Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a flexible structure of development that addresses diversity and variability amongst the student population (Dalton 2012). The goal of the UDL framework is to “synthesize best practices within the field of early childhood education and special education, providing a template to support access and equity for all children” (Garrity 2007). The framework optimizes the level of challenge and support to meet the needs of all learners. The core idea of UDL is to provide multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement.

**Design Questions:**

**Interviewee 1:** Educator, 46 yrs. old, 20+ yrs. experience

> “You do not want a large open space. That is the first big rule. An open space discourages the child to focus on the task at hand and encourages running in the classroom.”

> “I like calm, serene type of colors to keep a calm physical environment. You can also add artwork and lighting to add your own chair to place things up.”

> “I think seating needs to be looked at in the classroom. The kids are expected to sit in wooden chairs or plastic chairs for a long time. Research has shown that so many sensory things are needed if kids have seats on it or so that’s kind of thing. It really helps. It really just takes the edge off for the kids to deal with the constant problems but may be restless and helps to take that problems away.”

**Interviewee 2:** Kindergarten student, 5 yrs. old

> “Purple and red make me happy because I like apples. Blue makes me feel sad. Sometimes I feel lonely, change makes me feel angry.”

> “I like the toys in my classroom because there’s so fun, especially the block toys.”

> “We play on the carpet. We play duck duck goose, hopscotch, board games and even have story time with our friends.”

**Design Questions:**

1. **Provide Multiple Means of Representation**
   - Multiple modes of expression through the way in which the student chooses to use the space during “free time”. Students are able to use the smart board and computer technology as a way of interactive exploration and learning.
   - The classroom is also equipped with various learning stations focusing on all areas by incorporating activities in which can be achieved both individually or in group like settings. This allows for the ability for the student to decide upon what they work as based on their need. This includes tactile surface distinctions as a form of touching and room distinction between learning and play centers.

2. **Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression**
   - **Multiple Means of Expression:** Multiple means of expression through the way in which the student chooses to use the space during “free time”. Students are able to use the smart board and computer technology as a way of interactive exploration and learning. The classroom is also equipped with various learning stations focusing on all areas by incorporating activities in which can be achieved both individually or in group like settings. This allows for the ability for the student to decide upon what they work as based on their need. This includes tactile surface distinctions as a form of touching and room distinction between learning and play centers.

3. **Provide Multiple Means of Engagement**
   - **Multiple Means of Engagement:** This classroom setting is not only a setting for learning but also a place where children can be comfortable and learn. This includes the use of different activities such as puzzles, blocks, board games, and even real-world scenarios to keep students engaged.

**Relationship to Goals of Universal Design:**

- **Universal Design in the Kindergarten Classroom**
  - **UDL Framework:** The UDL framework focuses on three principles: multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement. Each of these principles is addressed in the classroom design, ensuring that all students can access the learning environment.

**Precedent Study:**

Hazelwood School, Glasgow, Scotland

- **Activity Centers:**
  - **Classroom Environment:** The classroom is divided into different sections, each with a specific purpose. For example, the carpet center is a quiet area for circle time, library, and reading, while the activity center is for various learning stations focusing on all areas by incorporating activities in which can be achieved both individually or in group like settings.
  - **Student Desks:** The desks are arranged in groups, allowing for easy interaction and collaboration.
  - **Student Cubbies:** These are designed to be comfortable and inviting, providing a space for students to relax and unwind.

- **Color Wall:** The color wall is designed to be visually appealing and stimulating, incorporating colors that are known to have a calming effect on children.

- **Soft Play Area:** This area is designed to provide a safe and comfortable space for students to release any tension during “free time.”

- **SMART Board Technology:** The classroom is equipped with a SMART board, allowing for interactive learning and engagement.

**Color Floor Applique:**

- **Graphically displays numbers with word association and number of dots to coordinate with each digit**

**ARC 558 Design Inclusive Environments:**

**Allysa Gozdziak**

**Introduction & Research - Design Opportunity & Program**

In this section, the importance of creating an inclusive learning environment is highlighted. The goal is to design a classroom that caters to the diverse needs of all students, ensuring that everyone can access and benefit from the learning experience.