

Widening the Circle

Celebrating Neurodiversity in Faith Based Schools

Focus Strategy:

Universal Accommodations

Meeting the needs of neurodiverse students, dual language learners, curious, and gifted students in every classroom can be a challenge for the most organized educator. Keeping track of accommodations, strategies for success, and learning goals while developing engaging lesson plans and assessments that do not include unnecessary barriers is no small task!

Begin each plan with **universal accommodations** that ensure each student has equal access to learning and can succeed in the classroom regardless of what makes them unique learners.

Accommodations for Instruction and Environment

- **Make directions clear and concise**

Begin each direction with an **action word**, to clearly state what is expected. Keep each step to one line of text, and bullet each step. Make it simple and to the point, so students know where to go next.

- **Make vocabulary words memorable**

Bold or underline all vocabulary words in every document, for every unit to cue them of important words they need to know.

- **Provide a model**

Give an example at the beginning of every section, every time, to demonstrate the process for completion. This is essential for math, and equally beneficial in all content areas.

- **Visual Aids and Graphic Organizers**

Use charts, mind maps, diagrams, and color-coded materials, to support learning and processing information more effectively.

- **Simplified or Modified Language**

Adapt language to meet the needs of students, particularly for English language learners or students with learning disabilities.

- **Use of Manipulatives and Hands-On Learning**

Incorporate physical objects, tools, or models to demonstrate abstract concepts, especially in math and science.



- **Preferential Seating**

Allow students to sit where they are less likely to be distracted, such as near the teacher, away from windows, or in a quieter area of the classroom.

- **Extended Time for Assignments and Tests**

Provide additional time to complete assignments, quizzes, or exams, so students can process and organize information at their own pace. Observe and inquire why the additional time is needed.

- **Use Technology**

Allow students to access the text-to-speech or speech-to-text feature on the laptop or iPad.

- **Alternative Response Methods**

Allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in various ways, such as verbal responses, visual presentations, or through the use of technology instead of traditional paper-and-pencil tests.

- **Additional Support or Peer Assistance**

Encouraging peer tutoring or collaborative work to provide support for students in need. Note taking assistance for outlines and class notes will capture key points during lessons that may have been missed.

- **Check-ins and Progress Monitoring**

Check in with students to assess their understanding of the material and provide additional support or clarification as needed.

Resources:

CAST- [The UDL Guidelines](#)

Parent Connection:

When teachers implement universal accommodations, parents develop a greater sense of trust that necessary accommodations for neurodiverse learners will be provided. Intentionally removing barriers for any student ensures all learners will be able to participate in the learning and demonstrate their knowledge.

