



Kindness in the Classroom:

“Accommodations” for All Students

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PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- ▶ **Equitable use:** Accessing course information, such as syllabi, in a variety of formats, including print, disk, and online.
- ▶ **Flexibility in use:** Varying instructional methods, including lecture, discussion, and individual and group activities.
- ▶ **Simple and intuitive:** Clearly describing course expectations for grading, in different formats, for example narrative and rubrics.
- ▶ **Perceptible information:** Using videos that include subtitles, or captioning, for those who may not hear, for whom English is not a first language, or for those who have trouble processing verbal information.
- ▶ **Tolerance for error:** Providing ongoing and continual feedback on coursework rather than at specified interim periods, such as mid-term or final exams.
- ▶ **Low physical effort:** Providing lecture notes, so students who have difficulty taking notes do not need to take notes.
- ▶ **Size and space for approach and use:** Making seating easily accessible, if possible, so everyone can see each other and communicate with one another directly. Circular seating may address this principle.
- ▶ **Community of learners:** Creating a variety of learning settings, for example, use of email groups, social networking sites, or chat rooms.
- ▶ **Instructional climate:** Including a statement in the syllabus indicating the desire to meet the instructional needs of all students and for students to convey their needs to the instructor.

"Universal Design for instruction in Postsecondary Education: A Systematic review of Empirically Based Articles." Kelly D. Roberts, Ph.D., Hye Jin Park, Ed.D., Steven Brown, Ph.D., Bryan Cook, Ph.D. University of Hawaii at Manoa, Department of Special Education.



WAC/WID/WRITING CLASSROOM UD-INFLUENCED PEDAGOGIES:

- ▶ Offer all students the option to have a laptop or other typing device in the classroom for informal writing as well as for in-class tests (if you really must have the latter).
- ▶ Provide extensions on both in-class and out-of-class writing assignments when requested. Or offer blanket extensions.
- ▶ Minimize lecture in the classroom.
- ▶ Offer extended time on essay tests.
- ▶ Provide feedback on essay drafts.
- ▶ Provide clear/written out essay assignments.
- ▶ Furnish teacher-provided class notes (when relevant).
- ▶ Others?

Questionnaire: Accommodations in the Writing Classroom

- ▶ How many years of college have you completed? If you've graduated, when did you graduate and with what degree?
- ▶ As a high school or college student, were you diagnosed with one or more learning, emotional, or physical disabilities?
- ▶ If so, and if you feel comfortable sharing, which one(s)?
- ▶ If you were not so diagnosed (or even if you were), did you know anyone in high school or college who was diagnosed with such disabilities? Do you know which ones?
- ▶ If you did have such a diagnosis or if you did know people with such diagnoses, what accommodations did you receive (or are you aware others received) in classes that featured a significant amount of writing (two or more essays or papers)? These accommodations might have been untimed essay tests, extended time on papers, use of a computer in the classroom, and so on. Please list and any all accommodations that you either received and/or that you're aware that others received.
- ▶ If you did receive such accommodations or knew people who did, how helpful (as far as you know) were these accommodations to the students' academic achievement? Please describe how helpful they were as best you can.
- ▶ As far as you know, were these accommodations not helpful? Please describe, as best you can, how they were not helpful.
- ▶ Have you ever received such accommodations in a writing class without being asked if you needed and/or wanted them? If so, which accommodations and what is your opinion about that experience?
- ▶ Do you think that accommodations for differently abled students should be offered to all students – at least those that involve writing? Why or why not?
- ▶ If you think accommodations should be universally offered, do you think all accommodations should be offered or just certain ones? If just certain ones, which ones would be appropriate for all students?
- ▶ Is there anything else about your (or others') experiences with accommodations in the writing classroom that you would like to share or add to what you've said above?



Some premises for providing accommodations for all (They might be wrong; yours might be different.)



- ▶ WAC/WID/writing classes are small (no more than 20 people).
- ▶ Most students have laptops or other mobile devices – or access to them.
- ▶ Many students are comfortable with technology.
- ▶ We, as teachers, are aware of our own disabilities, biases, pet peeves, hang-ups, and are willing to work with them – or let them go, if appropriate.
- ▶ We value kindness – we are willing to help students learn and succeed rather than expecting them to do it alone.
- ▶ We want to reflect and improve.
- ▶ We want to reach more students.

Thoughts? Comments? Questions?

Thank you!

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