

Universal Design for Instruction (UDI)

What is ...?

“The process of making our course concepts educationally accessible and skills attainable regardless of learning style, physical or sensory abilities.”¹

VCC is a community college with a long record of accommodating the learning needs of students with disabilities. However, Universal Design for Instruction moves the discussion from accommodation for those with identified or declared disabilities into the area of meeting the diverse learning needs of all students.

The objectives of UDI support this objective by:

- Building confidence of students in their ability /capacity to succeed.
- Motivating students to participate actively in the learning process.
- Maximizing learning
- Recognizing declared, and undeclared barriers, and limitations to learning in the traditional classroom and learning environment.

In your learning and teaching environment do you recognize any of the following?

- Students with English as a second or third language
- Physical limitations
- Limited sensory abilities
- Psychological or psychiatric concerns
- Different learning styles and preferences
- Different levels of preparation for the college learning experience

Educational Value

Universal Design for Instruction offers faculty

- An approach to meeting the widest possible learning needs in a class
- Principles of course design that minimize need for special accommodations
- Encourages communication between students and faculty
- Encourages active learning
- A strategy for increasing awareness of range of learning needs and styles possible in a learning situation
- A reduction in the time and resources allotted to special accommodation requests
- Guidelines on how to increase accessibility in a course/class

Universal Design for Instruction offers students

- A welcoming learning environment where diversity is expected
- More accommodating learning environment
- Motivational learning experiences
- Alternative communication methods/processes
- Learning spaces that meet a diverse range of learning needs and styles
- Multiple instructional methods and strategies
- Flexible and accessible learning materials

¹ ASD Project –Utah State University

- Institutional initiatives for enhancing accessibility to learning
- Instructional feedback in a variety of mediums
- Frequent and formative assessments

Examples of Classroom Application

- Design course online syllabus so that everyone can access the information regardless of sensory limitations.
- Label all equipment in the learning environment with symbols and text that is intuitive and simple to understand.
- Offer students multiple contact/communication tools such as office hours, email, telephone numbers, and course weblogs.
- Offer untimed assessment opportunities.
- Use close-captioned videos

Getting Started

Contact the Centre for Instructional Development cid@vcc.ca for support to implement UDI principles in your teaching and learning environment.

Videos: San Francisco State University Online Universal Design Tutorial
<http://ctfd.sfsu.edu/ud-online-training.htm>

More Information

Educational:

- *San Francisco State University Online Universal Design Tutorial*
<http://ctfd.sfsu.edu/udl-online-training.htm>
- *University of Guelph, Teaching Support Service Universal Design*
<http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid/>
- *CAST: Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age Primer on UDI*
<http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/ideas/tes/>
- *University of Washington, Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology* <http://www.washington.edu/doi/>

References:

- *Universal Design in Higher Education From Principles to Practice.* Edited by Sheryl E. Burgstahler and Rebecca C. Cory. Harvard Education Press. 2008