ED-MEDIA 2013 Roundtable Submission

Universal Design Isn’t.
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Abstract
Universal design originated as a design philosophy for improving physical accessibility. It has since been applied to computer technologies and interfaces with regard to analogous accessibility issues. When applied to learning, the general principles of multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement seem laudable (CAST, 2011). However, a significant body of research in learner control, multimedia, and related areas demonstrates that more is not always better (see for example, Mayer, 2001). The increasing diversity of learners and technologies are both a challenge and potential source for educational innovation. However, is substituting one-design-philosophy-fits-all for one-size-fits-all a real improvement? This presentation focuses on positive aspects of universal design philosophy and its limitations from an instructional design perspective. Alternative design suggestions will be discussed.

References