Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment with Universal Design for Learning

Craig Spooner
ACCESS Project Coordinator

ACCESS Project

- Second project, funded by U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education
- Partners: Occupational Therapy (CCP, ATRC), The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT), Psychology, College of Veterinary Medicine, Co-Wy Consortium
- Winner of 2008 N. Preston Davis Group Award for Instructional Innovation
- Mission: implementation, dissemination, research
- Website: http://accessproject.colostate.edu/

Diversity in the Classroom

- Who are your students?
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity
  - Native language
  - Life experiences
  - Disabilities
  - Learning styles/Multiple Intelligences
Age

- 40% of all college students in the United States are “non-traditional”
- Roughly 6 million are older than “traditional” students (18-22 years of age)
- 17% of all undergraduates at CSU are of “non-traditional” age
- Most live off-campus, many have jobs and families
- They are highly motivated and possess lots of life experiences

Gender

- Women outnumber men among CSU undergraduate and graduate students, especially in the Veterinary Medicine program (397 women to 130 men)

Ethnicity

- At CSU there are 24,700 RI students
- 13% are ethnic minorities (students from the U.S.)
- CSU students come from every state and from 85 countries
Native Language

- Language barriers can be an issue for both learner and instructor
- Written and verbal communication

Life Experiences

- Learning theory tells us:
  - Adult learners value their life experiences
  - New learning is built on prior knowledge and experience (scaffolding)

Disabilities

- Short-term or long-term, apparent or non-apparent
- Some categories
  - Learning Disabilities
  - Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
  - Autistic Spectrum Disabilities
  - Mobility Impairments
  - Medical/Chronic Health-Related Impairments
  - Psychological Disabilities
  - Traumatic Brain Injury
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
  - Blindness/Visual Impairments
  - Deafness/Hearing Impairments
**Learning Styles**

(One's preferred method of gathering and assimilating information)

- **Visual**
  - Visual-Linguistic (reading and writing)
  - Visual-Spatial (graphs and pictures)
- **Auditory** (listening)
- **Kinesthetic** (touching and moving)

---

**Multiple Intelligences**

- Howard Gardner, Harvard, 1983
- **Categories**
  - Verbal/Linguistic
  - Visual/Spatial
  - Musical/Rhythmic
  - Logical/Mathematical
  - Bodily/Kinesthetic
  - Interpersonal
  - Intrapersonal
  - Naturalistic

---

**Defining UDL**

Universal Design for Learning

is a set of principles and techniques for teaching
creating inclusive classroom instruction
technology and accessible course materials

---
Applying the 3 principles

- Present information and concepts in multiple ways and in a variety of formats.
- Allow students multiple ways to express their comprehension and mastery of a topic.
- Encourage students to engage with new ideas and information in multiple ways.

UDL is not

- A “silver bullet” for education
- A one-size-fits-all solution
- A set of rules for accessibility
**UDL is**

- A framework for inclusive pedagogy and accessible course materials
- A set of practices that...
  - Reach and engage the maximum number of learners
  - Recognize and anticipate classroom diversity
  - Emphasize flexible and customizable curricula

**What can UDL accomplish?**

- Cast a wider net to "catch" a more diverse set of learners
- Make learning more active and engaging
- Make learning and the materials of instruction accessible and usable by more students
- Help reduce the need for individual accommodations

**UDL Modules**

- Teaching
- Technology (course materials)
  - Microsoft Word
    - Styles and Headings
    - Images
  - Adobe PDF
  - HTML
  - E-Text
- [http://accessproject.colostate.edu](http://accessproject.colostate.edu)
Thank you!