

Hearing the student voice: universal design for learning (UDL) as a framework for pedagogical reform in Higher Education

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Introduction

What is ABL?

(Active Blended Learning)

ABL is the dominant pedagogy at UON and is a pedagogical approach that combines sense-making activities with focused student interactions (with content, peers and tutors) in appropriate learning settings – in and outside the classroom.



Features of Active Blended Learning

Same time
Same place

Face to face

Small group
interaction

Same time
Different place

Hybrid and Hi-
flex

Co-creation
and
community
building

Different time
Same place

Digitally rich
resources

Tutor
mediated

Different time
Different place

Co creation
and
community
building

Tutor
mediated

Work-place relevant; inclusive and accessible; practical and applied

Theoretical Framework: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Cast, 2018)

Engagement



Offer options and supports to stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning

Representation



Present information in different ways to support access and understanding

Action & expression



Offer options and supports to all so everyone can create, learn, and share



Research Aim:

To explore students' experiences of ABL pedagogical techniques at the University of Northampton (UON)



Methods: Recruitment Strategy

Phase 1

Students were invited to complete an online survey

Phase 2

Students who completed the online survey were invited to join an online focus group

Ethics:

This study was approved by the UON FHES Ethics Committee

**Take part in our survey
on the way teaching and
learning happens at UON.**

**Share
your
views**



Survey run by Associate Professors
Alison Power and Emma Whewell

tinyurl.com/4mrasz7

Sample: 58 participants to date

Gender:

Male 9% (n=5)

Female 86% (n=50)

Other 5% (n=3)

Age range:

18-45+ (43% aged 18-25)

Ethnicity:

36% White

22% African

14% Pakistani

5% Indian, remaining 23% combination of Black Caribbean and African, Arab, other Asian and mixed multiple.

Undergraduate Year 1	21
Undergraduate Year 2	15
Undergraduate Year 3	1
Postgraduate	21

Phase 1



What examples of ABL have you experienced?

Face-to-face interaction with tutors, small group teaching and teamwork.	49	88%
Activities that reflect the workplace and accommodate learner needs.	25	45%
A future-focused, digitally rich learning environment.	26	46%
An impressive range of accessible and up-to-date online resources and materials across all subject areas	35	63%

'I have taken part in many face to face interactions and have access to digital resources allowing me to do assignments from home'

'We have the opportunity to work on live client briefs, meaning we get experience with working in the industry and gain connections before graduating.'

'I can always speak to a tutor if I need any guidance with assignments or understanding information within the lecture materials'

What is your least favourite way to learn?

'Being show clinical skills and then not being given a chance in the same lesson to try them out for myself.'

'I am not a fan of online classes because I lose focus and cannot concentrate.'

'Less teacher speaking for hours and more interaction that can involve the whole class and not only the few students who usually interact.'

'More practical lessons, visiting places related to health (council, charity, projects in town), tests that stimulate our creativity and not only a plain essay'



What is your perfect learning experience?

'Small breakup groups among students to share views and interact effectively.'

'Access to full lesson material prior to sessions to be able to prepare more fully. I am dyslexic and this is very important.'

'Ideally learning would consist of theory broken up with practical application'

'Online resources and materials to enhance a conducive learning environment.'



Next Steps...

Phase 2:

Focus groups with students to design and evaluate ABL activities.

Designing and trialling a 'Staff Toolkit'



Thank you
Any questions?

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