

*The*  
**New Hampshire**  
**UDL Innovation Network**

Year 5 (2022) Report



**CAST**  
Until  
learning  
has no  
limits



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



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## **A Letter from the Commissioner**

I am so proud to celebrate the educators of New Hampshire who, year after year, show their strength of character and dedication to our students. Despite the strain created by the ongoing pandemic, they have refused to give up on any student. In particular, I would like to honor all of the educators involved in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Innovation Network, who have not only invested deeply in constantly improving their classrooms and schools, but also in building statewide UDL capacity.

We celebrate these efforts and understand that the true power to grow and expand UDL lies with teachers. Our diverse and unique students are deserving of rich educational experiences that help them reach their full potential and achieve bright futures. By using the UDL framework for instructional planning, our educators are providing all students access to a rich curriculum and control over their own learning. We are excited to be able to sustain this educational innovation within our state so that all of our students have an educational experience that drives them to explore their passions and build upon their strengths. I am immensely proud of all the dedicated educators who are building a professional foundation for UDL in New Hampshire. We have an exciting and transformational year ahead as NHED, in conjunction with New Hampshire educators, prepares to deepen and lead the work of UDL in the Granite State. Our work with CAST continues, and for that we are grateful.

Sincerely,  
Commissioner Frank Edelblut



# The New Hampshire UDL Innovation Network

## Introduction

In the Spring of 2018, Commissioner Frank Edelblut joined CAST in kicking off the first year of a multi-year project designed to ensure that all students across the state of New Hampshire receive high-quality, personalized learning. [The NH Universal Design for Learning Innovation Network](#) was created to provide professional learning for NH teachers interested in deepening their capacity as learning designers. Five years later, the Network has grown from a few participating teams to over 70 schools and 600 educators across the state. CAST's cutting-edge model for professional development is unique in that it empowers educators to own their learning through job-embedded coaching, peer networking, and design thinking and to use student learning as the measure of impact.

This year, participants attended two **statewide conferences** focused on active, hands-on learning. At these conferences, educators created lessons and designed their learning environments in maker spaces. They networked with peers from across the state to address problems of practice together. And, in educator-led "Network Talks" (an extremely successful addition to the gatherings), they learned from each other how to apply UDL theory to practice.

Outside of the conferences, most of the Innovation Network learning occurs at the participants' schools, where teams learn by doing. Two school-based protocols that have been central to the program are Instructional Rounds and Lesson Design Studios. In **Instructional Rounds**, the UDL team observes a series of classrooms where they collect data on the lessons. Together,

the team analyzes the data to identify trends in how students are engaging in their work, the options they have for understanding complex material, and how they demonstrate their knowledge. Finally, teams determine what is working well across classrooms, identify remaining barriers to learning, and set school-wide instructional goals to address the barriers.

Like Instructional Rounds, Lesson Design Studios are a means for educators to construct their own learning at the classroom level. In this protocol, teams of educators collaboratively create a universally designed lesson. One teacher then teaches the lesson in their classroom while the rest of the team observes. Students give feedback on what worked for them and what didn't. The team uses a [Journey Mapping protocol](#) to organize student feedback, analyze the lesson, and identify design ideas to apply to future lesson plans.

In order to support schools' ability to scale the work beyond the length of this project, CAST has placed a strong emphasis on building the capacity of school leaders to guide UDL implementation. Principals and superintendents are invited to participate in a monthly **Leadership Academy** where they analyze and build plans for universally designed school culture, teaching and learning, systems and management, and professional development. Teacher leaders and instructional coaches attend monthly **Coaching Academies**, where they work together to support the application of UDL to the classroom and to learn how to facilitate their colleagues' understanding and application of UDL.

Additionally, participants receive personalized support through **weekly office hours**, which address varied themes and problems of practice; and **monthly consultations**, during which school team facilitators and leaders can work one-on-one with their CAST Implementation Specialist to address questions, plan professional learning and problem-solve.

Finally, CAST Implementation Specialists support school-wide scaling efforts by creating digital, on-demand **virtual learning modules**. These modules provide both seasoned UDL practitioners and those new to the Network with options for deepening understanding of UDL and opportunities for applying it widely to the design of learning school-wide.

# Owning the Work

As the NH UDL Innovation Network enters its final phase, it is exciting to see teams taking ownership of [Universal Design for Learning](#). Instead of depending on CAST to lead all aspects of the work, school teams themselves are leading the implementation and scaling of UDL within their schools and districts. Teams have created their own implementation plans; they have trained UDL coaches; they have led professional learning to support educators throughout their schools; and they support each other to continue learning and growing.

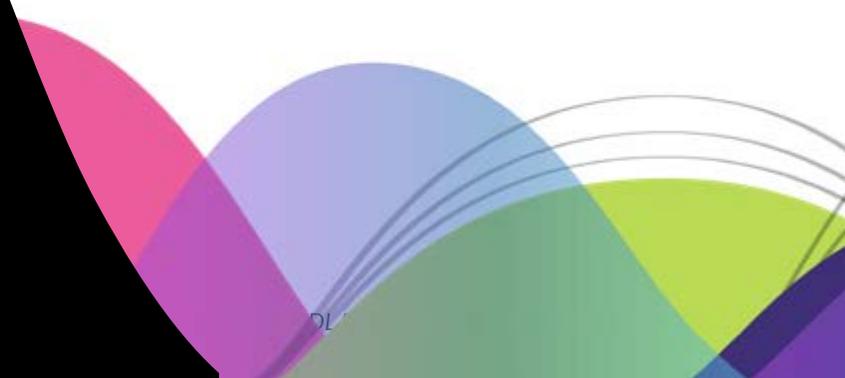
## Ownership Through Sharing, Collaboration, and Networking

From informal conversations over coffee to more formal networking during Lesson Design Studios, Journey Mapping, and Problem of Practice Protocols, the Fall and Spring Network Meetings buzzed with collaborative dialogue about proactive, inclusive design. This year, in the new and popular session strand called “Network Talks,” NH teachers and administrators from 15 teams shared how they use UDL in their schools and make the work their own. Feedback from participants was glowing.

“Teachers have taken on so much more of a facilitation role! We plan and implement UDL PD as a team. This has allowed for increased ownership of the work.”

“It felt so good to learn from each other in a supportive, open, trusting, comfortable environment. It was clear that we all respected one another and we all were so grateful to have this opportunity to learn from each other. We were able to share our own attempts at integrating UDL principles and practices into our teaching. At times, I felt that I was at such a beginning level of doing this. But my colleagues always made me feel that my attempts were important and that I was doing more than I realized. And also, I was able to emulate some of what I learned in the group, to try things out that my colleagues had done.”

“I’ve just seen UDL permeate my classroom. I have a preschool teacher next door, and it flowed into her classroom, too. We’ve both started to look at our teaching and our learners through a different lens and ourselves through a different lens.”



## Ownership Through Integration of UDL into School Improvement Planning

From the start, the UDL Innovation Network has required principals and school leaders to be members of teacher-led UDL teams. In the earliest phases, UDL was something new that small teams explored and integrated into their instructional practice. This year, however, UDL moved from being used only for lesson design to being a framework used by school leaders to craft long-term visions for school improvement. Superintendents, principals, and other educational leaders have prioritized UDL as an important lever for the change they hope to see in their school communities. CAST is supporting these efforts in the **Leadership Academy**, where they use [CAST's new schoolwide implementation framework](#) to design school improvement plans by focusing on **school culture, teaching and learning, systems and management, and professional development**.

## Ownership Through Scaling

Implementation Science tells us that change takes time and moves through phases. Early in the project, UDL teams were tasked with spending a year simply studying UDL. Today, those same teams are leading UDL implementation and thinking strategically about the next steps in their schools and districts. This year, they began to teach their colleagues about UDL. They ran UDL drop-in hours, led UDL book clubs, and shared UDL tips at staff meetings. Many teams supported their colleagues to participate in Instructional Rounds. Other schools experimented with running Lesson Design Studios on their own. These authentic, school-based professional learning activities are at the heart of schools' and districts' efforts to lead the scaling of UDL far beyond the NH Innovation Network's original mission.

"As a newer learner to UDL, having the four areas that we can focus on was really helpful. There are a number of pieces that will support me in thinking more systematically, which I really needed."

"The structure of the Lesson Design Studio was one of the best examples I can think of to experience job-embedded professional learning. My colleagues were there with me as I worked through a difficult problem. I was still fairly new to the school, and the experience helped me build supportive professional relationships at a time that I might otherwise have been very isolated." (from *Universal Design for Learning: One School's Journey*)

"We have a UDL Collaboration Club at my school, the principal is a strong leader and advocates for UDL."

"We have presented UDL ideas at our monthly staff meetings and it has been so well-received. Our team leader has provided ideas and shared them, and we also presented some of the ways we are using UDL in our classrooms to the school board in the fall."

"My real mindset shift came after the Lesson Design Studios. UDL isn't meant to put more work on the teacher. If you plan it right with UDL in mind, it shouldn't be more work for you at all."



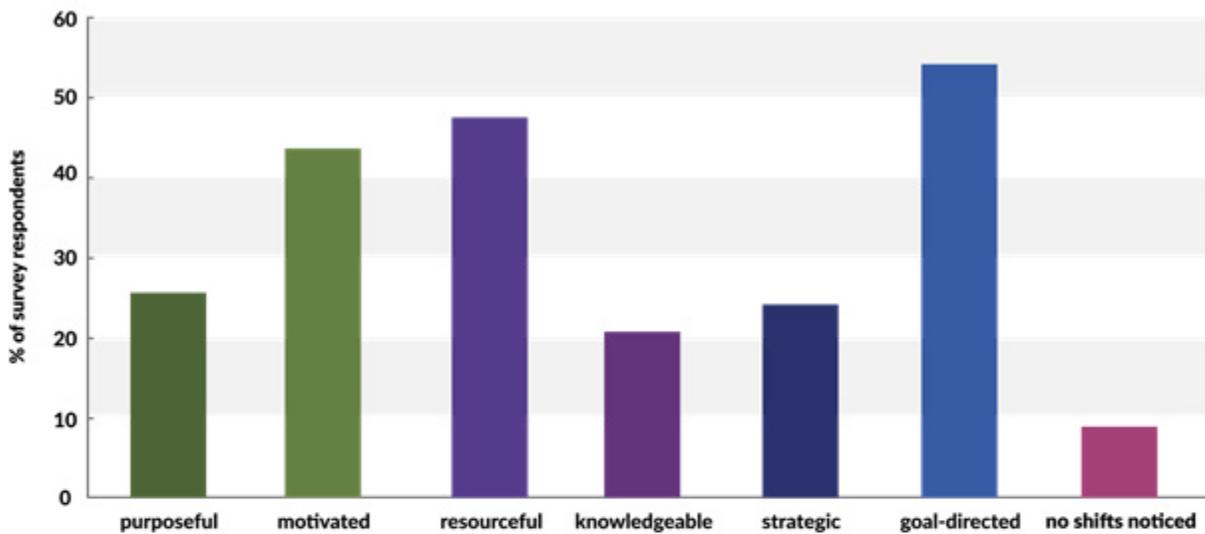
## Ownership Through Co-Design with Students

Finally, the truest measure of the project's success is the impact it is having on NH students. The goal of Universal Design for Learning is expert learning—students being and becoming experts at the art of learning itself, by making and reflecting on learning decisions. No teacher can personalize learning for every student in every lesson but when learners have options for engaging, making meaning of content, and navigating and communicating learning, they are able to personalize their own learning through true learner agency. Of course, teachers

continue to offer coaching, guidance, and mastery-oriented feedback as learners deepen their expert learning skills.

Of the participants who responded to our End-of-Year Survey, 55% of respondents reported that students have become more goal-directed this past year, 47% noted an increase in students' resourcefulness, and 43% reported that their students were even more motivated.

### Students are more...



Value	Percent	Responses
Students are more purposeful	26.4%	14
Students are more motivated	43.4%	23
Students are more resourceful	47.2%	25
Students are more knowledgeable	20.8%	11
Students are more strategic	24.5%	13
Students are more goal-directed	54.7%	29
I have not noticed any expert learner shifts	9.4%	5

**“I’ve always prided myself on encouraging students to be problem-solvers and critical thinkers. Applying the UDL Guidelines in my classroom actually gives me a pathway to make these goals even more attainable.”**

**“Being able to ask students for what they need to learn has really given the students I work with hope. The simple act of being able to provide alternative ways for them to show what they know has been a game changer for us.”**

**“My students are much more goal directed and reflective of their learning. As a result of them understanding the goals, they often help me to design how they will demonstrate their learning.”**

**“It’s just eye-opening to see how capable the students are and how excited they are about everything. They say things like, ‘Oh, I can do a comic to retell this story, or I can use a computer and use a voice recording.’ There are just so many options available to them, and it’s very helpful—very awesome—to see them using those tools and getting excited about it.”**



**“I think UDL for me coming in as a first-year teacher, it just was eye-opening in a lot of ways. I didn’t realize how many options I could be providing to my students and how helpful it is.”**

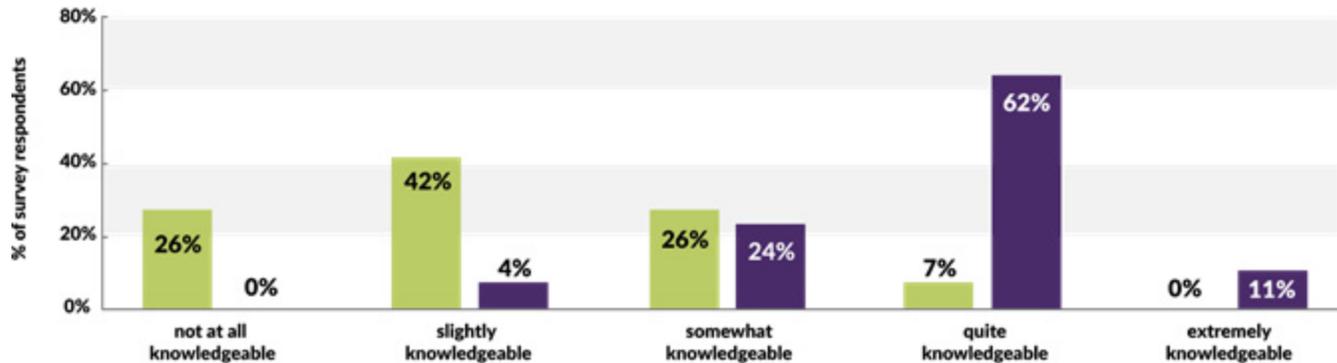
# Continued Growth

All of the Network learning opportunities have continued to support participants in developing their understanding of UDL and their confidence to apply the framework to their practice. Of the Network participants who responded to our survey, only 7% reported that they were “quite knowledgeable” about UDL prior to beginning the Network. There were no participants who reported that they were “extremely knowledgeable.”

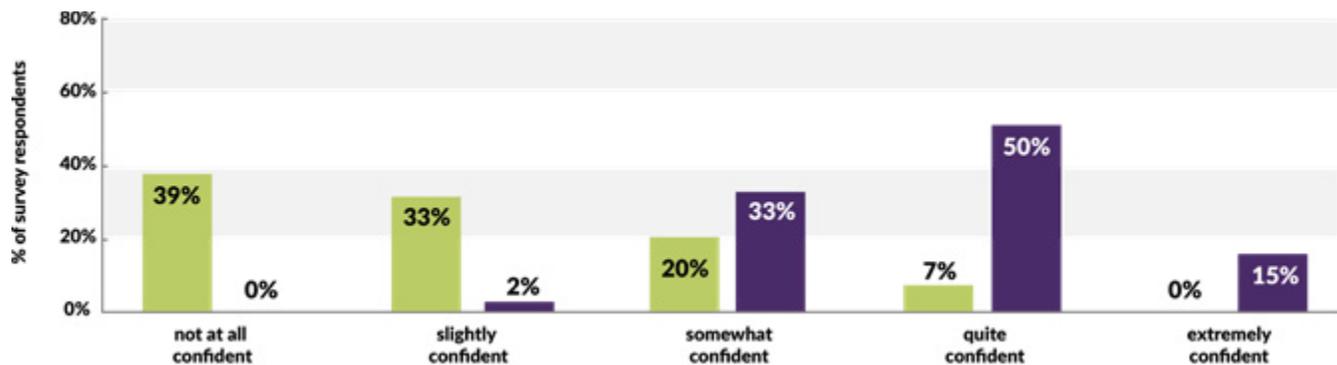
By the end of the 2021-22 school year, 73% of the respondents reported that they felt “quite” or “extremely knowledgeable” about UDL. Similarly, only 7% of respondents felt “quite confident” in applying UDL prior to beginning the Network, and no respondents reported feeling “extremely confident.” By the end of the 2021-22 school year, 65% of the respondents reported feeling “quite” or “extremely confident” in applying UDL.

■ Prior to joining the NH UDL Network
 ■ Now

**All respondents to the end of year survey:** How would you characterize your knowledge of UDL?



**All respondents to the end of year survey:** How confident do you feel in terms of applying UDL to your practice?

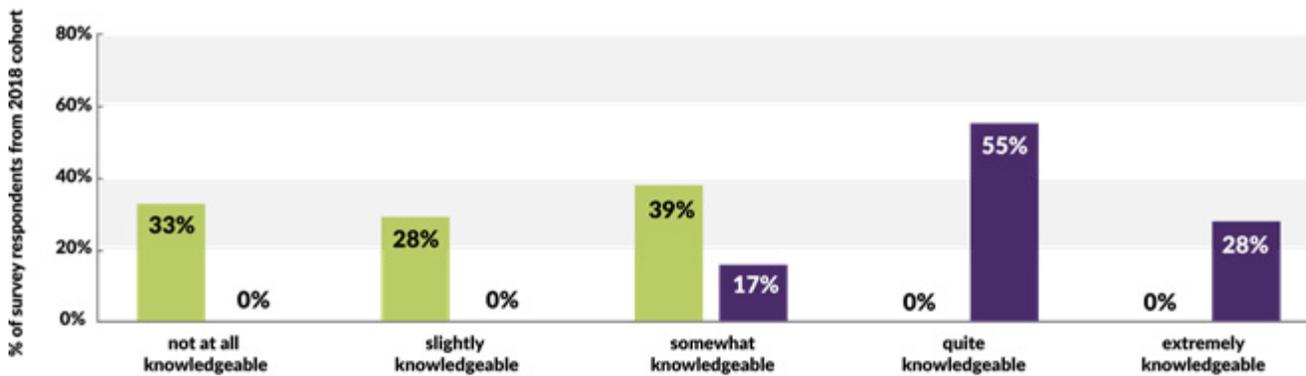


It is also exciting to follow the growth of participants who joined the Network in 2018, the very first year. Of the 2018 cohort members who responded to our survey, 0% reported that they were “quite” or “extremely knowledgeable” about UDL prior to joining. By the end of the 2021-22 school year, 83% of the respondents reported that they felt “quite or extremely knowledgeable” about UDL.

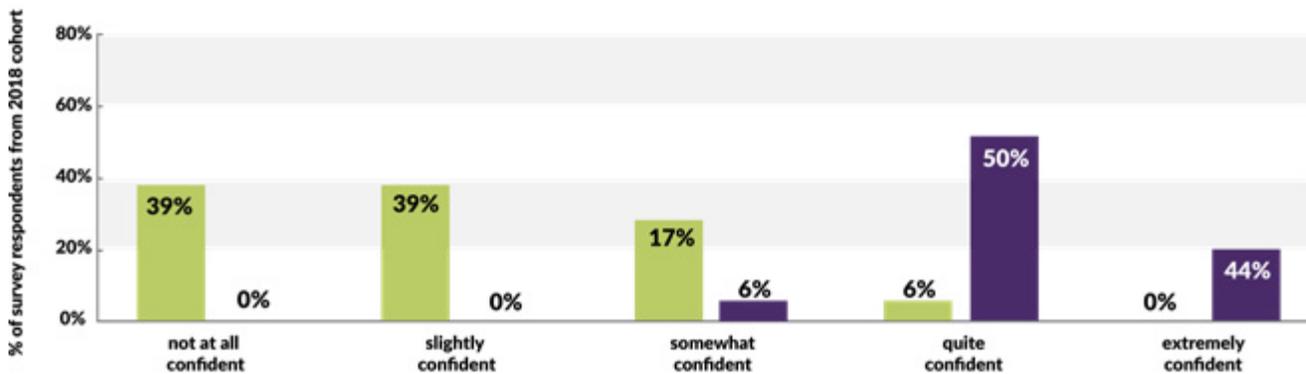
Similarly, only 6% of the 2018 cohort members who responded to our survey felt “quite confident” in applying UDL prior to beginning in the Network, and no respondents reported feeling “extremely confident.” By the end of the 2021-22 school year, 94% of the respondents reported feeling “quite” or “extremely confident” applying UDL to practice.



**Survey respondents who joined in 2018: How would you characterize your knowledge of UDL?**



**Survey respondents who joined in 2018: How confident do you feel in terms of applying UDL to your practice?**



**“My knowledge and understanding of UDL have changed exponentially! The workshops, design studio, instructional rounds, and the UDL collaboration club at my school—all have enhanced my understanding and prompted great enthusiasm for UDL, and also have supported and prompted me to use more UDL practices in my teaching.”**

**“Before the Fall of 2018, I was not exposed at all to UDL. I have learned so much and it has impacted all areas of my profession, in the classroom and in professional development. Being more focused on what our learners need to become expert learners, whether they are students or faculty.”**

**“I have grown from being eager to try out some strategies in my classroom to developing a true understanding of what it’s like to look at my classroom, curriculum, students, and families with a UDL lens.”**

**“I don’t just plan lessons anymore. I plan goals and invite my students on a journey to work towards those goals.”**



**“I am more understanding of the variability of learners in my classroom and the importance of the choices I make in delivering a lesson to my students. If something doesn’t go the way I planned, my first thought is to self-reflect not blame.”**



**“I share goals with students at the beginning of each lesson, offer choices routinely, have students engage in reflection, and generally try to divest myself of control and power, engaging students more in taking charge of their own learning. I have more to learn and a long way to go before I do this with complete fidelity, but the intent is there!”**

**“The UDL framework is embedded in all of my lesson designs. I also think I am a much more reflective practitioner now than I was before implementing UDL.”**

**“My work with the UDL Network taught me the importance of providing choice and multiple means for action and expression. During the pandemic, I taught in person, remotely, and hybrid. Already being knowledgeable about the importance of variability made pandemic learning meaningful for my students in these different settings.”**



# A Preview of What's to Come

As the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHED) considers how to move forward with Universal Design for Learning statewide, they, like the educators in NH schools, are building their capacity for scaling UDL. They have created a new Department of Education position for a Universal Design for Learning Education Consultant, and they plan to form a team of Implementation Specialists in the coming years. Over the next two years, CAST will support the passing of the baton to the NHED by training the new staff, co-designing professional learning resources, and creating a comprehensive manual for statewide implementation. As a state, New Hampshire is a national leader in applying Universal Design for Learning. The NH UDL Innovation Network has strengthened the capacity of NH educators to design learning that provides each and every student with access and agency. Over the next few years, this capacity will be sustained and deepened by the efforts of the NHED, and the original goal—a means for deeply effective personalized learning for every single student—will be achieved.

**“The NH UDL Innovation Network is the best professional development that I have ever experienced in my 17 years as an educator.”**

**“The work you are doing is so beneficial. I have been teaching for 15 years and my time spent learning about UDL through CAST has been the most meaningful professional development I have ever experienced. Please keep bringing UDL to more districts all over the country.”**

**“Your implementation specialists are so supportive. They listen and they know exactly how to take our ideas and build upon them in a constructive and positive way. Working with CAST has been a joy and an honor.”**

**“The collaborative aspect of UDL in my school has been great—a distraction from the stresses associated with the pandemic and a source of inspiration and gratitude.”**

**“This has been a real game changer for me within my own classroom. I have very much enjoyed the change in my students.”**

**“Without UDL strategies I would only have prepared for what I would need to learn in a remote environment.”**

**“Thinking outside the box to be able to increase engagement, representation, and action/expression in the classroom whether in person or virtual has been instrumental in our success and growth over these past few years with COVID. Instead of being seen as a disaster, thanks to UDL, COVID just presented many barriers we had to plan for. Because we had so many options and accommodations, even students who had to be out of school were asking to engage remotely. We were able to keep the connection, no matter what came our way.”**

**“I now pause before I engage, and I ask myself what questions I’m going to ask. I’m trying to frame my individual conversations beyond just providing one or two possible solutions, and instead providing pathways and agencies for everyone to find the best solutions that work for them.”**

**“As a former anthropologist, I have come to realize that UDL is anthropology for teachers. Anthropologists study cultures from the perspective of the people in them—not by looking in from the outside. UDL does the same thing. It looks at learning from the learner’s perspective.”**



**Stay in touch.**

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



**#NHUDL**

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