Making Connections

Between Multi-Level Systems of Support and Universal Design for Learning

A Multi-Level System of Support ([Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)]) is the practice of systematically providing differing levels of supports based on student need. Wisconsin’s vision of a multi-level system of support consists of four essential elements: High Quality Instruction, Balanced Assessment, Collaboration, and Culturally Responsive Practices.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunity to learn. The National Center on Universal Design for Learning has established guidelines and specific checkpoints to provide a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone.

These two frameworks share common traits with each other.

Both of them:
• Are research-validated frameworks for general education that benefit ALL students
• Are proactive and preventative approaches
• Require district-wide or school-wide change
• Recognize barriers to learning and provide direction in creating solutions

Looking at the checkpoints in the UDL Guidelines from the National Center on Universal Design for Learning, we see specific connections to the components of a multi-level system of support:

- **UDL Checkpoints Connected to Balanced Assessment**
  - Use of multiple tools for construction and composition
  - Vary the methods for response and navigation

- **UDL Checkpoints Connected to Collaboration**
  - Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols
  - Offer alternatives for auditory or visual information

- **UDL Checkpoints Connected to Culturally Responsive Practices**
  - Promote understanding across languages
  - Optimize individual choice and autonomy

- **UDL Checkpoints Connected to High Quality Instruction**
  - Maximize transfer and generalization
  - Illustrate concepts through multiple media

Sources: