

# CAST's UDL Implementation Phases

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## Overview

At CAST we are focused on supporting educators as they engage in learning about and implementing Universal Design for Learning into everyday educational practices in order to maximize learning experiences for all.

In 2012-2013 we ran the first UDL Academy. During this Academy, we worked with teams of educators in Massachusetts who were interested in beginning to implement UDL. We used the implementation process created by CAST as part of a Gates Implementation Grant, which followed four districts through their UDL implementation process. The five phases within an integrated dynamic process of UDL implementation, adapted from Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, and Wallace (2005), and were fluid and recursive, with three focused goals. The five phases included: Explore, prepare, integrate, scale, and optimize.

When we used the phases with our UDL Academy project in 2012-2013 we found that districts required more guidance than the initial phases provided. Specifically, districts wanted to know: 1) How do we know we are appropriately implementing UDL? 2) How do we measure “success” of implementation? 3) How can our district gain capacity in UDL practices? Overall, districts asked repeatedly for a detailed, step-by-step process. The idea of the phases being dynamic, fluid, and recursive seemed exciting at first—districts could build a path that made sense based on their own practices, policies, and cultures. However, as districts attempted UDL implementation they wanted more guidance in learning about UDL, in trying out UDL in their classrooms, in building systems that support implementation, and in using data to understand if change was occurring in terms of both student outcomes and teacher practice.

In 2014-2015, responding to the needs of districts, we began to build our current implementation model. During the 2014-2015 school year we worked with 13 teams in 10 districts, and used our experiences to build process and procedures that could provide districts structure while also being responsive to districts' needs. We strengthened the clarity of the implementation process, improved our explanation and resources around student and teacher data collection, and made suggestions for specific structures to support implementation. Our implementation process is flexible, and no two districts follow the exact same path. However, we have found that all 13 teams we worked with benefited from the structure of the implementation process that we attempted during the 2014-2015 school year.

Throughout 2015 we worked to write-up the implementation process and create resources to support implementation. This fall we will begin working with 88 teams across three states using

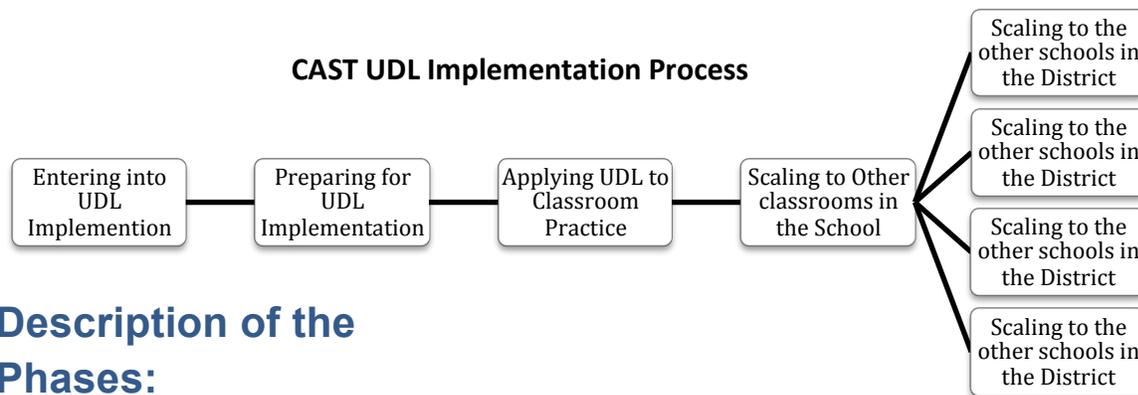
our implementation model. We have created an implementation guide to support teams through the process of implementation. At CAST we also offer guidance through regional face-to-face meetings and an implementation specialist.

## UDL Implementation Phases

Our current UDL Implementation process is based on research in educator change, implementation science, and Universal Design for Learning. Implementation is a process, not an event, and implementation requires more than the adoption of a new program (LaTurner & Lewis, 2013).

The CAST UDL Implementation process recognizes that classrooms, schools, and districts are complex systems and that no two classrooms, no two schools, and no two districts are the same. Context matters and the identified needs of the classroom, school and district directly impact the implementation process.

There are five phases of UDL implementation (*figure 1*):



## Description of the Phases:

### Pre-phase

1. District or school creates a school-based UDL team
2. Team decides if they are ready to engage in the UDL Implementation process.
3. Team determines the data that is available in the district to measure progress throughout the implementation process and identify data sources that will influence decisions on where and how UDL implementation will take place

### Phase 1

1. Team builds capacity around the team process.
2. Team builds capacity in data literacy for UDL Implementation.
3. Team learns about UDL and how to identify aspects of UDL in practice.
4. Team decides on an area of focus for the year.
5. Team ensures that it has the data it will need to monitor students' progress as they implement UDL.

## Phase 2

1. Team determines which classrooms will infuse UDL into instruction.
2. The team confirms the data it will collect over the year, including student data and data on instruction.
3. The team engages in three, two-week-long guided “trials” of data collection, trying out a guideline, and measuring changes in instruction and students’ performance and experience.
4. The team develops a plan for sharing its members’ practice with others in the school.
5. The team develops a plan of action for scaling to other classrooms in the school.

## Phase 3

1. The UDL Team helps to identify other classrooms in the school that can enter into Phase 2 of the UDL Implementation process.
2. The team develops an action plan based on the structures in its members’ particular schools and models of other schools’ successful implementation to scale to the school.
3. The original UDL Team mentors the new classroom teams to support the scaling of UDL practices in other classrooms as determined by the plan.

## Phase 4

1. The UDL Team and the district administration identify other schools in the district that can enter into the Pre-Phase of the UDL Implementation process.
2. The UDL Team and district administration develop an action plan based on the structures in their district and models of other districts’ successful implementation to scale to the district.
3. The UDL Team shares its work with the new district schools and figures out a system of support to scale the implementation.

We are confident that our new phases included in the guide and supported by direct work with schools will lead to change in teacher practice and student learning. We look forward to working closely with the school-based teams to ensure that the guide and the resources provide sufficient support to and flexibility for teams and to modifying the guide and resources as we learn more.