**UDL Quick Tips — Examples**

A. **Key Concepts**
   - The 3 key principles of UDL: Providing multiple means of
     a. Representation
     b. Expression
     c. Engagement

B. **Sort the list into two categories: need-to-know (essential) and nice-to-know (important, but not essential).**
   - Clarifying objectives and building the course around them is always important, but it’s especially true in the context of universal design. Without first clarifying essential goal and student outcomes, we may have trouble down the road if a request for accommodation is made.
   - Does the requested accommodation undermine the rigor of the course, or can adjustments be made that assess the same level of accomplishment with respect to knowledge, skills, and affect?

C. **Present information in a multiple formats, including text, graphics, audio, and video.**
   - Valuable not only for addressing different learning styles, but different physical and cognitive abilities as well.

D. **Post lecture outlines (not necessarily complete notes) prior to class, which students can use as a framework for note taking.**
   - Almost all students benefit from this, but students with disabilities will really appreciate this! Dealing with a disability takes a lot more time; therefore, note taking is greatly facilitated with a little extra preparation.

E. **Design electronic materials to be accessible to a wide range of users and display technologies. Structure materials for easy information access.**
   - When it comes to file formats and document layouts, who doesn’t like flexibility a variety of options? For a student who can’t see the page and must rely on text-to-speech software, flexible formats are essential! Electronic documents can be converted to a variety of formats, as long as they’re designed with accessibility in mind.
F. Provide instructions for assignments both verbally and in writing.
   • It’s easy to take for granted that students. But students may be from other countries and systems of education (Saudi Arabia, for example), or they be young and inexperienced. Studies and lots of anecdotal evidence suggest that students with cognitive challenges, including ADD/ADHD, brain injury, etc., require more prompting and more explicit directions.

G. Provide digital equivalents of all hardcopy handouts.
   • Going digital is the first step toward making a document accessible. You should hear the stories of students with visual impairments having to take their hardcopy syllabus over to RDS to have it scanned and turned back into computer-readable text so that they could hear the content! That’s totally unnecessary with an electronic document.

H. Communicate high expectations for all students, while expressing your willingness to make “appropriate accommodations” for students with disabilities.
   • Surveys of students with disabilities consistently show that a simple statement of concern and respect for students needs as individuals has a tremendous impact on their self-esteem and sense of feeling welcome in the classroom. Remember, students with disabilities always feel like outsiders, like they don’t belong. A simple statement by the instructor both verbally and on the syllabus makes a big impact.

I. Provide ample time for online assignments to allow for technical malfunction.
   • Helpful for all students, but especially important for students with disabilities. So many things can go wrong with assistive technology (screen readers, text-to-Braille, etc.).

J. Become familiar with student resources on campus, including the Office of Resources for Disabled Students, the Assistive Technology Resource Center, the Academic Advancement Center, the Learning Assistance Center, and others (see handout).
   • Faculty don’t need to know all the in’s and out’s of disabilities and accommodations, but it really helps if they know the basics:
     a. Students have a legal right to an academic accommodation, provided they:
        1. identified their needs to the Office of Resources for Disabled Students
        2. qualify for an accommodation.
     b. Faculty are required to provide an accommodation to such students, provided:
        1. the accommodation does not compromise or “water down” the curriculum or standards of the institution. Such an accommodation is considered “unreasonable.”
        2. This is why it is so important to clarify at the outset the goals and specific learning outcomes.
        3. See PPT slides attached
K. **Consider recording lectures and posting them as a podcasts.**

- An audio version of the lecture may be a nice option for most students, as they can listen to it on their iPod while driving or jogging, but it may be essential for students who can’t make it to class because of a malfunctioning wheelchair or who couldn’t “see” the lecture and needs to review it several times to pick up all of the points.

L. **Make a detailed course syllabus available in the department or on the Web prior to the first day of class.**

- Both the detail and the timeliness may be important to students with disabilities. Students may choose their courses based on their ability to perform the required class activities, and they need advance warning if the activities fall beyond their physical or cognitive capabilities.

M. **Create a welcoming class environment. Learn students’ names, if possible, and use their names when calling on them. Arrive early to class and greet students as they enter. Stay a few minutes after to take questions.**

A welcoming environment is an *inclusive* environment. When students feel as though the instructor cares for them as people, regardless of ability or disability, students have a greater chance of success.

N. **Use technology to increase class communication (clickers, RamCT discussions, etc.).**

- Although there’s little doubt that more is a good thing, the verdict is still out on the accessibility of “clickers.” They are a very exciting tool when used properly, especially in large lectures. It remains to be seen, however, whether they be a boon or a barrier to students with disabilities. (Of course, students with disabilities are a very diverse group, so impacts of this technology are bound to be different as well.)

O. **Offer office hours in flexible formats: face-to-face, email, telephone, etc.**

- Again, flexible availability to students is great for most students, but particularly important to those who may have difficulty getting themselves physically to your office. This is as true for a student in a cast following a skiing accident as for a student in a wheelchair.