

Universal Design for Learning in Vietnam's Primary ELL Classrooms: Balancing Introverted and Extroverted Voices

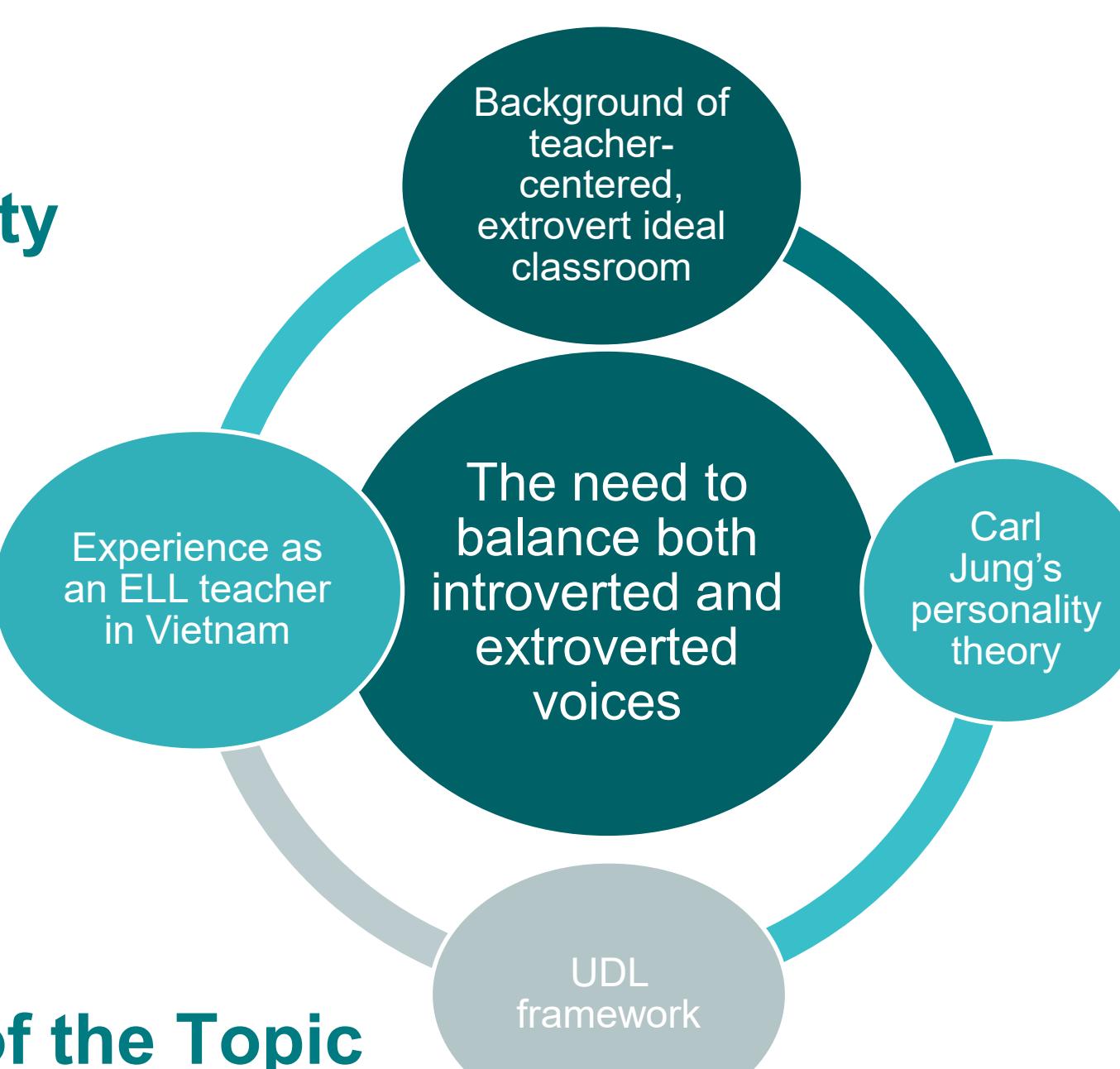
Minh Bao Ngoc Pham (Jade)

Abstract

This thematic literature review synthesizes findings from 16 empirical studies and 12 conceptual papers to examine how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can help balance the needs of introverted and extroverted primary English language learners (ELLs) in Vietnam. Despite limited Vietnam-specific empirical research on the intersection of UDL and personality diversity, the review suggests that UDL offers teachers a flexible, proactive framework that supports inclusive participation and provides learners with equitable opportunities to engage according to their individual strengths.

Introduction

My Positionality



Significance of the Topic

Vietnam's 2025 Education Reform seeks to shift instruction toward active, student-centered learning. However, classroom participation norms still favor sociability and verbal performance. This study emphasizes the importance of integrating UDL with personality-responsive approaches to ensure equity for all learners.

Thesis Statement

In the context of Vietnamese ELL and Education Reforms in 2025, the application of UDL can be utilized in Vietnamese primary ELL classrooms through teachers' differentiated strategies to avoid the "Extrovert Ideal" and recognize introverted strengths, promoting equitable teaching practices.

Research Questions

How can Universal Design for Learning (UDL) be applied in Vietnamese primary ELL classrooms to balance the needs and voices of introverted and extroverted learners?

Sub questions:

1. What is UDL, and in what ways is it relevant to the Vietnamese primary ELL context?
2. How do introverted and extroverted traits influence young ELLs' participation, confidence, and language development in traditional Vietnamese classrooms?
3. Which UDL-based strategies are most effective in promoting inclusive participation for both introverted and extroverted learners?

Literature Review

Vietnamese ELL Context & Educational Reforms

- English proficiency is both an educational and economic priority in Vietnam's integration into global markets (Le et al., 2023).
- MOET's 2018 curriculum promotes learner-centered, competency-based reforms aligned with global shifts.
- The National Foreign Language Project 2020 framed English as a "competitive advantage" (Nguyen et al., 2016).
- Implementation challenges persist: rural-urban inequalities, limited resources, and exam-oriented teaching reduce equitable participation (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007; Tran et al., 2024).
- These tensions create an urgent need for inclusive frameworks like UDL to support diverse learners.

The "Extrovert Ideal" in Education

- Jung's (1921) theory shows introversion and extraversion as complementary, equally valuable orientations.
- Modern schooling often privileges extroversion, including talkativeness, confidence, and public participation, which shapes an "Extrovert Ideal" (Cain, 2016; Dow, 2013).
- Teachers frequently interpret vocal participation as engagement, disadvantaging quieter students (Brown, 2007).
- In ELL classrooms, extroverted learners typically outperform in communicative tasks (Nggawu & Nguyen, 2023; Thach, 2025).
- Vietnamese cooperative learning contexts intensify this imbalance, making introverted strengths less visible.

Recognizing Introverted Strengths

- Introverted learners excel in reflective, analytical, and self-regulated tasks (Wakamoto, 2000; Brown, 2007).
- They demonstrate deep processing, careful listening, and strong independent creativity (Dow, 2013; Leung, 2015).
- Research shows that participation is not defined by who talks most; reflection, note-taking, and internal processing are equally meaningful (Flanagan & Addy, 2019).
- Introverted students contribute empathy, precision, and thoughtful engagement to group work (Truong, 2021; Mustoip et al., 2024).
- Recognizing these "quiet strengths" challenges extrovert-centered norms.

Teachers' Differentiated Strategies & UDL Application

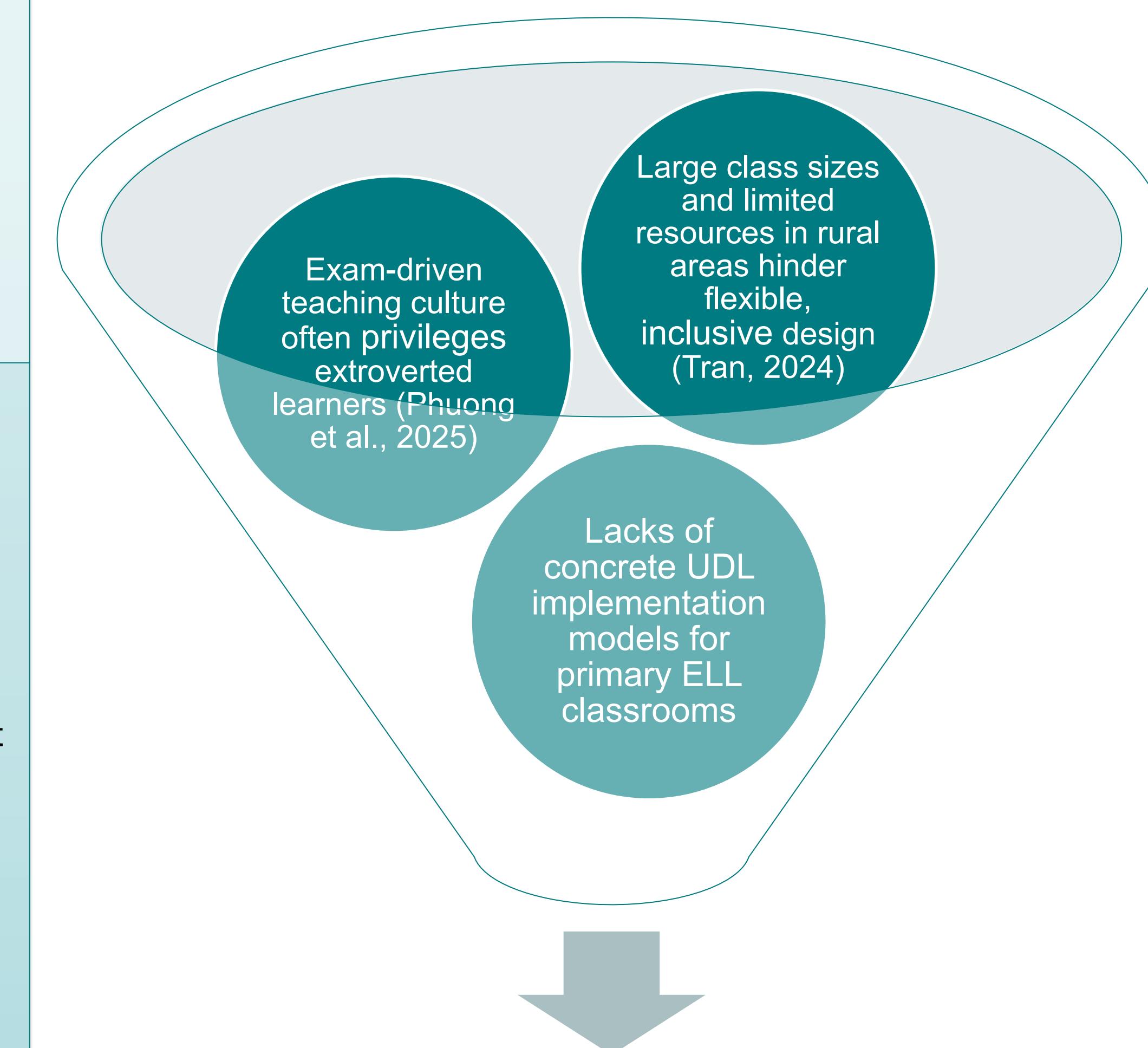
- UDL emphasizes multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to support learner variability (CAST, 2018).
- Differentiated tasks, such as individual reflection, pair rehearsal, and group discussion, balance introverts' and extroverts' needs (Thach, 2025).
- Flexible seating (quiet corners, clusters, open floor) supports comfort and choice (Tran et al., 2024).
- Multimodal tasks such as journaling, drawing, storytelling, and collaborative games expand participation options (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007).
- UDL transforms personality differences from participation barriers into instructional assets.

Recommendations

Implication	Application
Design learning environments that acknowledge personality diversity and promote flexible participation based on UDL principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering individual, pair, and group learning options and arranging flexible spaces (Tran et al., 2024). Sequence tasks from individual reflection to pair rehearsal and group discussion (Thach, 2025). Using rotating desk clusters, incorporating floor mats for story time, and simple visual or digital tools (Truong, 2021).
Embed UDL principles into national teacher-training and curriculum reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including UDL and personality-responsive pedagogy in teacher-education programs to help educators design varied participation pathways, consistent with UDL's emphasis on proactively planning for learner variability (CAST, 2018). Assessment policies should enable multiple modes of demonstrating learning, such as oral, written, and project-based tasks in alignment with UDL (CAST, 2018).

Future Research

- Mixed-method studies on how UDL impacts introverted and extroverted learners in Vietnamese primary classrooms.
- Longitudinal research on UDL-informed teacher training in Vietnam's competency-based curriculum.
- Classroom-based studies examining reflective journals, tiered tasks, flexible grouping, and multimodal participation.
- Research linking personality theory more explicitly with UDL's three principles.



Potential Barriers

Conclusion

1. UDL offers flexible pathways for engagement, representation, and expression, making it well-suited for young Vietnamese ELLs who need varied sensory, social, and independent learning options.
2. Introverted learners engage best through reflective, self-paced tasks, while extroverted learners thrive in verbal, collaborative activities.
3. UDL-aligned strategies such as flexible seating, think-pair-share routines, tiered activities, rotating group roles, and multimodal assessment emerge as effective methods to promote fair and meaningful involvement.

References

