

The  
**New Hampshire  
UDL Innovation  
Network**

Year 3 (2020) Report



**CAST**  
Until  
learning  
has no  
limits<sup>®</sup>

**A groundbreaking partnership focused  
on better outcomes for thousands of  
New Hampshire's learners.**





# A Note from Commissioner Edelblut

This past year has seen the largest disruption to New Hampshire education we've ever seen. Universal Design for Learning is an important tool in how the Granite State is adapting to that disruption, and ensuring educational opportunities for all of our students.

Having now completed its third year, The New Hampshire UDL Innovation Network has grown by 150%, with more than 500 New Hampshire educators now participating from 67 different schools. This growing network means that our educators are learning techniques to individualize their instruction and meet each student where they are on the learning spectrum. This approach to instruction was essential to helping students succeed prior to the pandemic. In the middle of the pandemic, it could not be more critical.

As we adapt to new challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, we are bringing the lessons of UDL to bear. The Department of Education is now offering every New Hampshire educator the opportunity to earn a Year 1 UDL Associate's Credential at no cost to them or their school. We hope that with the help of DOE UDL Coordinator Mary Lane, CAST CEO Linda Gerstle, Director of Professional Learning Jennifer Levine, and the entire CAST team, we can open up the possibilities of UDL to every teacher and student in New Hampshire. Thank you for your dedication to New Hampshire students, and good luck as we begin Year 4 of the NH UDL Innovation Network.

Sincerely,  
Commissioner Frank Edelblut



# Letter from CAST

This school year ended in a situation that none of us could have imagined when we began this project. Who could have known that teachers would be thrown into the world of remote teaching, that students would be sheltering at home with their families, and that the world of teaching and learning (not to mention the rest of the world) would be turned upside down? I am so proud of the outstanding job that the entire NH UDL Innovation Network has done in such difficult circumstances. Immediately teachers reached out to their Implementation Specialists to discuss the barriers to and brainstorm ideas for supporting students. Administrators figured out creative ways to support their teachers and students. And the CAST team dove into redesigning our support for Network participants. Instead of letting the pandemic slow them down, Network educators ramped up their teaching, doubled down on social-emotional support for their students, and found ways to design for all students. Many teachers told us that in such uncertain times, the UDL framework became even more essential than ever. I am honored to work with such an amazing and dedicated group of educators and look forward to continuing to do so in the future.

Jennifer Levine  
CAST Director of Professional Learning





# Table of Contents

## **1 The New Hampshire UDL Innovation Network**

### **2 A System Designed to Empower Learners**

2 Instructional Rounds

3 UDL Innovation Network Meetings

4 Team Learning Opportunities

5 Individualized Team Support

### **6 Becoming Expert Learners**

### **8 Supporting Students to Grow as Expert Learners**

9 Students say...

### **10 Participants**

10 Participating Schools

11 Individual Participants

### **12 Learning to Learn Remotely**

### **13 A Preview of More to Come**

# The New Hampshire UDL Innovation Network

The New Hampshire UDL Innovation Network is the result of a groundbreaking collaboration between the New Hampshire Department of Education and CAST, a renowned nonprofit whose mission is to transform education design and practice until learning has no limits.

This multiyear opportunity is designed specifically for school- and district-level educators who are committed to empowering all learners through Universal Design for Learning (UDL). In the 2019–2020 school year we welcomed 517 participants from 66 schools across the state of New Hampshire.

Over the course of the year, these UDL Innovation Network educators created inclusive lessons using the UDL framework, built a collaborative growth culture through Instructional Rounds, uncovered barriers to learning by Journey Mapping lessons and units, and immersed themselves in the UDL mindset and practice. We have been collecting numerous forms of data since the launch of the Network in the Spring of 2018 to understand how these experiences support teacher and student learning. Across the Network, we have conducted yearly baseline surveys, mid-year reflections, and end-of-year reflection surveys.

We have also been following two “focal schools” since 2018 in order to develop a rich understanding of team members’ experiences in the Network. Through this focal school project, we have conducted 20 classroom observations, collected an array of instructional materials and student work, and held 10 focus group interviews. This report synthesizes findings from the data we collected throughout Year 3 of the Network and shares the ways educators and students alike are growing as expert learners.



## A System Designed to Empower Learners

The ultimate goal of Universal Design for Learning is not only to ensure that all students learn rigorous content, but that they become experts on how to learn. Just as traditional schooling has focused on providing students with a specific set of facts, ideas, and answers, traditional professional development has revolved around outsiders coming in to tell teachers what to do differently. But UDL—and the NH UDL Innovation Network in particular—challenges the idea that there are always simple answers.

Our professional learning is unique in that it doesn’t depend on “experts” providing generic how-tos and checklists but rather on insiders using data specific to particular students, schools, their contexts to inform iterative cycles of improvement. Implementation Specialists from CAST support participants to be the drivers of their own learning, to draw on their own expertise and that of their peers, and push themselves to question, experiment, and learn from experience. In turn, these educators teach their students to do the same, with the ultimate goal of creating a generation of empowered, independent learners.

## Instructional Rounds

Based on the work of Richard Elmore and colleagues at Harvard University, CAST's Instructional Rounds empower teachers to be the drivers of their own learning. Three times a year, an Implementation Specialist from CAST joins each school's UDL team to investigate an instructional problem that the team itself has identified. In a series of brief class observations, educators gather data from multiple classrooms and use this information to identify trends that they see across the school—

- In what ways are students engaged in their work?
- What options do they have for understanding complex material?
- How do they show what they know?

Educators use the answers to these questions to explore what is working well in their classrooms, identify remaining barriers to learning, and create an improvement plan to minimize these barriers. The impact of Instructional Rounds is hard to exaggerate. Year after year, teachers and administrators report that participation in the protocol is transformative. Beyond the deep learning that comes from analyzing one's own practice and that of one's peers, educators gain a profound sense of empowerment that comes from using one's own expertise to create a path forward.

### UDL in Action

It's literacy time for first and second graders, and they're engaging in the "Daily 5" framework, an approach that supports students to work on personal literacy goals. As part of the Daily 5, students choose from a range of activities: read to self, listen to reading, work on writing, read with a partner, or word work. Students have made their selections and set individual goals—some students are settled in with pillows reading to themselves or with a partner, others are at desks drafting stories, others are in a reading nook listening to books on iPads, and others are shaping play dough into letters. After two rotations, students come back to the rug and reflect with one another on their personal literacy goals. One student shares that she is striving to "use different words that mean the same thing" to add more description to her writing. Another student shares progress on her writing goal to "make my people come to life and talk."



Instructional rounds were fantastic. We were able to see how we were already implementing UDL through observations that weren't high stakes.

Instructional rounds push us to get out of our comfort zones, something that is truly needed for all-around growth, but especially for growth in implementing UDL.



## UDL Innovation Network Meetings

Three times each year we invite participants from across New Hampshire to gather together with their peers to network, learn from each other, and dive deeply into complex questions of practice. The meetings create a space for participants to take control of their own growth by choosing what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Some choose to collaborate with colleagues to solve challenging problems, some work with CAST Implementation Specialists to focus on a specific issue, and still others explore resources independently. Each of these unique options is designed so that educators get exactly what they need to affect real changes in their own schools and classrooms. By experiencing how CAST models UDL in its own trainings, educators learn how to support their own students to become thoughtful, independent learners.

### *UDL in Action*

Second-grade students are revising their “small moments” stories to incorporate more rich description. Working on Chromebooks, they are reflecting on their progress as writers. They highlight specific sentences that they think could use more detail and ask themselves, “Should I add dialogue, adjectives, or more detail to help my reader have a more complete picture?” The teacher shares his own small-moment story as a model, asking students for suggestions as to how to revise for more detail. Then students embark on their own revision process with supports such as a “cheat sheet” for adding dialogue, a word list of adjectives, and an array of books to use as models.



**It is great to have a flexible schedule on our UDL Network days. It is so validating as an educator to be in charge of my own learning.**



**I really thought UDL was just changing one or two things, but now I realize it's so much more than that. I can make global changes in my classroom that help all students by embedding thoughtful questioning and planning into my instruction.**

**Network meetings are a great opportunity to work with our cohort and CAST without the interruptions of the day-to-day. It's also great to hear from educators around the state who are also working to introduce or implement UDL in their schools.**

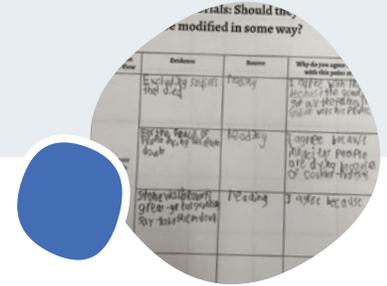
## Team Learning Opportunities

Learning alongside school colleagues is a vital step to building a culture of collaboration among staff. Because the needs of every school are different, the NH UDL Innovation Network creates time for school-based teams to work together on guided activities offered by CAST Implementation Specialists. Some teams choose to strictly follow online learning pathways on lesson planning, the UDL Guidelines, or schoolwide implementation. Others make use of resources to guide biweekly team discussions or analyze student work. Teachers who want deeper feedback on their lessons can participate in a video club where their peers help analyze a lesson or activity they have recorded. Individuals from across the Network can participate in Lesson Design Studios where they collaboratively create and analyze UDL lessons using design thinking activities. As with all aspects of the Network, these resources empower educators to participate in ways that best support their own learning.



## UDL in Action

Sixth-grade Social Studies students just wrapped up a month-long unit on the Civil War. Today, they're exploring a range of articles and videos of recent news clips to gather evidence in order to make an informed opinion as to whether Confederate memorials should remain, be removed, or be modified in some way.



**Sometimes we make our own barriers and just need support to help knock those barriers down. Our monthly conversations helped me when I felt stuck in the process.**

**By mapping moments that occur daily for us as teachers, administrators, and case managers, we can organically collaborate on ways to anticipate the**

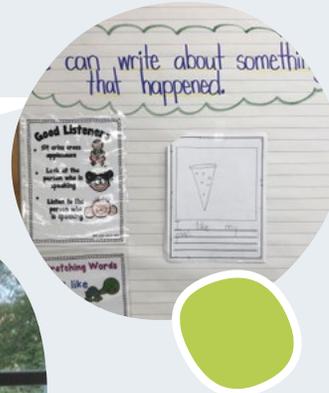


## Individualized Team Support

Learners thrive when they connect with someone knowledgeable who is supportive and guides their work. In this spirit, CAST matches each school with its own UDL Implementation Specialist. The Implementation Specialists get to know the schools and teams they work with extremely well; they observe classes, look at student work, meet with school administrators, and build meaningful relationships with each of the members of the UDL teams. They are always available to answer questions, provide resources, and model UDL. They provide the personal connection that is often necessary for any learner to dive deeper into their work.

## UDL in Action

Kindergartners are writing stories about a recent experience. They're "stretching" words to explore how they might spell them. They say the word slowly like a turtle, stretch the word like a snake, and write the sounds that they hear. They also illustrate their stories to bring them to life. At the end of class, students volunteer to come to the "Author's Chair" to share their story with their classmates.



I now see UDL as a cultural change for a school rather than an initiative to undertake.

I now spend a lot of time reflecting on my practice and considering all my students as I plan. Before learning about UDL, I was often more concerned about the lesson itself rather than the students experiencing the lesson.

Before learning about UDL, I would ask for a 5-paragraph essay and leave it at that. Now I let my students choose how they present the information. I'm getting some of the best work from my students—videos, posters and just totally out-of-the-box thinking.



# Becoming Expert Learners

A major goal of Universal Design for Learning is not just that learners acquire knowledge and skills, but that they develop expertise about how to learn. As defined by the UDL framework, expert learners are purposeful and motivated; they are resourceful and knowledgeable; and they are able to think strategically and be goal-directed (Ertmer & Newby, 1996). Data from Year 3 of the NH UDL Innovation Network reveal that educators and students alike are building these expert-learning characteristics.

## Supporting Teacher Knowledge of UDL

“How would you characterize your knowledge about UDL?” Participants’ responses reveal an increase in knowledge of UDL.



Prior to participating in the NH UDL Network



2020



## Supporting Teachers in Applying UDL to Practice

“How confident do you feel in terms of applying UDL to your practice?” Participants’ responses reveal increased confidence in applying UDL to their practice.



Prior to participating in the NH UDL Network



2020





**I started with fidgets and audio recordings. Now I'm looking at all my lessons and units through the lens of UDL. It has made me excited to teach!**

**I've woven the language and philosophy of UDL into my teaching and problem solving. The UDL mindset is a reflex for me now.**

**UDL is completely my mindset now. I'm constantly asking myself, "How can I help all of my students become expert learners?" When I plan lessons, curricular units, and assessments, I'm constantly looking for barriers and ways to avoid them.**



**Understanding UDL allows me to consider all my students, what they need to be successful, and what barriers are in the classroom and lessons that prevent learning from occurring.**

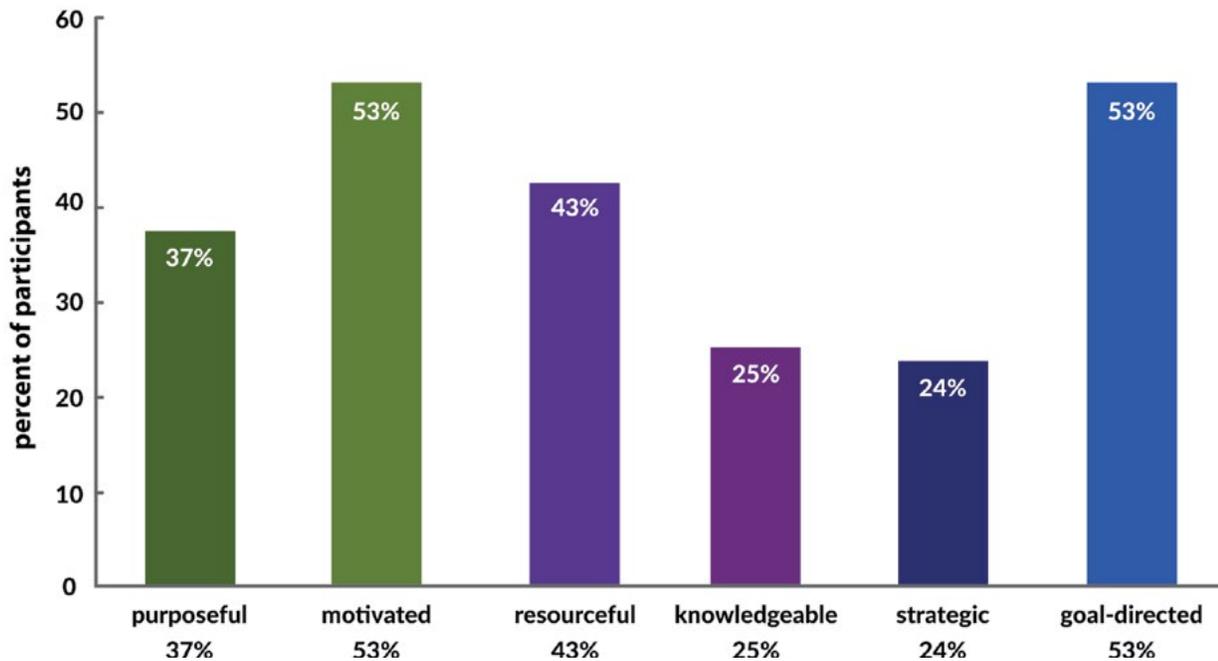
**I always embraced UDL as a way to identify and dismantle barriers that impede equity and therefore impede learning. After learning more through the NH UDL Innovation Network, I cannot envision an effective classroom or school without at least some integration and implementation of UDL principles and practices.**



# Supporting Students to Grow as Expert Learners

Data from Year 3 highlight the impact that teachers' participation in the NH UDL Innovation Network had on students. As Network educators grew and developed expert-learner practices and habits of mind, they supported students to do the same. The graph shows the percent of participants noticing expert-learner shifts in their students as a result of their participation in the NH UDL Innovation Network.

## Students are more...



### UDL in Action

Seventh-grade Social Studies students engage in a simulation to kick off a unit on economics.

*While on a field trip to Southeast Asia, your boat is caught in a fierce storm. The boat is damaged beyond repair, and you and your classmates are stranded on a desert island. You must survive for two years on the island before help arrives. What do you do?*

Students work with partners to devise a strategy for survival on the desert island. Through the activity, they uncover ways to utilize and alter the natural resources of the island to meet their basic needs.

Eighth-grade STEM students engage in a design challenge to explore the concepts of density and volume. They're tasked with creating a vessel out of a single piece of tinfoil that will not only float in water but carry weight. The team that designs the vessel that holds the most pennies wins!

# Students say...



The options my teacher gave me made me feel like I wanted to challenge myself and not just do the easiest thing just because it's easy.

Getting to choose my own topic for my speech really helped. The nervousness I felt wasn't as important as getting the topic across to an audience.

I guess I felt a little nervous when I learned that we had to do public speaking in front of everyone. But then I learned there were more options, and it really helped me overcome my nervousness.

I like when my teacher tells us the plan for what we are working on that day in order.



I like to get feedback on what I am doing right and what I should do differently.



# Participants

## Participating Schools

In collaboration with 66 schools from 37 different School Administrative Units (SAUs), the New Hampshire UDL Innovation Network built a diverse Year 3 cohort spanning the state.

School Name	SAU #	School District
Antrim Elementary School	1	Contoocook Valley
Greenfield Elementary School	1	Contoocook Valley
Hancock Elementary School	1	Contoocook Valley
Pierce School	1	Contoocook Valley
Mount Pleasant Elementary School	1	Nashua
Madison Elementary School	13	Madison
East Kingston Elementary School	16	East Kingston
Lincoln Street School	16	Exeter
Main Street School	16	Exeter
DJ Bakie Elementary School	17	Sanborn Regional
Memorial School	17	Sanborn Regional
Sanborn Regional High School	17	Sanborn Regional
Sanborn Regional Middle School	17	Sanborn Regional
Franklin Middle School	18	Franklin
Henniker Community School	24	Henniker
John Stark Regional High School	24	John Stark
James Faulkner Elementary School	24	Stoddard
Center Woods Elementary School	24	Weare
Weare Middle School	24	Weare
Mastricola Elementary School	26	Merrimack
Mastricola Upper Elementary School	26	Merrimack
Merrimack High School	26	Merrimack
Merrimack Middle School	26	Merrimack
Merrimack School District	26	Merrimack
Reeds Ferry School	26	Merrimack
Thorntons Ferry School	26	Merrimack
Pelham Elementary School	28	Pelham
Pelham Memorial School	28	Pelham
Newmarket Junior Senior High School	31	Newmarket
Plainfield Elementary School	32	Plainfield
Northwest Elementary School	37	Manchester
Milford Middle School	40	Milford
Nashua Technology Center: North Campus	42	Nashua
Moultonborough Academy	45	Moultonborough
Campton Elementary School	48	Campton
Pittsfield Middle School & High School	51	Pittsfield
Pittsfield Elementary School	51	Pittsfield
Hampstead Middle School	55	Hampstead

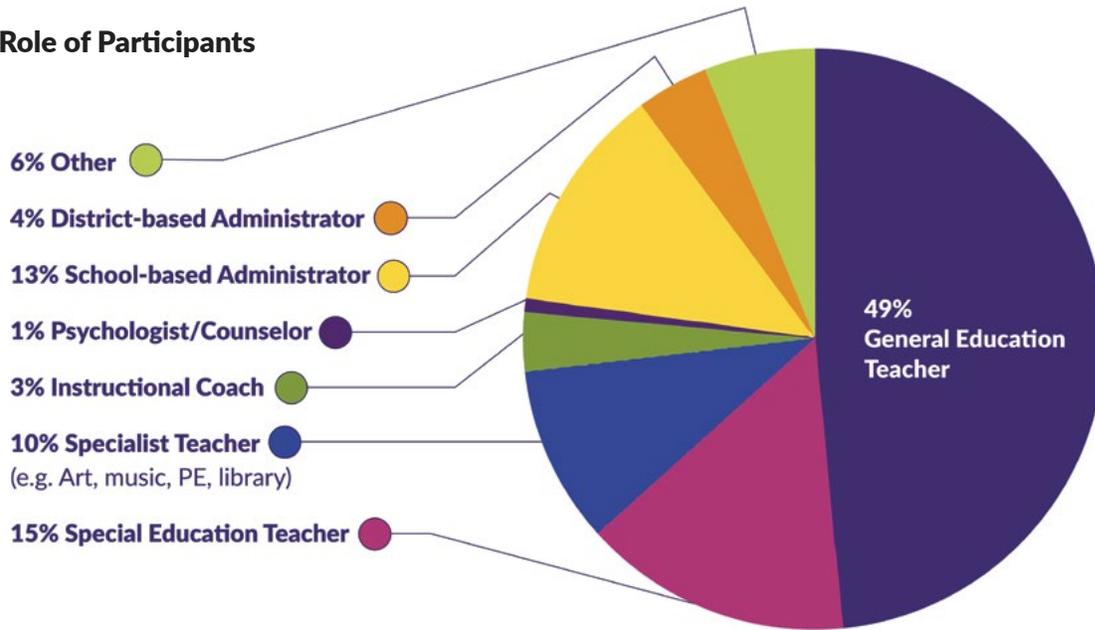
School Name	SAU #	School District
Hampstead Central School	55	Hampstead
Maple Wood Elementary School	56	Somersworth
Vilas Middle School	60	Fall Mountain Regional
Indian River School	62	Mascoma Valley Regional
Florence Rideout Elementary School	63	Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative
Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative Middle High School	63	Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative
Maple Street School	66	Hopkinton
Lempster Community School	71	Lempster
Hudson Memorial Middle School	81	Hudson
Lakeway Elementary School	84	Littleton
Daisy Bronson Middle School	84	Littleton
Littleton High School	84	Littleton
Hanover Street School	88	Lebanon
Lebanon High School	88	Lebanon
Lebanon Middle School	88	Lebanon
Mount Lebanon Elementary School	88	Lebanon
Dr. George S. Emerson Elementary School	93	Monadnock Regional
Troy Elementary School	93	Monadnock Regional
Winchester School	94	Winchester
Croydon Village School	99	Croydon
Cornish Elementary School	100	Cornish
Barnstead Elementary	155	Barnstead
Birches Academy Charter School	731	Birches Academy Charter School
Monarch School of New England		
The RSEC Academy		
Mount Prospect Academy		Beckett Charter Network
North Country Charter Academy		District 701
Great Bay Charter School		Great Bay Charter School

## Individual Participants

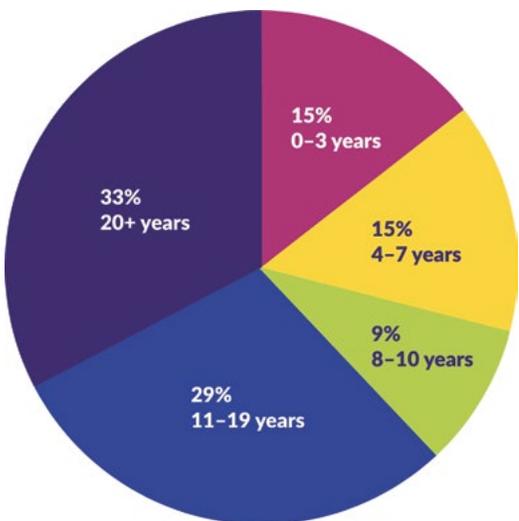
In Year 3, the NH UDL Innovation Network grew to a total of 517 participants. Of these, 216 started in Year 1, 103 more joined in Year 2, and 198 were new to the Network this year. As with previous years, there was a rich variety of roles among participants: 49% were general education teachers, 15% were special education teachers, 16% were school- or district-based administrators, and 20% identified as other related roles, including specialist teachers, instructional coaches, school psychologists, and counselors.

One of the barriers to the implementation of UDL is the perception that it is a framework that supports students with disabilities only. The fact that more than 75% of Network members are general education teachers and administrators is evidence that this work has been rooted in New Hampshire with all learners in mind.

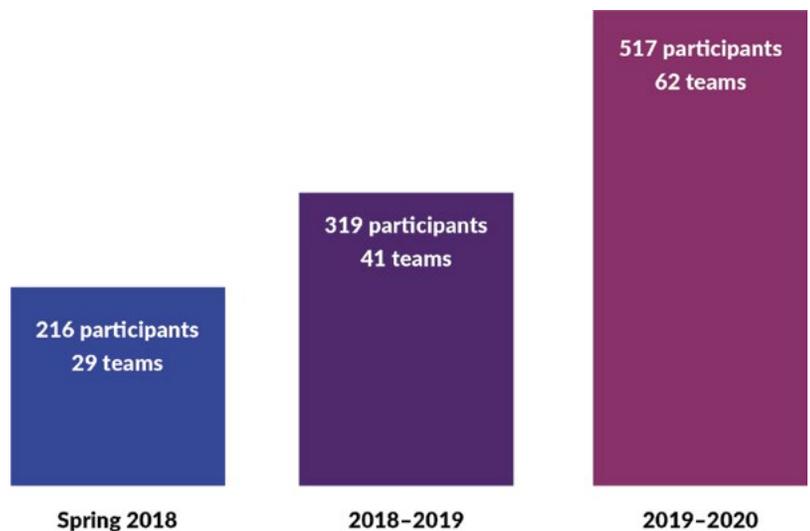
### Primary Role of Participants



### Years of Experience in Education



### Growth of the NH UDL Innovation Network



# Learning to Learn Remotely

When schools closed unexpectedly in March, the CAST team and NH UDL Innovation Network participants acted quickly to support students in their home environments. Not only did teachers suddenly need to learn to teach remotely, but CAST itself had to redesign its own virtual learning opportunities. We are proud to say that in both cases, our UDL support made the shift as seamless as possible. **Teachers reported that they had already spent the year learning to minimize barriers to learning, and that when the context changed, it was instinctive to identify the new barriers and design to minimize them.**

Similarly, CAST smoothly transitioned our face-to-face professional learning to the remote context. We created both synchronous and asynchronous virtual options for each of the Spring Network Meeting sessions, with each session offering options for how participants could engage with the material, learn new concepts, and practice what they learned. The CAST team modified all of the end-of-the-year content to ensure that it not only built on what participants had been learning over the course of the year, but also included new ways for thinking about UDL in a remote teaching and learning setting. We created options for using Instructional Rounds remotely to look at lesson plans and unit designs, and we designed a virtual version of the Lesson Design Studio that allowed teachers from different schools and districts to collaboratively create and implement lessons.

The biggest surprise in going remote was not how many changes needed to be made, but how subtle these changes were, affirming that the NH UDL Innovation Network model is dynamic and flexible. Iteration has always been a part of our model, and the shift proved seamless and natural.

**The importance of UDL got hammered home during remote learning for me. Students were working outside normal constraints and they were so creative in utilizing different ways to show what they learned.**

**Understanding student motivation and UDL principles was a game changer for remote learning. Providing choice of response was huge, providing multiple ways to listen to directions or participate in an activity really made our students successful. The easier the material was to access, the more student participation we had.**

**I created online stations, provided student choice, and made sure to include student self-reflection. I felt more ready than my colleagues for the shift to remote learning.**

**With UDL during remote learning, I could identify the barriers in learning and troubleshoot. Though not all obstacles could be overcome quickly or easily, I had the framework to help me help my students.**

Faced with the task of providing instruction remotely, teachers were applying more UDL principles to their instruction than ever before. It has been exciting to see, and will hopefully serve as a great example of what they can do to address similar barriers when we are no longer remote.



# A Preview of More to Come

As we look forward to the expansion of UDL and expert learning throughout New Hampshire, we are already planning for more growth and exciting changes in the UDL Innovation Network. In the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years, we will not only continue to support new and continuing schools and districts across the state, but we will welcome several schools to act as Learning Hubs. These schools will not only intensify their scaling of UDL within their own settings but will host outside groups to participate in on-site learning experiences such as Instructional Rounds and Lesson Design Studios. **Our goal is to build the capacity of all educators across the state of New Hampshire to understand UDL theory and apply it to practice.** Our current model provides NH educators with multiple means for accomplishing this goal and the introduction of Learning Hubs next year will evidence the professional learning to date and bring focus to our next statewide steps. We look forward to our continued learning alongside the dedicated and talented educators in New Hampshire.



 **CAST** | Until learning has no limits<sup>®</sup>

**Stay in touch.**

**We'd love to hear from you!**



**#NHUDL**

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