3Play Webinars | The Dark Arts Explained: How to Get Funding, People, and Time to Implement UDL

SOFIA LEIVA: Thank you, everyone, for joining us today for the webinar entitled "The Dark Arts Explained-- How to Get Funding, People, and Time to Implement UDL." I'm Sofia, Leiva from 3Play Media. And I'll be moderating today. And today, I'm joined by Tom Tobin.

Tom Tobin is the program area director of distance teaching and learning at the University of Wisconsin Madison, as well as an internationally renowned author and speaker on issues of quality and teaching with technology, including evaluating online teaching, academic integrity, copyright, and accessibility. He holds a PhD in English literature, a second master's degree in information science, a professional project management certification, a master online teacher certification, the Quality Matters Reviewer certification. And he recently completed the Professional and Accessibility Core Competency Certification.

He tells his nieces and nephews that he is in 42nd grade. He's also the author of *Evaluating Online Teaching, Implementing Best Practices, The Copyright Ninja, Going Alt-Ac, A Guide to Alternative Academic Careers,* and *Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone-- Universal Design for Learning and Higher Education.* Well, we're excited to have you today, Thomas. If you want to take it away, let's get started.

THOMAS J. TOBIN: Thank you very much, Sofia. I'm really grateful to be here on this session with everybody. And I'm just going to get the screen share going here and start off with some gratitude. I'm grateful to Sofia and for our hosts at 3Play for inviting me to share with everybody today. And I also want to say thank you to Faith from A La Carte Connection, who's providing our captions today.

If you want to see those captions or you want to turn them off, it's in the control panel down near the bottom or the side of your screen where you have the ability to work in the chat, the ability to raise your hand, all those kinds of things. And that Raise Hand down there is going to be important as well.

I want to make three, maybe three and 1/2 promises for everybody today. First, I am completely interruptible during the next hour that we're going to be spending. So if you're here on the live session, if you see something that sparks an idea or a question, put it into the chat, or use the Raise Hand feature. We'll recognize you, and you can become part of the conversation.

Second, even if you're watching the recorded version of this session, make sure

that you have some way to take notes, because I want to give you some ideas that you can then build on, expand on, actually use at your own institution. So I want to make sure that what you're leaving with today is practical.

Three, I'm going to make it simple. I'm going to take a lot of research that other people have done and I have done myself and try to boil it down into three strategies and two little tricks that you can try. Now, does that mean it's everything you need to know about how to get funding, and time, and people for your inclusive practices? No. I do want to help you with a starting point, though.

And I said three and 1/2 promises. The other 1/2 of that promise is there is going to be some corny jokes and some shtick here. So the theme that I've got here on the screen is the title. And it's a black background with some wavy lines on it. And it says "The Dark Arts Explained, How to Get Funding, People, and Time to Implement Universal Design for Learning." And there's an asterisk at the end there. And we'll talk about why there's an asterisk in just a second.

Also on the screen is the logo of 3Play Media, our sponsor for today. And there's a picture of me with my glasses down near the tip of my nose. And I'm sort of glowering over what looks like a crystal ball. That is actually the top of a staircase at the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest, Hungary. And when my partner and I saw this, we thought, ooh, we have to take that sort of fortune teller picture. And it's come in handy today.

Why the dark arts, you may ask yourself? Even if you're not, I'll explain. Sometimes, when we advocate for inclusive design and practice at our colleges, universities, companies, we're met with the response that is, yes, that's a good idea. Yes, that's a best practice. Yes, that's the right thing to do, but it only really has an impact for a small percentage of the people whom we serve. So maybe we won't do a great big thing. We won't have a big project, or we won't put a lot of time or money toward those projects.

I've found a couple of sneaky ways that we can frame those actions so that our leadership perceives it as mission critical and wants to make a budget item for it, wants to fund a position to help us do the work, wants to give us time to be able to do inclusive design and work. So with that, let's get going.

On your screen now is another black screen, and it's a rainbow pixelated outline of a unicorn with magic sparkles coming off of the unicorn's horn. And the reason that that's there is that's the asterisk in the title. And it says, "Some assembly required. Magic wand, cauldron, eye of newt, wing of bat, sold separately. Exercise caution, and always wear appropriate eye and ear protection when summoning dark forces. Toil and trouble may not be tax-deductible in all jurisdictions."

Yes, I'm kind of having fun with the dark arts theme here, but there is a serious point underneath this. And you'll notice there's also a little tiny picture of three witches around a cauldron from *Macbeth,* I think it was, a stage production of it.

The way to talk to your leadership is sometimes seen as this sort of mysterious thing, that especially if you're at an operations level in your organization, it can be a challenge for you to talk in a way that they pay attention to. And it's because their attention is often divided. And they have to make decisions based on imperfect information. So here are some of those secrets, if you have an inclusive design initiative, if you want to do universal design for learning, if you want to make your materials and your programming more accessible at your institution.

So on the screen now are some very not mythical challenges that many of us have gone through in the past several months. There's three pictures. One of them is of a car driving through a burning wilderness. There were wildfires on the West Coast of the United States, wildfires in Australia recently.

In the middle are people protesting for the Black Lives Matter movement in Los Angeles. And there's a bunch of people holding up signs and walking down the street. And on the right-hand side there's a man in a coffee shop. And he's looking at the camera while he's placing his order. He's wearing a mask because of the COVID-19 pandemic that we've all recently gone through.

Also on the screen is a cover image of the book that Kirsten Behling and I recently wrote called, *Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone-- Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education.* And I promise you that this presentation is a little bit beyond the book. This stuff that we're talking about today isn't actually in there, but it is based on a lot of the research that Kirsten and I did in order to frame universal design for learning for an academic and corporate audience.

So those are the promises of the session for today. Now, I'd like to get you into a little bit of thinking and doing right off the bat. So on your screen now are some college students. They're in a study area. It's very obvious this picture was taken before the pandemic happened. Nobody's wearing a mask.

They're all around a table, and some of the students have laptops open. Some of them are writing on paper. One of the students is standing up and pointing at a screen that they're all looking at. And on your screen now is the official definition of universal design for learning, from our friends at the Center for Applied Special Technology, or CAST, in Boston.

These are the neuroscientists and educational designers who said that if we are going to learn anything, whether we are six years old or 60 years old, we have to have a way to get engaged. We have to have a why for the learning. We have to be able to get the information that we need in order to learn. We have to have a "what" of learning. And we have to be able to practice that learning and demonstrate what we know. We have to be able to take action and express ourselves. We have to have a "how" of learning.

And since people learn in various ways and through various inputs, and there's great variety among us as we learn, universal design for learning says that we should design multiple ways of getting and keeping people engaged, give people multiple ways to get information-- just like today. I'm describing what's on the screen. Faith, from our captioning folks at A La Carte Connections, she's putting in the live captions. You have lots of different ways to get the information here today and multiple ways of taking action and expressing yourself, demonstrating your skills. And we're about to put that last one to the test in just a couple of seconds here.

Now, the same image and words are on the screen, but I've put a great big +1 on there, because I advocate a lot that if we want to talk to our campus leadership or our organizational leaders, and we say multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression, their eyes kind of glaze over. A simpler way to think about it is, think about the interactions that we want people who are learning to have with materials that we design, with each other, with instructors and

facilitators, with support people, with the wider world. If there's one way for those things to happen now, +1. Make one more way, and you've got a good start toward universal design for learning.

That's not all of UDL. It is a wonderful starting point,. And you might have heard me say these kinds of things before. I want to make sure that everybody has a baseline from which we're going to dive into some of the strategies that we're going to talk about. So thank you, for letting me do a little background to get us all up to speed.

OK. Now on the screen are a number of college graduates. They're in their caps and gowns. They're milling around in a building after they've graduated. And there is a professor in academic regalia, the red-and-gold gown with a big sash and the fancy hat. And he's giving one of the graduates a fist bump.

So if you had five minutes just to talk to your president, your provost, your CEO, one of the leaders of your organization, and you wanted to tell that person what are the important things to support in terms of inclusive design or inclusive work at your institution, what are the one or two things that you would want to tell that person?

I'm going to put two minutes of time on the clock, and I'd love to hear your ideas. Either post it into the chat and we'll give voice to it after the two minutes is over, or hang on to your ideas. Take notes in whatever format, and use the Raise Hand feature. We'll recognize you and bring you onto the microphone in just a couple of seconds as well.

So let me put two minutes on the clock. You're going to hear some music. If you'd like to mute your audio and think in silence, I'll also put into the chat when the music is going to end, so you can bring the audio back on. So here we go, two minutes. What are the one or two things you would put in your five-minute message to your leaders?

[MUSIC PLAYING]

All right, two minutes goes by pretty quickly when you're thinking and typing or taking notes toward your ideas, so thank you for putting your brains in that place. I don't see anybody yet who has raised a hand under the participants list. Is there

anybody who would like to be able to come on the live microphone and share a quick answer to this question?

All right, no worries. One of the parts of inclusive design or universal design for learning is giving people choices, even if they don't take some of those choices. So you had the choice to raise your hand and come on the live microphone, or take notes on your own, or type it into the chat. You choose, and you do what works for you.

So we've got some really good ideas here in the chat. Let me give voice to some of them. Sandra says, consult students with disabilities. They should be part of the process. Flexibility in terms of content types and approaches to assessment. So her message to leadership is, we've got to get folks involved who are affected by the decisions that we make about the inclusivity or exclusivity of our systems and our interactions. I love the way that you have framed that, Sandra. And we'll come back around to a couple of those points.

John says, UDL can help all of our students. It would close equity gaps with DSPS students-- I'll ask you what that means in a couple of seconds-- as well as increase completion and retention for all students and helping us achieve our institutional goals. I want to underline two words in what John says here. He's talking about completion and retention rates. This is what our presidents, our provosts, our vice chancellors-- this is the stuff that our leadership team is concerned with.

So John is using the language that they use in order to make an argument for inclusive design. So this is one of those little secrets that I wanted to share with everybody in a couple of minutes. So thank you for foreshadowing a couple of the things we're going to be talking about here, John.

Ben says, captioning can be helpful for English-as-a-second-language learners. And that is true, absolutely. And I actually want to use Ben's feedback here to also give another little foreshadowing.

Our leadership will not give you funding based on that, and I'll say why in a couple of minutes. So I love where you're coming from on that one, Ben. And I want to help you to build on that and strengthen it so that your leaders will listen better when you make a point like that. Awesome.

Gottfried says, paint the vision of an inclusive university, how it would be recognized by other organizations and universities around. Ooh, I love it. Gottfried is also doing something that we're going to talk about, which is to say, your peers are doing it. The people at this other big organization are doing it, and we don't want to be left behind. We want to be an industry leader, right? We want to talk the talk. We want to talk about vision.

So those are, again, language pieces that the leadership are using. So I love the way that you folks are framing this. Marty says, universal design benefits everyone, not just people with disabilities. Yes, and we're going to build on that. Lucy says, to engage all students equally without barriers and increase retention-- there's that word again-- by providing equal access to content and communications. Nicely done.

Diane says, using a UDL approach benefits all students, not just students with disabilities. And then I give some examples-- captioning being useful for everyone studying in a noisy environment, like people on the bus or the train, or when having audio on isn't feasible. We're going to build on that one too, Diane, because we're going to talk about how it leads to better student retention, persistence, and satisfaction. Very nicely done.

Maureen says, marketing advantage, because accessible course materials provide greater opportunities for learning. Here's a secret. All your captioned videos, they're searchable, which means that people can actually find things by keyword in them. And that's a marketing thing. Excellently done.

And let me see here. Lars says, accessibility matters. Faculty cannot do it alone. That's very true. We need processes and funding that will support faculty members, give them time to engage with improving student learning. Nice.

[? Zaynab ?] says the UN SDG 4, 11, and 16 are all about making this world a better place, so going to the United Nations. Let's get the institution on board by making our policies support inclusion and equality in access to education or otherwise. I love pointing to the law. And we'll also talk about why that's not the first place to go with your leadership.

And Sandra is saying, there's direct evidence that all students benefit from alternative formats, like captions, multimodal delivery of content. Evidence from 3Play Media and journal publications-- so hey, I just happen to have this document right here, nicely done-- and persistence, as well, in courses and programs as a whole are an issue that universal design for learning helps support, if we follow the principles.

I love how you folks are framing these things. And Marsha just put one in the chat here too. Accessibility is not a one-time checkbox, but a continual process that's integrated from the start, she says. It's essential for some, but useful for everybody.

And by the way, your leadership is going to think in checkbox terms. I bought the tool. We did the thing. Now, we're done with accessibility. Now, let's move on to something else, like equity, and diversity, and inclusion, and the flipped classroom, and working with incarcerated learners. Oh, I have to pause.

Have you ever felt like your institutional leaders go to a retreat once a year, and then they come back and they're all fired up with the new thing? And then everybody has to do the new thing. And that new thing changes every year as the trends go in education, or in business, or in industry.

Part of the challenge is that people can see universal design for learning, or inclusive design, as one of the new things. And we kind of suffer from innovation fatigue. Oh, yeah. I don't have to do this, I'll just wait until the weather changes, right?

Sandra's saying, is innovation on that trend? It crops up every few years. Yeah, you're thinking the right way here, I think.

What I'd love to do is help you to frame inclusive design, and UDL in particular, so that it's not part of that new thing, new thing, new thing progression, but it's more, this is mission critical. This is how we should be doing our business.

So let's think about that for a second. I'd like to offer you three new frames for when you do get an opportunity to talk with your leadership team. On your screen are three picture frames, some facing forward, some back. There's a nice vase with some plants in it. And there's a dark wizard holding up a green flame and a book in

the lower corner. Just remember, we're in the dark arts here, even though the color palette has gotten a little lighter.

The first of the three frames is scope. When you talk to leadership, the biggest challenge that we have is many of us work in disability services offices. Many of us work in instructional-design areas. Many of us work in information technology. Those are areas of our organizations where leadership perceive us as having a narrow scope. We only do computer technology. We only do disability support. We only do diversity and inclusion. And so our efforts are aimed at a very small slice of what the entire organization does.

So the first thing that you can do when you are arguing for an inclusive method, tool, people, time, is to broaden your scope. Ask questions of your leadership. And ask them, what are the big problems or challenges that they perceive? What are the things that they are trying to address right now? And then show how an inclusive-design framework or approach can help them with those broad problems for everyone.

I've said this a few times before in many other sessions, but it's doubly important here. On my video, I'm holding up my mobile phone. With the pandemic, everybody now has a similar barrier to getting access to materials, each other, instructors, facilitators, support resources, you name it. And that barrier is illness-related social distancing.

So one of the ways that we can talk about scope is talking about our learners on their mobile devices. Most of our learners do not own a laptop or a desktop computer, but north of 90% of our learners own a smartphone. And on that smartphone is how they're trying to get access to all of the services that we offer at our organization, or our college, or our university.

So when we talk to campus leaders, it's not just accessibility goes beyond disability, and it's good for everybody. But it is, if we made these materials more inclusive, we would be able to retain more of our learners. They would stick with us better. They would understand what we're talking about better.

I'm thinking both in an education context where we want students to take a course with me, and then come back next time and take a course with you and continue

their educations. And I'm thinking in an industry context here, as well, where we want our employees to understand the training materials the first time, get it right, and then give good service to the people whom we serve and to their coworkers whom they're working with. So the first secret is, broaden your scope. And be as specific as you can to the problems and challenges that your leaders themselves perceive.

So with that in mind, I want to take a second and see if anybody's got a hand up. Remember, I am interruptible. And if something pops up and is chiming for you, you want to share a story, or an example, or a question, just put it in the chat. Or put a hand up, and we'll recognize you and bring you into the conversation.

The second thing on your screen is impact. And here is where I get a little sneaky when I talk to my leadership team. On your screen are a number of graduates of a college. They're outside. They're all smiling. They're in their caps and gowns. It's the moment when they all throw their caps up in the air. Hooray, we've graduated. And so they're all looking up, throwing their caps up in the air and smiling.

When we think about impact, we can often box ourselves into that narrow scope, right? We can talk about, OK, this inclusive-design project that I want to do, this will have an impact on everyone whom we serve in the disability-support office. Now, our leadership probably has a mistaken notion of who are the people whom we serve in various areas of our organizations. So one of the things that we can do is start collecting data and statistics about the problems and challenges that we heard from our leadership colleagues when we were thinking about scope.

So if you ask them the question, what's one of the big problems that you're trying to address? And the response comes back, well, the freshman cliff in a college, right? We take in 2,000 freshmen. And by the time we get them to be a sophomore class, there's only about 1,400 of them left.

Where did the other 600 go? Find out. Get the information. Get the data. And what you'll discover is, most likely, many of them dropped out because of financial reasons. That's something that we can't really touch with better design.

But the number-two reason why people drop out of colleges and universities and the number-one reason why people quit jobs in industry-- time, time management,

literally finding enough time in the day to be able to honor their personal, family, work, and educational commitments. And this is where inclusive design and universal design for learning really does have a positive impact on everyone across all of the different use cases that we have.

When we did our opening brainstorm, you saw a lot of colleagues sharing about how UDL helps with captions, UDL helps with access, UDL helps people to stay with it. And the argument that I make to a lot of my leadership team is that universal design for learning, even if we're doing it at a surface level, even if it's just that 1+ design, it helps us to retain students better, because we're finding just 20 more minutes out of the day where they could study, practice, or prepare, where they didn't have time before. And we've got lots of data that show that those 15, 20 minutes for study, that can be the difference between struggling and keeping up.

So when we think about impact and we're talking with our leadership team, it is very useful, especially if you work in an area where you could be perceived as having a narrow impact-- take those data and do a report, or do a quick two-page summary, with some of the other people in the other service areas of your institution. Band together. So if it's just me in disability-support services saying we need to do this and fund this, that's one thing. But if it's me, and the IT director, and the CIO, and the folks from the registration office, and the folks from financial aid all saying, this has a positive impact, and this is something that we need to do, then that has a greater impact on our leadership team.

Sandra's asking a question in the chat. How much do hidden disabilities, like episodic or chronic illness-- so not keeping up-- or ASD, or ADHD, and so on, and what about unwillingness to disclose that, or not having a diagnosis-- for example, women with ASD-- who postpone post-secondary, or may forego it entirely due to lack of confidence despite a good academic record in secondary school.

Sandra's actually asking a question underneath this impact strategy, and that is, in the United States, and recently with the Accessible Canada Act as well-- and this is true in other areas of the world too-- when you are an elementary or high-school learner, the state is legally required to provide you with what's called FAPE, F-A-P-E, Free and Appropriate Public Education. What that means is, if you have a disability

condition that's in your environment, the state is required, in the form of your school and your teachers, to accommodate that, to make one change, one time, just for you, so that you have an equal chance at being able to learn well along with all of your classmates.

When we're talking about higher education, there is no FAPE. In fact, you, as a learner, have the right of privacy. If you have a disability condition in your life and you prefer not to let anybody else know about that or ask for accommodations about that, that is your right. The same thing when you go into the workplace. If you have a disability challenge in your life and you don't want your employer to know about that, that is totally your right not to disclose. But it's also your right to seek. And Sandra's saying, self-advocacy is needed as well, which can be an issue with other conditions. And that's absolutely true.

So one of the challenges that we face, as administrators and designers, is that since we know that not everyone is going to seek an accommodation, even if it might be beneficial to them, and since we know that the barriers that our learners face are not just disability barriers, right-- it's time barriers. That's the biggest one. We have work responsibilities, family responsibilities, military service. We're taking care of aged parents. All kinds of things are weighing on our time as learners or as employees. So when we design the learning interactions that we want our learners to have with us, whether we are in industry or education, we are lowering barriers that people don't have to ask us to lower, . And that's the strength of UDL.

Lucy's saying here in the chat, including faculty leaders can help too, since leadership teams seem to respond well to faculty voices. I'll insert here, especially if it's the faculty senate or some other governing body where there's shared governance. And Lucy says, they respond well to examples from their courses, including student outcomes.

And Lucy, I wish I could slip you $5 here, because that is a wonderful transition into the third strategy, which is budget. On your screen is a budget sheet that's printed out. There's a pen and some writing on this budget sheet in the background. And in the foreground is a calculator. And in the bottom corner is Krampus, the goat-headed demon who steals children at Christmas time in Eastern European countries and takes care of the bad children or naughty children.

So remember, we're doing the dark arts here, so this is sort of secret stuff that you should keep to yourself, until you spring it on your leadership. And you know that I'm saying that completely with tongue in cheek, but we'll continue with the theme here.

The third strategy is budget. Talk numbers. One of the reasons that we don't often get funding for large, inclusive design projects, including adopting universal design for learning, is that our leaders see the investment in time, people, and projects as being niche or narrow. So what you do is you listen, like in the first two strategies here, when we're thinking about scope and we're thinking about impact.

When you were thinking about scope, you were asking the question of your leaders, what are the big problems you want to address? When you're thinking about impact, you're taking the answer to that question and going to find data that show what the trends are or what the information is that you can use to show how your solution can help to address those things.

Here, when you're thinking about budget, is where you actually run the numbers. This is where you actually do the information gathering and the application. So you put together a project and start it up under your existing frameworks. And then, you can show, OK, when we took this particular course or this particular training effort, we ran one the way it's always been run, and we ran another one in a more inclusively designed way. And we ended up keeping more of our students. They earned better marks. They stayed with us. They persisted. They went on to go take more training or do more courses for us.

Those are the data where you can show, we spent this many hours, which costs this much money in salary and benefits, and we saved this much money. Because if it costs us $2 to keep a student from one year to the next to the next, if it costs us $2 to retain an employee from one year to the next, it costs us $10 in marketing, and job efforts, and recruitment, to go get a new student or a new employee. So know what those numbers are.

And here is where your recruitment, your marketing team, all of your colleagues in those areas, you can have really productive conversations with them, because they know how much per person they spend in order to bring in a new student or hire a

new employee. And you can use those data to say, if we hadn't done this in terms of making captions, in terms of doing inclusive design, in terms of giving people choices for how they show what they know, if we hadn't done this, we'd end up spending the $10 rather than the $2, and $2, and $2, and $2.

And [? Zaynab ?] is asking an important question. Will we get access to the notes for this talk or recording? It's a lot of information. Yes, it is, and you will have access to the recording, and to the chat transcripts, and to the live captions, as well, after this is over with. So 3Play is always really good about that. And here's Sofia. We'll send the recording tomorrow, so awesome on that.

And Sandra's asking another question here. And keep them coming as we go. She says, what about student perceptions of our institution? If they have a good experience in their courses or program and succeed, is that a factor that impacts the bottom line in the real world? Or is it less tangible?

Not only is it a factor that affects the bottom line, but when we think about students, the three things that I hear from campus presidents, provosts, chancellors, leaders, and from industry, CEOs and leaders, three things. Persistence-- are our students or our employees sticking with us? Are they going into a training scenario or into a course, and do they stay with it until the end? How many people drop out of a course, or reduce their load, or we end up moving them into a different place in the workplace because they didn't complete all of the training or all of the study that we prescribed for them? So persistence is huge.

Retention is the other huge thing. And this is the kind of language that I like to use with my leaders. Retention is, they did a training course with me, and now they're going to do another training course with you. And they're building up their skill portfolio. Or they took a course from me in the college, and now they're going to take another one from you next term. That's retention, and we want those numbers to be fairly high as well.

And to Sandra's question, student perception of the institution? Satisfaction. Are our employees happy to be working here? Are they satisfied with the job and the work performance that they're doing? Do they feel supported in their work that they're doing for us? In colleges and universities, are our students satisfied with their

experience? Now, this doesn't just mean getting high ratings on your end-of-term rating form, but it's also, do your students feel like they have the support they need in order to take risks, in order to get information, all those kinds of things?

And Sandra's also saying, she meant receiving support when they need it. And from the disability services perspective, do the students receive their support when they need it? Yes, that's one criterion. But we're also talking about, do students feel like the institution cares about them, both at an individual level from their instructors, the trainers, all those folks, or from an institutional level in terms of presence and service? And Sandra just put presence into the chat, so we're thinking in similar ways here. Excellent questions, and thank you.

As we're going through here, though, these are the big three things. And you can see how they scaffold, that when you're thinking about your scope, you can start asking very specific questions of your leaders to help them guide you in how you focus your conversation and your request. Then when we're thinking about impact, you use their answers in order to go find data and information that help you to make a case that is broader than just your narrow service area.

And now, when you're thinking about budget, here's where you make your proposal in terms of, this will save us money. This will save us time. This will save us effort. Those are the kinds of proposals that get funded the most often, that get supported the most often, and where the leadership understand the perspective from which you're coming.

So I want to pause for a second here and talk about universal design for learning advocacy. On your screen is Shareena Clanton. She is an actress in Australia, and she has Aboriginal ancestry and roots. And she is yelling through a microphone at an Australia Day protest for Aboriginal rights.

This is the kind of advocacy that a lot of us are used to thinking about when we think about universal design for learning, right? Nobody else is advocating for our students who have disabilities, so we'd better step up and advocate for them. So it is a challenge. And I have to be careful when I say this. Many of you might have heard me say this in other places, but I want to underline it here.

When we talk to our campus or organizational leaders, I have stopped leading with

a disability services argument. I don't talk first or only about people who have disability barriers in their lives. Now, that risks erasure. That risks not talking about people with disabilities at all. So I'm not asking you to completely ignore the folks whom you serve if you're in a disability services area, or you work closely with people who do.

What I am suggesting is that when we lead with that disability services argument, it automatically narrows how our leaders are perceiving our requests. So I try to lead with the access argument, rather than the accessibility argument. I try to lead with, everybody's on their mobile phones, and we better design for it, rather than an argument about making accommodations or giving people supports.

Then once that stuff gets funded, oh yeah, suddenly, we are doing good things for our folks with disability barriers in their lives. And here's how we can do more. Once I have that support from leadership and that attention from leadership, that broadens things out to help up.

And [? Parry ?] just put something into the Q&A saying, the pandemic really accelerated shining the light on the inequities in education and also the fact that educators go to great lengths to work with students where they are. How can we use this in a positive manner to drive that point home to leaders, if it's not already home?

I love the way you're phrasing the question, [? Parry. ?] In terms of we're all doing what we can to be inclusive, universal design for learning is actually a foundation of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. On your screen is a picture that you saw a little while ago. It's the students studying, and one student pointing to a screen. And it's got the official definition from CAST, and I've put the big red circle with a slash through the definition. So if we're leading with that disability argument, if we're leading with UDL, we might not get heard in the way that we want to get heard. I still want to bring UDL in, medicine inside the spoonful of sugar-wise.

And to [? Parry's, ?] point, what always gets funded? On your screen are 16 individuals. They're all standing in the middle of a street somewhere in a town, and they've all got business clothes on. And I think there's student-aged folks. And diversity is represented here.

We've got ethnic diversity. We've got some folks who are using guide dogs to get around, one person who has a wheelchair for getting around. We've got lots of different gender displays. It's one of those pictures that somebody said, how can we make this as diverse as we can do it?

What always gets funded though? What are the priorities of the institution? Look at your mission statements. Look at your vision statements. Look at how those things are evolving in response to things like the MeToo movement for women's rights, Black Lives Matter, in response to the pandemic and people needing access in different ways.

When you think from that institutional perspective about what always gets funded, you can start thinking about all of those things we've been talking about-- persistence, retention, satisfaction. And you can start framing your universal design for learning content in terms of, how do people get access to materials, to each other, to your institution, to the wider world?

On your screen are three students who are doing just that. They're at a coffee shop. One of them's sipping some coffee. They have a laptop. They have their mobile phones. They're talking to one another. They're interacting with the wider world. They're interacting with their institutions here, as well.

So as we're getting ready to wrap up, I want to make sure we have plenty of time for Q&A and things at the end, but I want to take a couple of minutes here. I asked you what you would do to talk to your leaders at the very beginning. Let's revisit that.

On your screen are five faculty senate members. They're all sitting at a table. They have microphones and name tags. And one of them is talking. The other ones are looking on respectfully while they're listening.

Take a couple of minutes-- I'll put two more minutes on the clock-- and describe an inclusive implementation. I put universal design for learning here, but you can be as open with this question as you like. And now, how would you request an inclusive project from your leaders? What are things that you would do specifically to make sure that you're talking their language and you're reacting to the concerns that they have about the institution?

So let me take a couple of minutes and give you some quiet for thinking here. Again, the music will come on, and you can mute. I'll definitely put in the chat when the music is ending. But what would you say to your leaders now? Here's two minutes.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

All right, there's two minutes gone by. And if you're still thinking and typing in, please take your time. And I want to double check with our participants list. Did anybody have a hand up, want to be recognized and come on the live microphone here? I saw a couple hands earlier in the session, but people put them back down again.

All right, we're a chatting bunch here today, and not a live-microphone bunch. And that is one of the blessings of universal design for learning. Just giving you the option means that you are probably more likely to choose one or the other. And that's a powerful part of universal design for learning.

Here are some responses that we've got from people now. Let's see. Sandra is saying, improved student outcomes, like completion of courses and degrees, looks good to government and funders and can draw money to the institution. You're talking the budget language of your leadership. And if you have data to support it, that is an argument that almost always ends up with a new full-time-employee line, or funding for a project, or time off from the work that you're doing now in order to do work that helps to advance that kind of project. I love that framing. Excellent job.

Farrah says, thank you for the verbal description of the images. Oh, that's actually something that is low-hanging fruit for everybody who's giving presentations. Never assume that all of your people can see what's on the screen or, even if they can, that they're paying attention to what's on the screen. I was giving a presentation like this a little while ago and somebody said, hey, I had to do the dishes while I was listening to the session, and I was able to follow along. So thank you. Excellent deal.

John says he would say, we have lost many students during the past year due to the pandemic. We need to re-engage with those students. Let's look at some instructional designs that can meet those learners where they are. Again, talking

about persistence and retention. You've got your leadership's ear already. And now if you've got some data to support that argument, then that becomes much more likely to be a successful conversation.

Sandra's adding on to hers, as well. If not direct funds, then funding for infrastructure, like technical or improved information-technology systems. Yes, absolutely. Fantastic.

By the way, if you're watching the recorded version of this program, please make sure that you have a way to take some notes. Or if you haven't been able to take an active role here in the live session, take some notes while we're thinking here. How will you approach? What actions will you take? So thank you, everybody, for the role play and for the ideas.

OK, we-- oh, and Lucy's got a long one here. Let me run in on this one. Suggest a joint faculty and staff professional day to train how to improve access and remove learning barriers in communication, specifically for marginalized populations. Yes. Provide examples of success from faculty members and staff, how UDL is an effective model for meeting recruitment and retention goals, including assessment, like including diversity, equity, and inclusion in program reviews. Ooh, yeah.

Our accreditors are asking for this. Nicely done, Lucy. She says UDL is beneficial for designing and reviewing programs in academic affairs and student affairs as well. Absolutely true. And we've actually got a couple of programs from 3Play Media about UDL in student services and student affairs. Check those out too.

Rebecca is asking, how would you differentiate access versus accessibility? This is worth a sentence. When I say accessibility, many of you already know that I'm talking about just people being able to get access to materials, each other, instructors, the world. But when we say accessibility to an audience who hasn't studied disability services or inclusive design, like most of our leaders, they can hear, making accommodations for people with disabilities. And they think, narrow scope.

So when I chop the end of the word accessibility off and talk just about access, then I know that I'm saying a word that everybody who hears it understands. Oh, access is getting access to the materials, access to each other, access to all the things. And

it applies to everybody here, as well. And so, thank you for the question on that.

And that means that we've now moved away from the three big strategies into two really simple, very specific tricks that you can do. Remember, we're in the dark arts, so this is where I rub my hands together and laugh in a gleeful way. You know-- [EVIL LAUGH]

Trick number one-- on your screen is a woman on her couch at home. Her son is asleep on her lap. He's hugging a stuffed animal. She has a pen and a notebook on her lap. She has a textbook open next to her. There's a laptop and her book bag next to her. She's studying.

Make universal design for learning part of your diversity, equity, and inclusion statements, or at least echo it. Talk about how access is the foundation of being equitable and providing services to everyone in an equitable way.

And [? Reeto ?] says this very well in the chat just now, saying, accessibility is access for everyone. Accommodation is more individualized, dependent on student needs, like getting more time to complete an exam or a quiz. Yep, absolutely.

And the second trick-- on your screen are two pilots in a small airplane. We're seeing them from behind. And we're looking out the window of their airplane, and they're flying over the top of somewhere. We can't actually see, but they've got a little map on their instrument panel there.

These are not the kind of pilots I'm talking about. Oftentimes, when we propose projects to our leadership we say, oh, we're just going to do a pilot to see how this works. Pilot projects equals no funding. When you call something a pilot, it's an experiment. So these kinds of pilots on your screen, the people who are flying airplanes, call them pilots, but call what we do phase one of the project. Or call it "the kickoff", but imply that there is more to be done, that we're not going to stop after this first part.

I know this is a really tiny change, not calling something a pilot, calling it phase one. It actually has an impact on whether you get funding or not. There is a wonderful study in Canada of, I think, it was 400 colleges and universities across North America. And they looked at people who were applying to get funding from their

institutions. And they looked at what people called the projects, and pilot projects didn't get funded. But phase one, and this is an established project, that stuff got funded.

So the two little dirty tricks, echo your diversity, equity, and inclusion statements in your UDL statements, and leave the flying of planes to the pilots, and call yours a phase one of your project.

So we've got about five minutes left. I want to make sure we have some time for our hosts to say thank you, as well, but I want to ask one last quick question. Just pop this into the chat, please.

On your screen is a meal. There are some pita, and some hummus, and guacamole, and a couple of different salsas in the back there. There's some bread in a stack, and there's a margarita in a jar. It's making me hungry. In many parts of the world, these are takeaway meals, but that's not the kind of takeaway we're after right now.

Take a couple of seconds and, just in one sentence, what's one thing that you will take away from our time together today? What's one thing that you want to try, one change that you want to make, one thing that you're already doing? And we've underlined it as important. What's your one takeaway from our conversation today?

So [? Pate ?] says no pilots, only phases for funding. Jeremy says, my takeaway is margaritas. I love that takeaway. Tanya says, I will use phase one versus pilot. By the way, we tend to remember the stuff that happens at the ends of experiences better than at the beginning too. So think back to the things we talked about to.

Paula [? Kaplan ?] says no more pilots. Pilot projects are often perceived as trials. John says, language counts. Absolutely. If I had to draw one line through all the things I was talking about, it's how we frame, not what we say.

Diane says, reframing my approach to get buy-in. Daniel says, I need to reframe how I'm talking about accessibility. Sarah says, access first, accessibility second. Lorraine is talking about access versus accessibility. Rebecca says, reframing the argument for inclusive-design projects. Alyssa says, I have heard simple language shifts that profoundly change perspective from leadership, so thank you for underlining that for us.

Isaac says, speak the language of leaders in proposals for funding. Lorraine says, leadership language. Yolanda says, stop leading with the disability services argument when you're approaching leadership. By the way, don't get rid of it entirely, by the way. I don't want to erase people out of our conversations.

Paula says, gather and present data. Absolutely. Having the numbers, having the information is persuasive. John says, if we could just wiggle our noses, like Samantha on the slide-- oh yeah, there's Samantha, the cartoon witch from the 1960s TV show *Bewitched.* [? Lalitha ?] says funding numbers and data-driven evidence. Yep. [? Hari ?] says band together, instead of going solo. It's amazing how sometimes when we just talk to people who are in other service areas at our institutions, we suddenly come up with ways that we can work together, or we get information that helps us.

Katie says, the difference between access and accessibility. Also marketing UDL is something that supports a positive educational environment for all of our community members, not just people with disclosed disabilities. Lucy says, I love that access is the foundation for DEI. Thank you. Paul says, UDL is not about disability, but about access for all to apply good lessons learned. Farrah says, speak the leadership language.

Mark says, do your own homework to learn and understand your leader's needs before making proposals. That's a really important one. You can have a solution to a fantastic problem. But if it's not a problem that your leadership agrees is a big one, then they're not as likely to support you on that.

Speaking of support, I want to say thank you to 3Play Media and to all of our colleagues who set this up. This was fantastic. Sofia's putting some links to view some upcoming webinars and to give feedback about this session as well.

I'm going to end just by saying, if you enjoyed this conversation, I'd love to continue the conversation with you. There's my picture on the screen. There's the books that I've written and the things that I specialize in. It's basically stuff that makes faculty members really afraid, sometimes. And you can get in touch with me at my website. It's thomasjtobin.com.

So thank you, everybody, for a wonderful session. I enjoyed it. You made it more engaging for me with all of your ideas and feedback. And I'm going to stop here and turn it back over to our host, Sofia. So thanks.

SOFIA LEIVA: Great. Thank you so much, Thomas. This was a really great session. And thank you, everyone, for joining us today.

I just have one little announcement. We are about to release our upcoming accessibility-focused podcast called, *Allied.* You can find information on that at www.3playmedia.com/alliedpodcast. Thank you, everyone, again, and I hope you all have a wonderful rest of your day.

THOMAS J. TOBIN: Take care. Bye, everybody.