Transcript UDL in Higher Education, HumberCTL

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Bianca Sorbera: Students come from unique lived experiences. That's why it's so important for educators to move away from the one size fits all approach to teaching and learning. Universal Design For Learning is a teaching approach that helps educators do just that.

Katie Billard: At the heart of Universal Design is the belief that variability is the norm. Rather than design for the average student Universal Design For Learning encourages educators to design their curriculum keeping in mind that all students are unique.

Bianca Sorbera: Universal Design For Learning informs educators how to build a strong foundation for learning and ensure that curriculum design is approached in a proactive rather than reactive way.

Katie Billard: Based on the framework created by CAST, Universal Design For Learning can be broken down into three core principles. Engagement is a crucial element of learning and students differ greatly in the ways in which they can be motivated to learn.

Bianca Sorbera: Some examples to engage students are: Providing students with an option to do a deeper dive with the course material. Provide extra resources and supports in the notes section of PowerPoint.

Katie Billard: Consider providing mastery oriented feedback that focuses on level of effort and process to keep students engaged. It's also great to Highlight Learning Outcomes and encourage students to create their own learning goals.

Katie Billard: Focusing on the post educational goals of students is also important. Attention to their future career goals provides them with motivation to stay enrolled and stay engaged.

Bianca Sorbera: The next pillar of Universal Design For Learning deals with how to best present teaching materials to students to maximize understanding. Providing options for students to engage with information, through text, video, audio or graphics gives all students a chance to learn in a way that is best for them.

Katie Billard: Another important approach is to embed hyperlinks for vocabulary and symbols, that links students to definitions and resources. It can also be helpful to make connections between concepts by using graphic organizers or concept maps.

Bianca Sorbera: Empowering students is what inclusive design is all about. It helps educators remove the obstacles that may be interfering with students learning.

Katie Billard: The final pillar of Universal Design For Learning deals with the options students are given to show what they've learned and to best communicate with each other in the classroom. Students have different ways of navigating the learning environment and expressing what they know. Since there isn't one means of action expression that is optimal for all learners, providing options is essential for student success. To provide multiple means of action and expression, consider the following.

Katie Billard: Give students a voice. Use student response software like Socrative or Kahoot to give students options for communicating in class.

Katie Billard: Flexible assessments. Allow students to use multiple media for assignments. Like comics, speech, video, music and visual art.

Katie Billard: And finally, foster critical thinking by using "think alouds" to model thought processes and demonstrate your logic to students.

Bianca Sorbera: A good analogy to sum up UDL is to think of these concepts within architectural terms. If you construct a building you will have to consider accessibility issues. Adding ramps and other features after construction can be costly, cumbersome and time-consuming. The idea is to incorporate accessibility features in the space within your initial design plans.

Katie Billard: The cool thing is, if you remove a certain barrier with one student in mind other students will benefit as well. Constructing a flexible course that gives a learner autonomy while maintaining the same learning outcome expectations for all students is the goal of Universal Design For Learning.

Bianca Sorbera: By exploring these three key principles of Universal Design For Learning instructors will improve their students overall educational experience. This approach is a way to become a more effective and inclusive educator.