

## Universal Design for Learning: 3 Ways SRA FLEX Literacy Powers Reading Comprehension

Universally designed curricula—particularly vital to students with disabilities, English Learners and others with diverse needs—are not new. With the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandating them, [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) principals are increasingly embraced by educators when creating instructional strategies to reach all learners. UDL is a decade-old educational framework that helps ensure every student is provided with the materials they need to succeed, regardless of their learning style. Three guidelines define Universal Design for Learning: Multiple Means of Representation, Expression, and Engagement; these guidelines aim to provide every student with an equal opportunity to learn.

Now, digital personalized technology coupled with print and project resources all deliver on the promise of Universal Design for Learning, and its call for an evidence-based approach to instructional equity. One literacy curriculum program developed with the three principles of universal design in mind is [SRA FLEX Literacy](#), a personalized learning program that offers students, teachers, and administrators multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement.

FLEX Literacy fuses instruction, practice, assessment, and review to provide comprehensive reading and language arts instruction. Designed for students in grades 3 and above, FLEX Literacy is an interactive tool that reaches students at a variety of levels, enriching instruction and accelerating them to grade level where needed. FLEX Literacy affords individualized instruction based on students' specific needs and it is easily accessible from any Internet-ready device.

With FLEX Literacy, teachers are given the tools to tailor

instruction to their students' specific needs through ongoing assessments. FLEX offers three different approaches: Digital, Print and Project Experiences. These three styles of learning can be used in tandem to enhance the learning experience of students based on their unique learning styles.

**The Digital Experience** focuses on skill development through individualized instruction. This experience includes reading instruction, practice, assessment, recommendation, and review components to aid students and educators alike.

**The Print Experience** incorporates small-group and differentiated instruction through teacher-led lessons. Opportunities for differentiation and independent reading are available based on students' performances in The Digital Experience.

**The Project Experience** is based on the application of skills acquired during the individualized online instruction component of The Digital Experience and the systematic instruction of The Print Experience. This collaborative approach to learning allows students to put what they learned to the test by applying their knowledge and forming cross-curricular connections through literacy.

FLEX Literacy is applied in classrooms nationwide both as 1) a digital supplemental, personalized learning ELA program to complement a classroom's core ELA instruction in 1:1 or 1:2 device classrooms, and 2) as an intensive intervention, multi-modal implementation of the digital, print, and project components, supporting Tier 2, Tier 3, or Special Education, blended learning curricula.

## **How does SRA FLEX Literacy's unique three-experience system correspond with the three principles of Universal Design for Learning?**

### **1. Representation**

The Universal Design for Learning guidelines state that multiple means of representation for content recognition are necessary for a universally beneficial learning experience. FLEX Literacy allows students and teachers to customize the learning experience through regular assessments in The Digital

Experience. In this experience, digital placement tests place students at the appropriate level and then self-paced lessons, leveled text passages, and instructions certify that all skills and concepts are available to each student. The interactive instructional format of The Digital Experience makes certain that each type of learning modality is available through audio, visual, and text-based content.

## 2. Expression

FLEX Literacy provides students with a variety of strategies to express themselves and build on previously acquired skills and knowledge through the combination of digital, print, and project experiences. Each experience offers students a unique way to showcase what they have learned—whether it be in the digital assessments, individualized reading, or collaborative projects. As an additional mode of expression, FLEX Literacy allows students to personalize their workspace by creating their own avatars.

## 3. Engagement

Each of the three flexible, option-rich learning experiences in FLEX Literacy work together to provide students with multiple means of engagement. In the Digital Experience, a game-like interface keeps students interested while regular assessments ensure the activities advance based on their skill levels. As these skill levels increase, the opportunity for independent reading increases in The Print Experience. The combination of these changes mean students continue altering the way they contribute to the collaborative projects in The Project Experience as their skills evolve and their knowledge increases.

SRA FLEX Literacy's three experience system makes it simple to take the “whole brain” approach with a teacher-led or personalized learning program that works for every student. To learn more, see [FLEX Literacy success stories and white papers](#) on the [FLEX Literacy website](#).