From Just Okay to Thriving: How Universal Design for Learning Leads to Success

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What is Accessibility?

- And why are we bringing it up?
- Accessibility is defined as the design of the environment so that it can be reached, entered, seen, or understood
- Universal designs make the world accessible

Classroom Accessibility

- Teachers present information making the assumption that our students understand what we are saying and asking them to do
  - Historically, classrooms are incredibly inaccessible places
- It is possible that some students with academic issues and perhaps with behavioral issues actually have problems which are the result of accessibility issues

Making Class Accessible

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) creates a learning environment with accessibility built into the design
  - UDL uses cognitive neuroscience to develop flexible approaches which result in all students being able to access the learning environment
- UDL uses 3 steps to build a successful classroom (online or F2F)
  - A variety of ways to exemplify what is being presented (multimodal)
  - Allow students a variety of methods to demonstrate knowledge – write a paper or present a project on the same material
  - Creating a learning environment which engages the interests of all students
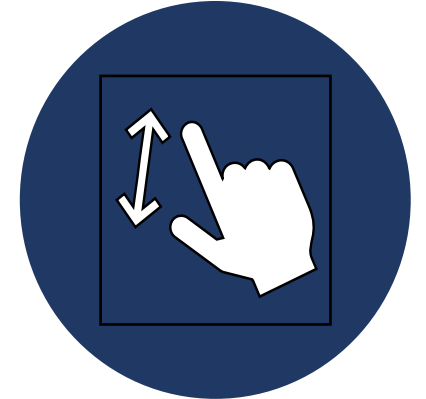
Multimodal Education

VERBAL – LEARNING CONNECTED TO WORDS

VISUAL (ICONIC) – LEARNING CONNECTED TO PATTERNS & RELATIONSHIPS

AUDITORY – LEARNING CONNECTED TO SOUND AND WORDS

KINESTHETIC – LEARNING CONNECTED TO MUSCLE MEMORY

How to translate your class into multimodal approaches

Physical Environment

- Write agenda on the board
- Move around the classroom
- No more than 10 minutes of straight lecture
- Know your classroom
- With technology never assume a student will just "pick it up"
- Give time warnings
- Plan for transition into class and between activities

Academic Environment

- Infographics
- Words in patterns
- Mind mapping
- Cartoons/images
- Active movement/group discussion
- Actual problems to solve
- Music (check on You Tube)
- Outdoor activities

Words in Patterns

- Outlines
  - Alphanumeric, decimal, full sentence
  - Mind maps
- Notes
  - Cornell, transcript, outlining, boxing, mapping
  - Do not assume that your students know which form works best for them or how to take notes at all
  - The best way is to show all methods to every student and let them decide which works best for that student and which helps them access their notes later

Lab Exercises

- No cookbooking
- It isn't science if you tell them what the results supposed to be

> MUSIC

- Include appropriate music in class presentation
- Allow students to use music as a study tool
- Use music as a mnemonic device
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJCRGoW4bGo

Verbal

- **Debates**
  - Randomly assign to groups and sides: pens vs. pencils, ice cream vs. cake
  - Declamation Competition – use Shakespeare, famous orations, speeches – ESU national competition
- **Do you agree with his answer?**
  - Point is to get them to listen to each other

Practical Problem Solving

- Use of practical exercises
  - Who can build the strongest bridge out of toothpicks?
- Group projects
  - Students learn different approaches from each other
  - Teaches collaborative social skills
  - Gives students safe spaces to try out novel approaches
    - Students will do things in groups that they will not do on their own, makes them braver

Active Movement

- Allow students to get up, use standing desks, sitting on balls
- Create space in lesson for students to move around
  - "For the next minute each of you will turn to the person next to you and brainstorm as many ways you can think of to use active movement in your classroom"
- Fidget toys
  - These provide stimulation that many students need to concentrate
  - The toy should not distract the student from the lesson
  - Make sure that other students are not distracted by the use of them in the classroom

Things to Remember

- No two people will learn the same, or have the same accessibility or learning needs
    - No such thing as universal accessibility
    - You want to improve accessibility for all without creating barriers for others
- Ask your students how they learn best – we have surveys you can use
- Make sure your multimedia is accessible
    - Videos have closed captioning, images and files can be read by screen readers and available to students at all times
- Use multimodal teaching approach
- If it's not written down, it didn't happen
    - Always communicate expectations and instructions both verbally and in written form

Did you notice?

- The font – Georgia is supposed to be the most readable
- The highlighted words
- Background of the slides is somewhat muted
- The presentation of words on slides and the limited amount of information on each slide

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