

Spring
2020

Best Practice in Teaching
Language Learners with
Diverse Learning Abilities

Susan Priebe
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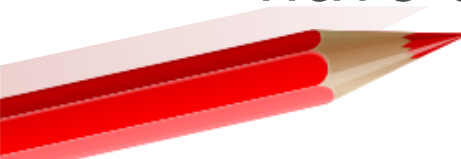




So what's the problem?

In a perfect world all exceptional students would come to class with their own personal instruction manual, including their personal history.

Exceptional international students tend to arrive without any documentation and without any disclosure that they may have diverse learning needs.



Why are exceptional international students not easily identified and accommodated?

Is it related to...

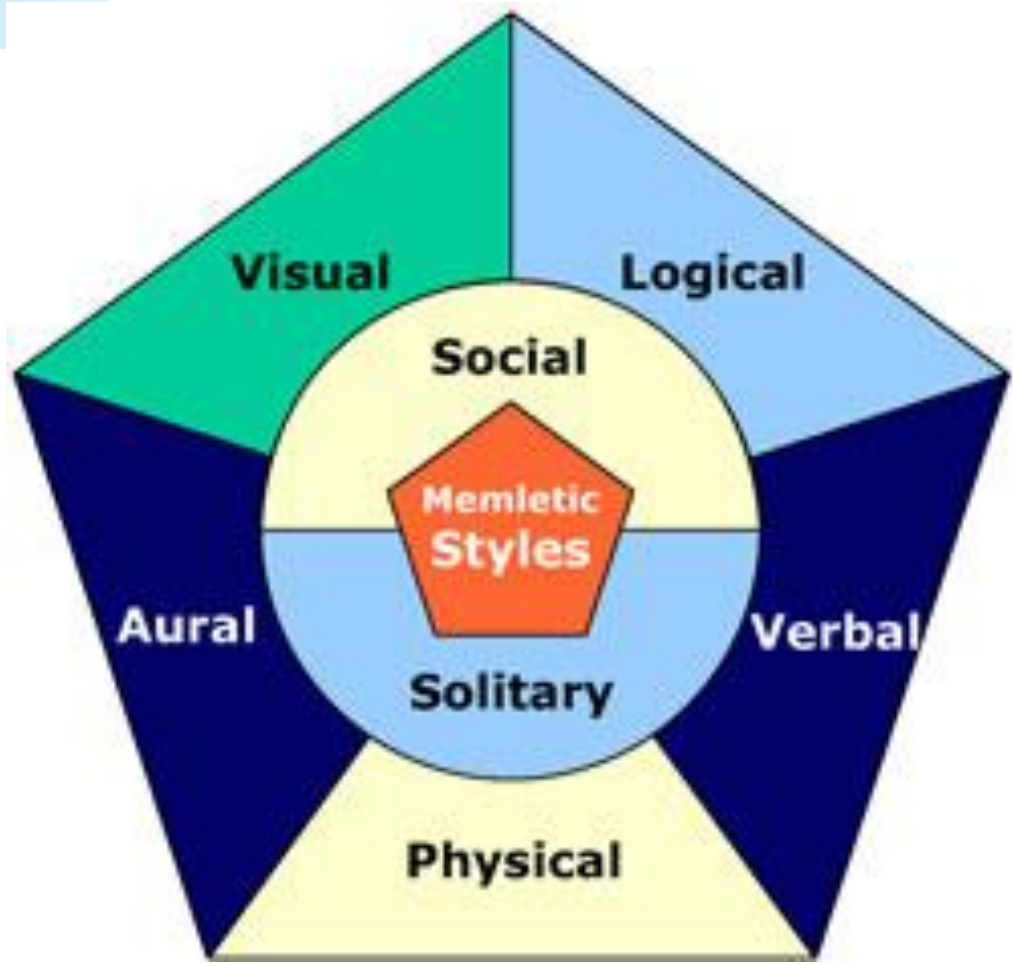
- Literacy in first language
- Language learning
- Culture
- Physiology
- Trauma
- Neurodiversity
- Multiple Intelligence and/or Learning Style



Multiple Intelligence



The Seven Learning Styles



<https://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/>

Get to know your student!

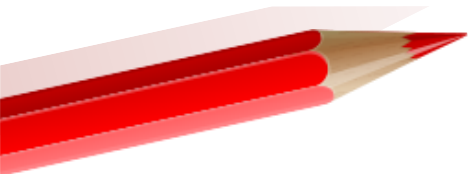
- What are they good at?
- What do they enjoy?
- What do they dislike?
- Are they literate in their first language?
- What is their story?



If they trust you, they will show you who they are!



Why students may not disclose their challenges

- Culture
 - Stigma & shame
 - Unaware there is support available if they ask for it
 - Undiagnosed and don't know why they are struggling
 - Fear of being even more disenfranchised or bullied
 - It may be easier too be perceived as lazy or unwilling, than to be perceived as unable.
- 



Building Trust

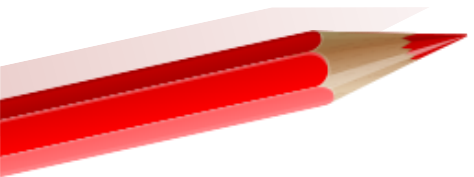


No Vulnerability = No Learning

True or False?

Why?

So how can we encourage students to be vulnerable with us?



Non-Negotiable

1. A trustworthy and empathetic teacher
2. A safe and inclusive classroom environment

Diversity is being invited to the party;
inclusion is being asked to dance.

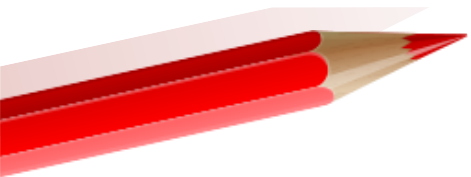
Vernã Myers

If either of the above are missing, it will be next to impossible for students with diverse learning needs to feel safe enough to share who they really are and what they need from us to be successful.

Building Trust



Sympathy vs Empathy



Building Trust



“We cannot downplay students’ need to feel safe and valued in the classroom.” Zaretta Hammond, 2015

1. Pronounce student names correctly and don’t assign them new names if you can’t
2. Get to know what students love and value
3. Seek to understand their culture beyond heroes and holidays



1. Shallow versus deep culture

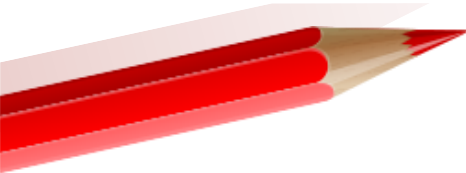
Singer, T.W. (2018). *EL Excellence Everyday*. CA: Corwin.

Building Trust



You start with little things over time. I share more with you, the more you honor the sharing. You share with people who have earned the trust to hear your story. Your story is a privilege to hear. Brene Brown (Netflix Special)

Teachers must model vulnerability first in order for students to begin to let down their walls and show who they really are.



Safe Environment



Identification...



ADD A FOOTER

I TAUGHT STRIPE HOW TO WHISTLE



I DON'T HEAR HIM WHISTLING



I SAID I TAUGHT HIM. I DIDN'T SAY HE LEARNED IT



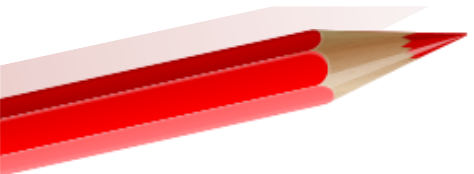
Investigation



Something is going on with this student...?

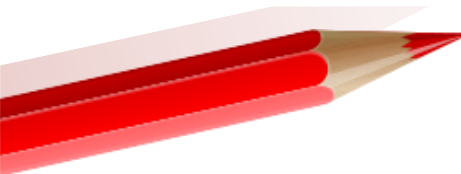
- Not progressing or behaving like the others in the class

What is the problem?

- Language
 - Have they been placed in the wrong level?
 - Are there any red flags when they interact in their first language?
 - Literacy
 - Can they read and write in their first language?
 - Culture
 - Maybe this is normal behavior where they come from?
 - Exceptionality
 - Do they have diverse learning needs?
- 

Common Exceptionalities

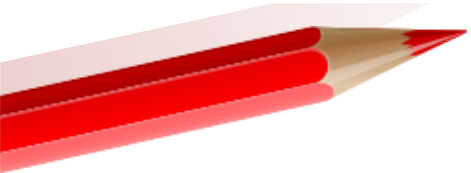


- Emotional/Behavioural
 - Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - ADD/ADHD
 - Learning Disability
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder/ Asperger's Syndrome
 - Physical
 - Traumatic brain injury
 - Hard of hearing
- 

Investigation



When a student first begins to exhibit anxiety, apathy, aggression or seems to get stuck in terms of not progressing along with their classmates, find a quiet, private time to ask them about it and begin taking notes and mention it to your supervisor.



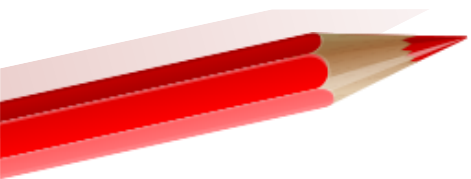
**Be sure you keep the BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) in mind as your notes could be seen later by the student and family*

Investigation Tool



Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems (ALSUP)

1. Write down your observations
2. Ask other teachers who teach the same student to write down their observations
3. Collect the data and look for similarities or patterns
4. If you can, talk to someone you trust from the same culture and ask them to observe and engage with the student in their first language. Do they notice anything different about the student?



ALSUP

INSTRUCTIONS: The ALSUP is intended for use as a discussion guide rather than as a freestanding check-list or rating scale. It should be used to identify specific lagging skills and unsolved problems that pertain to a particular child or adolescent.

If a lagging skill applies, check it off and then (before moving on to the next lagging skill) identify the specific expectations the child is having difficulty meeting in association with that lagging skill (unsolved problems). A non-exhaustive list of sample unsolved problems is shown at the bottom of the page.

LAGGING SKILLS		UNSOLVED PROBLEMS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty handling transitions, shifting from one mindset or task to another	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty doing things in a logical sequence or prescribed order	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty persisting on challenging or tedious tasks	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor sense of time	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty maintaining focus	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty considering the likely outcomes or consequences of actions (impulsive)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty considering a range of solutions to a problem	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty expressing concerns, needs, or thoughts in words	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty managing emotional response to frustration so as to think rationally	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chronic irritability and/or anxiety significantly impede capacity for problem-solving or heighten frustration	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty seeing "grays"/concrete, literal, black & white, thinking	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty deviating from rules, routine	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty handling unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, novelty	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty shifting from original idea, plan, or solution	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty taking into account situational factors that would suggest the need to adjust a plan of action	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inflexible, inaccurate interpretations/cognitive distortions or biases (e.g., "Everyone's out to get me," "Nobody likes me," "You always blame me, "It's not fair," "I'm stupid")	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty attending to or accurately interpreting social cues/poor perception of social nuances	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty starting conversations, entering groups, connecting with people/lacking other basic social skills	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty seeking attention in appropriate ways	

The Meeting...



The staff member with the closest relationship to the student should meet with the student one on one for the first meeting to discuss their lagging skills and unsolved problems. Ask them what they think is going on and what the solution might be? Don't overwhelm the student with too many people or you may cause them to feel shame and shut them down before you even begin.



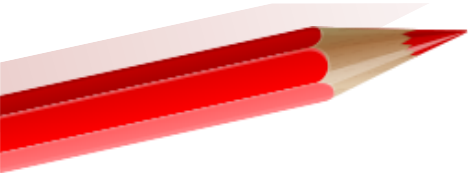
If they can't resolve the issue, then ask permission to invite someone else into the conversation to see if they can bring in some new resources to help. Form and bring in another member of the school based team.

School Based Team



If lagging skills and unsolved problems are identified and it is agreed that the student may be at risk, a school-based team should be formed.

Ideally, the team should include:

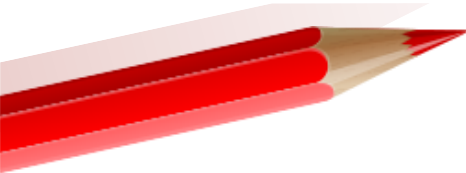
- All teachers who work directly with the student
 - First language support team member
 - Students' advisor
 - Director or Principal
- 



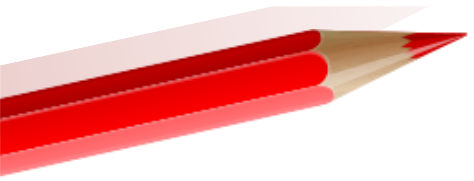
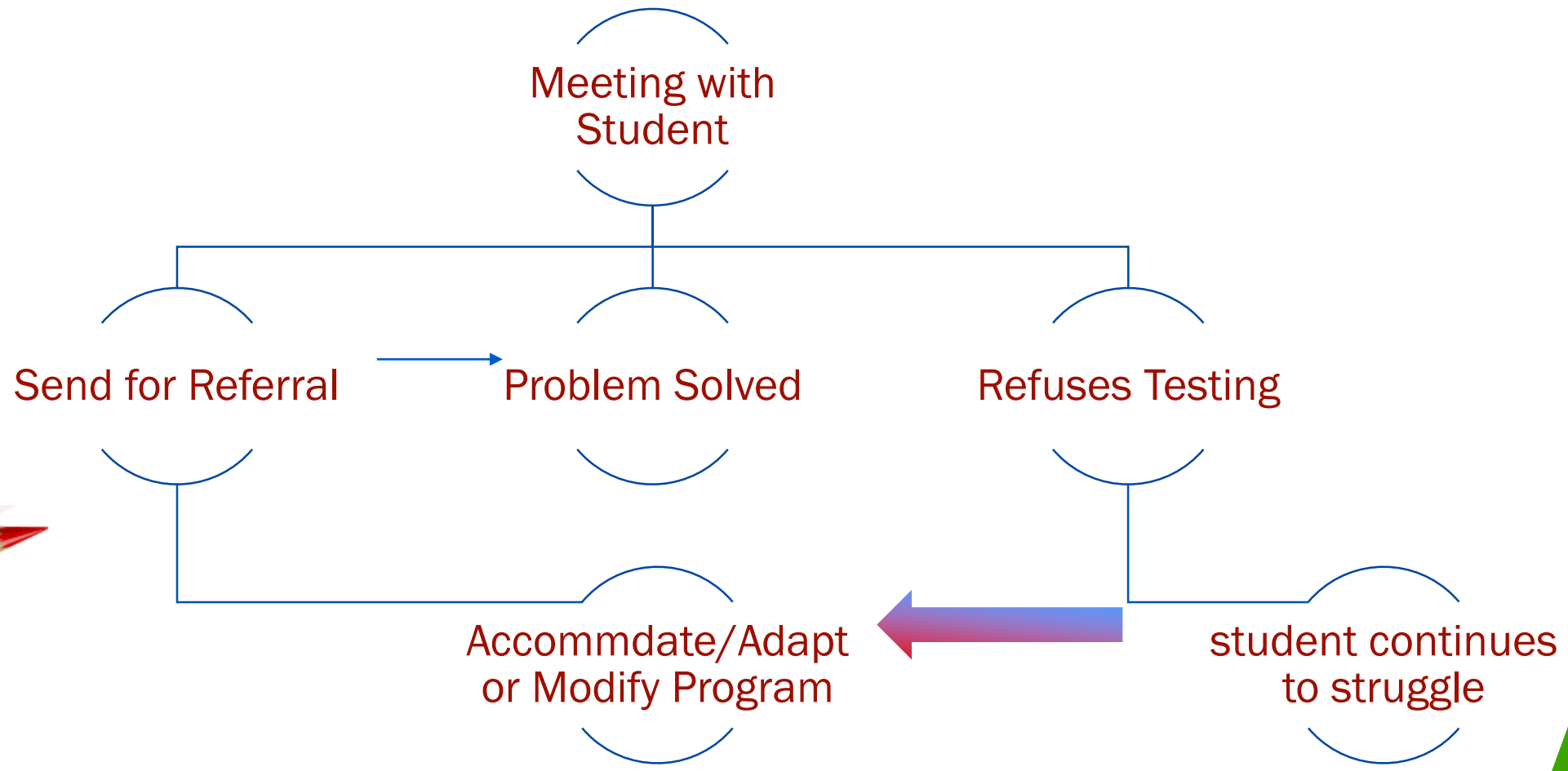
Meeting Etiquette

Always begin every meeting highlighting the students strengths and positive qualities.

If you can't think of any, refer to Armstrong's Neurodiversity Strengths Inventory, available online.



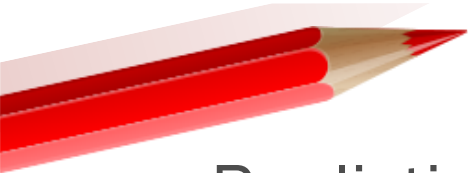
Possible Meeting Outcomes





Reality in the classroom...

The odds are that you will have students in your class that are either refusing testing, waiting for testing, or have already been tested and need to be helped to succeed but not enough resources are available to give them the help that they need. You may have others who are barely coping for now and will soon begin to show signs of academic distress.

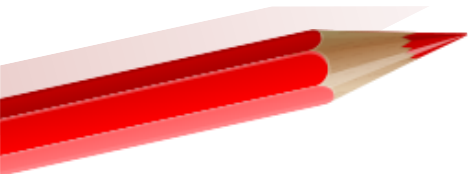


Realistically, what can we do for all of these students who are in your classes and need help now?



Legally what is required...

Private Language Schools are required to accommodate all students as much as possible without causing undue financial hardship to the program and without compromising the academic integrity of the program.



Big Picture

EQUALITY VS. EQUITY





Equality

doesn't mean



Equity

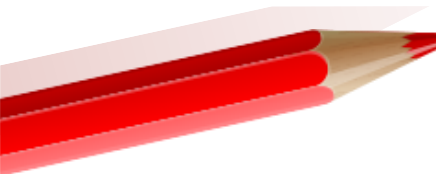


UDL



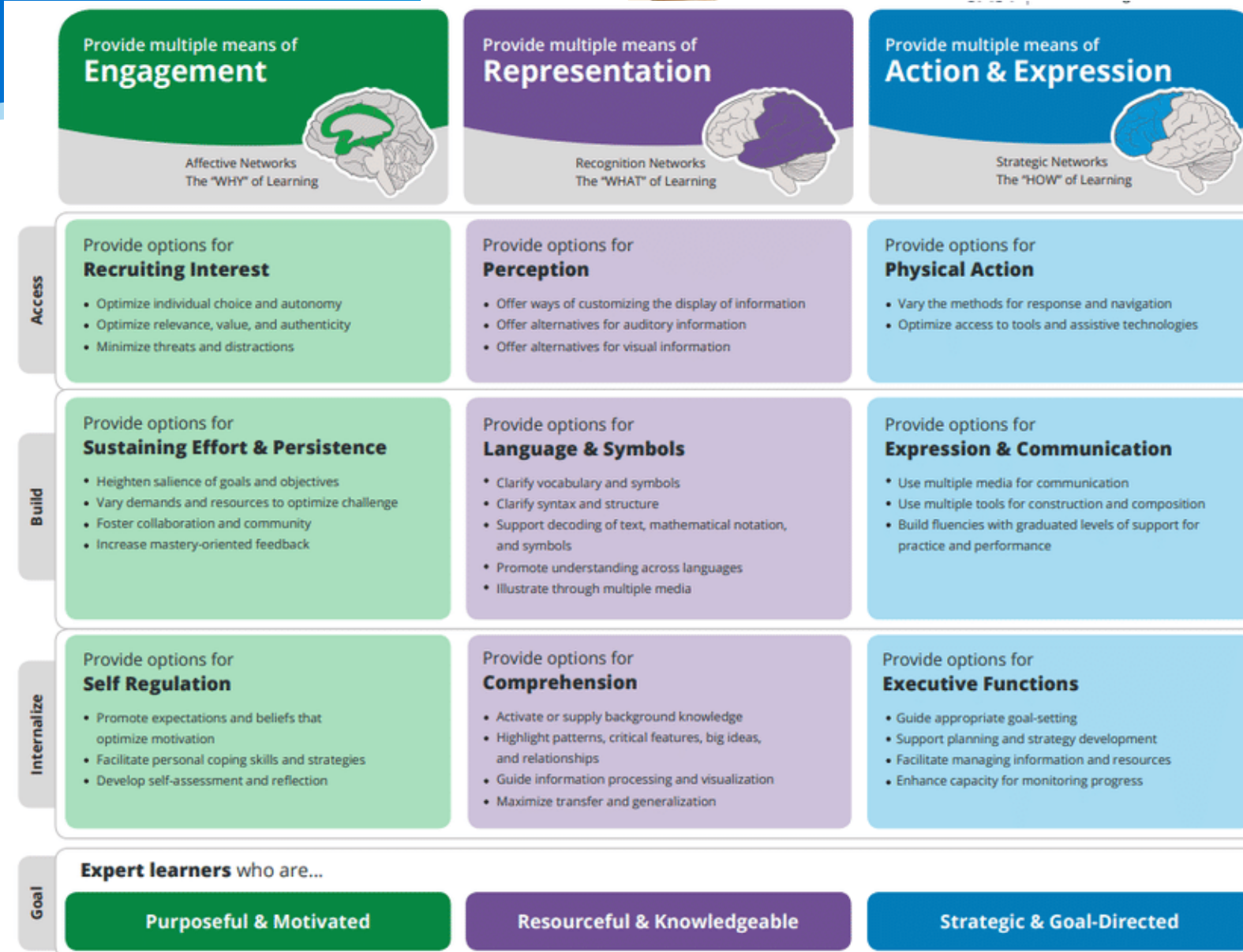
Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework of instructional approaches that recognizes and accommodates varied learning styles. It provides learning activities that expand students' opportunities for acquiring information and demonstrating learning, as well as for enhancing social participation and inclusion.



The driver for universal design is the philosophy of **proactively** addressing needs. Universal Design for Learning is integrated into regular instructional planning as a mechanism to make diversity the norm. It provides support for all students and motivates through the element of choice.

UDL



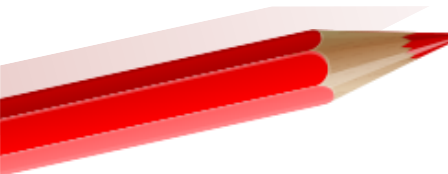
UDL

Universal Design of Learning

INSPIRED BY A PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES



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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Krec84KwbHE>

UDL for Language Learners

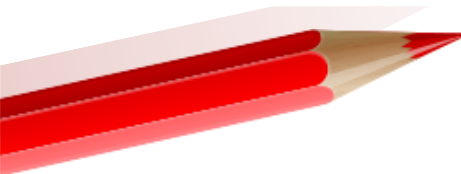


Build choices for all students into lesson plans

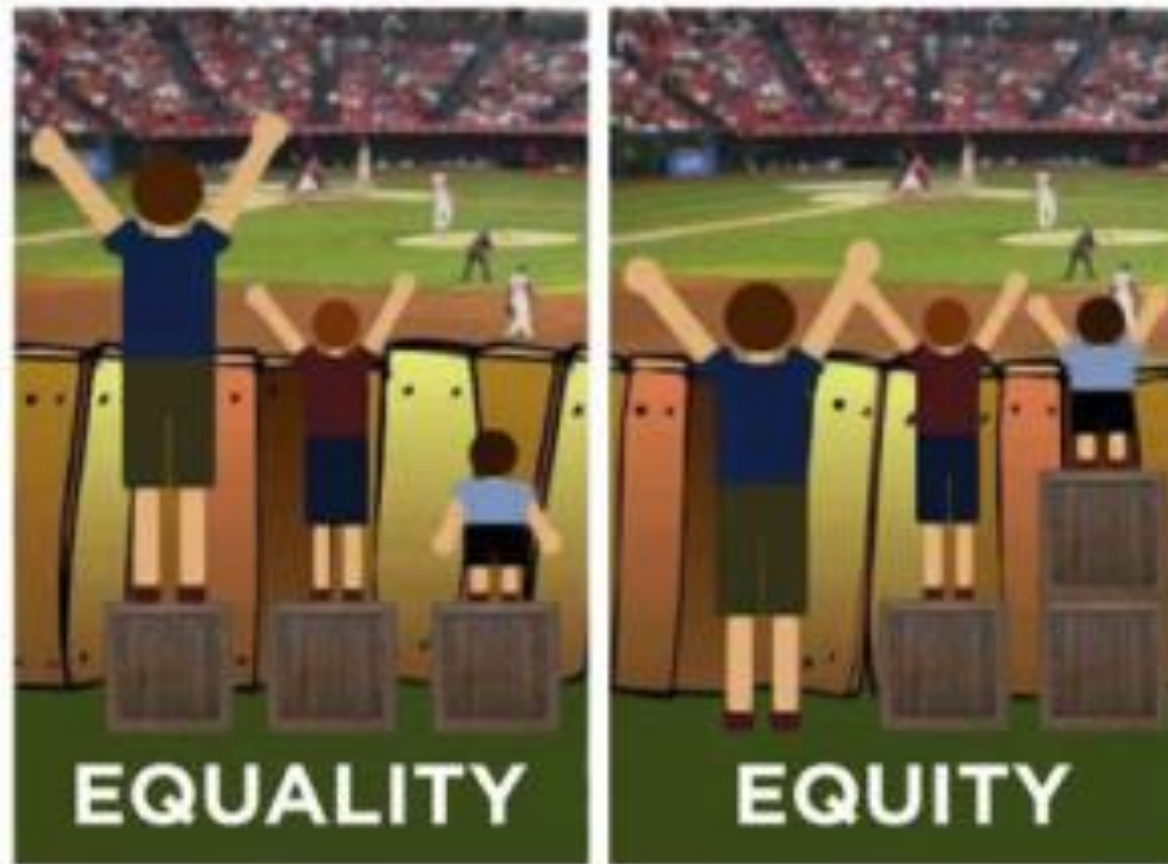
Choices should not diminish the academic integrity of the lesson

Students will choose how to adapt their learning to maximize their strengths and diminish their weaknesses.

Examples:

- 
- Word processing versus handwriting
 - Say it versus writing it
 - Hear it versus reading it
 - Draw it or act it out versus writing or saying it
 - Collaborate or work alone
 - Record it versus saying it

Students use
what they need



<https://everydayfeminism.com/2014/09/equality-is-not-enough/>



Thank You!!

Workshop Resources

Youtube:

Brene Brown on Youtube

Shelley Moore on Youtube

Google:

ALSUP

Armstrong's Neurodiversity Strengths

Universal Design for Learning

Hand Outs:

Best Practice Guidelines

Generic Accessibility Policy



Head . Heart . Hand

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