UDL-PLC Series: Building Student Ownership of Choices

LEARN

Building Student Ownership of Choices:

In a UDL classroom, we expect students to be engaged, independent, and effective learners. This requires more than just presenting content in an interesting way. As educators, we need to provide tools for students to take ownership of their learning by reflecting on the choices that they are provided for engaging with content and expressing their knowledge. Two additional ideas are related to this concept. First is the idea of Assessment as Learning, which means that we use the assessment cycle as a learning opportunity for students rather than simply a tool to inform teachers.

To learn more about assessment as learning, click on the link to "Assessment as Learning," which is an adaptation from the online book, *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind*, from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

Assessment as Learning: http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/hiat/udl/PLC_study_topics…

The second idea is that in addition to teaching content, we are charged with teaching students to reflect on their own progress and make careful choices about strategies to attain a goal. Review CAST's UDL Guidelines Checkpoint 9.3:

Checkpoint 9.3 Develop self-assessment and reflection

In order to develop better capacity for self-regulation, learners need to learn to monitor their emotions and reactivity carefully and accurately. Individuals differ considerably in their capacity and propensity for metacognition, and some learners will need a great deal of explicit instruction and modeling in order to learn how to do this successfully. For many learners, merely recognizing that they are making progress toward greater independence is highly motivating. Alternatively, one of the key factors in learners losing motivation is their inability to recognize their own progress. It is important, moreover, that learners have multiple models and scaffolds of different self-assessment techniques so that they can identify, and choose ones that are optimal.

There are many ways to have students reflect on choices in products, tools, methods or materials. Some teachers use surveys and exit ticket strategies. Others may consider graphing class preferences. Reflect on the following three methods for empowering and building effective student choices within the UDL framework:

1. Methods to introduce choices to students:

This may involve introducing a new method to the whole class so that it becomes an option for future assignments. Or, it may involve explicitly asking students to do a task several different ways in order to reflect on the experience.

2. Methods for students to choose a way of learning or demonstrating knowledge based on familiar choices:

Over time, teachers introduce new ways of learning or demonstrating knowledge to all students. At the start of a new lesson or unit of study, the teacher can then present familiar options for students to choose from. Watch the following videos to see how a middle school teacher presents choices to students:

Video examples:

- [Presenting choices to students](#):
- [Providing options for expressing what they have learned](#):

3. Methods to have students reflect on their choices and then document or share which choices did or did not support their learning for a specific task.

Examples of reflection survey questions

- How did you get your idea about your project?
- To complete your project, what do you need to learn about?
- How will you do this in a way that works best for you?

Example of "Exit Ticket" questions

- Tell me something you want me to know about your final project.
- For this project, I "showed what I know" best by _____ .

DISCUSS

Reflection and Discussion: Student Ownership of Learning
Reflect and discuss one of the following:

- Having reflected on the three key methods for building effective student choices in this module's LEARN section, describe in detail one strategy for at least 2 of the methods.
- Why is building student ownership of learning important? Reflect on this question and provide specific examples of how this helps learners.

Share your ideas with your colleagues online.

Response to Colleagues:
Build on the ideas of your colleagues. Remember to deepen the discussion and not simply respond, "I agree" or "I plan to try that." As always, reply to at least one colleague

Adapted from HIAT, Montgomery County Maryland Public Schools