

### UDL and Blended Learning: Part 3

Dr. Catlin Tucker

So I spend a lot of time supporting teachers and I often get the question of, "Where do I start? How do I begin this process?"

And my big picture advice is think big, get excited about all the possibilities that really exist when we think about UDL and blended learning, but start small. Choose a blended learning model, for example, station rotation. And as you're designing your station rotations and getting comfortable having students move through a series of online and offline learning experiences, start thinking about where might I include a choice?

Something meaningful where students get to make a decision at one of these stations, starting to give them agency to choose a pathway. So for example, it might be something simple like students are reading a text and you allow them to take traditional notes or you allow them to create sketch notes or maybe you give them a discussion prompt and you let them partner with somebody to have the real time discussion or you invite them to kind of log into your learning management system and post a response there. So really starting to weave in, kind of simple choices at first, to allow them to choose that pathway that's gonna work for them.

We can also use a station, in a station rotation to start thinking about how do we help students become those expert learners. Maybe it's a goal setting station or a self-assessment station. So starting with a single blended learning model, getting comfortable designing learning experiences using those models, getting kids kind of used to what it feels like to move through a rotation. And then starting to take those kind of core beliefs at the heart of universal design for learning and blended learning and starting to integrate them, you know, giving students that meaningful choice and allowing them to choose that pathway and cultivating some of those skills that they truly need to be those strategic, resourceful, self-aware learners that we're trying to cultivate in a universally designed blended learning environment.

So when we think about barriers to learning in a classroom and how blended learning can help us to kind of identify and then remove those barriers, thinking simply about something as kind of commonplace in a classroom as direct instruction, whether that takes the form of a lecture or a mini lesson, there are so many barriers that might make it challenging for students to access that information when it's presented live.

Kids might be distracted. They might not be feeling well. The pace of the information might be coming at them much too quickly. They might not have the background knowledge or the vocabulary to really understand that information. And so, that's where using something like strategic video recordings can be incredibly helpful to allow students to control the pace at which they engage with new information. Even a simple video allows them to just pause, rewind, re-watch instruction. They can also, if they're watching instruction in an environment where they can slow down the speed of the video or add closed captioning to improve accessibility, all of those things can be incredibly helpful.

So as educators, we wanna be thinking about how do we leverage technology to really make sure that students can be as successful as possible, whether that is taking in new information, processing information, and navigating what at times are very complex tasks in the classroom.

So I wanna thank you guys for joining me in this conversation about blended learning and UDL. And I just wanna remind you that as you are moving forward and you're exploring universally designed blended learning, to just give yourself the space to experiment, to make mistakes, and to continue to iterate. Honestly, we as teachers, just need to be that lead learner in the classroom. And so, I wish you luck on your journey, creating accessible, inclusive, and equitable learning environments.