's the kind of conversation that your president and your provost are already having with your college or university lawyer.

What I do is I take the word "accessibility," and I chop the end of it off. And I talk now just about access. By talking only about access, I'm talking about everybody. I'm talking about all

of our students.

And if access is through mobile devices, or if access is through some other way, like having satellite campuses in lots of areas of your service area or having evening courses at particular locations where there are concentrations of your students-- there are some colleges and universities doing that. It doesn't all have to be technology, technology, technology. At the same time, when we talk to our senior leaders about access for everybody, they start listening. Because they can tie that in to retention, persistence, and satisfaction.

Let me wrap up with two things for you, folks. And then we'll open it up for some Q&A and some takeaways, as well. Our colleagues over at CAST-- this came out just as my book was going to press. And it's something that I really love to share with people.

Universal Design for Learning-- the goal of UDL is to create expert learners, the people who know how to learn about things they've never even seen before. And they shift from us as givers of information and keepers of the structures of education. UDL gradually shifts us over to giving students more of a say in how they demonstrate their skills, how they path through things.

And you're going to have your faculty colleagues and your administrator colleagues who will fold their arms and gruffly say, well, why are we letting them run the whole thing? Aren't we the instructors? Or isn't this fair to everybody else if everybody else had to go through it one way and we're giving these people all these extra opportunities and options? Is it fair to everyone else?

The answer is it's fair to everyone if everyone has the choices. And in terms of this framework, what I really love is-- Katie Novak and Kristan Rodriguez, the people who created the UDL Progression Rubric that you see on your screen-- there's only a little tiny fraction of it here on the screen. This is a four- or five-page document.

But this shows, how do we start at an emerging level of universal design for learning in offering choices? And then how do we become proficient at it? How do we then go into approaching expert level practices? And some of our colleagues might go for this, and they might not.

But as we start moving through this progression of universal design for learning, one of the things that takes us way beyond what's in our book is talking to our senior leaders about how this is empowerment for our learners. And it does not reduce the rigor or the complexity of the

content and the ideas that we want to share with them. What it reduces is it reduces barriers to taking part in that conversation in the first place.

And this UDL Progression Rubric is a wonderful thing. I'd encourage everybody to go look it up. It's available as a PDF file, downloadable for free. And grab a copy of this. And you'll see how you can implement a lot of these ideas at your own college or university.

And I've got a comment here that I have to address. [? Terry Golightly ?] says, I love the irony of such documents prepared with poor color contrast. I guarantee you that the color contrast is right and follows the WCAG guidelines. It may be that the display coming over the internet to you is a little washed out. So I apologize for that.

And here's John Fisher and a couple of people-- Anne-Marie Johnson-- posting the link to the Progression Rubric right there in the chat. So that's excellent service for everybody else. Go take a look at that.

So we've talked a little bit about, what are some of the challenges that we face with universal design for learning? We defined what it is. And we spent a lot of time talking about, how do we talk to our senior leaders about UDL in a way that they are more likely to perceive it as being a mission-critical driver for things that they are very concerned about, like retention, satisfaction, and persistence of our students?

We also took a look at this rubric that came out a little bit after our book did and helps us to create those conversations, whether we're talking to our senior leaders or to our operations-level leaders who are in charge of places like the registrar's office, like our counseling services office, our librarians, our media services people, our IT people. So I'd like to ask for everybody who's here on the live webinar, if you're near the keyboard, please take a minute, and share one thing that you will take away from our time today. So what's one thing that either you are already doing, and we underlined it, and you know it's important-- what's one thing that you've learned and you want to try out? Or if you still have a question, what's one thing that you want to ask?

And I see Melissa saying, UDL equals access instead of accessibility when you're talking with your colleagues. Ideas how to talk to administration types-- there's another access to accessibility, plus-1, somebody saying they love the UDL Progression Rubric. That's excellent.

Facilitating self-directed learners-- actually, time management is a big challenge for almost all

of us. People are going to share the rubric with their faculty colleagues, connecting UDL to retention-- by the way, if you're interested, I'll share with our 3Play Media hosts all of those citations for the 30 years of data that show that this is true. And you can share those with your colleagues, as well.

And they're considering how to include each other. And somebody says, forgive me, but I don't get plus-1. Plus-1 is a way to simplify the multiple means of engagement, representation, and action, and skill.

So if there is one way for an interaction to happen now, think of one more way for that interaction to happen, and give people the choice. So that's what the plus-1 mindset is about. It's a radical simplification of universal design for learning. It's not all of it in a nutshell, but it gets people started and gives them a starting point that they can put their brains around.

And here's somebody saying, I need to think about how to apply UDL to graduate programs that are heavily content-based like nursing-- not so much leeway for students. So for an example with nursing, UDL does not mean that we are going to completely get rid of format-based requirements. For example, my wife used to be a teaching center director at a two-year college outside of Chicago. They had a nursing program that required their students, as part of the state requirements for licensure, to be able to lift 70 pounds and move it 10 feet.

The idea was that nurses would need to pick up patients and reposition them in part of their duties. There was a woman who walked with a cane. And she wanted to come into the program. And she was told, well, can you lift the 70 pounds? And she said, no, but I can do everything else.

And they said, no, that's part of the licensing thing. And we shouldn't take your money, because you shouldn't start down this path. She fought, and fought, and fought. They allowed her into the program.

She aced every single exam and test. And then when she went to take her licensure exam, she failed because of the physical requirement. And she sued the college. And the college won.

Because if the format is the assignment, if there is a requirement for a physical interaction and you cannot do that safely, if it interferes with patient safety, then there is no alternative to moving the 70 pounds. That being said, if there are alternatives in drafts of assignments, if



there are alternatives in practicum that you can offer to your students, by all means, offer them. Do that plus-1 design. But remember that universal design for learning doesn't mean that we are removing every single possible roadblock or that we are lowering standards.

And so here's [? Emily Bree. ?] The irony is hospitals are increasingly moving to using lift teams and mechanical hoist, because nurses were getting injured. Absolutely. And so if that's an opportunity to change a standard, that's awesome.

But if the standards in your field are related to physical movement, are related to hearing things, being a musician, or a music critic, or something like that-- if the assignment is the format, it's OK not to give your students choices. And that's dangerous to say when I'm an advocate for inclusivity and diversity.

At the same time, UDL allows us to lower barriers in lots of other ways. And so don't let your faculty members, don't let your administrators hide behind the idea of, well, that's our requirement, and students must do it that way. Always ask, well, why is that so? Is there an alternate way for people to go?

And Jennifer Levine is saying it really well. She says, competencies and learning objectives don't change just because you employ UDL principles. And the universal design for learning framework is just that-- it's a framework.

It rides on top of our teaching and interaction approaches that we already use. So universal design for learning-- when we talk to our senior leaders, we should say to them, this does not make our faculty members stop doing the flipped classroom, or authentic assessment, or getting out and doing service learning. This is a way to lower barriers for participation and being part of the conversation. And this is a way for people to be included in the educational conversations we've got.

And Angela Lee has been to my webinars before. And she's saying, aim for progress and not for perfection. So that's something that I always say. And I'm grateful to you for bringing that up.

And here's a couple of suggestions here. [? Patricia Clug ?] is saying, what about partnering with our inclusive and diversity colleagues as a way to get administrators' attention?

Absolutely. If you're in a particular service area at your college or university, find other people who can sing the same song, who are asking for similar kinds of initiatives-- being able to work

with our diversity offices to say, this is all of a piece, and this is all business critical-- so excellent, excellent ideas and takeaways here.

And I really love the one thing that you folks are taking away here. And I'd love to continue the conversation with all of you. We're coming right up here on our time as we're getting ready. So thank you very much.

Let me offer two more things for you. First off, I wrote a bunch of books. And I specialize in things that scare the heck out of faculty members, so things like academic integrity and cheating, evaluating online teaching-- especially when your department chairs haven't talked with technology before-- things like copyright, and things like accessibility and UDL.

I would love to continue the conversation. If you'd like to set up a 20-minute phone call, I'd love to hear your story. My website is just my name. It's [thomasjtobin.com](http://thomasjtobin.com).

And I'll also say thank you very much to our folks at 3Play for hosting this, and especially to Sofia and Eliza behind the scenes; to Kara, our captioner from all A La Carte Communications; and mostly to all of you who've been here for this hour with us. And your comments, your ideas, everything you've shared with us has been wonderful. And I thank you all.

Thanks so much. We've got a couple of minutes for Q&A open style here. And I'll turn it back over to Sofia for some ending comments before we get into that.

**SOFIA LEIVA:** Thank you so much, Tom. That was a really wonderful presentation. We do have a couple of questions that have already come in. The first question that we have is, I view one function of UDL as facilitating teacher collaboration for the purpose of vertical and horizontal articulation of curriculum, instruction, and assessments. Is that correct? Can you speak to that process?

**THOMAS TOBIN:** In terms of universal design for learning being about incorporating instruction into curriculum-- universal design for learning takes place at three different levels if we're speaking simply. It takes place at the level of individual interaction. So anytime that students are interacting with the materials that they need to read, or watch, or otherwise take in, that's one level of interaction.

The other level that we can talk about is the level of interaction that takes place in a classroom, or with somebody at the tutoring center, or even at the registrar's desk. Those kinds of interactions, if we're offering plus-1 on how those happen, we can give people more than one way to stay engaged-- so giving them reasons for why the conversation should

happen and how it has an impact on their real lives out in the real world. We can give people more than one way to take in information.

When there's that long line at the registrar's office at the end of every semester when it's registering for the new semester, have-- on those rope lines, you have those little pillars-- have a printed sign that says, here are the three pieces of paper that you're going to need when you get up to the desk. And then a little further down, have a little video playing on an iPad that says the same thing. And give people choices about how they take in that information and how they get prepared. And you're going to have fewer people walk up to the desk and be very mad, because they don't have what they need, or they're not ready to have the interaction. So being able to prepare that way is a way that we can think, even outside of curriculum and classes, about UDL.

And that third level of interaction is, how do our learners interact with each other and interact with the wider world? When we're asking them to go out and do authentic learning by checking in with local business people or working with others in industry in order to see about applying what they know, that's actually really good UDL. Because they're going to have choices about how they demonstrate their skills and how they report back on what they've learned. And giving our learners choices about how they report back and demonstrate their skills is the most powerful part of universal design for learning.

I teach English Composition courses I ask my students to write a five-page persuasive essay. And the end product of that is an essay. It's got to be a word-processed document. There's no getting around that. But as they're drafting, I give them lots of choices.

I say, OK, plus-1. As you're drafting a paragraph and I'm going to grade it on whether you have a clear thesis sentence and you are using details, evidence, and examples to support your point, I can grade that equally well if it's turned in as a word-processing file or if I have my students turn the selfie camera on their phones to good use and they speak it out loud. So I give plus-1 choices wherever I possibly can.

And that helps us to get vertical in that curriculum design. And that's a conversation we can have for 20 more minutes. So contact me offline if you'd like to continue on that one.

**SOFIA LEIVA:**

Thanks, Tom. The next question we have is, you talked a little bit about the learning style responses. Could you tell us a little bit more?

**THOMAS TOBIN:** Oh, yeah. Somebody mentioned that everybody has different learning styles way at the beginning of the webinar. And I said, oh, I'll push back on that one. And here we go.

Learning styles don't exist. Yes, I said that with a period at the end. Learning styles don't exist.

Learning styles as fixed characteristics-- if you have a visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learner, does that mean that, if I'm a visual learner that I can't learn anything by listening to it, or I'll be poor at learning by listening? Probably not. We have 50 years of neuroscience studies.

And I'll point you to my colleague, Michelle Miller, who is a cognitive neuroscience at Northern Arizona University. She has written persuasively on trying to bust this neurological myth. What we have is learning preferences.

And those change from moment to moment based on how we would prefer to engage with something or by circumstances. If there there's only one way to do it, we kind of buckle down and do it. And that learning preference is really an underpinning for universal design for learning.

Universal design for learning assumes that there is variability among all of our learners. We don't teach to the middle. We don't say, I'm going to just give this information in one way, and the people who need a hand, or need to see it differently, or are way beyond it, well, they'll just be bored or frustrated.

And [? Patricia Clug ?] talking about, what about students on the spectrum or other diverse learners? They can be locked into visual learning. Yeah, they absolutely can. But we wouldn't call that a learning style. We wouldn't call that something that-- you take a quick test, and then that determines how you learn for the rest of your life.

Everybody is a diverse learner. Some people, they learn within narrower limits of diversity than other people. But everybody takes in information. Everybody demonstrates information in more than one way. And so that's actually one of the reasons why, with universal design for learning, we should give students choices in individual interactions.

Here's something that is not UDL. For this assignment, my students will watch a video. For the next assignment, they will read a journal article. And for the third assignment, they will listen to a podcast.

That is just making some people a little more challenge on at least one of each of those.

Giving students choices in the individual interaction, that's universal design for learning-- so good question. And thank you for letting me go down and bust a myth there.

**SOFIA LEIVA:** Thanks, Tom. I think we have time for a couple more questions. Someone is asking, how would you implement UDL for online high schools?

**THOMAS TOBIN:** So for high schools-- actually, our colleagues in K-12 have been doing Universal Design for Learning for a lot longer than we have in higher education. And so I'd encourage you to look at the CAST website. And somebody post this into the chat. It's [udloncampus.cast.org](http://udloncampus.cast.org).

And that is examples from colleges, universities, and K-12 areas from the National Center on Universal Design for Learning. And the folks in K-12 were first to adopt it, mostly because there were federal grants, and there were also state programs that required inclusive design. And also [? Yolanda Lago ?] says, that's because K-12 requires teacher education, unlike university faculty. That's true, too.

It doesn't mean that lots of people in K-12 are actually experts at doing UDL or that it's been adopted. But it's been part of the curriculum in K-12 for a long, long time. So for an online high school, I'd love to have that conversation. And we don't have the 25 minutes for it left.

So I'm going to tease that out. And contact me later. I'd be happy to have that conversation.

**SOFIA LEIVA:** Thanks, Tom. I believe we time for one more question. Some-- not me-- have criticized UDL as moving the teachers' focus to the average. How would you respond to that criticism?

**THOMAS TOBIN:** I'd actually say that's a gross misunderstanding of universal design for learning. Moving the focus to the average-- I think we've had the focus on the average for far too long-- that, if we are trying to teach to this mythical, average student, we're actually only teaching in one way. And we're not really reaching out across the curve of abilities and preferences that our students have.

So universal design for learning-- I would say to that critic, go back, and take a look at how making some changes-- ask that colleague. Where do your students always ask you the same question every semester 700 times? What's that topic? That's a great place to do a little plus-1 thinking, and save yourself some work.

Where do your students get things wrong on the tests or the quizzes, and you end up having to reteach? That's a great place to go back, and do a little plus-1 design, offer them some

choice, offer them a study guide in another format. And that will save you-- faculty member, instructor-- some work and some fuss.

And that's actually what we're all about. So I'm really grateful for all the questions, all your interactivity. Thank you again, Sofia and 3Play, for inviting me. And I'm sure I'll see you folks on the road. So thanks again. Bye-bye now.