

Accessible Design and Accessible Pedagogy in Undergraduate Nursing Education

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Abstract

Universal Design for Learning is a framework for curriculum design that provides all learners with equal opportunities for learning, regardless of their ability, age, gender, culture, or linguistic background. This approach is grounded in the following three principles: multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement. Using Universal Design for Learning in the design of courses, learning materials, and activities means that all learners have the opportunity to succeed and accessibility is not an afterthought. Many nurse educators lack the knowledge necessary to integrate/implement Universal Design for Learning principles in their teaching. Collaboration with an instructional designer can assist nurse educators in creating quality hybrid and online learning experiences.

The RN-to-Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) is currently offered in a hybrid and fully online delivery format. The development of the online delivery format provided the opportunity to add an instructional designer to the NDMU School of Nursing team. The addition of an instructional designer promoted the enhancement of courses throughout the curriculum to better serve all learners, regardless of delivery modality, by improving accessibility through design and pedagogy. Examples of course enhancements included the creation of self-paced tutorials for navigating research databases through the library with comprehension checks, the implementation of Zoom-based synchronous feedback for student review of written papers, and the development of resources for an ePortfolio project. Utilizing an instructional designer within a nursing education program improves the accessibility of nursing education and benefits all learners while also enhancing the educational experience for all.