



Universal Design for Learning

Course Applications

Course Design

- Ensuring content is culturally relevant
- Making all academic content accessible online to all students for easy use with adaptive technology
- Provide all textbooks in digital format
- Select textbooks early, (think about the disadvantages for SWD when a textbook is added late)
- Include a DSS statement on syllabi
- Consider including in the syllabus that you welcome students to make an appointment with you to discuss disability related issues or the accommodations they have
- Providing adequate time for tasks
- Design for multiple ways for students to engage with the learning material- include incorporating group work, utilizing class discussion, student-consider lectures, hands-on activities, and fieldwork

Teaching Techniques

- Encouraging active learning
- Regularly assessing students' progress by providing feedback in a timely manner
- Put students into pairs or learning cells to quiz each other over material for the day
- Have students write out expectations for the course and their goals for learning
- Form a student panel to present alternative views of the same concept
- Conduct idea generating or brainstorming sessions to expand horizons
- If possible take students to hear guest speakers or special programs on campus
- Have students make appointments to see you individually or in groups

Delivery Methods

- Deliver instructions clearly and in multiple ways, such as with handouts, speaking, and asking students to repeat directions.
- Allow digital recorders and/or record lectures and put online
- Provide a written outline of the presentation
- Make power point slides available online before the presentation
- Allow students to share notes (perhaps online)
- Use visual aids
- Use cognitive tools like scaffolding for learning, (such as flow charts to categorize material).
- Use captioned videos in class and online or find transcripts of the video ahead of time

Assessment

- Explain how to study for different test formats
- Provide study questions or study guides
- Give sample test questions

- Consider un-standardized testing, multiple assessments such as oral presentations, demonstrations, portfolios, and projects
- Consider extended time or un-timed tests

Online Course Content

- Offer web-based materials in a format that is accessible, particularly to students who are blind and using text-to-speech technology, (Text-based materials).
- Provide “alt-tags” or descriptions of graphics, charts, or pictures online
- Layout course in a way for easy navigation of course information and ways for students to ask questions such as a message board.

Communication

- Ensure standard handouts and department signage easy to read, high contrast, bolded headers, and perhaps larger font than the average person needs.
- Make all student forms and handouts accessible online for easy use with adaptive technology.
- Emails should be easy to read, clear font, spaced out sections, bolded when necessary, etc.

Questions to ask about the Physical Environment

- Are staff aware of the location of all elevators in campus buildings?
- Do staff know how to turn on and off power accessible ADA doors?
- Are aisles kept wide and clear of obstructions for the safety of users who have mobility or visual impairments?
- Is adequate light available in the classroom?
- Do you allow students to stand or move around when needed during your class?

Statements from Students

(Universal Design in Higher Education from Principles to Practice, Edited by Burgstahler, 2008)

- “It is helpful when the instructor provides some advanced indication of which type of test the students should expect.”
- “In an Oceanography class, my instructor quizzed me orally about the locations and directions of various currents to accommodate my blindness.”
- “One instructor graciously called the disability services office in the middle of my exam to give me the opportunity to ask any questions. It meant a lot that he took my needs into account and made this extraordinary effort.”

The goal is to assist students with various learning preferences and learning disabilities.

For more information visit: http://www.washington.edu/doi/Conf/staff_resources.html