Universal Design for Learning Strategies

- What is Universal Design for Learning?
- Why should we use UDL?
- How to use UDL in your course?

References:
Center for Applied Special Technologies (CAST) website, www.cast.org

What is Universal Design for Learning?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a complex of principles that maximize teaching and learning for all students by using multiple ways of introduction, engagement, and expression. The purpose of the UDL is to eliminate barriers from the learning environment and to increase access for all learning contents through designs that acknowledge varied learning abilities and needs of diverse learners.

In the late 1990s, upon neuroscience and education research Anne Meyer, David Rose, and David Gordon introduced the three principles of UDL that are key to learning:

- Provide Multiple Means of Engagement - The “WHY” of learning
- Provide Multiple Means of Representation - The “WHAT” of learning
- Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression - The “HOW” of learning

Why should we use UDL?

Schelly et al. (2011) claimed that around 80% of students with a disability preferred not to inform the university about their disability, whereas, according to Wagner et al., (2005), in 2005 it consisted of 60% of students. This increased 20% over six years. It is stated that the “one-size-fits-all” kind of curriculum created with an average student in mind, can lead more than half of your students to fail. Dr. Todd Rose argues that “one size not only fails to fit all; it rarely fits any.” I would highly recommend you listen to his TedTalk - where he gives solid academic examples about why UDL should be used for curriculum design.

How to use UDL in your course?

Alongside with aforementioned resources, “UDL Guideline” by CAST is a worthwhile resource to look at on learning more about how to design curriculum using UDL. Additionally, the new book “UDL Navigators in Higher Education: A Field Guide” (May 2019) is also a useful handbook as it is full of practical advice on implementing the principles of UDL and how UDL works in many different departments in postsecondary education level.

“A quick UDL checklist”, created by Colorado State University within the Access Project, is a valuable tool to start clarifying whether currently incorporate UDL in your course. If the checklist indicates that you do not, the “UDL Quick Tips” chart will give you comprehensive guidance on how to use the UDL’s three key principles, how to write objectives and benchmarks, and share what kind of instructional materials and teaching methods you can use while developing using UDL.

References:
Center for Applied Special Technologies (CAST) website, www.cast.org


The ACCESS Project, Department of Occupational Therapy at Colorado State University website, http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/
