



# ***UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING***

## ***CRITICAL ELEMENTS***

Developed in Collaboration with the  
Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)

---

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) represents a paradigm shift in education that has the potential to improve outcomes for a broad range of students. MiTS, in collaboration with CAST, has identified four critical elements intended to serve as a foundation for implementation and further research. Instruction aligned with the framework of UDL must minimally include **each** of the four critical elements shown below.

### **1. Clear Goals**

- Teachers have a clear understanding of the goal(s) of the lesson and expected, specific outcomes
- Goals are communicated in ways that are accessible to all students, and can be articulated by them.

### **2. Inclusive, Intentional Planning**

- Intentional proactive planning addresses diverse student needs based on the teacher's knowledge of their students.
  - Addresses individual differences in background knowledge, affect, strategies, etc. (Consider what students know, what they are capable of, and what engages them).
  - Recognizes that all students learn differently and thus plan accordingly, paying particular attention to students in the margins (i.e., struggling and advanced) knowing that a broader range of students will benefit
- Addresses the demands (e.g. standards) and resources of the curriculum:
  - Maintaining rigor of the lesson while providing necessary supports and alternatives
  - Reducing the barriers in the curriculum by embedding built in supports from the start

### **3. Flexible methods and materials**

- A variety of media and methods are used to present information and content
- Students use a variety of media and methods to demonstrate their knowledge or express themselves
- A variety of methods are used to engage students and build self-regulation

### **4. Timely progress monitoring**

- Formative assessments are frequent and timely enough to plan/redirect instruction and support
- Both formative and summative assessments are varied and differentiated enough to be accurate for all students