Chapter 13
Access within the Classroom through Universal Design for Learning and Key Learning Elements

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ABSTRACT
Much has been done to assure that social justice is achieved by providing equal opportunity for access to education, but less has been done to provide equal opportunity for learning success. This chapter addresses how an organizational trainer/faculty (instructor) may become an Equal Opportunity Instructor for Learning Success (EOILS). In particular, it provides guidance for how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Elements of Learning may be combined in an innovative manner to design and implement classes that will provide equal opportunity for learning success. This is accomplished by presenting the UDL Principles and Elements of Learning while showing how course improvements may be made. There are three examples resulting in the final implementation that incorporates significant use of UDL Principles and Elements of Learning. Faculty and organizational trainers (training and development) around the world would likely benefit from the use of UDL.

INTRODUCTION
Social justice can be achieved by creating a pedagogy that matches individual learning needs. Social justice can be advanced for all global learners by creating a classroom environment that aims to meet the needs of the greatest number. The teacher’s goal is to motivate and excite learning. The planned classroom experience should not be one of simply imparting information to the learners but to motivate and assist them as they perform their own learning.

Education is becoming more necessary for employment in our contemporary technologically diverse society and it continues in most organiza-
tions for a lifetime. Learners can be left behind if they learn differently than the prescribed ways of a narrowly taught curriculum, and once behind, it becomes difficult to proceed.

Here we try to explain principles involved in creating a curriculum for learners who have different learning preferences, who need extra materials and resources, who do better with a different method of evaluating their learning, or who require a different mechanism to become more fully engaged in the learning process. This chapter will provide suggested general solutions and some specific examples of implementations of the solution.

BACKGROUND

The primary author, Joe Grimes, is a university faculty member of computer engineering, who founded and administered a university faculty development center for ten years. He has published faculty development material, presented at conferences, kept up-to-date with trends in educational literature and best practices of education. Early in his career, he also taught in a high school, and coached basketball, golf and soccer teams. Much of this chapter is the formulation of his ideas that are a reflection of all of these experiences.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

Social justice in education can come in multiple forms such as making education more accessible, creating healthy and safe environments for learners and organizational employees, and educating instructors and learners about social justice. This chapter is about a form of social justice in which every instructor can participate by focusing on how she/he can create an environment that maximizes the number of learners in her/his classroom who are targeted for learning success. Creating greater access to educational attainment within the classroom can do this.

Access to education often refers to learners trying to get into a course, school, or organization by overcoming physical, historic, or other barriers. But what happens when a learner overcomes those barriers and enters into a course at a school or within another organization? The concern of access to education becomes replaced by the concern of access to successful learning within the classroom. While many organizations, especially schools, have systems in place to make educational materials accessible to those with physical and/or mental limitations, a gap often remains for learners with different learning and study preferences. Often those with the greatest ability for recognizing these differences in learners and accommodating for these differences are the instructors.

Instructors who try to improve all of their learners’ potentials for learning success could be described as Equal Opportunity Instructors for Learning Success (EOILS). An EOILS does not discriminate based on race, age, sex, other personal characteristics, or learning preferences. EOILS will also do whatever they reasonably can to accommodate for variation in how learners learn and study.

An EOILS must consider each individual who enters the course. Learners come to courses with a high variation of prior knowledge and experiences (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Because each individual constructs his/her own knowledge, equivalent backgrounds might not mean equivalent knowledge construction (Bruner, 1996). Although learners learn best when information is presented according to highly researched principles (Mayer, 2005; Mayer, 2009) and study strategies (Weinstein & Mayer, 1985; Mulcahy-Ernt & Caverly, 2009; Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, & Willingham, 2013) they may need different varieties of learning activities and starting points (Rose, 2006; Rose & Meyer, 2006). Providing learners with choices of where to start and how to learn helps to advance the abilities of those who might not otherwise be able to succeed.