Accessibility *in* Action

Preview

Postsecondary students with disabilities often need accommodations to achieve. Universal Design for Learning offers postsecondary faculty a means of providing students with necessary accommodations. This Accessibility in Action provides strategies for making adaptations to classroom learning environments, instructional presentations, student materials, and assessments to ensure accessibility.

Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Postsecondary Classrooms

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Students with disabilities are less likely to pursue a postsecondary degree than their non-disabled peers; those who do are often less likely to complete a degree, and those who complete a degree are likely to take longer than their non-disabled peers (Murray, Goldstein, Donald, Nourse, & Edgar, 2000). Common reasons for this include student lack of awareness of the process for obtaining accommodations and faculty lack of awareness of how to provide needed accommodations (Palmer & Roessler, 2000).

In K–12 schools, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) provides a process for addressing individualized learning. An assessment is conducted and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is written that outlines the student's needs and academic accommodations. Educators are required by law to provide all accommodations that are written in the IEP. Accommodations are alterations to a curriculum that provide access for an individual without fundamentally changing the expectations of the course. Fundamentally changing expectations would be considered a

modification. For example, providing a student with a learning disability a digital copy of a required text as opposed to a printed copy would be considered an accommodation, whereas allowing that same student to take a different exam than the rest of the class would be considered a modification.

IDEA does not provide for students once they transition into a postsecondary environment, and thus students must begin advocating for themselves (Scott & McGuire, 2005). In higher education, students are expected to seek out the student disability services office on campus and request accommodations. And, the fact that students request accommodations does not ensure that they will be provided. The student disability services office can decide who should and should not be provided with accommodations.

In addition to those students with disabilities who are denied accommodations, there are large numbers of students with disabilities who never ask for accommodations. There are varied reasons why students do not seek assistance. For example, they may not know that they can ask for services, or they may feel uncomfortable disclosing and discussing their disabilities. Unfortunately, their educational experience may suffer when accommodations and modifications are not available to them.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offers higher education faculty a means of providing students with accommodations. Three hallmarks of UDL are:

- **Multiple means of representation**—providing information in different formats (e.g., lecture, videos, multimedia presentations, etc.)

- **Multiple means of expression**—allowing students to display knowledge in different formats (e.g., exams, papers, oral presentations, etc.)

- **Multiple means of engagement for all students in the class**—motivating student learning in different ways (e.g., hands-on activities, simulations, group projects, etc.) (Rose, Harbour, Johnston, Daley, & Abarbanell, 2008).

By implementing these UDL concepts into the postsecondary classroom, instructors can help to accommodate all students in the class, whether they have disclosed their disability or not. Much like universally designed environments, the elements of UDL that are implemented often can have unintended benefits for all students.

This *Accessibility in Action* will discuss the implementation of UDL principles in postsecondary classrooms. It focuses on making adaptations to classroom learning environments, instructional presentations, student products, and assessments to ensure accessibility.

UDL and the Classroom Environment

The key to providing a universally designed classroom environment is to prepare ahead of time. Having a plan and surveying the classroom environment to implement UDL principles prior to the start of class will make it easier to accommodate every student. Keep in mind that even with planning ahead and implementing UDL policies, accommodations still may be needed after class starts for some students with disabilities. It is impossible to plan for every situation. However, by implementing UDL principles, the instructor is covering most situations and minimizing the need to retrofit if new situations arise.

Postsecondary students participate in a variety of environments and situations, including lecture halls, lab settings, field experiences, class presentations, etc. In each of these environments there are things that instructors can do to ensure that all students will be in the best position to

access and learn the material presented.

Lecture Halls

Case Example: On the first day of class, 80 students walk into Professor Gaudery's class, Introduction to Sociology. Students typically take this course during their freshman year. This semester, Professor Gaudery has students whose experience with requesting accommodations ranges from very familiar to unfamiliar. Some of the students may have requested accommodations for the first time. There is a lot for her to consider, so she reviews the university policies for accommodating students with disabilities as well as other student needs that might arise during the course. She takes time to review basic information with her very diverse group of students.

Lecture halls are typically the most common meeting places for classes on college and university campuses. To begin implementing UDL principles in lecture halls, the instructor needs to look at the space prior to class and ask the following questions:

- **Can every student get into the classroom?** Everyone should be able to enter the room, including students with physical disabilities who use assistive technology (AT) such as wheelchairs or crutches, students with visual impairments, or students with service animals.

- **Does everyone have a choice of where to sit in the class?** Students should have a choice about where to sit; there should not be seats that are designated for students with disabilities. This does not mean that every student should be able to sit in every seat in the room, but students should have access to a choice of seating.

- **Are emergency plans in place to make sure that everyone can get out of the room/building in case of an emergency?** Most likely a plan is in place, but it is the instructor's responsibility to know that plan and to discuss exit options with students who may have difficulty or who may need help exiting the room/building.

- **Can everyone see things that are posted/written/projected on the chalk/white board?** Make sure that anything obstructing the view of the board from a seat is removed or that no one sits in those seats. Also make sure that notes or PowerPoint slides that are put on the board are large enough to be seen in the back of the room. When writing on the board, make sure that the marker or chalk is thick enough for all students to see and is written in a color that all can see from any seat in the room. To prepare for this, attempt to write some notes on the board and sit in the back to make sure that everyone can see them from there.

Quick UDL Classroom Environment Checklist

- [ ] 1. Every student can get into the classroom.
- [ ] 2. Everyone has a choice of where to sit in the class.
- [ ] 3. Plans are in place to make sure that everyone can get out of the room/building in case of an emergency.
- [ ] 4. Everyone can see things that are posted/written/projected on the chalk/white board.
- [ ] 5. Everyone can hear the instructor as well as other students in the class.
- [ ] 6. Everyone can see the instructor from his/her seat.
- [ ] 7. The temperature is consistent and comfortable for all students.

- **Can everyone hear the instructor as well as other students in the class?** Most lecture halls are large, and it is important that all students can hear the instructor as well as fellow students during discussion. If an amplification system is available, it would be beneficial to use it. Also, it is important that when a student makes a comment, it is repeated for the rest of the class to hear.

- **Can everyone see the instructor from his/her seat?** It is important that the instructor can be seen by every student. Some students benefit from being able to lip read or see the instructor's motions and expressions, thus seating should be arranged to avoid obstructions.

- **Is the temperature comfortable for all students?** Although this may not seem to be an issue, a room that is too hot or too cold can be very distracting for all students in the class, but especially for students with disabilities. Making sure the room is at a comfortable temperature will improve the setting for everyone in the class.

Following these guidelines is an important first step. It also is important to remember that although you, as the instructor, may think that you have properly answered all of these questions, students may not have the same opinion. During the first class, it is important to ask students several things. First, you need to ask if they are having any issues with the classroom environment itself. If so, attempts to accommodate those issues should be made. This may result in making requests to building supervisors, and time may lapse before issues are addressed to their satisfaction.

Second, you should note on your syllabus the policy your school has toward accommodations and who to contact with questions about how to obtain accommodations. Some student may think that accommodations are to be granted even if they have not registered with the appropriate office. Other students may have already done so, but may feel intimidated asking for them to be implemented. Most students will not offer their opinions if not asked, and they may not self-disclose a disability even though they are registered, so creating an environment where dialogue is open about the environment goes a long way toward creating a universally designed classroom.

Lab Settings

Case Example: Jack is taking a science lab course during the spring semester. He uses a wheelchair due to a physical disability that has limited the use of his legs. When he enters the room, he sees that all of the tables are at waist height and he is not able to access the equipment. In fact, he can't even see the labels on the lab equipment. He goes over to the instructor and they begin to develop a strategy. There is a table in the room that can be raised or lowered based on the height needed by any student.

Science lab settings often are overlooked when attempting to universally design classrooms to include all students. Addressing the following questions before class starts will help an instructor design a lab setting and sessions that will benefit all potential students:

- **Can all students access the lab?** This question addresses not only whether all students can enter the lab, but also the layout of the lab. Ensure that there are clear paths in the lab and there is no clutter that may cause students with physical or visual impairments to have difficulty navigating (Burgstahler, 2008).

- **Can all students access the lab equipment?** Lab equipment should be kept in a location where all students can access it. When possible, equipment should be plastic as opposed to glass so that all students can feel as though they can use it without the risk of breaking it.

- **Is the lab equipment properly labeled?** All lab equipment that has measurements or

instructions should be labeled with large letters and numbers so that all students can read and take measurements. Although this may seem to benefit only students with visual impairments, having larger, clearer labels can make taking accurate measurements easier for everyone (Burgstahler, 2008).

- **Are lab instructions provided in written and verbal form?** Providing instructions in multiple forms provides access to all students. Students with visual impairments or learning disabilities may struggle to follow written instructions. By providing verbal instructions, these students as well as students who are auditory learners will be accommodated.

- **Can all students access lab tables?** Lab tables should be at varied heights, or at least one table should be adjustable. Not only will this make it accessible to students in wheelchairs, it also will allow students of varying heights to work comfortably in a standing position.

- **Are verbal descriptions of demonstrations given?** Some of the most powerful experiences in labs are from demonstrations. To make sure that all students benefit from these demonstrations, a verbal description of exactly what is being done and what is happening also should be provided.

- **Is safety equipment accessible, properly labeled, and openly discussed?** Safety is critical in any science lab. All safety equipment should be clearly labeled with a combination of large symbols and words. These labels also should be printed in high contrast (Burgstahler, 2008). Discussing the location of safety equipment and procedures will help all students be aware of exactly what to do in case of an emergency.

Field Experiences

Case Example: Donna has dyslexia and is finishing her student teaching during the last year of her program. She is at a small liberal arts college in a rural area, so her choices are limited. She finds a school that is at the grade level she is interested in teaching and a site mentor with whom to work. The accommodation that she needs most is access to digital text that can be read aloud. However, when she goes to the school, she sees that there is only one computer per class, and students must share. She has been receiving accommodations at the college and talks with her site mentor to make sure they will be available to her during her student teaching.

Field experiences provided during a student's postsecondary education could include field trips, practicum experiences, or required internship programs,

among other things. This is typically the part of the postsecondary experience that is considered "practical" education, and it is often a time to apply what has been learned in class. Providing access to field experiences for all students is an important part of an inclusive and universally designed education experience. Although much of what occurs at the field experience site is out of the instructor's control, some planning and investigating can go a long way toward ensuring that the field experiences provided for students are accessible to all.

When selecting a field experience site, asking the following questions will help to determine the level of accessibility:

- **Are there any potential physical accessibility issues with the field site?** If students are not able to physically access the site due to a disability, the instructor could make suggestions for accessibility improvements or choose another site if this is going to be a problem.

- **Are those in charge of the field site willing and able to make accommodations to allow students with disabilities to complete the work necessary in a timely manner?** When choosing the site, the possibility of working with students with varying types of abilities and varying accommodation needs should be addressed. If the field site

coordinator is willing to make accommodations, notifying them of necessary accommodations in enough time to have them ready for the student who needs them is important. If the coordinator is resistant to providing accommodations, another site should be chosen.

As with the other class settings, planning is the key to having an accessible and universally designed field experience. Although postsecondary instructors may not have much control over the accessibility of the field experience site, they can discuss the importance of providing an accessible experience with the field experience coordinator. They also can provide necessary information and suggestions for inclusion when a student with a disability will be participating in that field experience.

UDL and Instructional Presentations

Case Example: Jordan, Mike, Casey, and April have learning disabilities, and they have been receiving accommodations at the university. For example, Jordan needs access to digital text, Mike needs auditory output to process information, Casey requires extra time to complete assignments due to her Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and April is visually impaired and has subsequent issues when information is presented in class. Their professor has already put his information together for the course. On the first night of class, he speaks with these four students and lets them know that all of his class materials also are online. He tells them they are able to record class lectures and that he is free to meet with them during office hours to cover any material they miss in class.

He also has two student mentors in the class who are available to assist them. The students tell him that there is a center for accessible instructional materials at the college that can help him make his materials more accessible. He thanks them and decides to use a checklist to reflect on his course materials and delivery (see text box, *Quick UDL Instructional Presentation Checklist*).

Once the class setting has been designed so that it is accessible to all, there are no obstructions, and everyone can utilize his/her own learning style without distractions, the focus needs to be on the presentation style that will be used in the class. In many cases, *how* information is conveyed to the class is just as important as the information itself. In most classes, it is likely that there will be only a few students who are registered with the student disability services office. However, there also are likely to be many students with invisible disabilities, such as ADHD or dyslexia, who have chosen not to register for accommodations, as well as many students without disabilities who have different learning styles and who would benefit from the utilization of some UDL strategies in the presentation of class materials. The following are some questions that should be asked when developing presentation materials to ensure that the presentation incorporates UDL:

- **Is an open and accommodating environment created during the first class period?** Many students with disabilities request accommodations through the instructor of the class. It is much easier for them to do this if they feel comfortable. To create an open and accommodating environment, not only is it important to include an accommodations statement on the syllabus, it is also important to discuss that statement with the class during the first session and to invite students who may need accommodations to meet in private to discuss them.

- **Is information provided in multiple formats?** Varying lecture style to include lectures, discussions, videos, and readings helps to address each student's strengths and abilities.

- **Are all visual concepts explained in an auditory manner?** Because of the learning styles and abilities of some students in the class, charts and graphs or pictures that are displayed visually should be explained as well. Some students may not be able to see the graphics, while others would benefit from an explanation of what they are seeing.

- **Does the instructor face the class when speaking?** Facing the students when speaking to them allows them to see the instructor's expressions, which can help to emphasize important points. This is especially helpful for students with hearing impairments who may not be able to sense changes in voice inflection. Facing the students also makes it easier for those who rely on lip reading to follow along with the information.

- **Does the instructor encourage and facilitate discussion?** Encouraging and facilitating discussions with and among students as part of the class presentation is a good way to implement the idea of multiple means of engagement. Providing students with a chance to share thoughts or provide information to others is one means to keep all students engaged with the topic. It also is a means to periodically assess knowledge that students are acquiring, and thus can become a universally designed form of assessment.

- **Are class outlines or PowerPoint slides available prior to the start of class?** Providing outlines to students prior to class primarily benefits students who have difficulty concentrating on the discussion while taking notes. Providing a structure for note taking (the outline or slides) helps all students focus their attention on the content of the class. Many instructors resist providing these scaffolds because they feel that students will not attend class. If PowerPoint slides or outlines are used correctly, they will give students only an outline of what is to follow (Tufte, 2003), and they will not benefit students who do not attend class.

- **Are class notes available after class?** Providing notes after class helps to ensure that students have gotten the important points to study from. This will benefit primarily students who have difficulty taking notes, but it also will provide all students with more reference material for class. Again, providing notes is often frowned upon because it is believed that it will cause a decrease in attendance. Most notes are not helpful, however, unless someone has participated in the class as well. Class

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Quick UDL Instructional Presentation Checklist

☐ 1. An open and accommodating environment is created during the first class period.

☐ 2. Information is provided in multiple formats.

☐ 3. All visual concepts are explained in an auditory manner.

☐ 4. The instructor faces the class when speaking.

☐ 5. The instructor encourages and facilitates discussion during lecture sessions.

☐ 6. Class outlines or PowerPoint slides are available prior to the start of class.

☐ 7. Class notes are available after class.

☐ 8. Reading assignments are made available in advance.

☐ 9. Outside of class, the instructor is available to communicate with students through multiple means of communication.

notes also can be provided in a way that can put some responsibility on the student to ensure attendance. Each class period, a group of students can be assigned to take notes and have their notes posted for the rest of the class. This gives the students a sense of ownership and responsibility, and with a group of notes being provided to the rest of the class, it is more likely that all important points will be covered.

- **Are reading assignments made available in advance?** Making reading assignments available in advance allows students to prepare ahead of time so that they can concentrate fully during the class. It also gives students who need to have reading assignments transferred into alternative formats time to do that without falling behind in class.

- **Outside of class, is the instructor available to communicate with students through multiple means of communication?** Due to differing abilities and comfort levels, students may have different preferences about how they contact an instructor. In most classes, email or text messaging are likely the preferred methods of communication. It is important that instructors make these communication options available, especially if students with hearing impairments are in the class. Email and text message technology have had the

unintended benefit of expanding the opportunities for people with hearing impairments to participate in mainstream communication activities along with those without hearing impairments. Although email may be the preferred option for many students, some who have difficulty reading or writing may prefer to meet directly with an instructor or call the instructor on the phone when a question arises. Having all of these options available for students allows all students to access the instructor as a valuable resource while also creating an inviting climate in the class.

UDL and Student Materials

Class products are defined as those items that a student needs to access to successfully complete the class. They include textbooks, videos, class notes, outlines, PowerPoint presentations, websites, assessments, etc. All students must have access to these materials to successfully complete the class, and access goes beyond simply having them available for download through a website. This section will describe different types of class products and discuss questions that should be asked when creating or procuring these products.

Textbooks

Textbooks are essential learning tools in most postsecondary classes. They are often the primary reference material for the class. Not every student can access a standard textbook, however. Students with visual impairments may have difficulty seeing the words on the page, students with learning disabilities may have difficulty extracting meaning from those words, students with physical disabilities may have difficulty turning the pages of the book, and students for whom English is a second language may understand the spoken word better than the written word. Add to this group students who are primarily auditory learners and there is the potential that a standard textbook may be a hindrance to many of the students in the classroom. Since the instructor is not in control of the textbook once it is selected, there is little that he/she can do to ensure that it is accessible. There are, however, two significant questions that the instructor can ask when choosing the textbook:

- **Is the textbook for this class available in a digital format?** When choosing a textbook for the class, it is important that the instructor contact the publishing company and ask if the text can be sold to students in digital format, or if they can obtain a digital copy once they purchase

a hard copy. Digital text is ideal for a universally designed class because of its versatility. The students described above may have different needs—e.g., a blind student may need Braille, a student with low vision may need large print, and a student with a learning disability may need text that can be read aloud. Digital text has the ability to be transformed easily into any format—including Braille, large print, different colors, or audio. Having a textbook that also is available in digital format allows all students to choose how they will access it based on their abilities or learning styles.

- **Is the instructor familiar with the university's textbook conversion policy and process?** In the event that a digital form of the selected textbook is not available, the instructor should be familiar with the university's policy regarding the conversion of text to alternative formats for students with disabilities. Alerting students to their options and providing the textbook converter (typically student disability services) with a copy of the text prior to the semester will typically mean that students who need text in an alternative format will have it in a timely manner.

Videos

Instructors often use videos, either in class or delivered via the web, as a supplementary means of providing information to students. This is an excellent use of UDL principles in that it varies the mode in which information is presented. It can be very beneficial to students who are visual learners. Many videos that are used, however, are not accessible to all students in the class. Much like the issue with the textbooks, there is not much that instructors can do about a video once they have decided to use it for class. However, there are several questions that can be addressed during the selection of the video to make sure that all students can access the information it contains:

- **Does the video have captioning for students who may have difficulty hearing?** Videos shown in class should have captioning to ensure that all students can benefit from them. When discussing captioning, the immediate thought is that it will benefit students with hearing impairments who cannot hear the audio. Captioning also can be useful if the video is shown in a loud room where all students may have difficulty hearing it, and for students for whom English is a second language who may understand the written word better than the spoken word. Captioning also can be a good reference tool for someone who may miss what is said in the video, since the dialogue appears at the bottom of the screen.

- **Can a video be made accessible to all students if it is not captioned?** Although it is ideal for a video to have captioning, if the video that is shown in class does not have captioning, a transcript should be created and made available. This also should be applied to videos without captioning that are posted online. When the video is online, the link to the transcript should be accessible while the video is playing.

Supplementary Materials

Every class utilizes some form of supplementary materials. Some, such as additional readings, provide reference materials or additional information. Others, such as assignment descriptions, provide a guide to the expectations for an assignment. In a UDL class, supplementary materials might include class notes, class outlines, or PowerPoint slides. When creating or distributing these materials, it is important to make sure that they are created and distributed a way that allows all students in the class to access them. These questions will guide the creation of supplementary materials that are accessible by all students.

- **Are supplementary materials posted online?** Just as it is important for textbooks to be available in digital format, any supplementary materials also should be available in a digital format. In a UDL class, it is

not enough to simply hand out class notes or an article to read. Doing this will not help students who consider themselves primarily auditory learners, nor will it help students who have difficulty accessing the printed text. Many of these materials may be available through the college or university library, where students can access many different full text documents. In other cases, the office of disability support, or student services, can scan or have a book recorded upon request for those classes in which the reading materials are not accessible in any other way.

- **Are supplementary materials that are posted online available in multiple formats (PDF, TXT, Word, HTML, etc.**)? Putting supplementary materials online is just the first step in making them fully accessible to the entire class. The next step is posting them in multiple formats, because some AT that students use to access online material works better with different formats. Also, some files are easier to manipulate in terms of creating large print or Braille than others. For example, some students in the class may benefit from Word files, while others may benefit from PDF files.

- **Are the posted supplementary materials accessible?** The final step in universally designing supplementary materials is to make sure that the materials posted are accessible. Most people don't realize that it is

possible to post a Word document or a PDF file that is not accessible. It is assumed that posting text online automatically makes it accessible digital text. Often, PDF files are locked when posted online, rendering them useless to people who rely on the text-to-audio format. There are steps that can be taken to ensure that files posted online are accessible.

Websites

With more and more communication occurring through a class website, addressing the accessibility of the website is an important component of universally designing a postsecondary class. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has created a comprehensive list of specifications designed to ensure that websites are accessible. Website accessibility is typically framed around the question, "Could someone who relies on the use of a screen reader access all of the necessary information on this site?" Following are several basic questions to ask to make sure that class websites are accessible:

- **Can a screen reader accurately identify images on the website?** Part of having an accessible website is having a means to access all of the information it contains, including pictures and other images. When creating a website or adding images, there is an option for adding an

alternative tag to each image. To see this tag, hold the pointer over any image on any website and a small yellow box with some text will appear. When accessing the site with a screen reader, the reader will indicate that it has encountered an image, and then will read the descriptive text in the tag. For an accessible/universally designed website, that tag must provide an accurate and complete description of the image so that a screen reader user will be able to draw the necessary information from it, just as anyone who is viewing the image would.

- **Are all of the links on the page meaningful?** Links that state "click here" or that contain similar language that does not indicate where the link will take the user are ambiguous and could be difficult to use. All links should describe where they are taking the user. This is not only easier for screen reader users, but it also makes the website flow better and it is easier for all users to find what they are looking for.

- **Are there hidden links on the page?** For design purposes, some pages hide links under other links that appear when the cursor rolls over the visual link. This is not necessarily intuitive for all who will visit the website, and it is difficult for a screen reader to identify these links. The obvious way to alleviate this problem is to eliminate any hidden links. The other option

would be to create a link to a text-only page that lists all of the links, including those that are hidden on the primary page. These pages are easier to access with a screen reader.

- **Is the information on the website presented in a logical order?** Information presented on a website should follow a logical order. Inundating a page with text could make it difficult for many users to navigate. Keeping a logical order and limiting the amount of information on a page to what is necessary leads to a website that can be used easily by all.

UDL and Assessments

Assessments often are overlooked when universally designing a class. Assessments also are cited as the most difficult aspect of the class to change. This is likely because altering assessments to fit UDL specifications often is seen as making the tests easier, which is not the case. Simple steps—including varying the number of assessments, the types of assessments, and the length of assessments—are all simple UDL steps that can be taken without compromising the integrity of the assessment. The following questions will help in implementing UDL solutions to assessments:

- **How often are assessments given in class?** The first step in universally designing assessments is to get away from the idea that only one or two tests need to be given during the course of the semester. By providing more frequent, shorter assessments, the instructor is likely to better understand if students are progressing as desired. Shorter, more frequent exams also may benefit students who have difficulty with time management on longer tests, and they can help to reduce the number of requests for extra time from students with disabilities.

- **Are the assessments always of the same type?** Earlier in this issue, three of the hallmarks of UDL were introduced. One of those—multiple means of expression—is the idea that in a universally designed classroom, students should be allowed multiple ways to express their knowledge for optimal results. This can be applied to assessments. In UDL, the style of the assessment should vary; for example, not every assessment should be strictly essay or multiple choice. A mix of different types of questions can help those whose strengths in response technique vary. It also is suggested that varying strategies to include oral assessment with immediate feedback can benefit students with differing learning styles and abilities (Thurlow, Johnstone, & Ketterlin-Geller, 2008).

- **Are there a significant number of students who request extra time as an accommodation?** One of the most common accommodation requests at the postsecondary level is for extra time on exams. Because this can make students with a disability stand out, many refuse to ask for the accommodation even though it would benefit them. The instructor can universally design the test by keeping this in mind when writing the test, making it a few questions shorter so that all students can finish during the allotted time.

Although it will take some adjustment on the part of the instructor, it is possible to create effective UDL assessments.

Conclusion

UDL is much more than a "buzz phrase." It also is something that is not confined to the K–12 setting, and it should be addressed in higher education settings. Although applying UDL principles entails a comprehensive look at every aspect of a classroom—from the class environment, to the presentation style, to the products that students must access, to the class assessments—UDL is something that can be implemented effectively in a postsecondary education setting. Much like adding curb cuts to a sidewalk or automatic

doors to buildings, incorporating UDL principles into postsecondary classrooms should be done with students with disabilities (both declared and undeclared) in mind. However, it also should have profound and lasting effects on all students in the class.

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