# Grow Your Practice Icon - hand out with a plant growing from itGrow Your UDL Practice Tool

This reflective tool is part of a series of three tools for reflection and planning created to accompany the UDL for FET project, undertaken by AHEAD and co-commissioned by SOLAS and Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI). The series includes:

1. **The UDL Pause and Reflect Tool** - designed to get you thinking about how your learners engage with, understand and demonstrate their learning in different ways.
2. **The Starting Small with UDL Tool** – designed to get practitioners started with UDL implementation by selecting and planning easy-to-implement UDL options for their learners.
3. **The Grow Your UDL Practice Tool** – what you are reading now, designed for deeper practitioner reflection and planning on intentionally implementing each UDL guideline, individually or in collaboration with your colleagues.

If you are new to UDL, these tools are designed to be used in order, but if you are already experienced in UDL practice, you may want to skip ahead and start with number 2 or 3.

**About this Tool:** The aim of this tool, the third and final one in the series, is to provide you with space to reflect more deeply on each individual UDL guideline and to provide practice prompts to help you to intentionally plan and deliver a more comprehensive UDL implementation which addresses all/most of the guidelines. To use this tool, go through each UDL principle and the connecting nine guidelines below and read the associated plus-one FET practice prompts. Then, develop your own ideas about how to apply the guideline to your own practice and make notes to plan how to implement them in the space provided.

Remember, you are not working alone, so when you want to work at a more systemic level, collaborate with colleagues to grow your/their UDL practices to give the learners choices and agency with aspects of the programme. You can start by finding an interested colleague, both completing this template, emailing each other the finished reflections and then meeting to discuss and provide each other feedback and advice.



## Principle - Provide Multiple Means of Engagement

Giving our learners choices about how they can get started, stay focused, and sustain their effort and attention, means they can move from being just rote memorisers to becoming more active explorers—if our goal is to create new practitioners in our fields, starting with engagement shifts our whole mind-set from “teach them ideas” to “prepare them to be colleagues.

### Guideline: Provide options for recruiting interest

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for recruiting interest. Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Make your new learners welcome, send them a positive welcoming message by email
* Survey your learners and find out how they are feeling, what are they interested in
* Give them the bigger picture, where they can go, show them how the content is relevant to their life/learning goals
* Identify the pinch points where learners get stuck and provide plus-one options
* Make it safe for them to get tasks wrong and to make mistakes
* Offer ‘no-consequences’ practice (i.e. ungraded)

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### Guideline: Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for sustaining effort and persistence. Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Have high expectations for your learners, let them know that they can do the work, and show them how
* Prompt learners to formulate their own goals and restate them as short- and longer-term objectives in their own words
* Share your coping skills and strategies with them, you had to learn this stuff too
* Show your learners how to work together
* Foster collaboration and communication, create learning groups with clear goals, roles and responsibilities
* Give one mid-week encouragement e-mail to all
* Vary the demands and resources of work
* Chunk learning into simple steps
* Check and check again for understanding of goals, tasks and terminology
* Give formative feedback that is constructive, relevant, timely and measurable

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### Guideline: Provide options for self-regulation

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for self-regulation. Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Encourage learners to set their own personally appropriate goals and activities
* Encourage the learner to reflect on their own progress towards reaching their goals
* Make the learning process itself explicit
* Provide scaffolds for developing coping mechanisms for real life
* Share the assessment rubrics and check understanding of them
* Create self-assessment tools for learners to use throughout the course

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# Principle - Provide Multiple Means of Representation

Learning doesn’t happen unless we can understand and use information from the world around us. Think broadly about information: it can be observed phenomena in a lab or out in the world, a phone call or remote-video session with a practitioner in your field or a classmate, a how-to video on YouTube or a where-to-focus video from an instructor. So create multiple ways that learners can take in and then apply information, content, and ideas, and you will lower another barrier to learning.

### Guideline: Provide options for perception

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for perception. Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Offer simple and clear fonts and good-contrast colour schemes
* Offer ways of customising the display of information e.g. provide PowerPoint slides in advance, provide accessible digital documents which can then be manipulated by learners (colour, size of font etc.)
* Offer alternatives for key auditory and visual information e.g. ensure videos have captions, ensure images are described using alternative text etc.
* Chunk content into manageable sections, ensuring perquisite knowledge and skills are in place
* Create plus-one alternatives for key information (e.g. instructional video to supplement text instructions for a key process)

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### Guideline: Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols. Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Clarify vocabulary and symbols e.g. provide glossaries, definitions of symbols and keys for graphics/maps
* Use simple language to build up ideas and reduce use of jargon
* Clarify unfamiliar syntax (in language or in math formulas) or underlying structure (in diagrams, graphs, illustrations, extended expositions or narratives)
* Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols e.g. by providing key documents in an accessible digital format (which allows for text to be read aloud, manipulated and for words to be defined/translated to other languages)
* Illustrate through multiple media e.g. present key concepts in one form of symbolic representation (e.g., an expository text or a math equation) with an alternative form (e.g., an illustration, diagram, table, model, video, comic strip, story board, photograph, animation)
* Do not assume prior knowledge and highlight new vocabulary and symbols that are being used

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### Guideline: Provide options for comprehension

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for comprehension Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Give the learner background knowledge e.g. anchor instruction by linking to relevant prior knowledge
* Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships - emphasise key elements in text, graphics, mind maps, diagrams and formulas
* Guide information processing, visualisation, and manipulation e.g. Give explicit prompts for each step in a sequential process, “Chunk” information into smaller elements and remove unnecessary distractions unless they are essential to the instructional goal
* Break down processes and create a screen cast for independent learning away from class
* Apply captions to videos
* Clearly identify the core skills that learner must demonstrate or know

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# Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

If we ask learners to show what they know in only a narrowly-prescribed range of ways, we will miss expertise and ideas that don’t match well with learners’ skill sets in the moment. Equality—giving everyone the same tools and the same directions for using them—is less effective than equity—helping learners to meet the same standards using different tools, methods, paths, and ways of showing their skills.

### Guideline: Provide options for physical action

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for physical action. Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Expand assignments with audio/video/presentation options
* Provide alternatives in the requirements for rate, timing, speed, and range of motor action required to interact with instructional materials, physical manipulatives, and technologies
* Provide alternatives for physically interacting with materials by hand if possible
* Give your learners a plus-one choice of activities/tasks
* Support learners to use no-, low- and high-tech options

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### Guideline: Provide options for expression and communication

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for expression and communication. Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Encourage the learners to use multiple media for communication e.g. encourage ‘composition’ in media such as text, speech, drawing, illustration, poster, film, music, visual art, sculpture or video. Support them to understand how to do so
* Support learners to use tech-help when expressing themselves, including spell checkers, speech to text and recording tools
* Offer the learners social media and/or interactive web tools to communicate and receive feedback (e.g. for in-lecture group work)
* Design a multimodal assignment as a learner choice
* Facilitate learners to build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance - Learners should develop a variety of fluencies (e.g., visual, audio, mathematical, reading, etc.)
* Provide learners with at least 2 ways of doing the work and showing their skills, (subject to assessment criteria in graded tasks)

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### Guideline: Provide options for executive functions

**Reminder:** Executive functions are higher executive skills which allow humans to overcome impulsive, short-term reactions to their environment and instead to set long-term goals, plan effective strategies for reaching those goals, monitor their progress, and modify strategies as needed. Associated core learning skills are goal setting, problem solving, working memory, cooperation, reflection skills, time management, self-monitoring and planning.

Below are some associated plus-one practices to provide learner options for executive functions. Use these practices to generate your own ideas/plans for your learners in your context:

* Facilitate managing information and resources e.g. provide templates/tools for data collection and organising information
* Enhance the learner’s ability to monitor progress e.g. ask questions to guide self-monitoring and reflection. Guide the learners to set their own goals and milestones within the course
* Help learners plan their work tasks, providing models and templates for them to follow (like the one you’re using now)
* Break down and explain processes and tasks step by step.
* Provide scaffolds, checklists and guidelines for project planning, prioritising and scheduling of steps
* Show learners how to give and receive constructive feedback
* Give your learners rubrics, guides, and opportunities to perform peer- and self-assessment
* Design a group assignment with role choices

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Now you are ready to take all your planning and reflection notes and implement your UDL ideas to provide your learners with more flexibility, accessibility voice and choice.

This template is designed as a resource for the UDL for FET Practitioners guidance. You can find the full guidance as well as other helpful resources for implementing universal design for learning in FET on [the UDL for FET Resource Hub](https://ahead.ie/udlforfet) – [www.ahead.ie/udlforfet](http://www.ahead.ie/udlforfet).

When you are finished using this reflective template, why not share some of your thoughts with the online UDL for FET community by posting your thoughts on twitter using **#UDLforFET** and tagging **@AHEADireland, @SOLASfet and @ETBIreland**.