

“Universal Design in Learning” Roundtable

Agenda for Our Time Today

- “Test Your Knowledge” about Universal Design in Learning (UDL)
- Discuss Principles and Applications of UDL in Sociology Classes
- Discuss UDL Tips and Resources
- UDL Assessment and Reflection Activity

“Test Your Knowledge” about Universal Design in Learning

1. Universal Design in Learning (UDL) is a curricular approach inspired by the field of

- a. textile & apparel management.
- b. architecture.
- c. medicine.
- d. industrial food science.

2. Which of the following students are most likely to benefit from UDL?

- a. Students with learning differences/disabilities or problems with executive function.
- b. English-language learners (students who are non-native English speakers)
- c. Adults students returning to the classroom after some time away
- d. all of the above.
- e. none of the above.

3. Which of the following laws *actually offers a formal (legal) definition of UDL?*

- a. 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- b. 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- c. 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)
- d. 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

4. True or False: _____

UDL is backed by brain research. Scientists in the fields of education, developmental psychology, and neuroscience have determined that there are three distinct, yet interrelated, learning networks that must be activated in order for students to learn and learn successfully.

5. True or False: _____

As its name implies, Universal Design in Learning is *universal* meaning that it will require instructors to commit to *one* preferred teaching strategy, method, or instructional design. This will ensure that students themselves can adapt to a uniform curriculum.

Principles and Applications of UDL in Sociology Classes

Framework for Access and Equity

- Ready use by widest possible range of participants-- anticipates a variety of needs
- Minimizes barriers to learning, maximizes learning of diverse learners
- Supports *all* learners' access, participation, and progress through *flexibility* and *alternatives* (not replacements)
- Respects human diversity & shifts focus *from* individual problems in learning to environmental problems in learning

Meta-cognition and Student Success

- Facilitates self-assessment of learning, expanding beyond content knowledge
 - Cognitive and intellectual access through comprehension supports
- Draws on multiple means of _____
 - Representation → “what” of learning
 - Recognition learning network: how we make sense of presented information
 - Action or expression → “how” of learning
 - Strategic learning network: how we demonstrate knowledge & navigate educational environment
 - Engagement → “why” of learning
 - Affective learning network: how we are motivated & affected by beliefs, values, or personal qualities/background
- Reduces student stress & allows for self-definitions of success

Instructor Benefits

- Builds on “distributed intelligence” of instructors
 - Instructors have different strengths & weaknesses in different areas (like students!)
 - Opportunities to learn and model new skills, collaborations, and alternatives
 - Curbs overreliance on any particular, singular strategy
- Pro-active, rather than reactive, approach to curricular development: *thoughtful planning*
 - “Cost-effective” (time/effort) to *build* UDL *into* courses than to retrofit them
- Contributes to institutional compliance efforts with HEOA, IDEA, and ADA

(Some) UDL Tips and Resources... and by no means exhaustive or definitive!

Course Syllabus

- Utilize (Word) “accessibility tracker” when creating syllabus and other course documents
- Connect to and through learning management system (LMS)
- See [Tulane University's Accessible Syllabus website](#) for ideas on how to apply UDL principles to images, text, rhetoric, and policy in syllabi

Lectures

- Face students while lecturing & provide access to interpreters
- Make structure explicit and clarify direction(s)
- Incorporate (or increase) graphics or visuals in text-heavy PowerPoints
 - Provide PowerPoint file or equivalent PDF version via LMS for preview or review
- Orally describe visuals/graphics
- Record for later viewing
- Consider crowd-sourced notetaking or note-sharing

Class Discussions/Discussion Groups

- Allow choice among groups/groupmates

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Pre-Conference Workshop on Teaching & Learning

- Provide options for face-to-face or online/video/conference call discussions
- Consider small group vs. full class discussion

Assessment

- Offer choices for projects beyond papers/lit review (i.e. concept mapping, comic, etc.)
- Provide models, templates, detailed rubrics, and/or sample completed assignments
- Provide scaffolding activities at multiple points

Textbooks

- Consider titles that offer various formats such as print, digital and/or audio versions
 - Ensure scanned readings via PDF are compatible with screen-reading and/or speech-to-text programs
- Offer choices among texts (i.e. if comparable in content, traditional text-heavy vs. graphic/illustrated version)
- Utilize the [Accessible Textbook Finder](#) (AccessText Network)
- Define vocabulary, translate foreign language concepts, or highlight/explain abstract concepts in advance of readings

Videos

- Utilize closed-captioning or provide access to transcripts
- Consider titles that are accessible via university/college or public libraries (versus subscription service and/or behind paywall)

Learning Management System (LMS)

- Use as basic skeleton for course (link to all aspects: syllabus, grades, documents, etc.)
- Link to (reputable) websites, web-based tools, animated/coaches and/or tutorials with content for scaffolding opportunities
- Utilize discussion boards/forums for (asynchronous) interaction

Student Profiles

- Provides “starting point” from which to consider how UDL will emerge in context

Additional Resources

National Center on Universal Design for Learning: <http://www.udlcenter.org/>

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST): <http://www.cast.org/>

Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD): <https://www.ahead.org/home>

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM): <http://aem.cast.org/>

UDL Assessment and Reflection Activity

1. Rate your *current* level of knowledge/use of UDL: are you a novice, advanced, or an expert?
2. (How or in what ways) are you *currently* applying UDL in your courses?
3. What step(s) do you plan to take *in the future* to introduce, improve, and/or expand UDL in your courses?