

Diversity
Enrichment
Transformation

The Human Element – Engagement & Inclusion

Dr. Rachael Fionda

Training and Development Coordinator

Emerald Cultural Institute

Overview

Learner engagement through the lens of UDL

- How inclusion supports engagement
- The Learner's Lens
- Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to design effective ILOs and effective ways to make learning visible
- About Emerald Cultural Institute



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Welcome

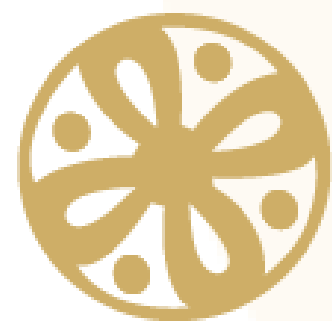
- Rachael Fionda
- ELT for 25+ years
- Germany, Italy, Austria and Ireland
- MPhil and PhD in Applied Linguistics
- German (C1), Italian (B1+), Norwegian (A1+)



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- UDL in teaching is like dropped curbs (ramps) in city design — built for accessibility, but they end up helping everyone move more freely.



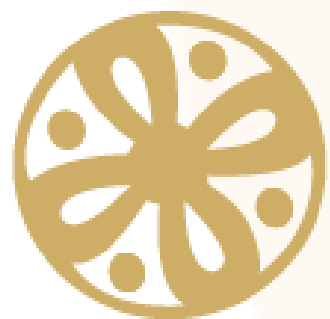
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Universal Design for Learning

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) helps us design lessons that reach more minds and voices by:
 - **Engagement:** spark interest and sustain effort through relevance, choice, and emotional safety.
 - **Representation:** make input accessible by varying how information is presented — text, visuals, audio, models, gestures.
 - **Action & Expression:** give learners flexible ways to show understanding — speaking, writing, drawing, building, performing.

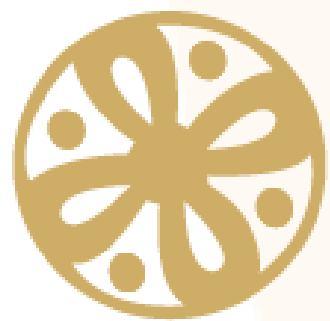


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Quick checklist

- Activate schema always
- Variety of task types
- Give students a choice
- Make learning visible



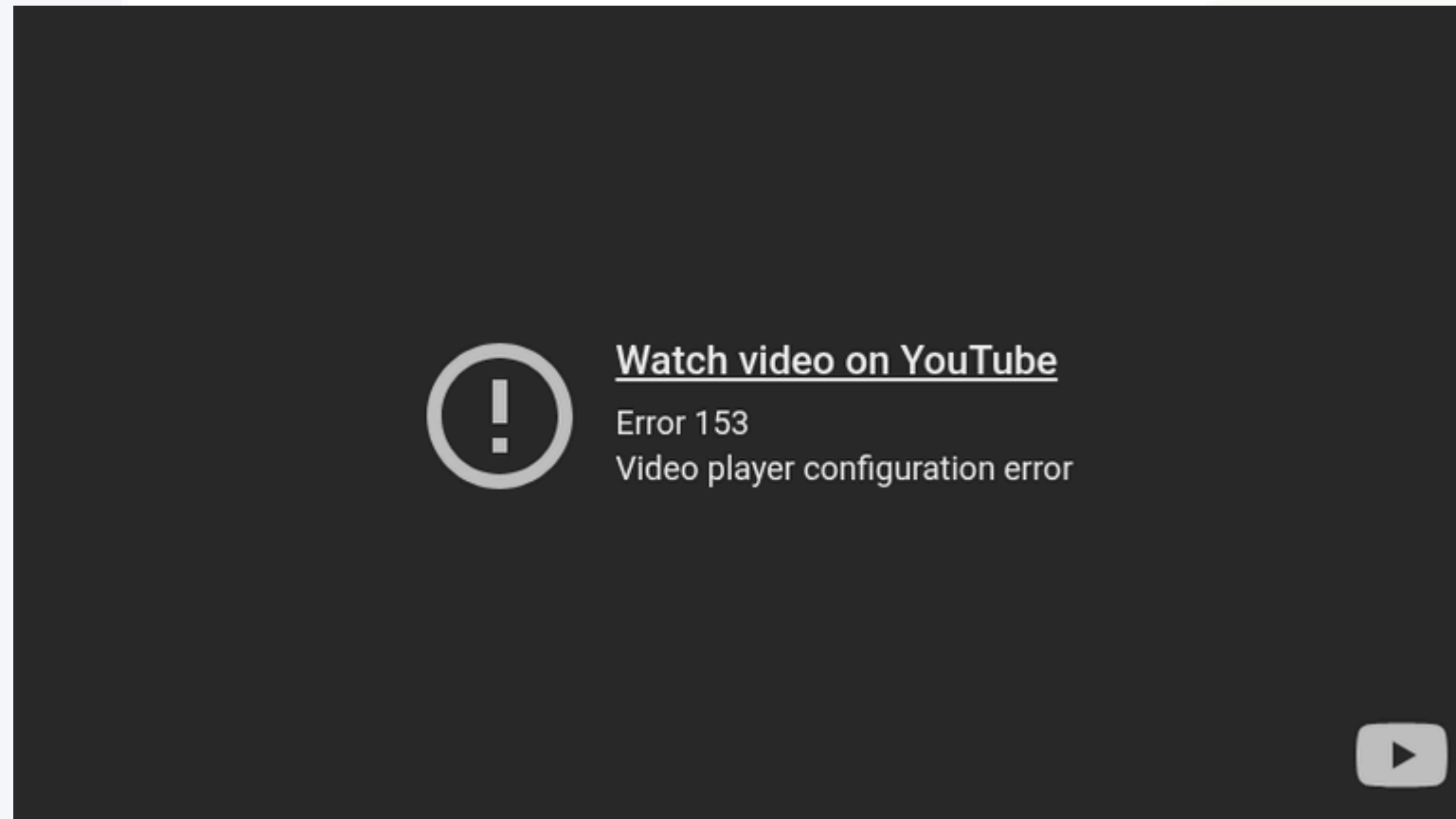
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The Learner's Lens

- Key perspective is first of all realising and acknowledging that learning differences and differences in how we perceive the world means that student engagement may look different to how you expect.

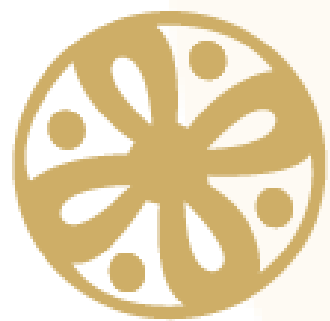


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ILO (Intended Learning Outcomes)

- Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) aren't admin—they're **anchors**. They **connect**:
 - Teacher and learner through **shared purpose**
 - Past knowledge and new content through **schema activation**
 - Intention and reflection by **making learning visible**



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ILOs

- do not cover the grammar focus
- are communicated to the students at the start of each lesson
- provide clarity, particularly for students with ND or a learning difference

They do....create a communicative context.



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Effective ILOs

1. Use the present simple
2. Practise "there is/are"
3. Learn countable/
uncountable nouns
4. Use the past simple
5. Practise question
forms
6. Use "can/can't"
7. Learn comparatives

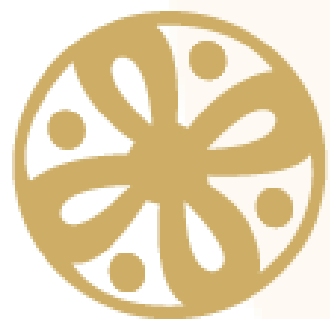


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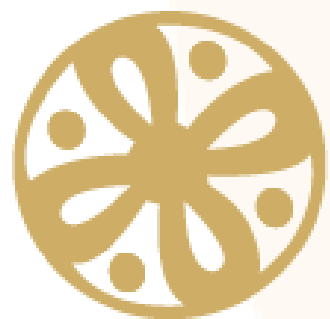
1. Talk about your daily routine
2. Describe your bedroom or favourite place
3. Ask for food and drinks in a café
4. Tell a short story about your weekend
5. Ask and answer basic questions about hobbies
6. Say what you can and can't do well
7. Compare two cities or two classmates' routines

ILOs in sum

- Clear Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) do more than organise teaching — they create purpose.
- When learners know what they're working towards and how it connects to real use, engagement increases.

Context-rich, communicative outcomes increase willingness to communicate and classroom participation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

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Make learning visible

- What can you do at the end of the class/week that you couldn't do at the start?
- How did you get there? What felt good? What felt more challenging?



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About Emerald Cultural Institute

Beyond Language Learning

What we offer:

- Expert led English and professional development courses for teachers, educators, and professionals
- Hands-on workshops, cultural immersion, and real classroom takeaways
- EAQUALS and QQI accredited

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Our Erasmus+ Portfolio

- Inclusive Language Learning & UDL
- CLIL in Action
- AI & Digital Tools in ELT
- Teacher Wellbeing
- Sustainability
- English & Irish Culture

Our Difference

Emerald combines academic rigour with human warmth — small groups, reflective practice, and intercultural connection.

We don't just teach language; we cultivate confidence, curiosity, and lifelong skills.



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Thank you
