Hello. I'm Betsy Dalton. I work in a technology center serving people with disabilities. I am happy to be here with you to discuss our final Principle,

Action and Expression

Action and Expression is the third Principle of Universal Design for Learning. It is the HOW of learning and its main purpose is to help students become strategic, goal directed learners.

The strategic network that handles action and expression, is located in the frontal lobe region, known for its role in planning, organizing and self-monitoring. We use this network to plan, carry out and track both our physical actions and mental processes. We recognize what to attend to, create a plan of action and then figure out HOW we will share or communicate what we have learned.

This principle asks us to explore different ways to expand our repertoire of activities, media and materials for students, to help them express what they know and have learned. By providing many different paths and alternatives we distinguish knowledge and understanding from the means of production.

Some argue today's students are more easily bored, distracted and reluctant to persist when mastery is challenging. Reasons may involve learners' impaired or underdeveloped executive functions. UDL challenges us to provide the scaffolding needed to support executive functions, and to teach strategies to support and improve them.

While students have choice of action and expression, it is the teacher who considers, frames, and builds in the opportunities of choice that will retain the integrity of the learning goal. In addition, this principle asks ALL teachers, not just special education teachers, to understand the various means needed to support each student's access and independent navigation of learning and expression, regardless of their ability or disability.

This is a lot to consider, but with creative and diversified curriculum planning, teachers can offer a wide range of opportunities for action and expression. With this in mind let's look at each UDL guideline in detail, what it means and how you might apply it in YOUR educational setting.

Provide options for physical action

This guideline asks us to consider the motor demands and barriers to learning. Teachers need to facilitate different options for each student to physically respond, navigate their personal or technical settings, and use different general or assistive technologies to demonstrate their learning. We also need to ensure we don't remove the challenge when we remove the barriers.

What does this look like in action?
When designing or finding curriculum materials, check to be sure that assistive technologies will work seamlessly with other technologies, so that students can participate fully and not be singled out. Build in alternative options for students such as encouraging computer response instead of paper and pencil. Encourage multiple means of navigation - by hand... by voice...by switch... or by keyboard.

Consider speech recognition for students. Options such as PaperPort notes with built in Dragon Dictate or ListNotes for Android provide accurate speech to text options on students' devices. Students with visual

challenges can use braille keyboards that transfer notes into print. Students with physical challenges can express their choices and their knowledge by accessing tablets or computers through a switch, and many students can benefit by using word prediction programs such as WordQ for Chrome... or Read&Write for Google Docs...to aid spelling and written expression, or to reduce keystrokes.

Provide options for expression and communication

For most educators, writing is a natural and successful way to express our thoughts and ideas. In most learning environments, text is the dominant & preferred means to record, organize and report information. Assignments and assessments that are text-heavy, however, are barriers for many students, limiting success, reducing engagement, and producing boredom. We live in a media rich world. Providing choice builds students' abilities as well as their fluency across media, and encourages creativity. Students need access to a variety of tools, both digital and physical, to help them compose responses and construct meaning.

What does this look like in action?

Options are the name of the game in this guideline. Teach students how to communicate using a variety of media. This might include the creation of social media such as blogs, wikis and tweets, and the use of online interactive tools to create comics such as make beliefs comix...websites builders such as Google sites...animation videos such as PowToons...or easy screen capture videos such as screencast-o-matic

Don't forget to also provide options for students to express themselves in more traditional ways such as text, speech, drama, music, drawing, sculpture, and math manipulatives.

Consider technology to support students' higher level thinking. Kathy Schrock's website has an interactive tool to explore both iPad and Android apps that support Bloom's taxonomy. Consider creating similar interactive resources for learners using a tool such as Symbaloo to showcase tools students can explore and add to their learning toolkit.

Provide options for executive functions

Think back to the UDL principle of engagement - engagement, interest, and motivation relate closely to learners' executive functions as they develop self-regulation and build sustained effort and persistence. Executive functions are intertwined with virtually every classroom task. Helping students be personally aware and metacognitive of these functions is important in Universal Design for Learning.

What does this look like in action?

Helping students set achievable goals to guide their work is a daily task. Model the process of long-term goal setting through SMART goals as well as through daily "to-do" lists. There are many of these types of apps to choose from.

Teach students how to plan, and provide a variety of methods, including checklists and project planning templates. Help students organize and manage information through the strategic use of digital writing frameworks and graphic organizers. Provide apps such as popplet, iBrainstorm, Inspiration or Kidspiration and model visual learning techniques for planning and organization. Teach students how to take notes and integrate organizational strategies using tools such as EverNote or Microsoft OneNote. Include formative self and peer assessment to provide timely feedback such as with quick writes and the comments feature of google docs. Include assessment checklists, rubrics and exemplars to help structure & guide learning. Intel

has an excellent online assessment tool to help you quickly create student and peer rubrics for self-assessment.

This concludes our session on Multiple Means of Action and Expression. Thanks for listening and for participating with us. Kendra, Luis and myself hope that you will enjoy exploring the tasks in this final week of our SOOC.