UDL and CA MTSS: Part 2

James McKenna	Hello, my name is James McKenna, and on behalf of the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence and our friends at Texthelp, I would like to welcome you to another of our "Why UDL" videos. Today, I'll be talking with Rhonda Marriott-Spencer from the Orange County Department of Education. Rhonda, would you like to tell us a bit about your background with California multi-tiered systems of support and universal design for learning?
Rhonda Marriot-Spencer	Thank you, James. Yes, so happy to be here. I serve as the administrator of the Learning Supports Unit with the Orange County Department of Education, and we are the lead agency, along with our partners, the Butte County Office of Education, through the grant offered by the California Department of Education to support the implementation of a multi-tiered system of support. And so through our efforts as a member of the executive leadership team, we have built capacity for county offices of education throughout the state of California. And we have trained over 600 districts in the California MTSS Framework and the schools that are partnering in that work. So we're excited that we're into our third phase of California MTSS now, where we are truly supporting those school-site individuals through the support of a coach to be able to implement and build capacity around what a multi-tiered system actually looks like to really implement a continuum of support, knowing that all of our students are general education students first, regardless of identification for specialized services, and they all should have access to that best first instruction to meet academic behavior, social, emotional, and mental health supports. So really thinking about,how are we integrating those supports into that continuum where universal design for learning is at that foundational piece of that. So we really need to have that intentional focus around: What are we doing to design our support so that students have access to them? And then knowing that some of our students require those supplemental supports, so we provide those when and where they need them, and then tapping into those specialized service providers to be able to offer them, and then also some students need those intensified supports as well. So really thinking about, how are we offering those throughout the school day so all students can succeed. So when we think about that multi-tiered framework where the needs of the whole child are front and center. That's why we do what we do. That's why we get up every day to make sure that we are providing those supports so students

can succeed. However, in order to get there, we really need to make sure that that administrative leadership is supportive of the entire school staff. Are there opportunities built-in to staff meetings or professional learning events, so that staff can collaborate, so that they can look at student outcome information known as data. So we can really look at: Where are our students, and then what do they need? So it's up to that administrator to be able to provide those supports and then also to build their capacity along the way. So connecting them to a coach, or a mentor, or somebody like that that is really supportive to enhance that school system.

And then also, we need to think about: How are we integrating these supports within the school day? So it's not just that social-emotional learning is happening every Friday at 10:00, how are we integrating social-emotional skills and competencies, behavior supports to make sure that it's integrated within that academic content so that this is building the capacity of all of our students? And then, of course, the importance of including families and communities.

We need to tap into these families who best know these children and tap into them to be able to obtain: What are the best strategies and how can we best support these children? So that's that two-way street. It's that two-way communication. The school is not just delivering information to families and parents, but they're also receiving that feedback about: How can we enhance our school climate and the school culture to meet the needs of that community?

And then finally, how is the district or that local education agency supportive in removing those barriers for those schools? So we look at that district as that point of intervention. They come in to remove those barriers, they help to align initiative, they approve funding to be able to support, for example, professional learning. When we think about universal design for learning, while I mentioned those three key areas that we need to think about, we also need to think about how are we building the capacity of our educators to be able to... It just becomes a natural part of their day. So they intentionally design those lessons to remove those barriers for their students. So that whole framework, that is completely relevant to California MTSS is that way, that vehicle that will support a school as it transforms to make sure that we are consistently meeting the needs of our students.