DARLENE: Right now I’m excited to introduce the next topic, which is inclusion through universal design for learning, which is as – if you’ve been with us for the whole four days, it’s very much one of the themes of the conference and really excited to – I haven’t actually met Lynsey yet, so lovely to meet you. She’s been away on holidays but her workplace assured me she’s one of those women that work 24/7 so I could trust that she would turn up, so I was very glad to hear that. So Lynsey is an education consultant at Down Syndrome QLD. She’s a passionate and knowledgeable advocate for all individuals to receive an inclusive education experience and to achieve the best of their abilities. So over to you, Lynsey, and welcome.

LYNSEY: Thank you. Can you hear me okay?

DARLENE: We can. Thank you.

LYNSEY: Awesome. I just wanted to check that. Good. Well, welcome to my presentation. My name is Lynsey Kennedy-Wood and today I'm going to be talking to you about inclusion through universal design. It’s so awesome, just in the last 10 minutes, to be able to hear and read those comments about the usefulness of universal design for learning. You know, we hope that coming into the future that it's going to be much more prevalent in all learning institutes as well and all courses but before I begin I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we gather today and pay our respects to the Elders past and present. I extend that respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today. So that’s my contact details down there. I’m going to very quickly touch on -

DARLENE: Sorry, Lynsey. I just might encourage you not to be so quickly.

LYNSEY: Sorry.

DARLENE: Just to slow down for our Interpreters.

LYNSEY: I am – I am a race horse. I’m sorry.

DARLENE: Yes. So just slow it down. Thank you.

LYNSEY: All right. So most of you, if not all of you, are probably well aware of what UDL is at this point, having been part of the conference for the last four days, but those of you who don't I'll quickly outline its origin and its use today. So it was first implemented in the architectural industry to create more access for and individuals who might require design accessibility and that type of thing into buildings and it was then implemented into the educational arena to provide education that’s accessible to all individuals on the same basis as everyone else. It can and should be applied to all educational experiences. Unfortunately it's still one of those things that is not happening regularly and there are some people who are doing a fantastic job, but there’s also those who need that little bit of a push. The idea behind UDL is removing the barriers to create that level playing field for everyone. Why do we want everyone to use UDL? Well, Australia signed the UNCRPD, which stands for the United Nations conventions on the rights of persons with a disability in 2008, so we want to ensure we provide access to the general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning, without discrimination and on the same basis as everyone else. Therefore we need to remove the barriers at all levels to ensure equal access, so why do we use it because it's timely, modern, valuable, responsive to the needs of people. It's equitable, so everyone has equal access, and it allows for those collaborative relationships, which we know is very valuable and most importantly it’s inclusive. So it's creating an inclusive learning episode at the beginning to create equal access without the need for individualised instruction and modification so all students can access those adaptations and modifications. So from Sam Johnstone on UDL on campus at cast he said, “It offers a systematic framework to look at supporting all students in the classroom so they can persist in a course, get a Degree and get to the next place they want to go”. And we know that education is a basic human right and we need to provide ways for everyone to be able to access it and UDL is such a pivotal framework for us to endeavour to implement into the learning environment. So the frame works and principles, very quickly, because most of you will know this, consists of representation as recognition, action and expression is strategic and engagement as effective. It’s based on neuro science, on how individuals learn, so each part of the brain is engaged in a different way and this is the way to make learning meaningful. So engagement, the why, the effectiveness of it and how an individual engages in the academic side of things so we know some people like spontaneity and adventure, other people like rigorous protocols, they like to know how to do things and they don't want it to be changed and so we need to provide that for both sides of the coin. Therefore as an educator we need to think, am I allowing my students multiple ways to engage in the learning. Action and expression, that’s how an individual would express their learning and individuals do that in very different ways and for this reason again, we need to allow students multiple ways to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge, I'm only going over these very briefly so I hope that’s okay. And the last one is representation, so learners perceive and comprehend information in different ways. So we know that students with down syndrome learn visually, so we need to provide all the information we are going to present to them in a very visual manner, so we incorporate lots of visuals, 65 percent of the population are visual learners so we always recommend that individuals present visually as much as possible. We know that people who have hearing loss, will need sign and interpreters, for sight loss they might need braille and that type of thing. So therefore we need to present information in different ways. So on to the good stuff. How do we apply UDL to higher learning opportunities? So traditionally, universities have created a cookie cutter mould of how we are to learn. When I went through university we all sat in these big halls, TAFEs and stuff like that might be a little bit smaller but still tiered seating and that type of thing. Tutorials, labs, discussion groups were in small groups or in lines and there was no real differentiation or modifications or things weren't expressed in a different way. We were expected to learn in the same way. So the use of UDL means that that can absolutely change and for many institutes it has changed the way they look at the set up and that sort of thing, but for some they still are on that journey. What we need to do is we need to make sure that the institute fits the individual and not expect the individual to fit the institute. UDL helps this to be proactively met. So one of the ways we can do this is by flexible learning environments, or flexible learning spaces. So these are incorporated in to most higher education institutes at the moment, I’m not saying all, and they offer a way for students to engage in the learning in the way that's going to work for them, so offering things like how they set - how they access information. So libraries now have taken on a whole new meaning, you will walk in to a library you will see bean bags. You might see chairs, you might see stools, you’ll see couches. You will see little computer set ups like traditional, but there's so many different ways that places are set up now and this is all part of that universal design because we are creating areas that are accessible to all individuals regardless of what they might need, therefore that student can walk in and decide for themselves what they want. So we are removing the barriers and putting the onus on the student. Now, when it comes to environment that's a very different matter than when it comes to the curriculum or the contents that we are delivering. So one of the things that we need to look at is the skill set of the teachers, educators aren't going to be skilled in all areas, they're going to have things they're better at, things they might struggle with, things they need assistance with and we need to make sure teachers in the positions are in the right position for their skill set, that's one of the things that is important. Now, the Deloitte report stated that UDL is concerned with the conscious and deliberate creation of lessons and outcomes that allow all students access to and participation in the same curricula and provide accessible, flexible, usable and customisable curriculum for all students, which can be used in combination with a structural differentiation. So that there is about making sure the person you put in place of the education is actually able to create those sorts of things. So let's look at the three areas and how we might put some of those things into practice and some things we might need to think about. You will notice it's very visual for me because I do work for individuals who do need that visual representation, and I am going to work backwards from three to one, just to mix it up, because it doesn’t really matter which way you do it. Okay. So the way we represent and deliver information that we want students to understand and apply can be done in a number of ways and it's not limited to one. Traditionally it was always the lecture and the tutorial, as I stated before, often done with that tiered seating or in the line or small groups, then there’s the labs and discussion groups, which offer a chance to ask questions, to ensure you are on the right track, to engage the clarity, have I got the right understanding of this. Recording of lectures and discussions allows an individual to stop, replay, if they didn’t quite get it, have that thinking time, allow them to go back over it again or just watch the whole thing again if they need to watch it several times. I know each time I watch something, especially TV episodes or things like that, I always get something different out of it and that's important too, to have that important. Sometimes we'll miss it the first time through, we were too busy focused on the last point, so being able to go back to that and replay it is really important. Like we are doing today, having subtitles, closed captions, signing whatever is required, an interpreter, that's also really important for those individuals who might not hear clearly or if the presenter is not talking clearly or fast like myself like a race horse then they might need those as well. Utilising videos, websites that help consolidate the topic or provide further information or just present the information in a different way. So Ted talks, they’re just such a different way to present information. They're fun. They’re engaging and if you can utilise those, do. There's lots and lots of websites that will present information in a different way that maybe you haven't thought of and that’s important as well. Student notes, which we’re going to talk about a little bit more soon, and offering alternative easy read texts. So sometimes those big studies that are written that might be 20 pages long can just be too much for some of our learners and we need to offer an alternative. I’ve heard of text books that have alternative texts, one might be more visual, same content, same structure, but it’s just more accessible to some students. Students then have a choice between which text they wish to read. Always offering that choice and then if they struggle with reading then there’s applications on computers and there’s so much technology out there. Where we can use those. There’s one called snap and read, which just reads straight off your computer for you. So with student notes, these are really important and these are such a great asset because every student will share, will write, will collate the information given to them in their own way and it's a great way to share knowledge and engage students as everyone takes notes the way that works for them. So some people are going to take them just dot points. Some people are going to draw diagrams, some are going to do mind maps, some are going to use technology, some people are going to use lots and lots of colours, I love lots of colours, so one of the things that helps me focus and draw my mind, and then using these to share with other students. That’s a great way to help consolidate learning, clarify what was said and that type of thing and a great way to do this is to have either - allowing students to upload their notes weekly or giving them an actual week when they are to upload their notes and even offering it as part of their final grade. Another way, and most places are doing it, I think all places do this, let’s be honest, is offering the lecture notes before hand and the slides prior to the lecture, just giving students an opportunity. Students who might need a bit more time and bit more thought process to run through the slides and make sure they understand what's going to be happening and then if there’s any words phrases, pictures, hot topics that they don't know, that allows them the time to have a look, make sure they're familiar with them so when they come to the lecture they're not getting stuck on something.

DARLENE: Hi, Lynsey. Sorry, it’s Darlene here. We’ve just got five minutes to go.

LYNSEY: Okay.

DARLENE: Okay. Thank you.

LYNSEY: And having that. Live recordings. COVID has shown us how powerful these are. This takes away a lot of the pressure from things like lights and noise, people who might have access issues. It helps people who have anxiety and that type of thing, especially during the current climate, and I think going forward this needs to be absolutely a staple within the educational realm. Just offering that online opportunity and giving it to them live so they feel like they are part of it and then offering the recording later. And choice, choice has been shown to engage students much more and they're more likely to engage with the learning but it's also shown the popularity of courses, when educators offer the choice the course is often much more popular than the counter parts. Action and expression, offering students lots of different ways to show their learning. Traditionally we've done these types of things, I’m going to skip through some of these. So essays, multiple choice, self assessments, oral presentations, drama role playing, that type of thing, and we need to offer the choice in that area and then showing examples. So giving examples of what is the expectation of the outcome or the assessment piece, so ensuring we show different examples from years past, what's the learning we are expecting to be shown to us, how they explain it or show it or do it needs to be given to that student and they can do it their own way. Then engagement, so engagement as I said before, is so different for each student, offering lots of opportunities so the choices, collaboration. Some students love it, some students really don't like it, so offering that collaboration when needed. Utilising technology so much is at our finger tips with technology. Those flexible learning spaces, ensuring it moves towards their goals. So if they have life goals and you have created - something they're doing is going to help them to reach one of their life goals it’s more engaging for them and they're more likely to progress with it. And using skills that are transferrable, so making sure if you are doing an economics course you know they’re probably interested in money, they might want to learn about a personal portfolio, so make that one of the assessment tasks type thing. So I'll quickly go through some examples. So before you start, before you ever introduce the course, you want to know what the goal is and work backwards, so what am I expected under the assessment piece and step it back from there. Then look at the barriers that could rise up and pre-empt them and remove it before it ever makes an appearance. Making learning outcomes authentic and transferrable to real life is really important and do the work now, as opposed to once the problem arises. During it, present the information in all those ways, check in, engage understanding, through discussions, through emails, through quick survey monkeys. Share knowledge through the online note sharing and utilise observations to inform your future learning. Then after the subject, after the lesson, after the tutorial, whatever it is, self reflect on yourself as the educator, how did it go, what do I need to change, make the changes but be nice to yourself. Know that it's a process. No one gets it right the first time. We’re all on a journey and we need to give ourselves that time. Now, I know I’ve only got a minute so these are some examples of what you might do. So traditionally, if an assessment piece was a portfolio you could offer these different ways, and then offer as an individual piece or small group assessment. Likewise, a short answer assessment you may offer it in those different ways and then as an individual or small group assessment. I know I've run out of time. Thanks for listening. If you do have any questions you can contact me and I believe you are getting these notes all references are there, education@downsyndromequeensland.org.au. Thank you, Darlene.

DARLENE: Wonderful thank you Lynsey. Well done for getting through. I’m sorry I had to rush you.

LYNSEY: That is fine.

DARLENE: The recording and power point will all be up on ATEND. We are getting things up each day so you can check that out on the ATEND page, presentations 2020, if you want to follow up on any of the great information that Lynsey gave.