

Design options for sustaining effort and persistence

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Design multiple means of Engagement' from the Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Includes:

Why this matters

Clarify the meaning and purpose of goals

Optimise challenge and support

Foster collaboration, inter-dependence, and collective learning

Foster belonging and community

Offer action-oriented feedback

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From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Design multiple means of Engagement](#)

Suggestion: [Design options for sustaining effort and persistence](#)

Date

05 July 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/design-options-for-sustaining-effort-and-persistence

Why this matters

Learners vary in how they stay motivated through challenges.

Without access to a range of flexible supports and scaffolds, some learners may get left behind ([CAST, 2024](#)).

Design options for sustaining effort and persistence prompts us to consider learner variability at the outset and offer options to:

- [clarify the meaning and purpose of goals](#)
- [optimise challenge and support](#)
- [foster collaboration, interdependence, and collective learning](#)
- [foster belonging and community](#)
- [offer action-oriented feedback.](#)

This guideline also reminds us to consider

- How will these options support learners in reaching their goals?
- Could any of these options create barriers or unnecessary challenges?
- Will all learners have fair and equal access to high-quality choices?
- How do these options reflect and respond to learner variability?

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Clarify the meaning and purpose of goals



Source:

[UDL Guidelines 3.0, CAST \(2024\)](#)

<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/engagement/effort-persistence/meaning-purpose-goals/>

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Optimise challenge and support

Learners will vary in how they respond to challenges in learning.

Learners engage with challenges in different ways: Too little challenge is demotivating and too much challenge is overwhelming.

Consider the following:

- Presume competence and nurture a belief in the capabilities of every learner.
- Offer options with varying modes of complexity or difficulty.
- Offer options for tools and scaffolds that align with the learning goal and promote agency.
- Emphasise process, effort, and progress.

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Foster collaboration, inter-dependence, and collective learning

Learning with and from one another is central to the learning process.

Consider ways to foster collaboration, interdependence, and collective learning:

- Co-create community agreements that foster collaboration, interdependence, and collective learning.
- Support group work with clear shared goals, roles, expectations, and responsibilities.
- Discuss different ways to ask for help, including visual or body cues.
- Support different ways to develop ideas or generate knowledge, such as discussion, wānanga, talanoa, and digital collaboration tools.
- Encourage and support opportunities for peer interactions and supports (for example, Think-Pair-Share; peer tutors; tuakana teina).
- Support communities of learners engaged in common interests or activities or who identify in similar ways.
- Offer opportunities to learn about differing interests or activities or peers who identify in different ways.
- Encourage questioning to more fully understand concepts, ideas, and perspectives.

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Foster belonging and community

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Engagement

- Create opportunities for learners to share perspectives on what belonging and community can feel like.
- Create opportunities for learners to share their ideas for different ways to foster belonging and community.
- Welcome interests and identities in responsive and flexible ways.
- Examine when or how bias may be creating barriers to learners' sense of belonging

Adapted with permission: UDL Guidelines 3.0, CAST (2024)

Source:

[UDL Guidelines 3.0, CAST \(2024\)](#)

<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/engagement/effort-persistence/belonging-community/>

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Offer action-oriented feedback

Action-oriented feedback is focussed on ways to make progress and take action toward the learning goal.

Offer feedback in a way that upholds the mana of learners and:

- encourages perseverance, focuses on development of efficacy and self-awareness, and encourages the use of specific supports and strategies in the face of challenge
- emphasises effort, improvement, and achieving a goal rather than on relative performance
- is frequent, timely, and specific
- is substantive and informative rather than comparative or competitive
- models how to incorporate reflection, including identifying patterns of challenges or strengths, into positive strategies for future success
- encourages risk taking and offers another (or differing) perspective(s).

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