

Improving Access to College Courses through Universal Design of Learning

Presenters- Ricki Sabia, Associate Director,
National Down Syndrome Society Policy Center

David Wizer, Professor, Department of Educational
Technology & Literacy, Towson University

UDL Definition in Higher Education Opportunity Act

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING.--The term “universal design for learning” means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that--

- (A) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and
- (B) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient. HEOA 103 (a)(24)

Universal Design for Learning

- Education reform that is student centered, building in access from the beginning like universal design of architecture
- Removes barriers in course syllabi and in the design and delivery of content and assessments to improve achievement of ALL Learners
- Supports instructors by minimizing retrofitting during class
- Supports students by minimizing boredom and frustration-education is in “optimal zone”

Guidelines for the Three Principles

<http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines>

I. Representation

Use multiple means of representation

1. Provide options for perception

- Options that customize the display of information
- Options that provide alternatives for auditory information
- Options that provide alternatives for visual information

2. Provide options for language and symbols

- Options that define vocabulary and symbols
- Options that clarify syntax and structure
- Options for decoding text or mathematical notation
- Options that promote cross-linguistic understanding
- Options that illustrate key concepts non-linguistically

3. Provide options for comprehension

- Options that provide or activate background knowledge
- Options that highlight critical features, big ideas, and relationships
- Options that guide information processing
- Options that support memory and transfer

II. Expression

Use multiple means of expression

4. Provide options for physical action

- Options in the mode of physical response
- Options in the means of navigation
- Options for accessing tools and assistive technologies

5. Provide options for expressive skills and fluency

- Options in the media for communication
- Options in the tools for composition and problem solving
- Options in the scaffolds for practice and performance

6. Provide options for executive functions

- Options that guide effective goal-setting
- Options that support planning and strategy development
- Options that facilitate managing information and resources
- Options that enhance capacity for monitoring progress

III. Engagement

Use multiple means of engagement

7. Provide options for recruiting interest

- Options that increase individual choice and autonomy
- Options that enhance relevance, value, and authenticity
- Options that reduce threats and distractions

8. Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence

- Options that heighten salience of goals and objectives
- Options that vary levels of challenge and support
- Options that foster collaboration and communication
- Options that increase mastery-oriented feedback

9. Provide options for self-regulation

- Options that guide personal goal-setting and expectations
- Options that scaffold coping skills and strategies
- Options that develop self-assessment and reflection

UDL in Practice

Apply the three principles to the course goals, materials, instructional methods, and assessments

This ensures all three brain networks are engaged at the same time to optimize learning and accurate assessment.

Other UDL provisions in HEOA

- UDL required for certain grants, e.g. Teach to Reach
- UDL is permitted activity in other grants
- State and IHE Reports cards must report on any UDL activities related to preparing teachers to use technology in classroom

National UDL Task Force

www.udl4allstudents.org

- Spearheaded by NDSS in 2006
- Coalition of over 40 national groups representing general education, special education and higher education interests
- Promotes UDL in Federal policy and legislation and dissemination of information on UDL

Higher Ed Groups on Task Force

- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- Association of Teacher Educators
- Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
- Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
- Association on Higher Education and Disability
- Vocational Evaluation and Career Assessment Professionals Association

UDL in Federal Policy and Legislation

- OSEP UDL Toolkit
- UDL in
 - 2011 Senate draft ESEA bill and 2007 draft House NCLB bill
 - Higher Education Act of 2008
 - House/Senate LEARN ACT
 - Guidance on ARRA
 - Race to the Top Assessment Criteria
 - National Educational Technology Plan
 - Administration's Blue Print for ESEA
 - OSEP Personnel Preparation Grants

State-level UDL Policy

Example: Maryland UDL Statute

- Spearheaded by Maryland Down syndrome Advocacy Coalition and Maryland State Department of Education
- Supported by 34 state organizations
- Creates stakeholder task force for recommendations regarding UDL in MD
- University of Maryland and Institute for Higher Education Policy are represented

MD UDL TF Report- Higher ED Recommendations

- Inform faculty about the principles of UDL and integrate them into course implementation with supportive policies and professional development
- Instructors should be encouraged to use the UDL Educator Checklist in Appendix D, available at <http://www.udlcenter.org/implementation>.

Higher Ed Recommendations

- Embed UDL into the vision and strategic planning for organizational practices and instructional design practices within the institution.
- Encourage instructors to embed UDL principles in course syllabi and design and delivery of content and assessments through professional development

Higher Ed Recommendations

- Ensure that the UDL principles and guidelines are modeled in the coursework, planning, and delivery, for all teacher and administrator preparation programs.
- UDL principles should be included and taught in both general and special education methods courses.

Higher Ed Recommendations

- Encourage pre-service teachers to use the UDL Educator Checklist in Appendix D, also found on the Web at <http://www.udlcenter.org/implementation>
- Include the UDL guidelines with existing observation tools utilized by mentor teachers and university supervisors.

Higher Ed Recommendations

- Provide active support for the implementation of UDL principles and guidelines through professional development partnerships with local school systems, the State Department of Education, in education preparation programs, and in professional development schools.

**Google “Route for Every Learner” for full report

Higher Education responds

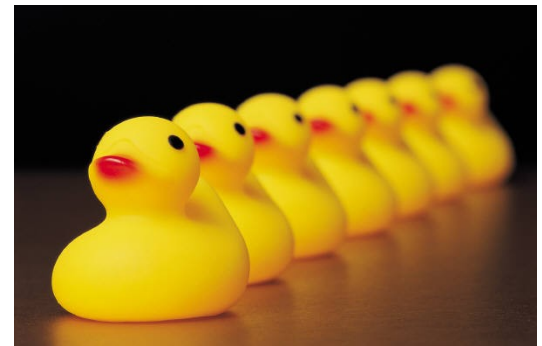
Towson University's UDL path

- Started over 10 years ago
- Initial inclusion in graduate coursework
- Now Core belief in College of Education
- Now it is resident in significant and useful ways across campus

Towson University's UDL Path

College of Education's Actions

- Integral to our work
- Core value integrated through professional development
- Means to meet needs of every learner
- Differentiation is essential



Towson University's UDL Path

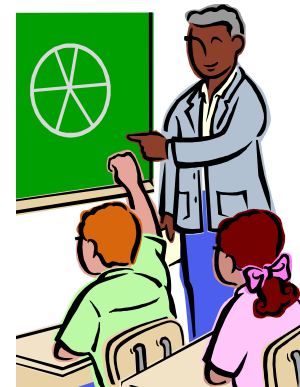
College of Education's inclusion

- Technology integration courses
- Special Education courses
- General Methods courses
- Internship placements
- Numerous other courses



Towson's UDL Courses -2 examples

1. Integrating Instructional Technology
2. Introduction to Special Education
 - Focus of key course assignments
 - Lesson Planning assignments and related assessment
 - UDL is vital and significant component



Towson University's UDL Path

Campus View

- Major focus and organizing theme for Disabilities Support Services
- Knowledgeable staff in Campus-wide Office of Technology Services
- Staff who assist in ways to modify instruction and provide wide range of support

Disabilities Support Services & UDL

Campus examples include- Culture

- Class Climate- faculty & students
- Teaching Methods & Materials
- Interaction- on-going
- Feedback- detailed
- Assessment- provide options



Disabilities Support Services & UDL

- Campus examples
- Student honor society-
Members are disability advocates
Perform service functions
- Hardware/ software solutions-
Lightscribe pens
Kurzweil text to speech
products



Office of Tech. Services & UDL

Campus examples

- Blackboard online teaching examples

One place for all resources

- Podcasts- presentations & feedback
- Blogs- exemplars, in-depth answers
- Video examples embedded in course

Office of Tech. Services & UDL

Campus- Student created projects

- Voice threads- student poster sessions
- Podcasts of students reflections
- Video interviews in language courses
- Second life in marketing & art
- Team based learning-
advanced PowerPoint or
video



Your comments & ideas

Please, let us know your views.

Ricki Sabia, Associate
Director,
National Down Syndrome
Society Policy Center
rsabia@ndss.org

What added information would you like?

David Wizer, Professor,
Dept. of Educational
Technology & Literacy,
Towson University
wizer@towson.edu

