Executive Summary
Increased Learner Engagement: Strategies for Education Credential Attainment
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YouthBuild programs are always seeking to adopt teaching strategies that are engaging and relevant to YouthBuild participants. The youth served in this program are vulnerable learners with complex needs. The critical hope is that the teaching strategies used lead to positive student outcomes such as attaining a high school diploma or high school equivalency credential. YouthBuild educators must use continual assessment and reassessment to determine whether or not their academic content and teaching styles are sufficient to create a learning environment that is accessible to all learners. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) are two strategies that have been shared with the YouthBuild field within the last three years with the goal of engaging and empowering learners so that they can successfully attain academic credentials.

UDL is an approach that creates flexibility in learning to adapt to individuals’ learning differences. Problem-Based Learning presents students with a real-world problem and open-ended questions with many possible solutions in order to provide a place for authentic application of content and skills.

Jason Marshall of YouthBuild USA, Michael Deragon of YouthBuild Providence, and Michael Anderson of YouthBuild Omaha share their experiences learning and implementing Universal Design for Learning and Problem-Based Learning in YouthBuild to better connect with the non-traditional students served by the program and improved educational outcomes.