

Chapter-13


IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING IN LARGE POST-SECONDARY CLASSROOMS

Marking Inclusive Design A Reality Within the Neo-Liberal Constraints of The Enterprise Academy

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ABSTRACT

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has been catching the interest of post-secondary faculty for now over a decade, both in North America and Europe. There has been an increasing volume of field initiatives and research projects which examine the ability of the UDL framework to provide authentic inclusive classroom provisions to the full spectrum of diverse learners present in the tertiary sector. This chapter, however, identifies and examines a tension which emerges between the transformative aims of UDL as a process for inclusion on the one hand, and the business-model pressures of the neo-liberal academy on the others. One example, in particular, highlights this tension: the large tertiary classroom, and the chapter analyzes whether it is ever possible to fully implement UDL within the parameters for the large lecture hall. Business model considerations make increasing class sizes in undergraduate education increasingly appealing. This seems to create pragmatic limitations to any effort to implement UDL in these spaces. The chapter brings together the voice of two UDL scholars: one, based in North America, examines this tension from a theoretical perspective, while the second, writing from Ireland, addresses the concerns raised and demonstrates ways to achieve UDL integration even in these challenging neo-liberal formats. The chapter offers recommendations to the international reader on how to navigate this tension within their own post-secondary landscape.

Keywords: UDL, Inclusion, Post-Secondary Landscape, Large Classrooms, Neo-Liberalism, Diverse Learners

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Introduction

This volume examines the tension that can exist between transformative, student-centered pedagogies and the neo-liberal parameters increasingly dictating policy and practice within the business model Academy. One of the areas where this tension is tangible is the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL has imposed itself in the tertiary sector, over the last two decades, throughout the Global North and beyond, as a fresh, invigorating, and innovative framework that pushes educators and settings beyond deficit model approaches to inclusion – thus far mostly limited to the provision of reasonable

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