



## **Universal Design for Learning Project-Learning Assessment System**

**Department of Education Demonstration Grant: \$1,086,298**  
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Renton Technical College is developing and piloting an innovative new system for helping students with learning disabilities called the **Learning Assessment System (LAS)**. The main platforms of the LAS are **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** and **Strategic Instruction**.

Students with learning disabilities often don't seek help from the Student Services Department until they begin having trouble in the classroom, which can be weeks into the quarter. For students who are struggling with *undiagnosed* learning disabilities, getting diagnosed can be extremely time-consuming and expensive. In either case, it can take weeks for accommodations to be put in place and often it is very difficult for the student to recover from the loss of learning during that time.

The Learning Assessment System offers solutions for addressing learning barriers quickly and effectively in the classroom, speeding up the process for effective accommodations when needed, and at the same time it helps students understand their learning strengths and weaknesses, and promotes students' control of their own individual learning process. The system puts emphasis on self-assessment and student self sufficiency, which has been shown to be essential to the success of students with learning disabilities.

The LAS model consists of three tiers of services: *Tier 1*: UDL classroom assessment and strategies provided to the entire class, and individually to those who need more intensive help, *Tier 2*: more intensive assessment and strategies given by Student Services counselors and *Tier 3*: assessment and/or accommodation by the Disabled Student Support counselor. This model, along with a web-based tracking and communication tool, creates an environment where most learning barriers are resolved quickly and effectively in the classroom, or through facilitated referrals to Student Services and electronic sharing of information between instructor, student and counselor.

The LAS has evolved over the past three years through the funding of the 2002 *Demonstration Projects to Ensure Students with Disabilities Receive a Quality Higher Education Program*, Title III, and a statewide project called the Learning Disabilities Quality Initiative (LDQI). Staff from a variety of departments, including the Student Services and faculty from 10 professional/technical programs worked together to develop the tools and service delivery components.

The project will include a collaboration of 2 urban technical colleges in Western Washington, RTC and Bates Technical College, and Community Colleges of Spokane, representing 3 institutions in Eastern Washington, both urban and rural. Covering a broad geographical area of Washington State, this project will develop a model and tools that any community college or adult learning agency will be able to customize and replicate with minimal effort. Each partner site will mentor two other sites, creating a network across Washington State.

For more information, contact Cathy Jenner at (425) 235-2352 x5639 or [cjenner@rtc.edu](mailto:cjenner@rtc.edu)  
<http://www.rtc.edu/AboutUs/DSDPGrant/>