

From ideas to impact.

A seven-milestone journey through **Universal Design for Learning**. From a late-diagnosed student finding another way in, to a disability-led researcher and founder building what the system did not anticipate.

Accessibility is not only physical. It is cognitive, social, linguistic and cultural. U DL 3.0 is the move from accommodation to design, and from access for some to belonging for all.

II. THE JOURNEY

Seven movements, one through-line.

Each milestone is tagged with the U DL 3.0 principle it made visible, sometimes by its presence, more often by its absence.



2017–19
DIAGNOSIS AND RE-ENTRY

Diagnosed late. Back into study through TAFE.
A non-traditional door into a system that did not anticipate me. Diagnosis and medication arrived after the years that needed them most. I returned through a Cert IV Tertiary Preparation at TAFE NSW. The route was not the problem; the assumption of a single route was.

BARRIER SURFACED



2020
UNIVERSITY

Entering UNSW as a mature-aged, first-in-family student.
Navigating systems built for a learner who does not vary. Lower-SES, learning the rules in real time, with no one at home who had walked the same path.

BARRIER SURFACED



2021
SECOND YEAR

Switching to molecular biology. Representation, lived.
The abstract, statistics-heavy neuroscience I started in did not fit my brain. My dyslexic, visual mind thinks in structures. When knowledge was represented visually, as molecules, pathways, systems, I thrived. Multiple means of representation is not a preference. It is the difference between failing and excelling.

UDL · REPRESENTATION



2021
CO-FOUNDING

Co-founding the Diversified Project.
Disability-led co-production. The work that taught me the why, that gave me the language, the skills, and the right to name the gold standard I had not been given. Engagement is not motivation. It is the moment a learner is invited to author their own conditions.

UDL · ENGAGEMENT



2021–25
RESEARCH

Four peer-reviewed publications.
A growing conviction made evidentiary: inclusion must be designed in from the start, not retrofitted as accommodation, not delivered as exception.

UDL · ENGAGEMENT



2025 → 26
BSC TO MRES

Finishing the BSc, beginning a Master of Research.
A national document and policy audit of a ll 42 Australian universities, 2024 to 2025: which deliver UDL, and which only speak it. One shows comprehensive integration; the rest thin out through policy and toolkit, policy rhetoric only, and generic accessibility. This is the four-pattern classification, and the gap it names is Shadow UDL: the language of inclusion without the practice.

NATIONAL AUDIT



Now
SIMPLIFII OS

Simplifii OS, the accumulated answer.
Every barrier on this path became a design requirement. Dyslexia and overload became visual, structured learning. Executive-function struggle became built-in scaffolds. Buried help became findable, in the moment of need. What the journey taught me, built so the next student can show what they know, their way.

UDL · ACTION & EXPRESSION



2027 →
THE NEXT MOVEMENT

From building the fix to changing the system.
Next, the planned transition to a PhD. The audit named the gap; the doctorate asks how to close it: student perspectives on UDL in practice, and the cultural, linguistic and intersectional dimensions the framework still under-serves. I have built from the bottom up through Simplifii, and worked sideways in through co-production and advocacy. The next move is top down, into education policy reform, so inclusion is required by design, not left to the people it excludes.

WHAT'S NEXT

I. ABSTRACT

UDL is not a methodology I learned. It is the architecture my path required. Each barrier became a design requirement; each accommodation withheld became a principle I would later return to as a researcher and build for as a founder.

This poster reads one journey against the three principles of U DL 3.0 (CAST, 2024), and arrives at a single conclusion: the students most affected by exclusionary design are not its subjects. They are its authors.

III. UDL 3.0 · THE LENS

My story is the framework, lived.

Three principles, three milestones in one life. The framework did not describe me retroactively. My path was the framework before it had a name.

Representation

PRINCIPLE 1 · LIVED AS THE MOLECULAR-BIOLOGY SWITCH

A visual, dyslexic mind that thrives when knowledge is shown, not just told. Structures, diagrams, molecules: the same content, finally legible.

"The **content** was **never** the **problem**. The **single channel** was."

Engagement

PRINCIPLE 2 · LIVED AS THE DIVERSIFIED PROJECT AND ADVOCACY

Disability-led co-production gave me the why, and the skills to name what students are owed, not as gratitude, but as design.

"Engagement **is** **authorship**, **not** **enthusiasm**."

Action and Expression

PRINCIPLE 3 · LIVED AS SIMPLIFII OS

What the journey taught me, built so the next student can show what they know, their way. The barrier is the brief.

"Every **accommodation** **I** was **denied** **became** **a feature**."

THE THROUGH-LINE · CO-DESIGN

The student the system failed became the researcher mapping that failure, and the founder building its replacement. **Variability is the rule, not the exception.**

IV. RECOGNITION ALONG THE WAY

Awarded by the sector my work was built to change.

2026	NDRP Disability Research Leadership Program, 2026 cohort	2025	UN SDG Global Citizenship Award (APRU)
2025	Cultural Visual Art Competition, DIIU / UNSW	2024	ADA Audacious Vision Dean's Award
2024	PASS Inclusivity Champion Award	2024	Student Community Impact Award
2023	ADCET Accessibility in Action Award	2022	Science Student Impact Award

With thanks to the academics and co-production partners, including Professor Therese Cumming and the Diversified Project, who gave a non-traditional student access to research and a seat at the table. This work exists to make that access structural, not a matter of luck.

Three peer-reviewed publications · Neurodiversity Foundation Research Fellow (2025 to present) · advisory roles across the disability and higher-education sector.

Aaron Saint-James

UNSW Sydney · Master of Research · Founder, Simplifii OS
a.saint-james@unsw.edu.au

SIMPLIFII OS
EST. FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE

CONNECT ON
LINKEDIN



TRY
SIMPLIFII



THE
DIVERSIFIED
PROJECT



PERSONAL
WEBPAGE

