

# Learner agency

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Find out about UDL' from the Guide:

[Universal Design for Learning](#)

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## The goal of UDL

Learner agency is the goal of UDL.

Learner agency is about having the power, combined with choices, to take meaningful action and see the result of those decisions.

It ... is about learners having the understanding, ability and opportunity to be part of the learning design and taking action to intervene in the learning process to become effective lifelong learners.

**Derek Wenmoth (2021)**

**Source:**

[Agency by Design: Making Learning Engaging \(2021, PDF\)](#)

[https://aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/AuroraInstitute\\_AgencybyDesign\\_DWenmothMJonesJDiMartino.pdf](https://aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/AuroraInstitute_AgencybyDesign_DWenmothMJonesJDiMartino.pdf)

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## Characteristics of learner agency

The UDL Guidelines support the development of learner agency by guiding the design of environments where learners can become more:

- ✓ **purposeful** – learners have confidence in their own ability and make decisions to support their learning
- ✓ **reflective** – learners assess what supports learning and what gets in the way and make adjustments
- ✓ **resourceful** – learners draw on strengths, skills, cultural knowledge and experience, and available tools to support learning
- ✓ **authentic** – learners connect new ideas to their lived experience and develop deeper understanding of the world
- ✓ **strategic** – learners set clear goals, monitor progress, and adapt plans as needed
- ✓ **action-oriented** – learners initiate and collaborate in efforts to meet their goals.

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## Conditions for agency

Designing learning environments that support learner agency requires:

- ✓ **recognising culture and identity** – acknowledge and affirm the diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities that shape how learners engage and express agency
- ✓ **continually examining educator-learner relationships** – reflect on power dynamics and foster respectful, reciprocal interactions that value learner voice
- ✓ **creating space for meaning-making** – provide opportunities for learners to engage with content individually and collaboratively through dialogue, reflection, and inquiry
- ✓ **examining bias and barriers** – identify and address biases or systemic structures that may limit some learners' ability to participate fully and authentically in the learning process.

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## Barriers to agency in the design

Consider what limits agency.

Look for barriers in the design, not the learner.

UDL aims to change the design of the environment rather than to situate the problem as a perceived deficit within the learner.

**UDL Guidelines 3.0 | CAST (2024)**

Source:

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

<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

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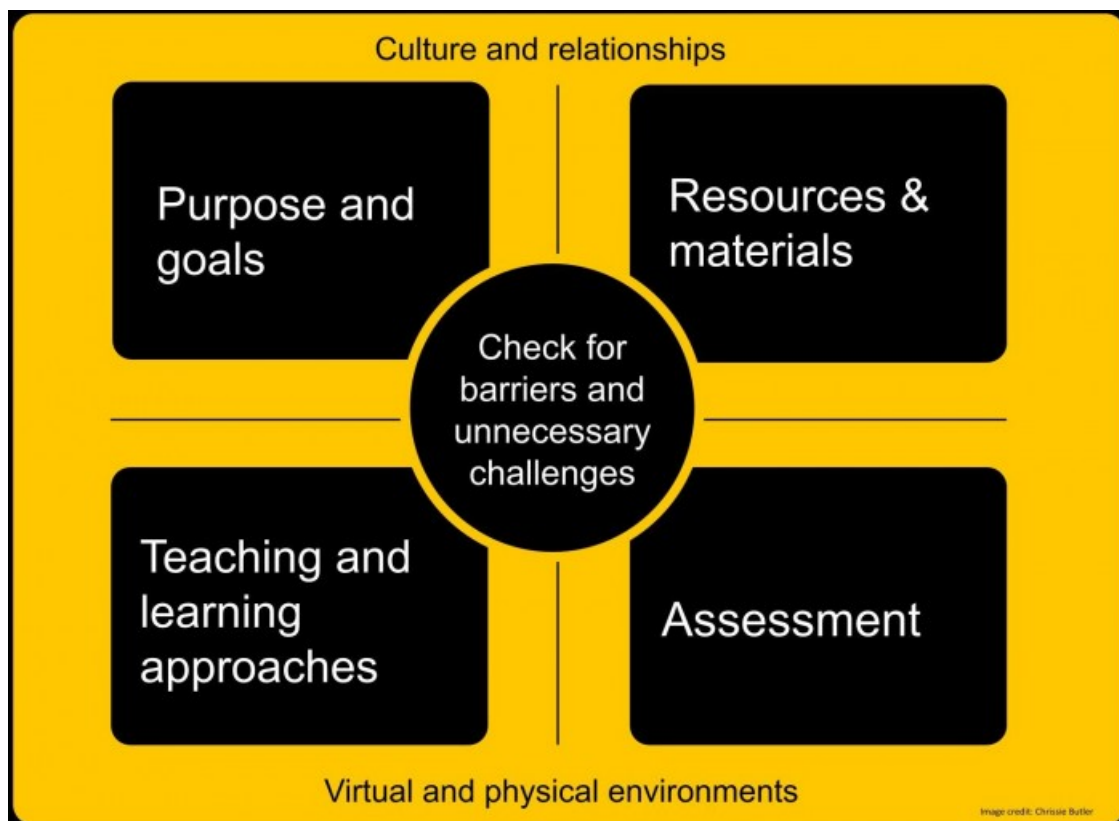
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## Checking for barriers



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## Useful resources



### The goal of UDL: Learner agency

An introduction to learner agency on the UDL Guidelines website.

Publisher: CAST (2024)

[Visit website](#)

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