Assuring an Inclusive Instructional Environment

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Objectives

- **Present facts and figures relating to incidence of mental illness/psychiatric disabilities**

- **Describe functional limitations**

- **Clarify letter vs. spirit of legal compliance**

- **Describe Universal Design as an inclusive framework for instruction**

- **Provide inclusive instructional examples using UDI Principles**

Facts and Figures

- Terminology: Mental illness (MI); psychiatric or psychological disabilities
- Group of disorders including depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress, and obsessive-compulsive disorder
- 2003-2004 data (U.S. Department of Education, 2006):
  - 11% of undergrads reported having a disability
  - 22% reported having mental illness
  - Females more likely to report MI/depression

Common Characteristics

– **More susceptible to common stressors of college life**

– **Difficulty receiving, processing, and recalling information during times of stress**

– **Side effects from meds may affect attention, memory, alertness, activity level**

– **Onset and occurrence of episodes may relate to missed class attendance**

Common Characteristics

- **Lack of energy; sadness or fearfulness; nervousness, agitation; unpredictable, or inappropriate comments**
- **Avoidance or withdrawal behavior**
- **Dependency; low self-esteem**
- **Inability to make decisions**

Functional Limitations

- **Cognitive: Short-term memory problems, time management, self-talk (fears, failure, panic), extreme self-absorption, concentration problems, screening environmental stimuli, distractibility**

- **Behavioral/Physical: Impulsiveness, repetitive motion, self-talk (influences behavior), pacing, maintaining stamina, lack of affect, difficulty initiating and maintaining interpersonal contact, responding to negative feedback and change**

Letter of the Law?
or
Spirit of the Law?

- **ADA requires access including reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments**

- **In an era marked by increasing student diversity, adopting a philosophy that is inclusive of *all* students is desirable**

Universal Design

- **The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design (NCSU,1997)**

Universal Design for Instruction (UDI)

"UDI is the proactive design and use of inclusive instructional strategies that benefit a broad range of learners including students with disabilities."

Scott, McGuire, & Embry (2002)

Principle One
Equitable Use

- **Comprehensive syllabus**
    - **Hard copy and online**
    - **Simple font and layout**
    - **Clear, bolded headings**
    - **List of dates for readings, assignments, tests**
    - **Links to key content**
- **Accommodations and behavioral statements**
- **Announce changes – in advance**
- **High expectations – for *all***

Accommodations Statement

- **ACCOMMODATIONS**

  If there is any student in this course who has special needs because of learning disabilities or other kinds of disabilities, please feel free to discuss this with me at the beginning of the semester. Disability services are available through the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD), Wilbur Cross Building, Room 201, 486-2020, or the University Program for College Students with Learning Disabilities (UPLD), Gentry, Room 003, 486-0178.

Class Expectations

- **ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR and STUDENT CONDUCT POLICIES**

    Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the University's *Student Code of Conduct* as it relates to academic integrity and conduct in undergraduate education (http: //www.dosa.uconn.edu/student_code_appendixa.html)

Principle Two Flexibility in Use

- **Multiple methods of instruction**
  - **Lecture with visual outline/PP**
  - **Group activities**
  - **Web-board based discussions**
  - **Handouts to accompany verbal presentations**
- **Multiple methods of assessment**
  - **varied ways of demonstrating mastery (paper, class presentation, online module)**
  - **student choice in completing activities to demonstrate mastery**

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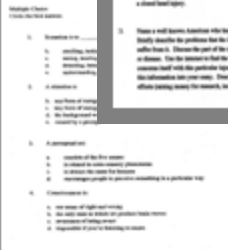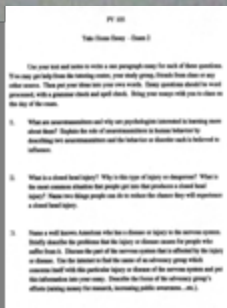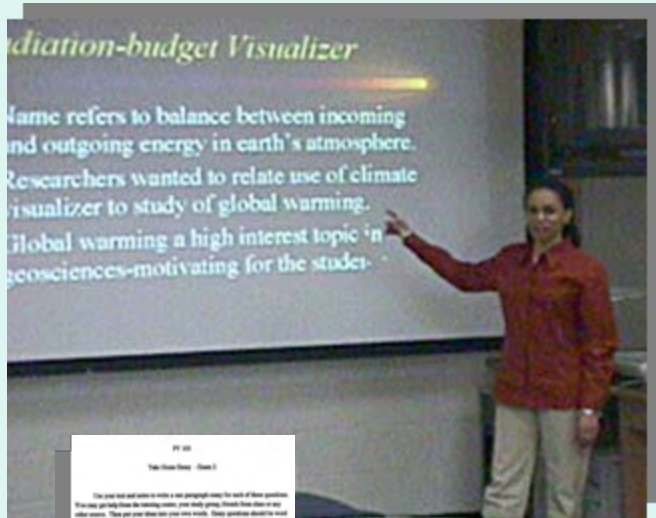
Principle Three
Simple and Intuitive
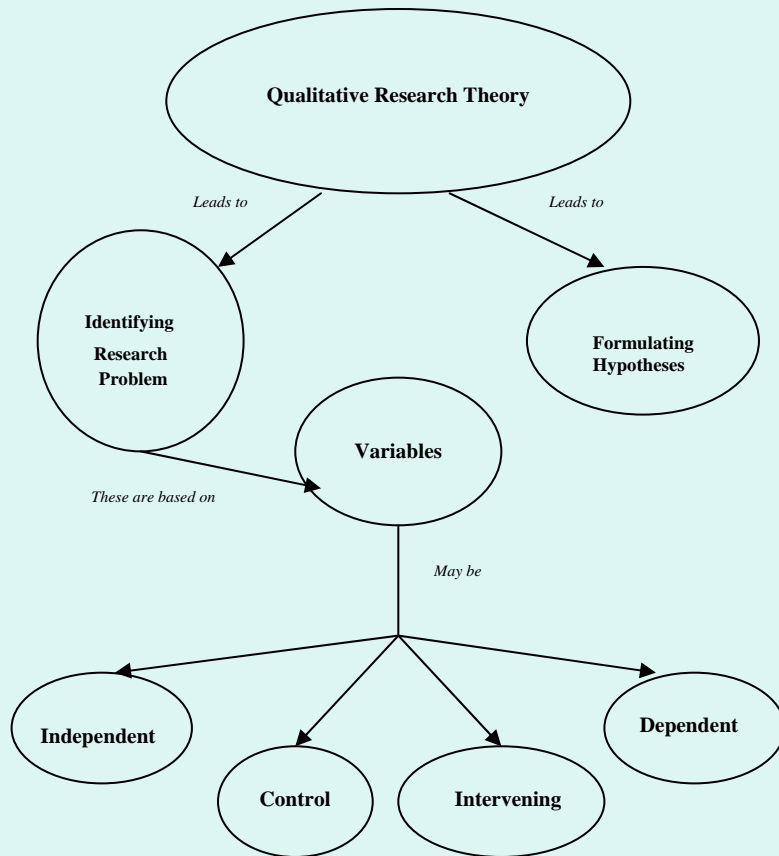
- Use of rubrics for grading

- Models of exemplary work posted online

- Differentiating between essential & supplementary material

- Structuring each class lecture consistently

McGuire, 2007

Principle Four
Perceptible Information

- Texts, reading materials in digital format or online
- Lecture outlines provided online
- Permission to tape record lectures
- Using "wait time" to accommodate processing speed differences

Principle Five
Tolerance for Error

English Comp
File Edit View Help

Draft 1
Draft 2
Draft 3

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- "Practice" exercises to supplement classroom instruction
- Extra credit options
- Breaking large assignments into components for formative feedback
- E-mail contact to reinforce student's efforts
- Dropping quiz/test items if missed by ___% or more of class

Principle Six
Low Physical Effort

• **Lecture outlines, online access to lecture notes**

• **Use of the Library online reserve or WebCT for reading materials**

• **Flexible seating for easy classroom ingress/egress**

Principle Seven
Size and Space for Approach and Use

- **Classroom seating preference and flexibility in exiting**
- **Classroom "stretch" time**
- **Use of technologies (e.g., white boards) that relate to learning**

Principle Eight
A Community of Learners

- **Syllabus statement**
- **Guidelines for team projects – in advance – with roles and grading criteria**
- **Specific directions for class activities**

Community of Learners

A goal for this course is that we shall all contribute to a climate that promotes a Community of Learners (Principle 8). This includes participating in an instructional environment that promotes respect, interaction, and communication. Respectful language and behavior are expected of all students during classes and class discussions.

Principle Nine
Instructional Climate

- **"Welcome" e-mail to class distribution list – before classes begin**
- **Periodic e-mails that reinforce student effort**
- **Opportunities for anonymous student feedback about class activities**
- **Modeling respect for the class community by language, demeanor, personal anecdotes**

Food for Thought

"**Subject matter defines the boundaries of the intellectual territory….**

Students' intellects, learning styles, fears, and aspirations shape their paths of inquiry."

(Barnes, Christensen, & Hansen, 1994)