

Learner variability matters

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Find out about UDL' from the Guide:

[Universal Design for Learning](#)

Includes:

The learning brain

There is no average brain

What is learner variability?

Why learner variability matters

Reflection questions

Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Universal Design for Learning](#)

Strategy: [Find out about UDL](#)

Suggestion: [Learner variability matters](#)

Date

17 January 2019

Link

www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/learner-variability-matters

The learning brain



Source: [CAST](#)

Source:

[CAST](#)

<http://www.cast.org/binaries/content/assets/common/publications/articles/cast-udlandthebrain-20180321.pdf>

[View full image \(140 KB\)](#)

How these networks interconnect and act together is unique for each of us.

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There is no average brain



Source: [Medscape](#)

Source:

[Medscape](#)

<https://www.medscape.com/>

[View full image \(130 KB\)](#)

[UDL and the Learning Brain CAST 2018](#)

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What is learner variability?

Learner variability is a fundamental premise of UDL.

Findings from neuroscience indicate that each human brain learns using three primary networks in the brain.

Our **affective networks** influence our emotions and motivations.

Our **recognition networks** influence what we perceive and understand through our senses and

Our **strategic networks** influence how we organise and communicate our thinking.

These networks make unique interconnections influenced by:

the context in which learning happens

our emotional state

our experiences, background knowledge, interests and abilities.

This combination makes learning highly variable.

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Why learner variability matters

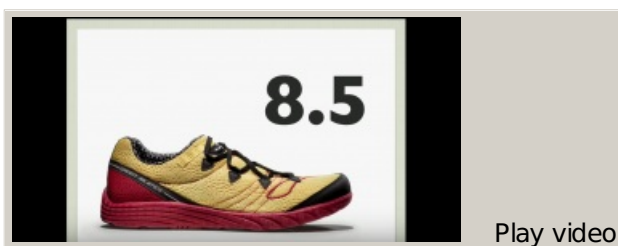
Dr Todd Rose, Harvard University talks about why planning for variability is critical.

Source: [Cyber Learning \(US\)](#) Closed Captions

Source:

[Cyber Learning \(US\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGkGAaPILl5COT6GnRGaejA>



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/8WClnVjCEVM>

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Reflection questions

Discuss how you plan for variability in other contexts. Think about planning a meal for a group of people you don't know. What variability would you expect and how would you plan for it? Could this approach translate to teaching and learning?

Reflect on Todd Rose's story about the implications of giving everyone the same sized shoes? In what ways might this relate to teaching and learning?

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Useful resources

UDL and the learning brain

Read time: 5 min

Publisher: CAST

[Download PDF](#)

Level up your inclusive practice

Read time: 5 min

Publisher: CORE Education

[Visit website](#)

Research@Work: Embracing Learner Variability in Schools

Read time: 2 min

Publisher: Digital Promise

[Visit website](#)

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