DIVERSE LEARNERS

When we mention diversity in the classroom, we are talking about all the ways that make a student a unique individual. Factors that may affect how a person learns and interacts with their environment include learning style, language, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender identity, family structure, religion, interests, cognitive diversity, physical diversity, motivation, personality, and more. When working with students, it is critical that we consider all learners as we prepare to engage.

Support ALL Learners in the Classroom

Keep in mind these techniques and points of consideration as you prepare for the learning experience.

- Be predictable. Let students know the schedule and what to expect. Predictability eases anxiety for all students.
- Ask questions. Get to know students and their interests. You might even use their interests to help illustrate a concept you are teaching.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Keep language concrete. Avoid figurative language (idioms and metaphors), or if you do use it, explain what you mean.
- Pause after posing a question to the group to allow for processing before inviting responses.
- Re-phrase, don't repeat, if a student is having difficulty understanding.
- Show concepts visually. Write/draw directions on the board.
- Model what you want students to do, where appropriate.
- Check for understanding with non-verbal signals.

- Repeat important questions or instructions to help students remember.
- Allow for process time. A student may not always answer you immediately or directly.
- Limited distractions: You may notice that some students have a special space for focused work.
- Learning aids: Students may utilize different tools and strategies to help them learn. This could be fidgets at their desk, sitting on a yoga ball, noise-cancelling headphones, personal technology, taking a break by walking around the classroom, and more.
- Understand that every student is trying their best. Empathy and kindness go a long way.

More Resources to Explore:

Video: UDL at a Glance
Video: Junior Achievement: Working with Diverse Learners
Video: JA Working with Diverse Learners Pt. 1
Video: JA Working with Diverse Learners Pt. 2
About Universal Design for Learning

Junior Achievement®