Universal Design: A Paradigm Shift for Inclusion

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Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:
• List examples of person-first language.
• Articulate the theoretical foundations and guiding principles of Universal Design (UD) and Universal Instructional Design (UID).
• Describe examples of the implementation of UD and UID and how these practices can benefit all students.

Learning Objectives (cont.)

Participants will be able to:
• Create an action plan for implementing UD and UID in their own offices, programs, and services.
• Discuss how UD and UID can serve as a foundation for multicultural higher education and enhance access and success for students from historically underserved populations.
Webinar Outline

- Introductions and overview
- Why these slides are not “pretty”
- Letter and spirit of the law
- Welcoming language
- Introduction to UD, UID, UDSD
- Resources
- Presenters’ Contact Information

Inclusion

Have you excluded anyone today?

A Note About PowerPoint & Overhead Slides

These slides are designed to be readable, rather than “pretty.” Guidelines include:

- Sans-serif font, preferably 32-point, but minimum 28-point
- Absence of artwork that distracts the reader and does not add to content
- Description of any photos, artwork, visuals, charts, graphs, etc., that cannot be read by a screen reader

LETTER of the LAW

Laws protecting people with disabilities

• Rehabilitation Act of 1973
• Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
• ADAAA of 2009

SPIRIT of the LAW

Respect ♦ Comfort ♦ Awareness

❖ Person-first language
❖ Appropriate & effective communication with people with disabilities (see Tips sheets)

Language Use

Consider:
• Why is it acceptable to use derogatory language (e.g., “retard”, “spaz”, “nut case”) related to disability when it would not be acceptable to use similar language referring to race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation?
• What are the historical roots of the term “handicap”?
Language (cont.)

- Why have some words historically used to refer to disability become synonymous with stupidity (e.g., *Dumb and Dumber*, “That’s so lame!”)
- What do phrases like “the blind leading the blind” really mean? Are they innocuous? Can we understand why people who are blind would find this demeaning?

The LANGUAGE of DISABILITY
“Person First”
The person is emphasized first, the disability second.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Phrases</th>
<th>Negative Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>person with a disability</td>
<td>disabled, handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person without a disability</td>
<td>normal person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual who is unable to speak</td>
<td>mute, dumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman who is blind or has a visual</td>
<td>blind woman or “the blind”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disability or has low vision</td>
<td>confined or restricted to a wheelchair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person who uses a wheelchair</td>
<td>suffers a hearing loss, deaf and dumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person who is deaf; person who is hard of hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The LANGUAGE of DISABILITY
“Person First” (continued…)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Phrases</th>
<th>Negative Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man with paraplegia</td>
<td>paraplegic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual with epilepsy</td>
<td>epileptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person who has a learning disability</td>
<td>slow learner, retarded, learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person with a mental or cognitive</td>
<td>disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disability</td>
<td>crazy, demented, insane, nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person with a developmental disability</td>
<td>mentally retarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person with a congenital disability</td>
<td>has a birth defect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person who has muscular dystrophy</td>
<td>stricken by MD, physically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disabled, crippled, lame, deformed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

- Avoid labeling people on the basis of a single aspect of their social identity (person first).
- Ask people what terms they prefer to describe aspects of their social identity.
- Refrain from using “othering” language (e.g., normal, regular).
- Be aware that some identity groups are “reclaiming” language to refer to themselves (e.g., fag, crip, girl, tranny), but “[t]he subtleties of language become more difficult when the same words spoken in-group hold a different meaning when used out-of-group” (Tregoning, 2009, p. 174).

Addressing Language and Culture With Students

- Have students reflect on times when they have been the targets of oppressive language.
- Discuss potential reactions to oppressive language used by others, including when presented as humor.
- Use these reflections and discussions to create role-playing activities.
- Encourage students to be allies in language use.

Communication Tips

(see sheets)

When you meet a person with a …

- Visual Disability (blind, low vision)
- Hearing Disability (d/Deaf; hard of hearing)
- Mobility Disability
- Cognitive Disability
Universal Design (UD)
Universal Instructional Design (UID)
UD for Student Development Programs and Services (UDSD)

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Definition of Universal Design

Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Source: The Center for Universal Design (1997)

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Not just “one size fits all . . .”

Applied to higher education, the primary goal of Universal Design is to create inclusive, flexible, customizable products, courses, programs, activities, and environments.
Description of Next Visual

The next slide presents a photograph of a street corner with yellow painted curbs and white striped crosswalks. At the crosswalks the sidewalk and curbs are modified so that their height descends to street level and that area is unpainted.

Description of Next Visual

On the next slide a line with an arrow at each end depicts a continuum. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is placed toward the left end of the continuum, which represents the provision of individual accommodations. The right end of the continuum represents universally-designed spaces and experiences where fewer individual accommodations are needed.
Universal Design Continuum

Accommodating individuals one at a time
Universal Design: Barrier-free, fewer individual accommodations needed

Why Implement UD in Postsecondary Settings?

Have you ever learned by chance or later in your relationship with a student that the student has a disability?
Have you wondered why the student had not disclosed the disability sooner?

Video: Uncertain Welcome
http://www.cehd.umn.edu/passit/

(You are welcome to share this link and to use this video for professional development.)

Why UD?

We hope that you will take the time to view the video Uncertain Welcome at your convenience. Students have many reasons (including past experiences with educators) to be apprehensive about disclosing a disability. Early in a relationship we do not ask other students to share aspects of their identity that may be highly personal, but we expect students with disabilities to disclose them.
Universal Instructional Design (UID)

UID involves the highly intentional and reflective practice of considering the multiple and intersecting social identities of all students who might potentially pursue an academic program, enroll in a class, or use a learning support service (e.g., learning center) when designing the program, course, or service.

UID & Social Justice

“Social justice is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. . . . The process for achieving the goal of social justice . . . should also be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming . . .”


UID Guiding Principles

• Create a welcoming and respectful learning environment
• Determine essential course components
• Communicate clear expectations
• Provide constructive feedback in a timely fashion
• Develop natural supports for learning, including through use of technology
Guiding Principles (cont.)

- Use multiple teaching strategies
- Provide multiple types of opportunities to demonstrate knowledge
- Encourage contact between and among students and faculty

Source: North Carolina State University, 1997; based on Chickering & Gamson, 1987

UD Principles for Student Development Programs and Services (UDSD)

- Create welcoming spaces
- Develop pathways for communication
- Promote interaction among students and between staff and students
- Ensure equal opportunities for learning and growth

UDSD Principles (cont.)

- Communicate clear expectations
- Use methods that consider diverse learning styles
- Provide natural supports
- Ensure confidentiality
- Define and evaluate service quality
Implementation:
Creating Welcoming Spaces

- Greet students as they enter
- Learn students’ names
- Involve students in establishing guidelines for discussion, including use of derogatory language and any issues of confidentiality
- Develop inclusive statements for syllabi and for promoting student programs, events, and activities

Creating Welcoming Spaces (cont.)

- Honor diversity and cultural differences
- Recognize the authority of personal experience
- Share your own experiences
- Avoid singling out students who receive accommodations
- Attend to physical needs of all students
- Respond to students in a timely fashion

Examples of Implementing UD, UID, UDSD

- A prospective student’s first contact with the institution or a specific program or service may be via its Web site. What do we need to know/do to be sure the site and its many links are universally accessible and welcoming to all?
- How do we design a universally-accessible campus tour?
Examples (cont.)

• How do we conduct group interviews (e.g. for residence hall staff or orientation leader positions)?
• How do we plan a stress reduction/relaxation training workshop?
• What might we include in a checklist for planning campus events and activities?

Examples (cont.)

• What would the syllabus for a universally-designed first-year experience course look like?
• How do we design universally accessible career services—including campus visits by employment recruiters?

Benefits of UD

Although UD, UID, and UDSD were originally envisioned to provide access for people with disabilities, if implemented intentionally to serve all inhabitants/learners/workers, everyone benefits.

Just as everyone benefits from involvement in diverse educational settings, everyone benefits from making those settings more inclusive.
Benefits of UD for Students

• Eliminates need to be segregated for some accommodations
• Addresses stigma associated with medical model (disability as deficiency)
• Recognizes individual differences among all learners, including in learning styles & ways of knowing
• Enables students to use their strengths

Benefits of UD for Faculty and Staff

• Cost-effective
• Time-efficient
• Enhances student engagement
• Reduces need for last-minute modifications to accommodate students with a variety of needs, including but not limited to students with disabilities

Legal Obligation vs. Moral and Ethical Imperative

It is imperative that we consider students’ (and colleagues’) diverse and unique identities as we determine both what we do and how we do it. That is, we must embed multiculturalism in content, process, and desired outcomes.
Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit

- **Interactive** traveling exhibit designed to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities
- **Multimedia** approach addresses disability history, law, statistics, communication, and UD principles
- **Banners**, posters, computer quizzes, activities
- **To host Allies for Inclusion: The Ability Exhibit**, please contact Karen Myers at kmyers11@slu.edu
- **Sponsored by** Saint Louis University Education Department and Division of Student Development

Resource: PASS IT

- U.S. Department of Education grant, 2005-2008, # P333A050023
- Focus on developing discipline-specific professional development materials for teaching and student services
- [http://www.cehd.umn.edu/passit](http://www.cehd.umn.edu/passit)

Available from PASS IT

- Book on implementing UD & UID
- Professional development guidebooks for teaching and student services
- Videos
- Templates for UID implementation & course evaluation
- Bibliographies, including for online and legal resources, and information about assistive technologies

**Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, grant # P333A050023**

**All PASS IT resources are downloadable free of charge**
Additional Resources


• DO-IT, University of Washington http://www.washington.edu/doit/


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