Universal Design for Learning
The parable of the can opener
Introduction to Universal Design

- Concept of universal design originated in architecture

- Designed physical space to be accessible from the start, rather than adapting later

- Concept is now applied to education
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Process

- Emphasizes meeting individual needs of a broad range of students
- Provides alternative ways students can engage the learning process
- Enhances access to instruction for all students
UDL makes learning more accessible

- delivers course information in a customizable format
- removes barriers to information access
- provides flexibility without watering down the curriculum
Fundamental Practices of UDL

- Create a climate of openness and respect
- Consider the physical environment
- Clearly define expectations and offer feedback
- Promote information access
- Use cooperative learning methods
- Assess students’ knowledge through a variety of methods
Create a climate of openness and respect

- Encourage students to visit during office hours
- Identify campus support services so students can get help
Consider the physical environment

- Encourage students to choose seats based on their need
- Be aware of ambient noise. Use amplification or captioning
- Ask students if they can hear and see the presentation
- If distractions cannot be remedied, request a room change
Clearly define expectations and offer feedback

- Create a detailed syllabus
- Provide specific criteria and examples for projects and assignments
- Consider alignment between what you teach and test
- Evaluate knowledge throughout the course
- Build flexibility into attendance and testing policies
Multiple formats

**audio:**

- Avoid pronouns when giving instructions
- Allow recording of lectures or make copies available
- Repeat questions asked in class before responding
- Read overheads out loud
Promote information access

Multiple formats

visual:

• Use large font size, contrasting colors, and simple designs for projected presentations

• Leave overheads/slides up long enough for note-taking

• Use captioned videos whenever possible
Promote information access

Multiple formats

kinesthetic:

• use a variety of teaching strategies in addition to lecture
Promote information access

Technology

- Provide digital copies of overheads, outlines, and slides
- Post course materials on the web early
- Graphics may not be accessible via assistive technology
- Chat rooms are not accessible to screen readers
- Contact DSO for assistance
Promote information access

Textbook selection

- Adopt textbooks early to allow time for digital conversion
- Consider using textbooks that have learning supports
Promote information access

Organization and planning

- Develop a preview of course activities and timelines
- Make daily agendas available
- Encourage students to organize study groups
Facilitate note-taking

- Give students lecture outlines or copies of slides
- Speak slowly enough to allow students to take notes
- Use contrasting colors for presentation materials. Dark colors are more visible.
Use cooperative learning methods

• Consider ways to include students who would otherwise be excluded
• Give written as well as verbal instructions
• Establish rules for speaking in the group
• If a student is having difficulty, ask the student for suggestions
Assess student’s knowledge through a variety of methods

• Consider academic integrity, rigor, purpose, etc.

• Possibilities may include projects, oral presentations, multiple choice exams, etc.