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
The learning brain

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

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How these networks interconnect and act together is unique for each of us.
There is no average brain

Source: Medscape

UDL and the Learning Brain CAST 2018
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.**
Why learner variability matters

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

Source: Cyber Learning (US)

Cyber Learning (US)
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGkGAaPIL5COT6GnRGAejA

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

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?
Useful resources

UDL and the learning brain
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