# Students with hearing loss:

## Post-Secondary voices & universal design for learning

# Objectives

- Understand hearing loss as it relates to diversity & universal design for learning

- Explore classroom applications

- Consider implications & recommendations

# What is universal design?

Curricula design that makes learning accessible to the widest possible range of learners through multiple means of:

- acquiring information
- engaging interest
- demonstrating knowledge

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Satisfies essential learning requirements

# Learning & hearing loss

*… independent of population figures, disability is not at all a distinguishing feature of a group of individuals … it is rather an essential feature of the human condition* (Bickenbach 2001,580).

# Medical model of disability

Disability:

- Is a deficit from the norm

- Derives from the individual student

- Requires solutions from professional intervention

# Language

- Defines
- Categorizes
- Labels

- *& therefore shapes perceptions, teaching/learning models & policy*

# Individual accommodations

## The law in British Columbia now requires:

- Assessment on an individual basis

- Provision of medical documentation

- Determination of essential requirements

- *Reasonable Accommodation* to the point of *Undue Hardship*

# Impact of the legal model in British Columbia



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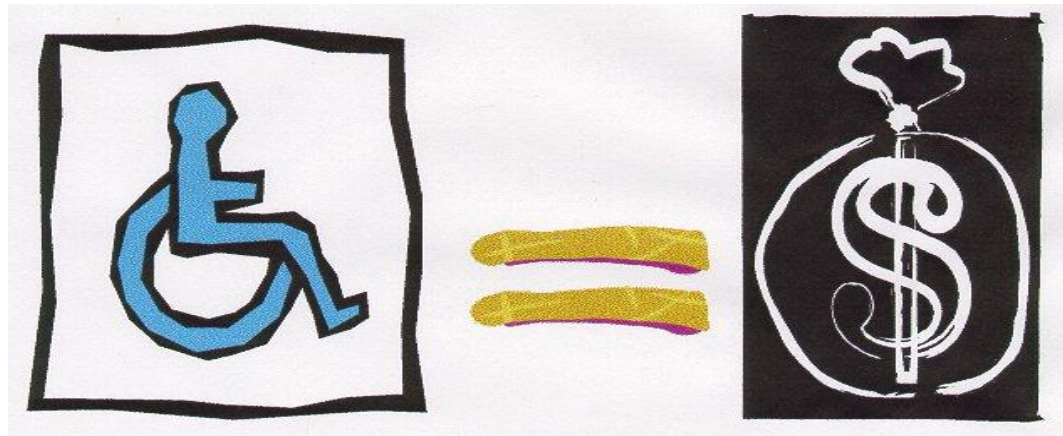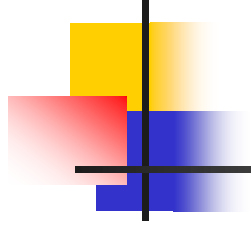
# Social model of disability

## Disability:

- Is a neutral difference

- Derives from social interaction & the environment

- Requires solutions that change the environment & social interactions

# UDL & the learning brain

- Recognition, strategic & affective brain networks

http://www.cast.org

# Principles of universal design for learning

# Accessible & fair

Is it likely that students will have difficulties accessing course materials or

participating in any essential activities related to this class?

- Online summary of key points to be covered in the upcoming class
- Online materials formatted so that they can be accessed by students with hearing loss
- Invite students to disclose needs

# A teacher's perspective

*I expect students to electronically distribute information that they are going to present beforehand. That works well for everyone, but can be especially beneficial for someone who is deaf or hard of hearing. This is not doing anything different for students with disabilities. In fact, everyone benefits from a common strategy.*

# Simple & consistent

Are there areas of confusion or inconsistency among course objectives, your own expectations and/or how the course is presented?

- Confirm questions on the final relate directly to information covered in class
- Announce changes to the course syllabus in class & online
- Check written materials & PP slides for consistency

# Flexible presentation & participation

Does the course offer students multi-modal access to materials & ways of demonstrating knowledge in a way that suits their abilities?

- Multiple instructional approaches: lecture, discussion, small groups, interactive materials, text, videos, graphics
- Alternative assignments & test formats
- Option to submit a written or oral report

# Explicit & readily perceived

Are there barriers to students receiving or understanding information & resources they need?

- Clearly define topics & concepts
- Demonstrate course website
- Provide reading material in digital & online format
- Explicit assignments
- Interpreters for exam instructions

# Supportive environment

Will students feel respected, welcome to express their thoughts & able to explore new ideas in this course?

- Encourage students to share their knowledge with other students to create collaborative atmosphere
- Encourage questions
- Study groups, listservs
- Discussion affirms respect for diversity

# A student's perspective

*At the beginning I wanted to tell every teacher and then I found that teachers do kind of look at you different and then I thought well maybe it is not the best thing to tell teachers right out front. I just kind of wanted to try it on my own.*

# Eliminate non-essential physical requirements

If there are physical challenges or obstacles to participating in this course, can they be reduced or avoided?
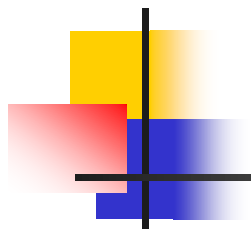
- Ensure guest speakers are aware of students' needs
- Provide short breaks
- Reduce ambient noise
- Encourage turn-taking & facing the student
- Add navigation tools to websites

# Space & environmental supports

Will students will find any of the materials or activities in this course to be inappropriate or unsuitable?
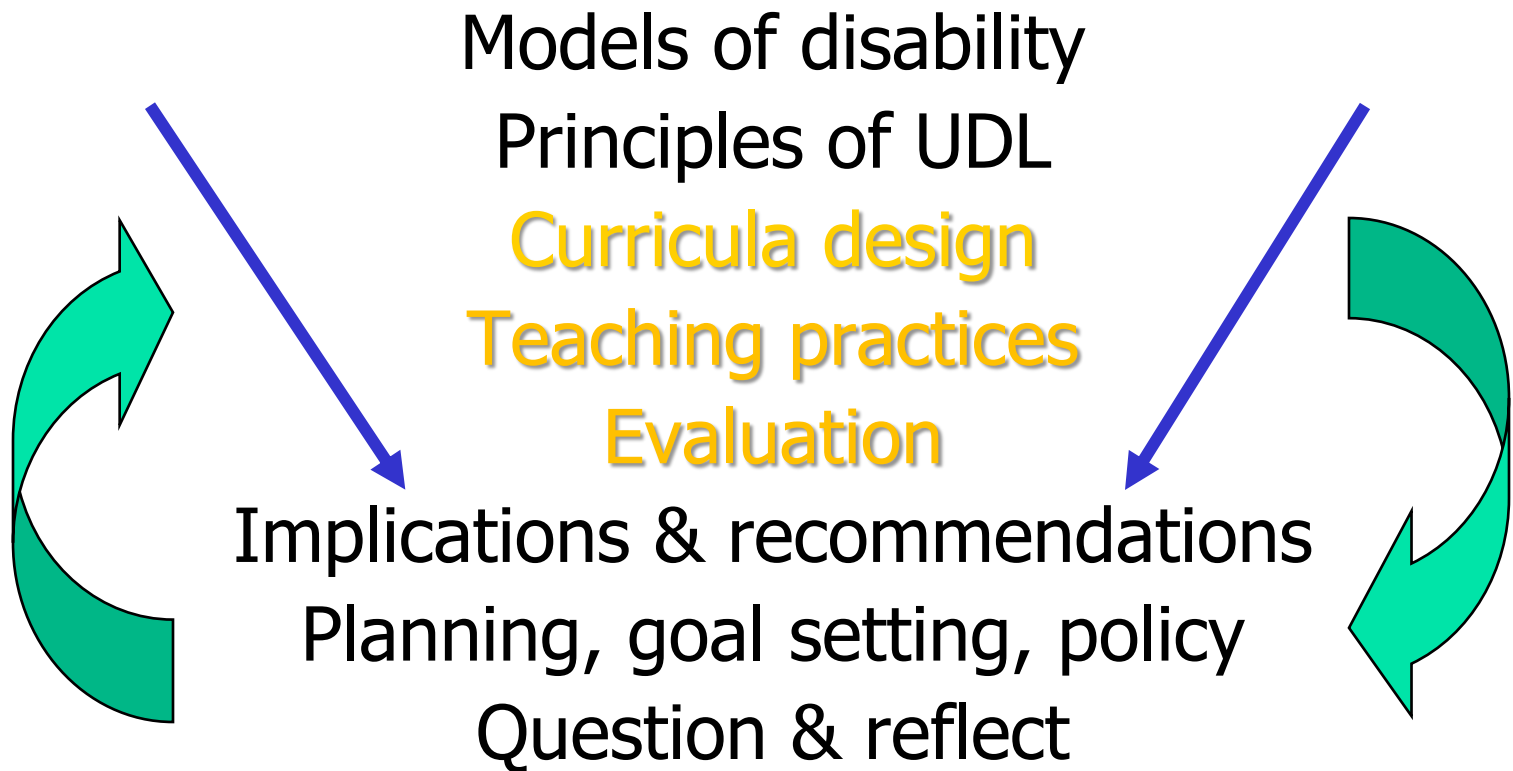
- Adapt design when lecturing in a lecture hall v. a seminar room
- Schedule small group activities in a room compatible with discussion & physical movement
- Consider lighting, ambient noise, access

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# Implementing universal design

# Re-imaging disability

Models of disability

Principles of UDL

Curricula design

Teaching practices

Evaluation

Implications & recommendations

Planning, goal setting, policy

Question & reflect

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# Implementing universal design

## Professional Practice

- Facilitate dialogue
- Build relationships
- Reflect on change

## Professional Development

- Continue to learn
- Mentoring & coaching
- Release time

# A student's perspective

*It seems that some people are natural teachers and some people aren't. Other teachers say this is how I have always done it, and this is how I always will do it, and you don't get it.*

# Implementing universal design

## Educational Leadership

- Balance interests & responsibility
- Share leadership
- Implement legislation through UDL
- Co-create access

# Re-imaging disability

- Current educational practices
- Values, beliefs & biases
- Social relationships, political & cultural landscape
- Ongoing reflection
- New understandings

# Re-imaging disability

- Build relationships between students, teachers & administrators
- Identify what is unique to the situation
- Promote practices to meet students' needs
- Support for teachers