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**Title:**

**From Accommodation to Transformation: Advancing Student Success through Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education**

**Sub-Theme:**

**Transformation, Inclusivity, and Well-being in Higher Education**

**Format:**

**Paper Presentation**

**Abstract:**

This paper explores how Disability Unit practices in higher education can move beyond traditional accommodation-based approaches towards systemic curriculum transformation that advances student success, inclusion, and well-being. While universities increasingly provide accommodations such as extended assessment time, assistive technology, and alternative assessment arrangements, structural barriers remain embedded within curriculum design, assessment practices, and teaching approaches. Consequently, many students with disabilities continue to experience unequal participation and limited epistemic access despite institutional support measures.

Grounded in Vygotsky's Social Constructivism, Inclusive Education frameworks, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach within a South African higher education context. The research draws on reflective practitioner inquiry informed by professional experience within a Disability Unit, together with anonymised case records and institutional support practices.

The findings suggest that accommodations, while necessary, often function as compensatory measures rather than transformative pedagogical strategies. The paper highlights the under-recognised pedagogical role of Disability Units in shaping inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment practices. It further demonstrates how UDL principles can support curriculum redesign that enhances flexibility, engagement, and inclusive participation across diverse student populations.

The study argues that sustainable student success requires institutions to embed accessibility and inclusion within mainstream teaching and learning practices, repositioning disability as a critical lens for curriculum transformation and socially just pedagogy.

**Keywords:** Universal Design for Learning; Disability Studies; Student Success; Inclusive Pedagogy; Higher Education