

Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Social Work Education

Authors : Kaycee Bills

Abstract : Action research is a method of inquiry useful in solving social problems in social work. This study seeks to address a significant problem: higher education's use of traditional instructional methods in social work education. Ineffective techniques, such as lecturing, fail to account for students' variable learning needs. In contrast to traditional pedagogy, universal design for learning (UDL) is a robust framework that '[improves] and [optimizes] teaching and learning for all people' (CAST, 2018), including students with disabilities. For this project, the research team interviewed the UDL and Accessibility Specialist at their institution for two reasons: (1) to learn how to implement UDL practices in their classrooms, and in turn, (2) to motivate other faculty members at their institution to consider enacting UDL principles. A thematic analysis of the interview's transcript reveals themes relevant to practicing UDL. Implications for future practice, as well as the researcher's reflections on the research process, are shared in the discussion section.

Keywords : disabilities, higher education, inclusive education, universal design for learning

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