The Arc
King County

Class 3

UDL & MTSS (?!): Rethinking accessibility

Inclusion Academy Sequence 1: Accessibility and Belonging in Public Education
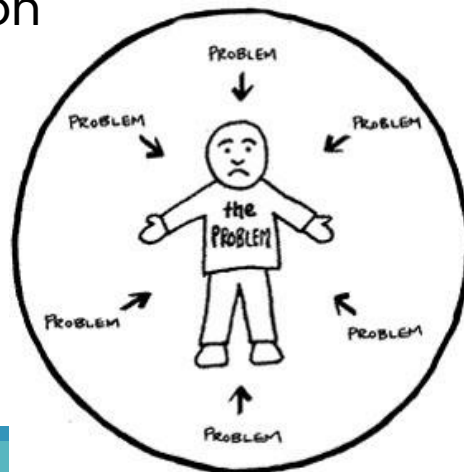
How we think about disability

Medical model

Disability is a deficiency or abnormality

Disability resides in the individual

Disability-related problems are fixed by curing, or normalizing, the person. Change the person

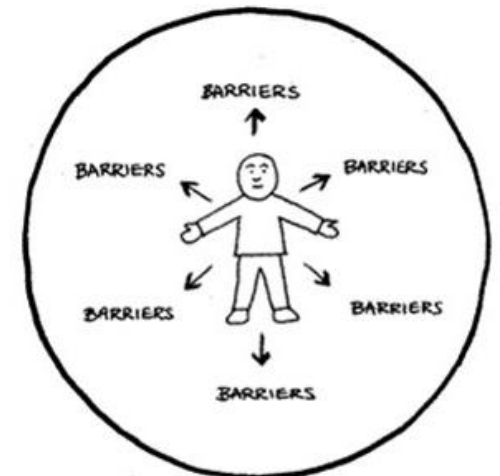Professionals are the expert on disability

Medical Model

Social model

Disability is a difference, like race or gender

Environmental barriers disable people

Disability-related problems are fixed by removing barriers. Change the environment.

People experiencing disabilities are the experts on disability

Social Model

How we define ableism

Ableism:

Discrimination in favor of non-disabled people

Ableism:

A set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities

Ableism:

A belief that people with disabilities need to be fixed or cannot function as full members of society, and that having a disability is a defect rather than a dimension of difference
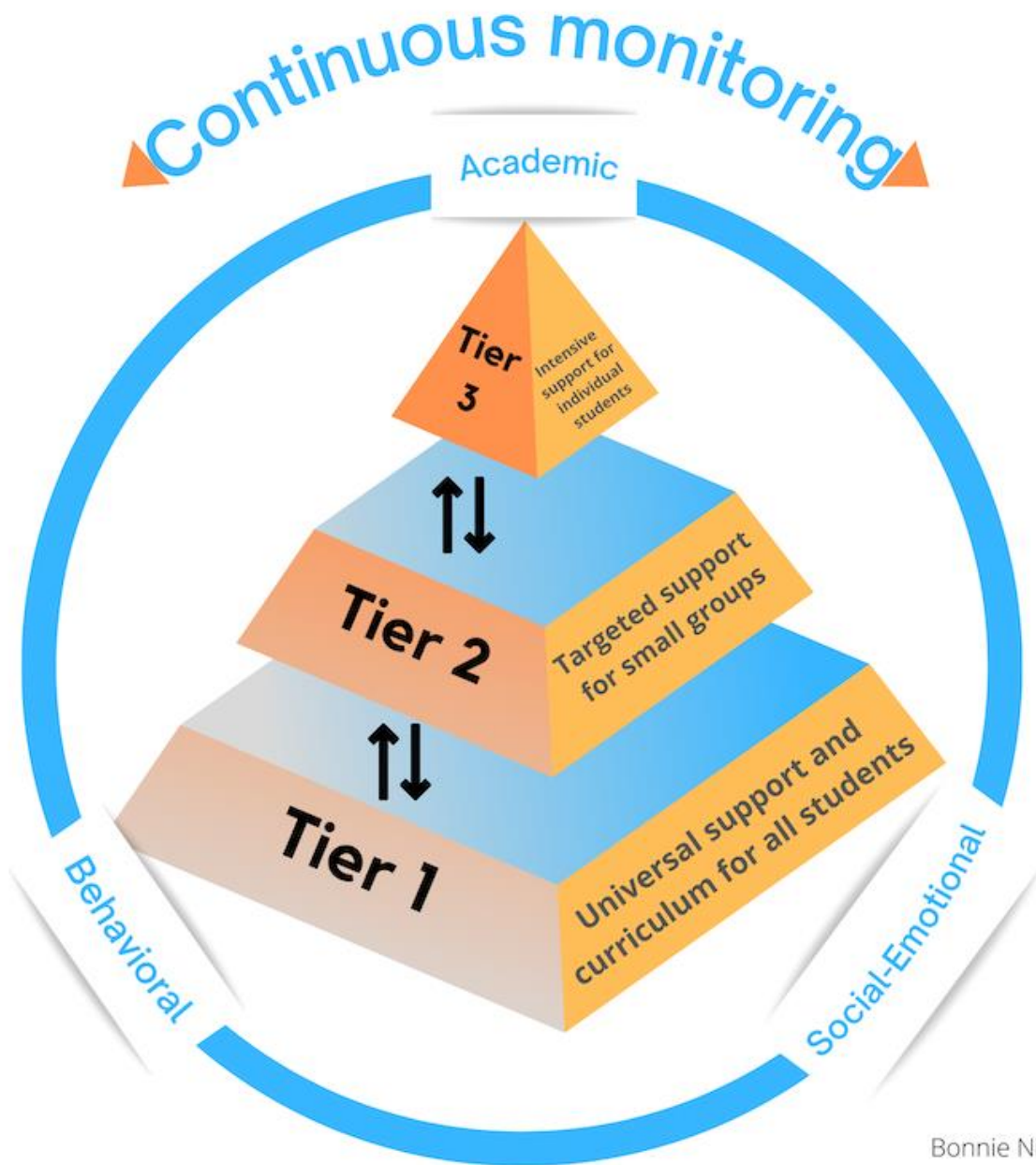
Universal design for learning (UDL)

"All students have **assets** and **strengths** and **goals** and interests. UDL lets us offer them options and choices to create **personalized pathways** to meet very rigorous goals. Our job is to teach them as they come."

– Katie Novak
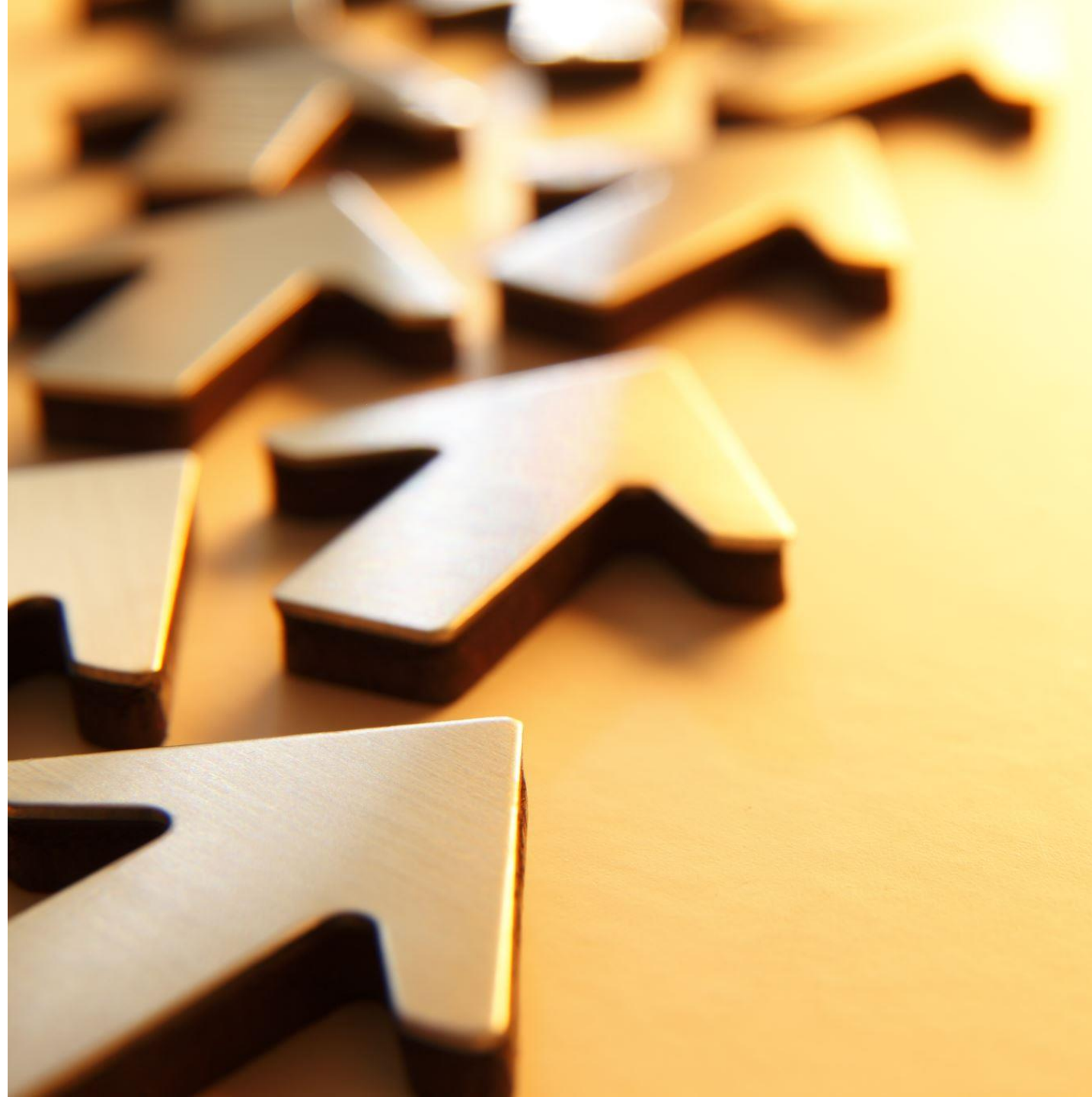
MTSS

Multi-tiered systems of support

Screen all students each year

Identify anyone who may be struggling

Provide timely supports

Monitor progress

Respond to academic, social and emotional, and behavioral needs

Use a team approach: teachers, counselors, psychologists, aides

Involve the family

Use evidence-based strategies

Prior 1970s, children with disabilities could be and were denied access to schools, or only given limited opportunity to learn.

Laws were changed in the 1970s to give children with disabilities access to public education.

Terms used prior to civil rights legislation:

- "Educable, trainable, and custodial"

Where we left off …

The first federal laws ...

**Section 504
of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**
Prohibits discrimination because of disability in programs that receive federal funds. Introduces term " free and appropriate public education"

1975 – Education for all Handicapped Children
Becomes Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990.
Includes free and appropriate public education (FAPE), least restricted environment (LRE), Individual Education Programs (IEPs), and parent participation in creating IEPs

Broad civil rights protections

1990 – Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Makes it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities. Modeled on Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Terms "developmentally handicapped/disabled" and "intellectually disabled" start coming into use. "Institutions" start to be called "facilities"

Children can no longer be barred from schools because they are disabled.

How they are admitted varies from total separation, to integration, to intentional inclusion

Partly this is because of the individualized nature of special education. But bias has a role, as do training and resources

Journey continues

The present

How accessible and equitable education is depends – on the specific school and its approach and whether it is prepared to meet your child's needs.

If your child has an IEP – you get to be part of the team to design their individualized program. How well that team works and how included you feel can vary.

If your child has a 504 plan (no IEP) – staff decides what accommodations are needed.

Tools we use

Accommodations – used in IEPs and 504 plans. They alter the environment, not the curriculum

Modifications – can be used in IEPs. They alter the curriculum by changing the expectation or content

Differentiation – teaching technique that responds to variance in learning

Related services – can be used in IEPs. Includes therapies, transportation, counseling, etc

Accommodation
Section 504

A change in **HOW** the student will learn the same materials as their peers. **Alters the environment.**

- Breaks
- Large or alternative print
- Additional time
- Small group setting
- Use of assistive technology
- Preferential seating

Modification
IDEA

A change in **WHAT** the student is taught or expected to learn. **Alters the curriculum.**

- Fewer questions
- Lower or higher level of text
- Alternative projects
- Adjusted curriculum
- Shortened assignments
- Adjusted grading scale

What are the pros and cons of modification?

Differentiation

Tailoring instruction to meet individual needs. Retrofitting.

Typically uses ongoing assessment and grouping.

Teachers can differentiate various components:
- o Content (Use reading materials of varying levels)
- o Process (Offer manipulatives)
- o Demonstration of learning (Students choose assignment)
- o Learning environment (Creating quiet spaces)

What are the pros and cons of differentiation?

So ... what does the future hold?

WHAT OTHER TOOLS ARE THERE?

UDL – what and why?

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Civil rights + science = Wow!
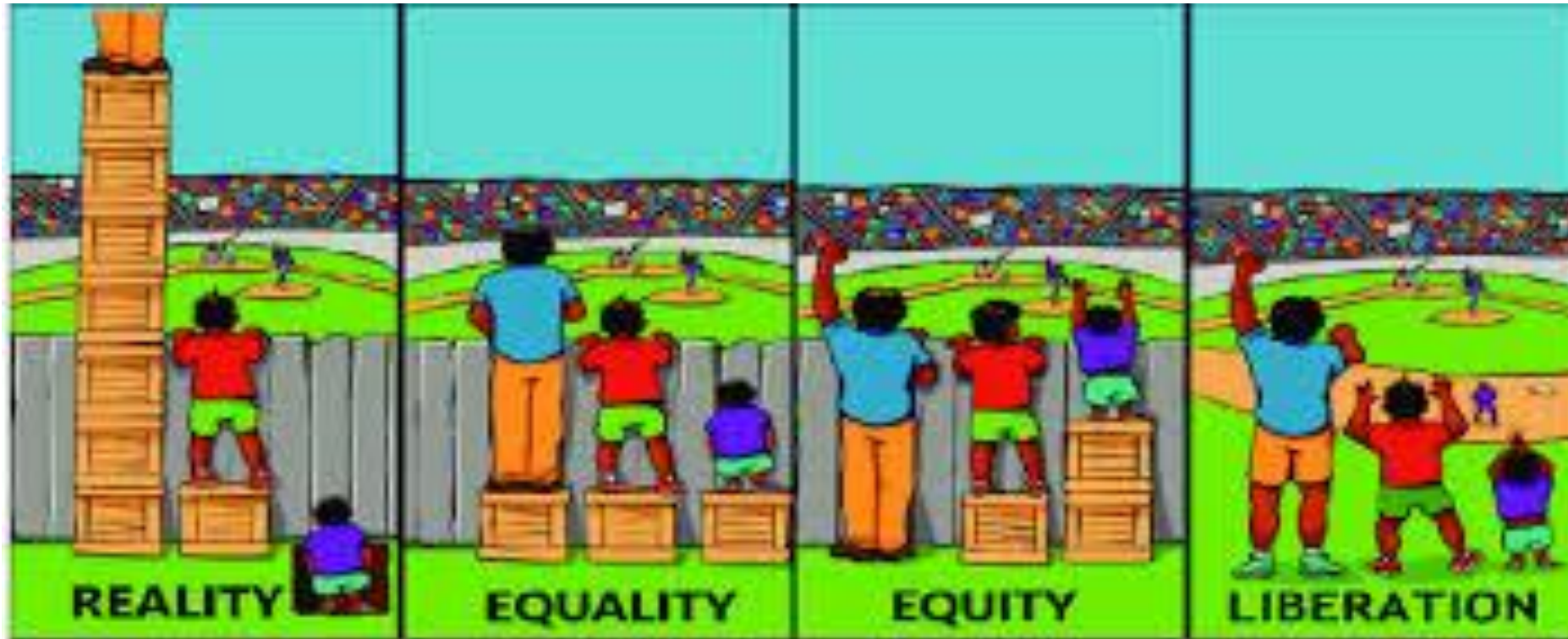
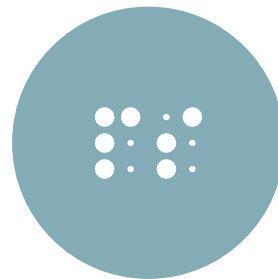# Educational strategies: Tier supports

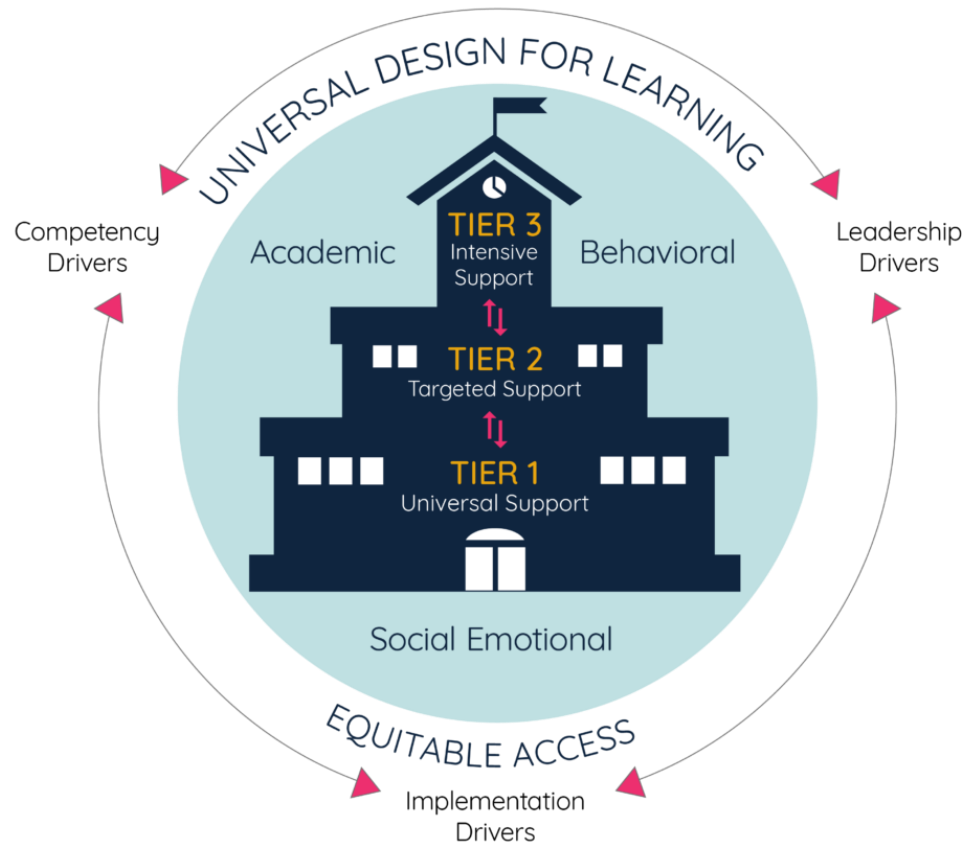RTI – response to intervention (academic)

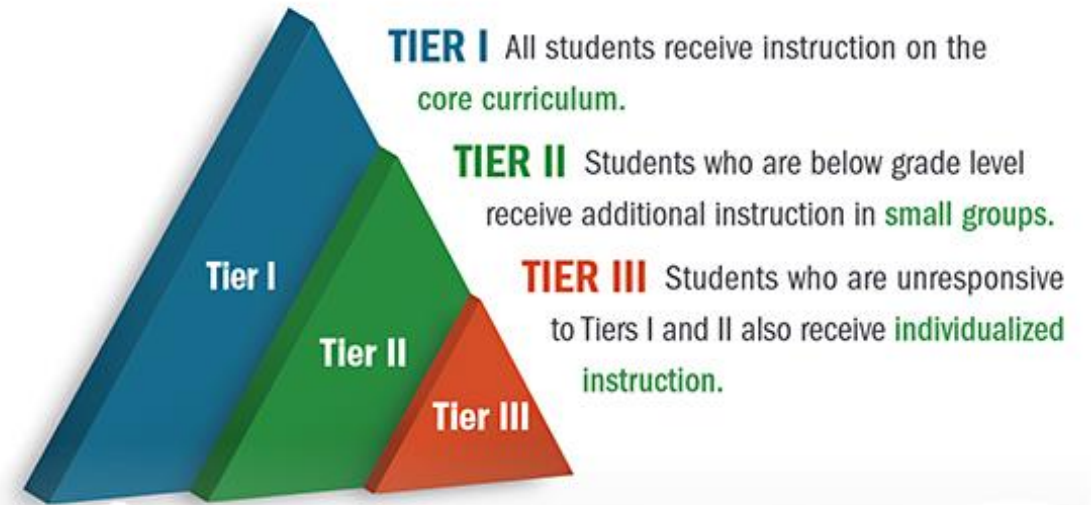PBIS – Positive behavior interventions and supports (behavior)

MTSS – Multi-tiered systems of support (Whole-school/child, systems approach)

Accommodations, differentiation – Find ways to provide access, retroactively

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Competency Drivers

Academic

TIER 3
Intensive Support

Behavioral

Leadership Drivers

TIER 2
Targeted Support

TIER 1
Universal Support

Social Emotional

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Implementation Drivers

MULTI-TIERED
SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

TIER I All students receive instruction on the core curriculum.

TIER II Students who are below grade level receive additional instruction in small groups.

TIER III Students who are unresponsive to Tiers I and II also receive individualized instruction.

Tier I

Tier II

Tier III

Big idea!

If we KNOW education marginalizes and/or excludes learners, why don't we rethink how we're doing it?

If we DESIGN learning to be accessible, then we don't have to spend as much time modifying and differentiating.

Universal Design for Learning, inspired by universal design in architecture and engineering.

Proactively design for access

Build in flexibility

Focus on how people learn

Empower students

"Universal Design for Learning is like putting out a buffet of all options and allowing students to choose which options work for them."

AFFECTIVE NETWORKS:
THE **WHY** OF LEARNING

RECOGNITION NETWORKS:
THE **WHAT** OF LEARNING

STRATEGIC NETWORKS:
THE **HOW** OF LEARNING

Engagement

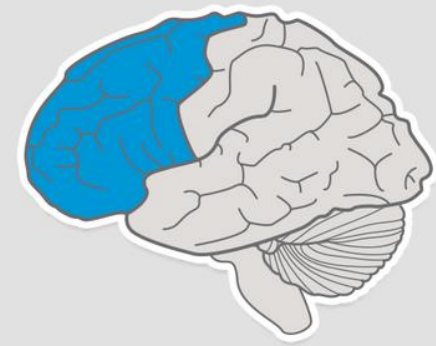For purposeful, motivated learners, stimulate interest and motivation for learning.
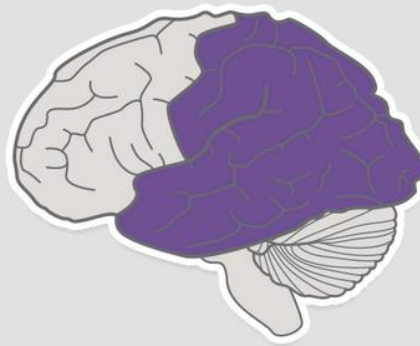
Representation

For resourceful, knowledgeable learners, present information and content in different ways.

Action & Expression

For strategic, goal-directed learners, differentiate the ways that students can express what they know.

The dinner party analogy

EVOLUTION OF LEARNING VIA CASSEROLE, MENU, OR TACO BAR

Static: "Casserole"

🍽️ Just one option, with all ingredients combined.

😕 If you are allergic to any of it, can't have any of it.

"Casserole" in education…

Emphasis on the curriculum	Follow the script	Teach lesson and follow unit as designed
Focus on the "average student"	Does not consider students on the margins	Ignores barriers

Differentiating, or reactive: "Individual meals"

The chef creates an individualized meal for each guest

Focus is often on ingredients they must avoid

"Individual meals" in education ...

Evaluate the student	Focus on cause and effect	Retrofit with accommodations or differentiation
Focus on individual ability (as determined by the teacher)	Tries to bring all students to "normal"	Works around barriers

Proactive learning: "Taco bar"

Your guests have multiple options.

You leave it to them to create their own meal

Evaluate the environment	Evaluate classroom and culture	Intentional
Design instruction before students arrive	Expect variability; value variety	Removes barriers

"Taco bar" in education

1. Students need to be engaged

2. Students need options for how to access knowledge. Provide them

3. Students demonstrate learning differently. That's a good thing

The UDL 1-2-3s

Differentiation is reactive

UDL is proactive: you do not need to differentiate as much

Differentiation is NOT UDL!

Differentiation – Responsive	UDL – Proactive
Changing a lesson for 1 student or small group, based on what the teacher thinks the student needs or can do.	Designing spaces and lessons to be accessible by first removing barriers, then creating options for student choice.
Most of the class does 1 thing. Some students do something else when the teacher decides, and if they have capacity to offer changes.	Variability is normal and planned for. Students decide how to approach the lesson, based on their interests and needs.

Energy goes to creating access

In UDL, differentiation, modification and accommodation don't go away. They just aren't used as much. More energy is put into creating accessible environments, where all students feel like they belong. Less energy is put into adjusting for outliers. There is no one "typical" or "normal" student .

ENGAGE STUDENTS – respect differences; give choice; observe and anticipate interests; honor culture

REPRESENT information with an eye to access. Communicate verbally and visually; model steps; repeat and restate key concepts.

Value variety in how learning is **EXPRESSED.** Offer multiple ways to respond; accept multiple levels of complexity.

UDL in practice

A practitioner …

Embraces natural curiosity of learners and facilitates learning through exploration

Looks for understanding in context of everyday activities. Observes daily routines, and interactions

Offers responsive structure and support for learners to be successful in activities

Incorporates high interest topics and embeds learning into motivating activities

Approaches learning broadly, asks: What is the true goal? How can all children benefit?
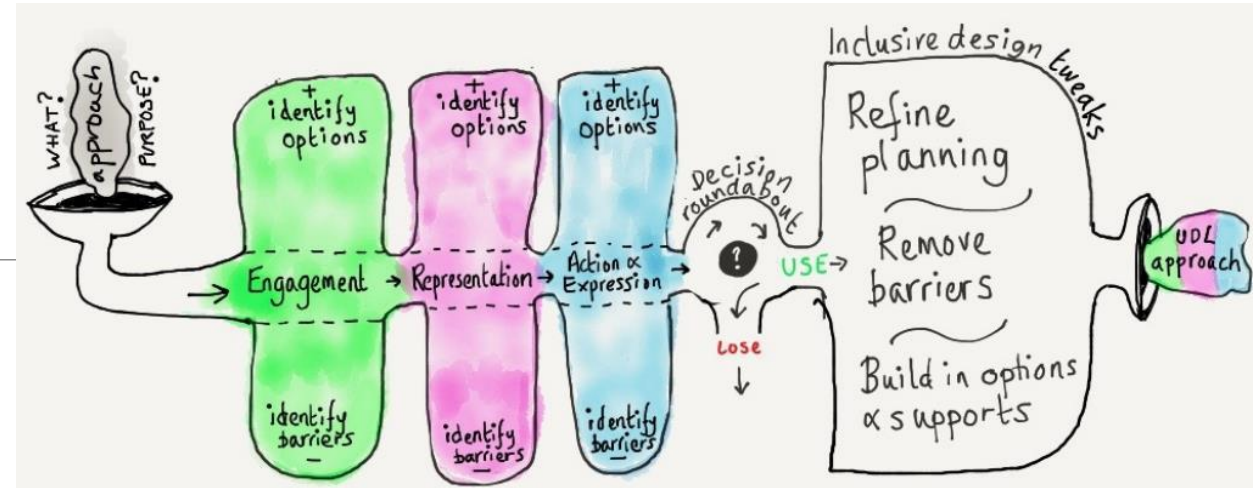
A practitioner...

Is flexible with pacing; accommodates breaks and different ways of engaging

Ensures a safe and welcoming environment for all: safe floors to navigate, wide pathways, varied seating options, sensory adaptations

Provides diverse materials and tools to reflect varied cultures, experiences, and needs

Prioritizes building relationships and creating opportunities for family involvement

Line leader
1ST
2nd

Breakfast
Centers
Circle
Outside
Lunch
Nap
Snack
Outside
Story
Goodbye

Short, Wonderful Videos About UDL

[Universal Design for Learning and Inclusive Classrooms](#) (4min)

Peek inside the classroom of Linda Ojala to see how she implements UDL, and why she so greatly values it in her practice

[Shelley Moore: The Evolution of Inclusion](#) (5min)

We have come a long way, and there is still room to grow!

[The End of Average!? Disrupting the Green of Education](#) (6min)

Shelley Moore discusses the history and thinking behind universal design, and why it makes so much sense to create a classroom space that works for a wide range of learners

What does this mean for advocacy?

» How might you use this information to choose a school?

» How might you use this information to work with your child's teacher, or within an IEP team?

» How might you use this information to work within your school district?

What's going on now?

OSPI has established centers of excellence for inclusive early learning for educators and administrators to observe and learn from; promoting excellence in practice

OSPI completed the Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project (K-12), a 2-year project funded by state funds and a federal grant. Now OSPI is building an Inclusionary Practices Technical Network (IPTN)

- o Free professional development
- o Focus on students with IDD and Black students using special education services
- o Resources and research

UDL in Washington

There are school districts in the state adopting UDL. Systemwide UDL takes time.

The principles of UDL, though, are reflected in inclusionary practices. So even if a district is not implementing UDL systemwide, classroom teachers have access to training that supports inclusion proactively

ESSA (federal act to address educational opportunity gaps) defines and endorses UDL, and calls on states to use the principles of UDL to create alternative testing

OSPI provides some support for UDL. More could be done.

Resources: Learning more

Building Inclusive Childcare: [Questions to Consider in UDL Observations of Early Childhood Environments](#)

National Center for Learning Disabilities: [A Parent's Guide to UDL – Parent Advocacy Brief](#)

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI): [Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project](#)

Beth Poss, SLP: [Creating the UDL Early Childhood Classroom](#) (with printable tools)

Ellen Ullman: [So You Think You Understand UDL?](#)

Resources: Learning more

H.A. Harte: Universal Design and Outdoor Learning

L.A. Dinnebeil, M. Boat, & Y. Bae: Integrating Principles of Universal Design Into the Early Childhood Curriculum

M. Conn-Powers, A.F. Cross, E.K Traub, & L. Hutter-Pishgahi: The Universal Design of Early Education

Special Education Technology Center: UDL in the Preschool Classroom