Universal Design for Engagement & Retention in Student Affairs

Melanie V. Tucker, Ed.S., LPC, LMHC, NCC
Assistant Vice President, Student Affairs
Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
Northern Illinois University
Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to explain principles of UD/UDL.
- Participants will be able to demonstrate how UD with a social justice model increases access and inclusion.
- Participants will be able to identify how increased access and inclusion may positively impact engagement and retention.
Pulse Check

• What does engagement mean to you?

• What does retention mean to you?

• What does Universal Design mean to you?
Engagement & Retention

- Research shows that students stay where they feel valued and included.

- The accessibility (or not) and design (or lack of) of learning environment and campus community send non-verbal messages about the inclusion of diverse students.
7 Principles of UD

1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive use
4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance for error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use

When factored in on front end (as design is occurring) it reduces need for retroactive fixes or accommodations, which cost more money.
Examples of UD

- Equitable use - curb cut, service counter at seated height
- Flexibility in use - power door, directions provided orally and in writing
- Simple and intuitive use – visual images, large buttons on vending machines
Examples of UD

- Perceptible information - videos captioned
- Tolerance for error - online submission of form indicates what is “wrong” and how to fix it in order for submission to be accepted
- Low physical effort - room for a wheelchair to turn around, separate table and chair
- Size and space for approach and use - direct access to printed materials in an office
3 Principles of UDL

1. Provide multiple means of representation
2. Provide multiple means of action and expression
3. Provide multiple means of engagement
Examples of UDL

- Multiple means of representation – content shared visually, orally, in writing, electronically, etc...
- Multiple means of action/expression – demonstrate learning through written, verbal, visual, etc...
- Multiple means of engagement – presentation, reading, small groups, large groups, one on one
Your Turn!

• What are some examples from work that you do?
Perspective of Disability

- Multiple models or frameworks in which disability is viewed exist.

- Framework or model used impacts how design in construed and priority of access/inclusion.
Disability Frameworks

**Medical Model**
- Disability is a deficit
- Disability can be corrected
- Accommodations are one way to correct
- Reactive approach

**Social Justice Model**
- Disability is neutral
- Disability is magnified by barriers
- Good design reduces needs for accommodations and impact of disability
- Proactive design

**UDL – Universal Design for Learning**
Disability Framework & Design

- When disability is viewed as neutral and design is viewed as impactful for a wide range of individuals, creates a proactive, inclusive, reduce barrier environment for many.

- When disability is viewed as problem to be fixed and design is viewed as meaningful for the majority, creates an exclusive, reactive, barrier laden environment for some.
Design & Student Affairs

- Where does design come into play with Student Affairs & Enrollment Management?
Assessing UD & Student Services

- Identify the service
- Define the “universe”
- Involve users of service
- Adopt and apply guidelines/standards (e.g. best practices)
- Plan for accommodations
- Train and support
- Evaluate
UD & Student Affairs

• Planning, policies, and evaluation = consider diversity issues as you plan and evaluate services.
• Physical environment = access, comfort, and safety reflective of multiple tenets of diversity
• Staff = provide training
• Information and technology = accessible and inclusive
• Events = accessible, inclusive, range of activities
Engagement & Retention

• Student feedback
• Constituency feedback
• Planning & assessment
• Understand your audience before “converting” to UD
You’ve been asked to collaborate with staff from different departments to plan a Welcome Days activity for the Fall Semester. Design an inclusive activity using UD/UDL principles.

Be prepared to present your idea in 10 minutes, including which principles your group used.
You May Already Be Applying UD

- Using visual aids to compliment learning vs. just providing data (UD 2, 3, 5/UDL 1, 3)
- Information on websites, brochures & flyers (UD 1, 2, 3, 4/UDL 1)
- Programming that targets introverts & extroverts (UD 5, 6/UDL 1-3)
- Open space technology for trainings (UD 6, 7/UDL 1-3)
- Incorporating learning styles – similar to UDL

5. Tolerance for error    6. Low physical effort    7. Size and space for approach and use
Resources


• AHEAD ([www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org))

• UD/UDL website [www.udlcenter.org](http://www.udlcenter.org)
Conclusion

• Thank you for your interest in utilizing UD in Student Affairs. If I can be helpful in your journey, I would be happy to hear from you!