

USING UDL TO DECOLONISE THE CURRICULUM

MULTIPLE WAYS TO LEARN, EXPRESS, AND ENGAGE

ANCHORS OF THE MODULE

- 📌 PART 1 – Understanding UDL as a Framework for Inclusion
- 📌 PART 2 – UDL as a Tool for Decolonising Teaching
- Break
- 📌 PART 3 – Synthesis & Reflection



“When a flower doesn’t bloom,
you fix the environment in
which it grows, not the flower.”

Break

Alexander den Heijer

WHAT IS UDL?

- **Origin:** From Universal Design in architecture and the social model of disability.
- **Core idea:** Barriers are in the environment, not the learner.
- **Teacher as designer:** Build flexibility into content, methods, and assessment from the start.
- **Goal:** Anticipate diversity and remove barriers before they appear.



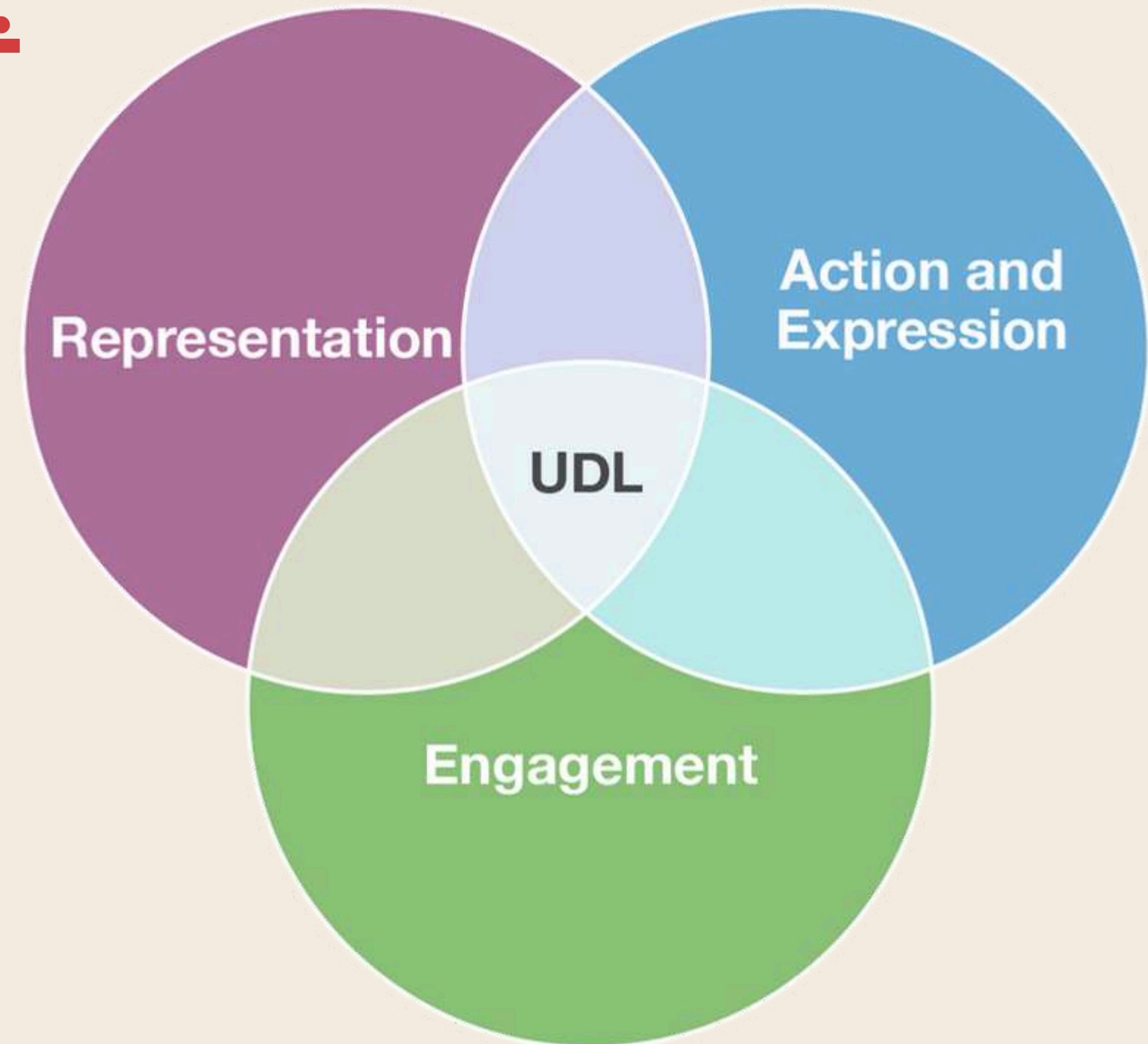
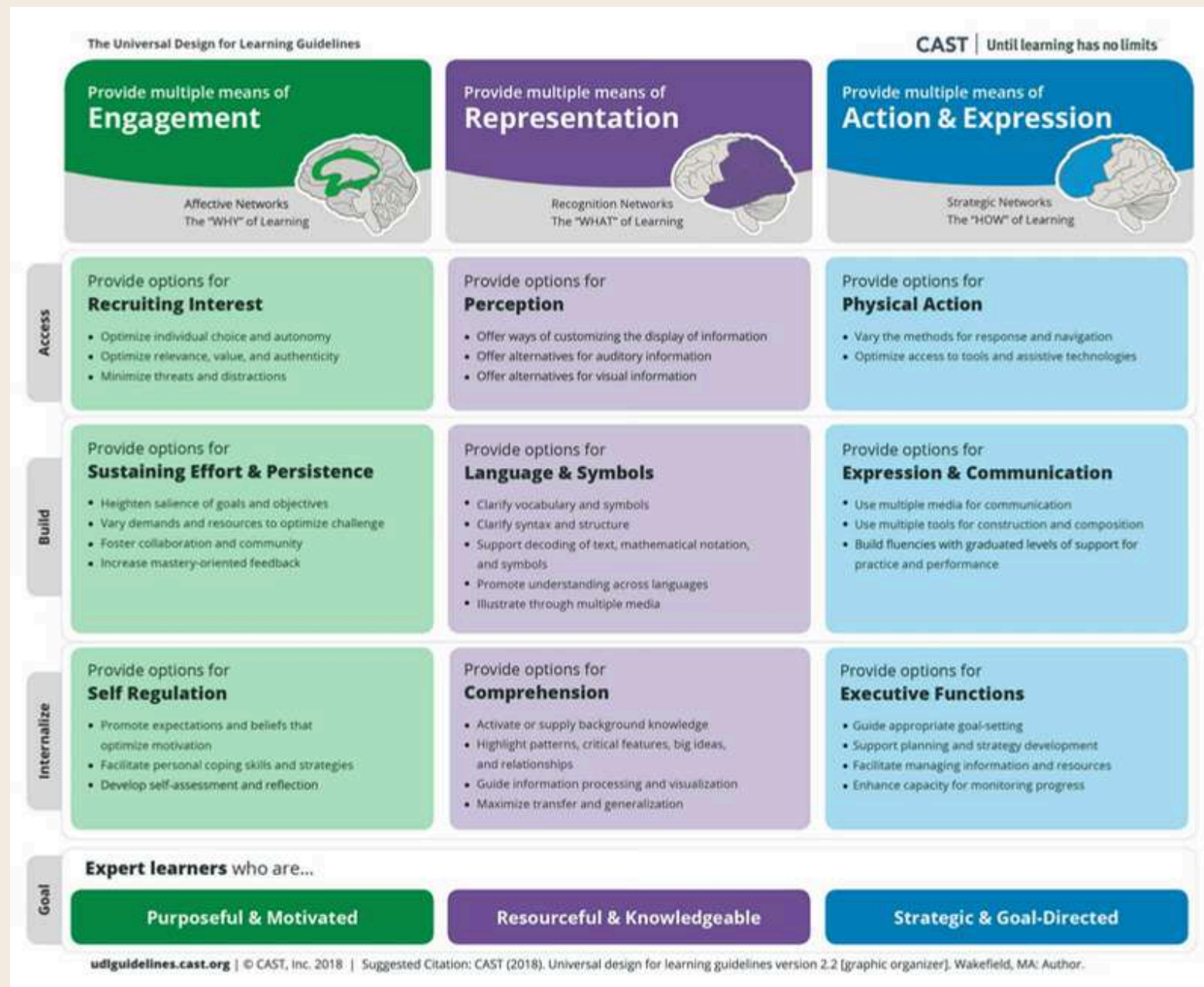
Mindset Shift: from accommodation to anticipation

Instead of asking “Who needs support?” we ask

“What in our design needs to change so everyone can thrive?”

click to see the complete UDL guidelines on the website

UDL GUIDELINES:

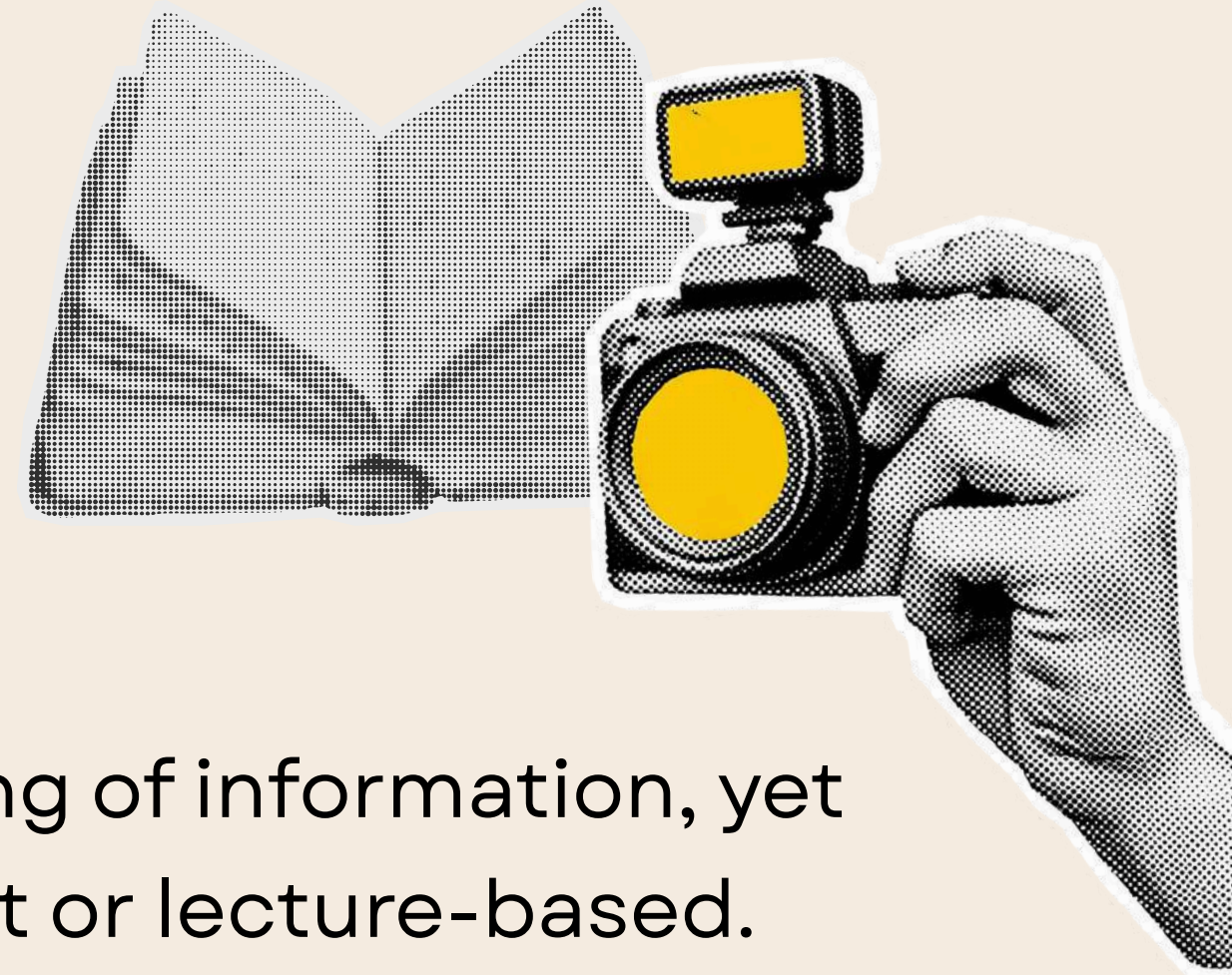


THREE PATHWAYS TO INCLUSION

Principle	Focus	Reflective Question	Classroom Example
Representation	How students receive and access information	“Can they learn in more than one way?” “Are multiple perspectives represented?”	Mix text, visuals, podcasts, and videos
Action & Expression	How students show what they know	“Can they express learning using their strengths?”	Students choose: essay, artifacts, group project, presentation.
Engagement	How students connect with learning and find meaning	“Do they find personal purpose?”	Offer authentic choices, real-world relevance, and collaboration.

REPRESENTATION

THE “WHAT” OF LEARNING



Traditional challenge:

Learners differ in the ways they perceive and make meaning of information, yet information is typically presented in one format, often print or lecture-based.

UDL approach:

Present information in multiple modalities (text, visuals, audio, interactive elements)

Decolonising extension:

Ask whose worldviews and knowledge systems are represented.

Key idea:

Representation means *whose* knowledge we show – not just *how* we show it.

REPRESENTATION IN PRACTICE

	Same Story	Different Stories
Same Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ One medium, one worldview → Knowledge appears fixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Same medium, new voices → Perspectives added, but still within the same frame
Different Formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Many media, same message → Access improves, meaning stays narrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">💡 Many media, many worldviews → Knowledge becomes plural, situated, and dialogic

ACTION AND EXPRESSION

THE “HOW” OF LEARNING

Traditional challenge:

Learners differ in how they approach learning and express understanding, yet learning is shown mainly through essays, tests, and oral presentations.

UDL approach:

Offer choice in how students participate and demonstrate learning (oral, written, visual, digital formats).

Decolonising extension:

Ask whose forms of expression are valued and recognised.

Key idea:

From expression as performance → to expression as empowerment.



EXAMPLE: PHOTOVOICE

CONNECTING CLASSROOM TOPICS WITH EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES



Step	What Students Do	Why It Matters	Tools
1. Capture	Take photos or draw images	Connects learning to lived experience	📷 Phone, camera, tablet, sketchbook
2. Reflect	Written or spoken explanation	Builds critical awareness	🖋️ Journal, Padlet, Voice note, OneNote
3. Share	Present images	Promotes dialogue and empathy	🖼️ Gallery wall, Slides, Padlet
4. Discuss	Explore ideas together	Fosters collaboration	🪑 Circle talk, Flipgrid, Padlet, or class blog

ENGAGEMENT

THE “WHY” OF LEARNING

Traditional challenge:

Learning often follows a one-size-fits-all model, detached from students' interests, experiences, and identities.

UDL approach:

Foster engagement through relevance, collaboration, and autonomy.

Decolonising extension:

Shift from motivating students to co-creating purpose and ownership.

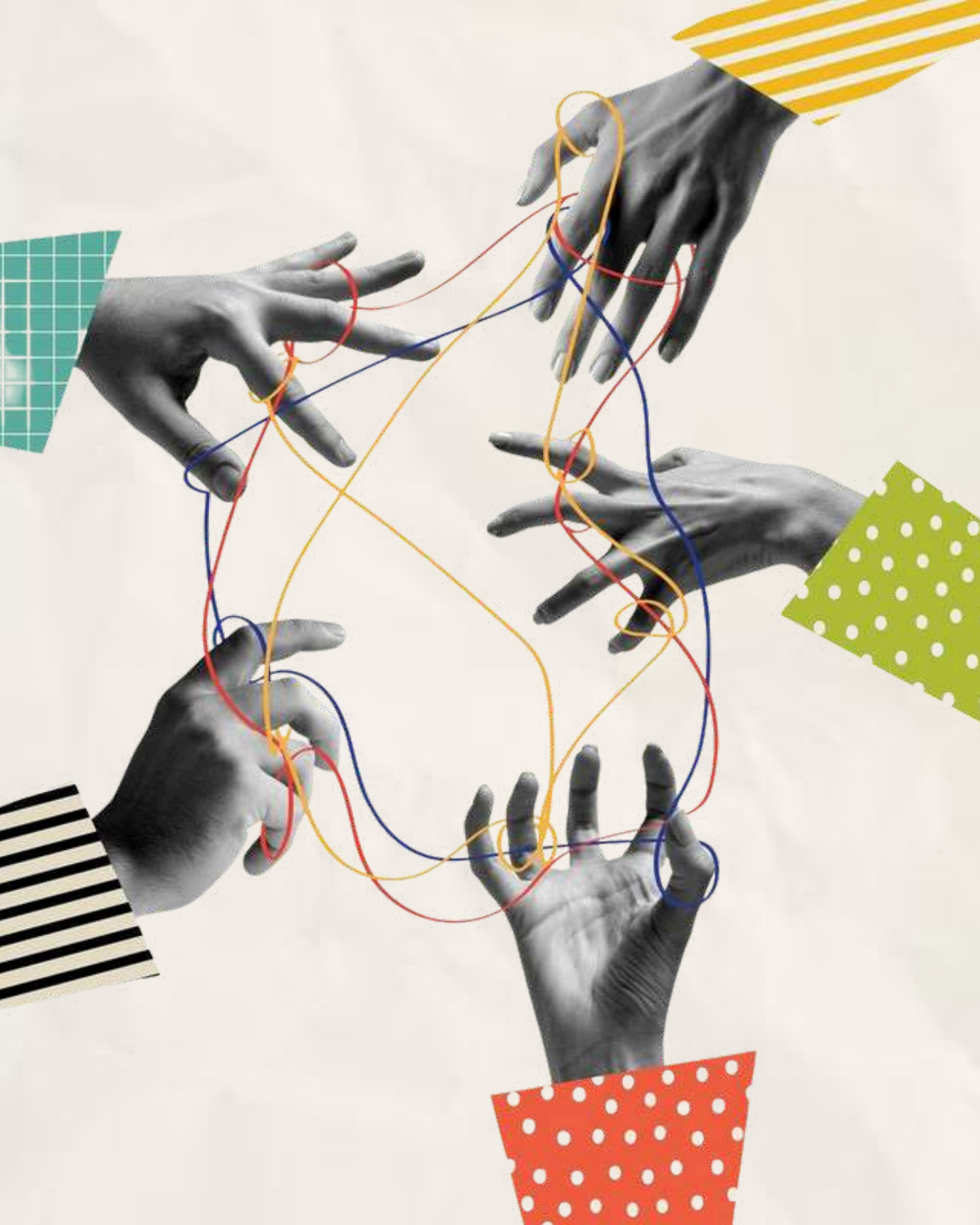


Key idea:

From engagement as motivation → to engagement as co-creation of meaning.

ENGAGEMENT IN PRACTICE

Focus Area	Core Idea	How It Can Look Like in Practice
Co-design learning	Students and teachers collaborate to shape topics, resources, or assessments within shared goals.	Learners suggest inquiry themes, co-create rubrics, or choose how to present understanding.
Authentic & local relevance	Learning connects to students' identities, cultures, and community contexts.	Classroom projects draw on local stories, cultural examples, or real-world challenges.
Reflective & dialogic practice	Engagement develops through continuous dialogue and joint reflection.	Regular reflection circles, feedback, or learning journals make students co-owners of progress.



**QUESTIONS,
REFLECTIONS,
IDEAS**