The Universally Designed Learning Experience:

Institutionalizing UDL

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The ACCESS Project

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- Our Goal:
  - Ensuring 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"
  - Materials usable with a wide range of technologies, including assistive technologies

**Practical Changes**

- Topics of interest to faculty and administrators
  - Teaching and Learning
  - Persistence/Retention
  - Diversity
    - Cultural and language backgrounds
    - Learning styles
    - Abilities and Disabilities
Universal Design for Learning

“Universal Design for Learning is a set of principles and techniques for teaching, creating inclusive classroom instruction, technology and accessible course materials.”

The (mini) ACCESS Video

UDL: a framework for inclusive pedagogy

1. Information and concepts are represented 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.
**Institutionalization Plan**

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

**Dissemination**

- **Local**
  - Embed UDL principles into existing campus-wide professional development related to improving teaching, learning and technology
- **Regional**
  - CO-WY Consortium, 2- and 4-year IHE's, 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
- Strategic goals of the institution
  - The "WiIFMs"
- 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
- CSU Libraries
- Academic Departments
Institute for Learning and Teaching

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

Central Computing

- Technology Workshops
  - Word, PowerPoint, Excel, PDF, HTML
- Best practices for Course Management System (WebCT)
  - Online Modules
  - Classroom Training
- New Blackboard training modules and faculty workshops

CSU 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
- UDL Research in “Gateway” courses
  - Veterinary Sciences
  - Psychology

**UDL Research**

- “Will instructor training increase the implementation of UDL principles?”
- UDL literature is long on best practices, short on empirical evidence
- Developed survey instrument
- Targeted “gateway” courses with persistence problems

**Research Results**

- Areas of significant change after UDL training (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
Research Results

- Corroboration of national disability statistics
  - 9-11% of students report having a disability (>2 million)
    - 100-level Psychology students
    - 300, 400, 500-level pre-med students
- Just a few hours of training can produce significant changes in instructor teaching behavior that:
  - correspond to widely-acknowledged best teaching practices
  - enhance the learning experiences of all students, including those with disabilities

Conclusions

- Institutionalization of UDL is being achieved through:
  - A philosophical shift
  - A dissemination plan based on inclusive pedagogy
  - UDL Award
  - Advisory group of key administrators
  - Strategic partnerships with other university organizations
  - UDL Research

Thank you!

Visit us Online at http://accessproject.colostate.edu

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