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At crucial cross-roads of 21st century pedagogy in Higher Ed in the search for global, sustainable solutions for Inclusion: potential of Universal Design for Learning

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Personal introduction

- I facilitate this session today with several ‘hats’
- Background in Inclusive Education in K-12, with a specific focus at Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
- Current position as Assistant Prof at UPEI. Heavy teaching schedule with International cohorts. Academic Lead on the Global Perspectives MEd
- Short involvement in Accessibility in Higher Ed. Was Director of Office for Students with Disabilities/ MyAccess for 4 years over the period of my PhD
- Researcher with a focus on UDL

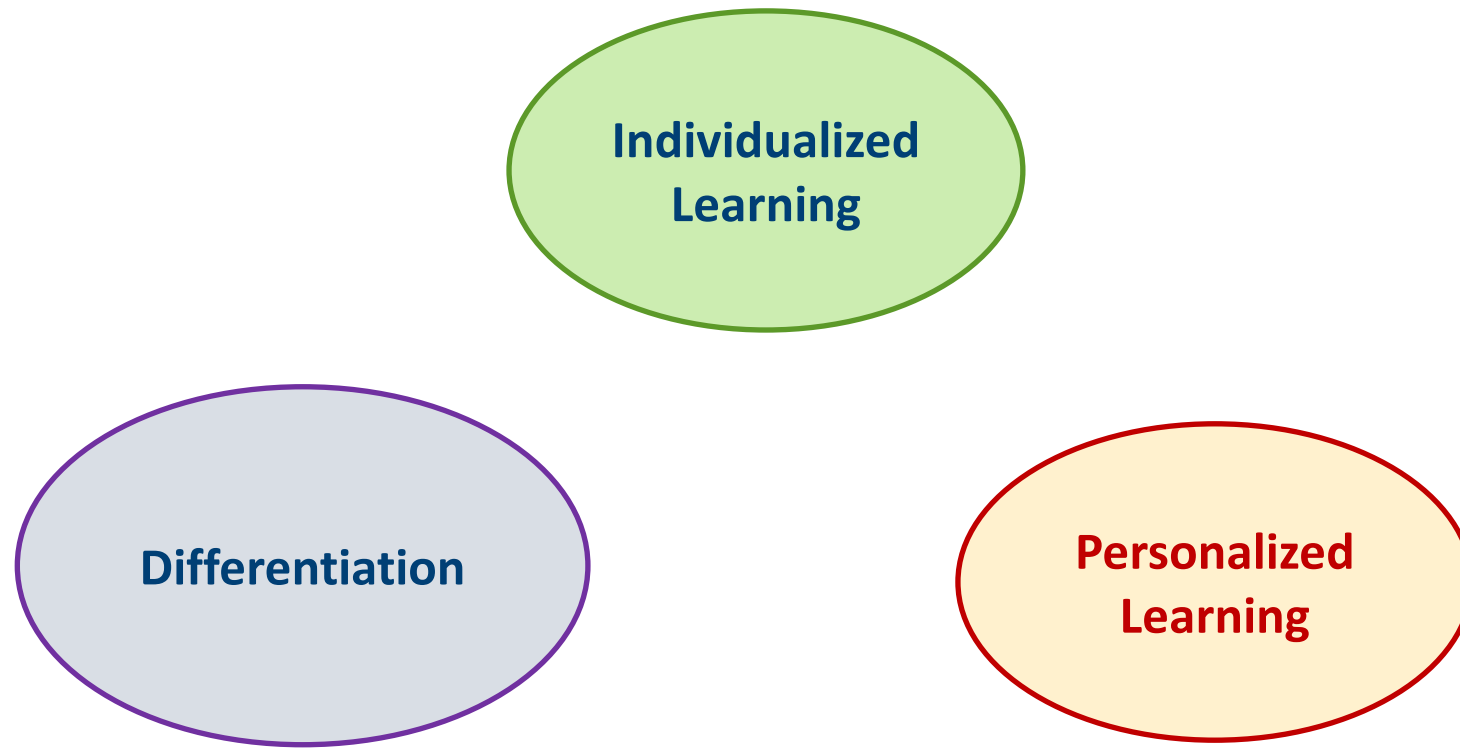


Part 1 - Bridging the gap between individual explorations in Inclusion and the need for institutional solutions

- There is tangible tension in many contexts between the individual explorations by instructors of inclusive practices and the need for institutional, cohesive and sustainable solutions to widen access to learning.

Small group exercise

- Take 10 minutes to discuss with your colleagues your understanding of these three terms we often encounter in Inclusion



Add to this these other terms frequently used in our context

**Student
centered
teaching**

**Individualized
Learning**

**Rights based
retrofitting**

Differentiation

**Personalized
Learning**

Suitability of these individual approaches and initiatives to Inclusion in a Higher Ed context?

Individualized Learning



Differentiation

Personalized Learning

Suitability of these individual approaches and initiatives to Inclusion in a Higher Ed context?

- Overly focused on a one-on-one relationship we simply often do not have.
- Implicitly reliant on a time scale (whole academic year) we do not have available
- Assumes the student's desire to share and disclose – Often not the case in Higher Ed
- Implies the instructor's capacity to 'spot' needs = often a fallacy
- Tends to reduce 'diversity' to neuro-cognitive impairment
- Is reactive rather than proactive, and hence eternally repeated through a career
- Exhaustion factor

Why do we love this terminology and these concepts?

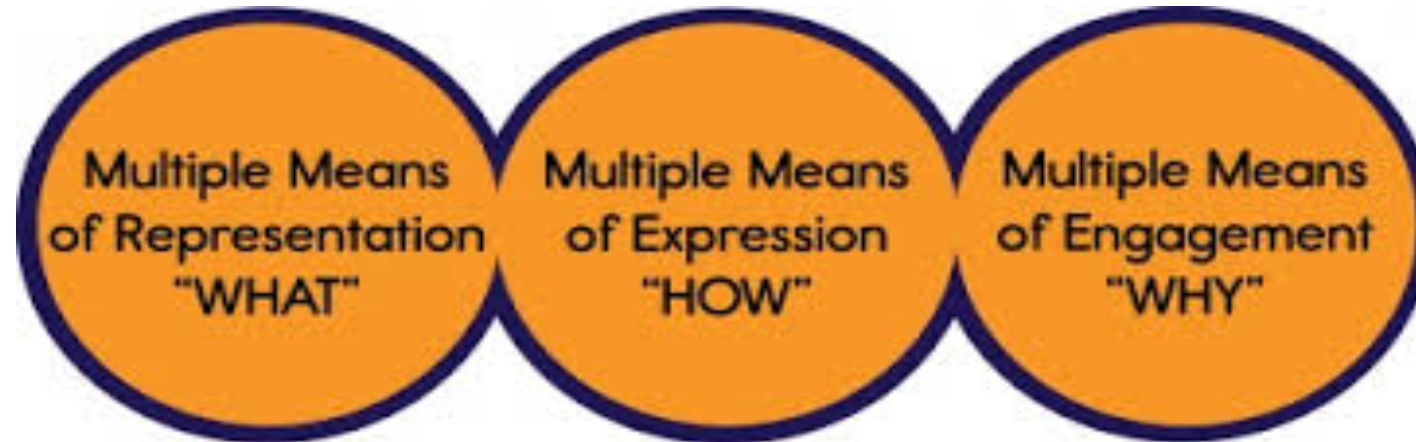


Individualized Learning



The potential of UDL when bridging individual inclusive practices and institutional needs for a systemic framework

- UDL is not a checklist
- It is not a prescribed set of tools or practices
- It is a mindset that offers campus employees a blue print to engage in a reflection of access
- Provides clear, transparent and user-friendly avenues (which can be formulated across an entire campus) within which practitioners can frame their own reflection, practices, and strategies.



Part 2 - Finding a discourses that bridges the chasm between Disability and Learner Diversity

- Much of the discourse on Inclusion has thus far focused on neuro-cognitive diversity.
- Yet there exists another powerful discourse in Higher Ed embracing learner diversity from a much wider context.
- Campus professionals often experience the clash that exists between two discourses that have similar aims but have thus far worked in silo.
- How will we succeed in embedding Intersectionality in both these perspectives?



Group activity

- Reflect and share with your colleagues at least one initiative, project or round table where you experienced this silo?
- Whom could you and should you have invited?
- How might you have had to modify your language to welcome these other stakeholders?

Why is the diversity discourse so fragmented in Higher Ed?

- Diversity offices
- Accessibility offices
- International Student services

- We are fragmenting the notion of 'diverse learner' to suits our professional needs

- We are poorly aware of Intersectionality (#disabilitytoowhite)
- <http://www.dailydot.com/irl/disability-too-white-hashtag-twitter/>

- The learner's reality is not fragmented and categorized in such a clean and neat way.

The daunting impact of legislative protection related to impairment

- Anecdotal look at the impact of the OADA on instructor's approach to Inclusion
- Retrofitting legislation can back fire since it (i) focuses practitioners solely on impairment, (ii) sets standards which appear daunting (practitioners are shown to simply abandon engaging practices for fear of coming short on the Disability legislation front)
- While I fervently support strong Disability legislation and string enforcement provisions, I still assert that it has the negative affect of making teaching staff adopt an overly narrow look at learner diversity.

Breaking down silos within learner diversity: a difficult task

- Debrief on activity and anecdotal feedback from my time as Director of the OSD at McGill
- Changing the name of the service
- Redefining the mission statement of the office
- Reaching out to other 'social justice' units
(<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/dhe.30033/full>)
- Abandoning the conventional focus on neuro-cognitive diversity or even Disability
(<http://nova.newcastle.edu.au/ceehe/index.php/iswp/article/view/29>)

Part 3 - Moving beyond views of Technology as mere gadget

- Instructors are challenged on a daily basis with the powerful effects of technology.
- This has led to ferocious debates on the interaction of pedagogy and technology, debates that rarely tackle the fundamental issue of Inclusion.
- How will the emergence of new literacies force us to rethink the core skills we teach and does this rethink not offer a rare opportunity for an enhanced and organic focus on Inclusion?

Inherent tensions



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Assistive Technology



And as a result of this 'conceptual' chaos, still today in 2016...

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OPINION | COMMENTARY

I'm Banning Laptops From My Classroom

Students use computers to take notes, sure, but that's not all. One spent classtime streaming a

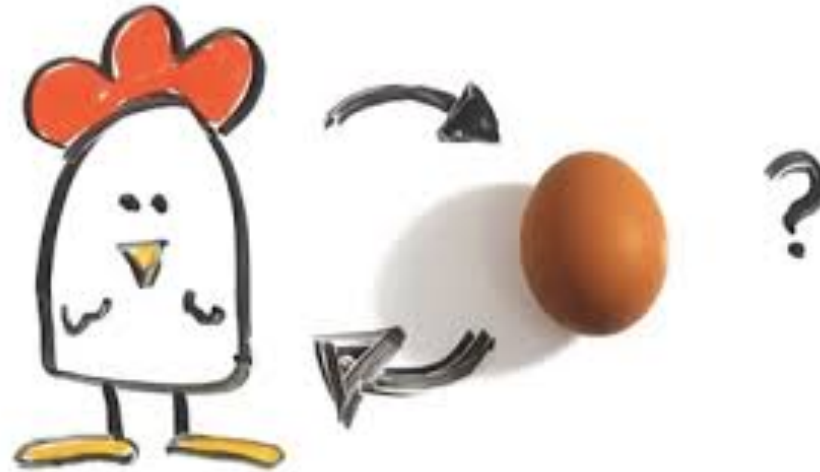


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The chicken or the egg?

- What should come first technology or pedagogy?
- Technology or accessibility?
- Can we address learner diversity without technology?



UDL's potential in integrating technology within a coherent pedagogical discourse

- Ed tech remains at all times a tool, rather than a focus
- It is entirely possible to go through a UDL reflection as a practitioner without using technology
- UDL focuses on design and allows for flexibility for practitioners both willing or reluctant to integrate technology.
- Technology is featured not as the raison d'être but as a useful tool when seeking to offer learners flexibility
- Technology becomes organically integrated not as an end in itself but within the logic of a designer approach to the perspective of the UX of the student
- See Todd Rose's TED talk on 'The myth of the Average'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eBmyttcfU4>
- The future starts now: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfN5SSiRoPs>

Part 4 - Forging an interdisciplinary approach to Inclusion in Higher Ed

- Higher Ed campuses have historically been the subject of a chasm between faculty and staff.
- Can this dichotomy survive the 21st century challenge to hierarchies, formal learning and collective open access knowledge?
- As formal boundaries become eroded between professions and sectors, might we face unprecedented opportunities for a rethink on cross-disciplinary collaboration towards a common goal of including diverse learners?
- What will be the composition of inclusive taskforce on our campuses in the future? What new innovative roles might stakeholders play?

Anecdotal introduction to the issue

- Remarks made to me by a staff member from CAST in Montreal.
- Issue of “ownership”.
- Powerful observation for me, having worked intensively in Accessibility but always destined to join the rank of faculty.
- The chasm is striking and uncomfortable.
- Accessibility staff – Student services staff – Teaching and Learning staff - Student Affairs staff – Instructors – Instructional Designers
- Staff have different backgrounds, training, professional orders, perspectives and allies.
- Does it need to be this way?
- How might we reach a more osmotic and holistic professional approach to inclusion?
- What is the new interdisciplinary role we might all be able to forge ourselves in these changing times?

Group activity

- With peers, please take a few minutes to reflect on ways Inclusion might be tackled in a more osmotic and interdisciplinary way within each of your institutions?
- What might this new 'Inclusion Practitioner' look like?
- What hurdles do you need to tackle before this becomes a reality?

UDL's “umbrella” purpose, use and appeal

- UDL has the advantage of offering a common language that can be used by all disciplines
- The entire campus workforce can enter discussions on UDL despite having different training, field and specialization.
- It serves all aspects of interaction with a ‘user’, and goes well beyond the class to include any interface with students and employees alike.
- Use of UDL at McGill’s OSD in 2012 to audit the interaction with service users:
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1040544.pdf>
- Work with all student services units in 2013-14 to elaborate similar reviews
- UDL can become a unifying, interdisciplinary discourse on Inclusion in Higher Ed

Conclusion: Opportunities?

- We have started with the notion of changing landscape and emerging challenges.
- Might it be possible to ‘put a spin’ on this vision and envisage this changing landscape as an unprecedented set of opportunities?
- UDL is a sustainable framework for Inclusion in Higher Ed. Because it focuses on design, it triggers systemic change that transforms the academy.
- Financially it is sustainable too and greatly reduces costs, first by avoiding retrofitting and second by avoiding duplication between the various units addressing diversity
- UDL creates opportunities for an emerging interdisciplinary approach to Inclusion, which bridges professional silos
- UDL is the sole framework for Inclusion which does not over-focus on impairment and can be used to address the full spectrum of learner diversity (culture, LGBTQ, International students and second language learners, first generation students, etc.)
- UDL – because it is a design based approach – places a central focus on the UX. UX in the academy has the potential radically alter our lens, practices, collaborative potential and future policies.

Resources

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- Wood, D. (2015) Problematizing the inclusion agenda in higher education: Towards a more inclusive technology enhanced learning model. *First Monday*. Retrieved from: <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/6168/4903>

