

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](#)

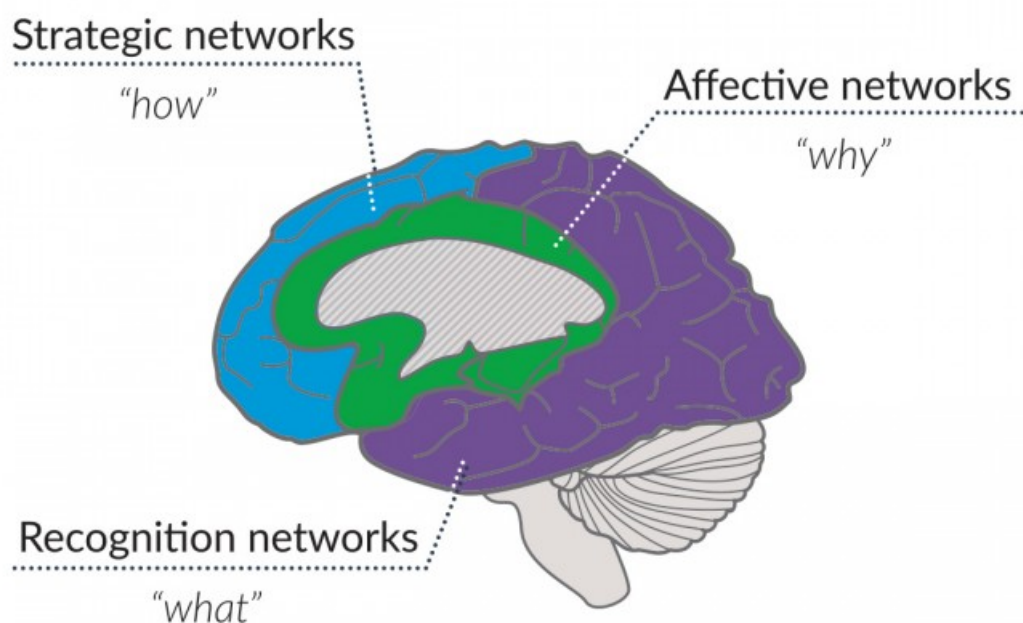
Date

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

The learning brain



Source:

CAST

<https://www.cast.org/products-services/resources/2018/udl-learning-brain-neuroscience>

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There is no average brain



Source:

[Medscape](#)

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

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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.



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

Closed Captions

Source:

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGkGAaPILl5COT6GnRGAEjA>

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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

A rationale for UDL based on findings from neuroscience.

Publisher: CAST

[Visit website](#)



Level up your inclusive practice

Read time: 5 min

A blog post about planning for learner variability.

[Visit website](#)



Research@Work: Embracing Learner Variability in Schools

Read time: 2 min

In this video, David Rose discusses the importance of providing learning supports and structures that are tailored to students' individual needs and abilities. He shares his vision for “de-standardizing” education to help students discover their strengths and become expert learners.

Publisher: Digital Promise

[Visit website](#)

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