

A Universal Design for Learning

Including those with Complex Communication Needs



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Universal Design for Learning is a framework for approaching instruction for all students and learners. Professionals working under this framework presume competence for all students by identifying and removing all barriers to representation, engagement and expression. The ACCESS Project at the University of DE has done work to implement UDL as a framework in classrooms throughout the state. The success that they have seen is an overall shift in attitudes of educators and professionals as well as improvements in success for a wide variety of students.

Interdisciplinary:
To provide the most rich educational experience for students with complex communication needs, a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to instruction *must* occur. The Speech-Language Pathologist should serve as a resource for supporting the communication of students with complex needs throughout their school experience. All professionals need to be familiar with a student's modality of communication in order to effectively model and promote communication for the student.

Underlying Assumptions:

- Presume Competence of all learners
- Foster positive attitudes about the device, all methods of communication are valid and meaningful
- Respond to communicative attempts to encourage students

CORE Vocabulary

- Up to 85% of speech is comprised of the same 250-300 words
- Consistent across cultures and populations
- Use these functional words to comment on *anything* in the classroom or lesson

Aided Language Stimulation

- Teachers, paras, peers
- Students who communicate with different modalities need just as much input in their means of expression
- MODEL, MODEL, MODEL**

Multiple Modalities

- Visual supports promotes a more wholistic learning
- Tap into other senses to reach all learners

Benefits:

Meeting the communication needs of students has shown to decrease the frequency of the occurrence of "problem behaviors"
Speech-generating devices can promote literacy for ALL students

Product:

Throughout a review of the literature, a common theme within AAC training of professionals in the school was that examples of connections to the curriculum prove beneficial in connecting to implementation. For this reason, I have created a sample lesson plan implementing core vocab., aided language input and mixed modalities. I have also assembled a guidance document with helpful resources and websites that I hope to be able to use to support educators throughout my future career.