

Bank Street College

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Welcome

Since 2005, Bank Street College and San Jose State University have been working closely to create a small database of material that will help all undergraduate and graduate students more fully participate and succeed in our teacher education courses. Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a guide, these monthly newsletters will help us share our work with a broader community of teacher educators around the United States.



In this, our second newsletter, we have provided two different kinds of resources. First, **Judy Lesch**, former coordinator for

the HEDS UP grant and on the graduate faculty at Bank Street College, has collected and annotated a list of web sites from other universities that are currently involved in efforts to redesign their courses in light of Universal Design for Learning. Also included is an



instructional activity from a Child Life course taught by **Deb Vilas**, faculty member at Bank Street

College, that guides students in viewing a video. This activity prepares students for an assignment in which they conduct a play session with a child. We hope that you find both these contributions useful in your UDL efforts.

Defining Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning in education refers to meeting the unique educational needs of each student regardless of learning style, physical, sensory, organizational, or linguistic differences. Rather than taking a "one-size-fits-all" approach, UDL stresses flexible and multiple modes of organizing course content,

assignments, and activities.

UDL provides a variety of alternatives for students to access and engage the learning process. Beyond accommodating students with disabilities, the features of UDL benefit all students and may reduce the need for individualized accommodations. (Adapted from Ohio State University, Universal Design Project)

Web Site Resources

By Judith Lesch

1. University of Minnesota

<http://www.education.umn.edu/passit>

This site relates to their current grant, PASSIT, but also to their former work in this area. They are addressing all aspects of disability, including learning disabilities.

Under “Resources” there are:

- A complete workshop facilitator’s guide (CTAD: Workshop Facilitator’s Guide)—many pages with lots of outlines, suggestions, and handouts for a variety of workshops. Some address work with faculty around redesigning their courses; others address concepts of Universal Design for Learning and disability.
- A full book (*CTAD: Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education*) that you can read or download. Look at the table of contents: some chapters look interesting and helpful, including those under classroom strategies about writing and composition.
- Under “Additional Resources” you can download a five-page handout about assistive technology, which lists a range of assistive devices, purposes and websites associated with them.
- There is also a video titled *Uncertain Welcome: Student Perspectives on Disability and Postsecondary Education*, which can be ordered from this group.

2. Kent State

<http://www.classaccommodation.org/>

This site lists a number of topics that are bulleted with important information. I sampled a few and found them informative, especially the “frequently asked questions” and the “accommodations” sections. They suggest that we use their material—especially the “fact sheets” and adapt them to our own purposes.

3. University of Massachusetts, Boston

www.eeonline.org

This site has several well-designed topics, including some great examples of UDL syllabi and some informative tutorials—with audio—to help faculty better use the Universal Design for Learning options. I also visited the instructional strategies section, and in this one there are many suggestions in a table format, including the amount of time a strategy would take. And last but not least is the UCD tools section that has pictures, explanations, and websites for every conceivable technology that might be used in a college setting.

4. University of Washington

<http://www.washington.edu/doit>

Go to “Postsecondary education” and look at the four areas, especially the Faculty Room. There you can find lots of handouts, informational sheets, and different topics across a wide range of disabilities. They also have a number of videos on this site that you can watch on the computer screen. This is an extensive website with a lot of different components, including employment and other disabilities materials. The Student Lounge also has some interesting material for students about studying and getting accommodations.

5. Sonoma State

http://lightbridge.sonoma.edu/main/lessons/lessons_topic.html

At this site there are actual video examples, explanations, and resources for many areas of classroom instruction. I went to the one suggested for ELL’s and thought it was a good resource for classroom teachers.

6. San Jose State University

http://www.sjsu.edu/cfd/programs/facultyinresidence/instructional_materials/

This web site has plenty of materials used for faculty workshops. You may download all the Power Point Presentations and handouts. These provide good ideas on how to incorporate UDL principles into course instruction, including syllabi, assignments, and assessment.

Instructional Activity



"It's Harder Than It Looks":

A video discussion activity

Course Name: This activity is used in two courses: Therapeutic Play Techniques for Child Life Specialists and Play Therapy

Instructor: Deborah B. Vilas, MS, CCLS, LMSW

Institution: Bank Street College of Education

Purpose of the Activity

The activity provides scaffolding for students to learn a specific play technique. The activity heightens awareness of child centered play skills, while normalizing typical challenges faced by students who are beginning to learn this play technique.

Context

This activity was designed to engage students in analyzing video excerpts of students like themselves conducting child centered play sessions with young children. Later in the course, they conduct their own play sessions, and this activity helps prepare them for some of the common challenges they may face.

Introduction

Prior to the introduction of this activity, students were asked to conduct a child centered play session. Students had prepared for that play session by reading about the technique, viewing a video of a highly skilled professional demonstrating the technique, and role playing the interaction in class. The gap in skill level between the novice students enrolled in the class and the professional demonstration caused students to feel incompetent and anxious about their performance. This anxiety made it difficult for students to access their skill set when conducting their own play sessions.

With this in mind, I gathered video clips of students conducting play sessions, and created a film (using iMovie)

depicting common struggles of beginners learning the technique. Upon viewing the excerpts, the class engaged in discussing the strengths and struggles of the students, as well as possible strategies for improving the technique. The process allowed them to take in the reality of how a novice differs from an experienced professional, thereby making their own expectations for themselves more realistic. The activity also increased their awareness of some of the skills they needed to conduct a successful session.

Activity Directions

- Video clips are shown one at a time to the class, using an LCD projector or smart board, so that the image is large enough for the class to view details comfortably.
- A transcript of each video clip is handed out for students to follow along. For later viewing, a handout of play themes and a play evaluation scale can be distributed as well.
- The instructor introduces the film clips by acknowledging how difficult it is to try the technique for the first time, how awkward it can be to be filmed, and how brave the students in the video are for allowing their struggles to be used for teaching purposes.
- Following the viewing of a film clip, the instructor engages the class in a discussion of their observations. The instructor takes notes on chart paper. Students are asked to begin by listing the strengths of the student's technique and what went right in the film. They are then asked to list the struggles that they saw. Lastly, they are asked to strategize about how the student from the film clip might improve her/his performance. At a later class session, the video can be replayed with a focus on the child participant, as opposed to the student leading the session.
- The notes from the discussion are transcribed and made available to students digitally on the course website and in hard copy at the next class session.
- The film clips are made available to students on the course website for further examination, as well as for students who may have been absent that day.

(continued)

Guidelines for Submissions

You may submit instructional activities, excerpts from your syllabus, instructions to assignments, or other relevant course material. The submission should include: 1) Purpose, 2) Context, 3) Introduction, 4) Directions/Instructions (if applicable), 5) Assessment (if applicable), and 6) Connections to UDL.

To submit your work, please include a cover sheet with your name and institutional affiliation, course name, and a brief description of the course purpose and goals. Attach your document in word format and label it with your last name and a key word for the lesson (i.e., otoyaknapp_snowballing). For more information, please contact Karina Otoyaknapp at (212) 875-4482 or E-mail at kotoyaknapp@bnkst.edu. Your work will be reviewed and may be used in our next newsletter.

Instructional Activity (continued)

Discussion Questions

- What strengths did you see in this student's performance? What did she do well? What aspects of the technique did you observe?
- What did you see her struggling with? What did she do that was not representative of the technique?
- What aspects of the technique might she have added, or done differently to improve her performance?
- What did you notice about the child developmentally? Motor development? Language? Cognitive? Emotional/Social?
- What play themes did you notice?
- Applying the Play Scales, what did you observe about the child's play?

Assessment

When students engage in discussion about their observations, the instructor has the opportunity to address misconceptions and worries, thereby strengthening the awareness and comfort level of the class. When the students then conduct their own sessions and write their papers, the instructor can see how many skills the student were able to incorporate into their own sessions, and how aware they are of their own areas for growth and improvement.

UDL/BSC Connection

The "It's Harder Than It Looks" activity addresses Universal Design for Learning principles in the following ways:

- It gives students access to an alternative visual example

of a technique that they have read about and seen modeled by a professional. The activity is followed by the use of work sheets at home and role playing in small groups in class. These multiple modalities of introducing material allow students the opportunity revisit the material from several angles, scaffolding their understanding of the technique.

- The use of an LCD projector or smart board enables the class to view the video comfortably without crowding around a small video screen or missing important visual details.
- The activity is flexible in that the material is available to students through in-class video, as well as online through a course website.
- The handout of a language-based transcript of the video, as well as a summary of the discussion notes, supplements the visual and audio portion of the film clips.
- The use of prior students as models of the technique builds a sense of community as students view, analyze, and discuss typical pitfalls that all beginners face. There is a normalization of typical struggles and mistakes, creating an atmosphere of acceptance and openness to being on the learning curve.
- The discussion questions model strength-based learning, thereby creating a community of respect as both strengths and struggles are given equal time in the discussion.
- Concept, skill, and affective development are supported with both examples and non-examples because the class learns from observing the students' mistakes as well as their modeling of correct technique.