The Universally Designed Learning Experience:

Institutionalizing UDL at your University

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The ACCESS Project

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- Our Goal:
  - Ensure that students with disabilities receive a quality higher education

The Old Approach

- Accessibility workshops:
  - Course materials and documents
  - Web based information
  - Course management systems
  - Instructional media
- Compliance with regulations, guidelines
  - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
  - Section 508 of Rehabilitation Act
We Failed to Gain Traction

- Narrow Focus
  - Disability
  - Assistive Technology
- Faculty Perception
  - "I don’t have students with disabilities."
  - “Not my job!”
- Went at it alone
  - Few strategic partnerships
  - Low on the list of administrative priorities

Philosophical Changes

- Benefits for all students
  - Disabilities are part of the range of diversity
  - Enabling the learning environment
- Broader definition of “accessible”
  - Accessibility paired with usability
  - Applied to a wide range of technologies, including assistive technologies
- Tie our goals to those of the University

Goals of the University

- Access, Diversity, and Internationalization
- Enhance accessibility for students with physical, learning and other disabilities
- Active and Experiential Learning Opportunities
- Student Engagement
- Retention and Graduation
**Universal Design for Learning**

Universal Design for Learning is a set of principles and techniques for creating inclusive classroom instruction and accessible course materials.

1. **Represent** information and concepts in multiple ways (and in a variety of formats).
2. Students are given multiple ways to **express** their comprehension and mastery of a topic.
3. Students **engage** with new ideas and information in multiple ways.

**Representation**
Ideas and information are represented in multiple ways and in a variety of formats

- Lectures
- Group activities
- Hands-on exercises
- Text + Graphics, Audio, Video
- Usable electronic formats (e.g., Word, PDF, HTML)

Students express comprehension and mastery in multiple ways

- "Projects, Performances, Presentations"
- Journals
- Portfolios
- In-class writing assignments
- Art work
- Videos or Film
“Engage” students in multiple ways
- Express your own enthusiasm!
- Challenge students with meaningful, real-world assignments
- Give prompt and instructive feedback on assignments
- Classroom response systems (clickers)
- Make yourself available to students during office hours in flexible formats
**Institutionalization Plan**

1. Dissemination
2. Creation of award for UDL implementation
3. Formation of advisory group with campus Administrators
4. Strategic Campus Partnerships

**Dissemination**

- Colorado State University
  - Embed UDL principles into existing professional development
- Regional
  - CO-WY Disability Consortium, CoADE, eLCC
- National
  - EDUCAUSE, AHEAD, AHG, NASPA

**UDL Award**

- Associates UDL with instructional innovation
- Promotes awareness of UDL
- Provides monetary incentive for the adoption of UDL
Creation of Advisory Group

- Campus representatives
  - Provost's Office
  - Institute for Learning & Teaching
  - Student Affairs
  - Central Computing
  - Retention Offices
- It starts with one administrator
  - Offer a key role on your project

Benefits of Advisory Group

- Advice
  - Experienced external perspectives
  - Project directions
- Opportunity
  - Tie UDL to the institution's goals
  - Remind administration of institutional benefits of UDL
- Credibility and Access
  - Buy-in all the way to the top
  - Introduction to Professional Development venues
  - Develop partnerships

Strategic Partnerships

- The Institute for Learning and Teaching
- Central Computing
- Libraries
- Academic Departments
Institute for Learning and Teaching

- Provost Course Redesign Initiative
- Orientations for New Faculty and GTAs
- “Master Teacher Initiative” seminars in all 8 colleges
- “Teaching with Technology” workshops
- Annual campus-wide “Professional Development Institute”

Central Computing

- Technology Workshops
  - Word, PowerPoint, Excel, PDF, HTML
- Best practices for Course Management System (WebCT)
  - Online Modules
  - Classroom Training
- Evaluation of new CMS options

Libraries

- Electronic Reserves
  - Creating Universally Designed PDFs
- Electronic Books
  - Planning team for electronic book reading technology
  - Hardware and software
**Academic Departments**

- Faculty training
  - Face to face
  - Online modules
    - [http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/modules](http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/modules)
- UDL Research in “Gateway” courses
  - Veterinary Sciences
  - Psychology

**UDL Research**

- Examine the effectiveness of instructor UDL training as measured by student and instructor perceptions.
- Examine perceptions regarding what promotes an effective teaching and learning environment.
- Investigate the number of students who report having a disability and the percentage who seek accommodations.
- Lay groundwork to monitor persistence and retention.

**Quantitative Results**

- Statistically significant, meaningful effect sizes (student perspective):
  - Information is presented in multiple formats
  - Instructor actively engages students in learning
  - Instructor relates key concepts to the larger objectives of the course
  - Instructor begins class with an outline
  - Instructor summarizes key points
  - Instructor highlights key points of instructional videos
Qualitative Results

- Strategies to Increase Student Engagement
  - Clicker questions
  - Asks questions
  - Videos
  - Partner/group discussion and activities
  - In-class mini writing assignments

- Strategies to Increase and Support Learning
  - Videos
  - Provides examples
  - Clicker questions
  - PowerPoint (structure, organization)
  - Checks for understanding

Research Wrap-Up

- Corroboration of national disability statistics
  - 9-11% of students report having a disability (>2 million)

- Just a few hours of training can produce significant improvements in instructor teaching behavior
  - Enhance the learning experiences of all students, including those with disabilities

Conclusion

- Institutionalization of UDL is achieved by:
  - A philosophical shift
  - A dissemination plan
  - Promotion via a UDL Award
  - Advisory group of key administrators
  - Strategic partnerships
  - UDL Research
Thank you!

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