

## UDL and Language Learners, pt. 1

- Soomin Chao Hello everybody. My name is Soomin Chao. I am with the Multilingual Academic Support Unit at the Los Angeles County Office of Education.
- Elise Yerkey Hi, I'm Elise Yerkey. I'm also with LACOE's Curriculum and Instructional Services Division with Soomin, and I'm in the Inclusive Design Unit and my job is to provide professional learning when it comes to Universal Design for Learning.
- Soomin Chao Elise and I are so pleased to be here with you and we are going to be having a conversation today about UDL and our multilingual learners and how best to support them in the instructional environment.
- Elise, could you please help us, those of us who are maybe a little bit less familiar with UDL, help us get acquainted with the brief overview.
- Elise Yerkey So, Universal Design for Learning was defined in the Higher Education Act back in 2008. And so the definition that was used in that act has kind of been adopted in subsequent acts in California. And the way the Higher Ed Act defined it was they said, "Universal Design for Learning is a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice." And it does this in a specific way.
- It reduces barriers in instructions, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient. And the way it does that is the framework provides flexibility in the ways that students are engaged, the way information is presented, and in the way students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills.
- And so I'm gonna also share a little story that I think is very UDL. So back in the days when the LA Times had a book review section, they interviewed some authors and asked them why they read. And one author told a story about being in elementary school. I remember a specific book and where it was located in a school library. Didn't remember the name, but he knew it was on the third shelf, about three feet from the door, and it was about a little boy who, like him, had a habit of tapping and counting the combination of taps. And one day, the character in the story tapped on a wall and a door opened. And the author says that he reads for the same reason that that boy tapped, and that's to look for doors and break down walls. And that's exactly what UDL is, except in the language of UDL, doors are options and walls are barriers.
- Soomin Chao Elise, your story really resonated with me and I appreciated that so much especially from the perspective of a classroom educator. I know that one of the many areas of

focus and what we desire for our students is to make sure that we get to know them so that we can identify potential barriers and provide avenues for access for our students so that they're able to learn, they're able to participate and engage, and feel part of that learning community.

UDL in the classroom is so important in engaging all of our learners and especially our language learners. It's a way that they can engage with the learning and teachers can also anticipate barriers and create access points so that they're able to grow and flourish and be successful.