EPiSODE

Entrepreneurial Skills
for Disabled People

022-2-AT01-KA210-ADU-000097665

Training Course facilitating

Entrepreneurial Skills

Aims & Objectives

By the end of this module, the learner will be able:

- Practice inclusive teaching strategies.

- Demonstrate the importance of creating an inclusive environment for the successful delivery of the lecture.

- Identify the components and means tied to the inclusive teaching strategy.

Key Words

- Inclusive Teaching Strategies
- Inclusion
- Diversity
- Intersectionality
- Universal Design for Learning
- Assistive Technology
- Physical Accessibility
- Creativity
- Engagement

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UNIT 1

Introduction to Inclusion

1.1 What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is a cornerstone in modern education and societal dynamics. The term specifically denotes the practice of **ensuring equitable opportunities and respect** for individuals who might otherwise be **marginalized**.

This encompasses individuals with physical disabilities such as mobility issues, neurodiverse individuals, individuals with sensory impairments as well as mental disabilities and people having **diverse** cultural, socioeconomic or identity related characteristics and backgrounds (The University of Edinburgh, 2022)

1.2 Is Inclusion a one-fits all Solution?

It is apparent that inclusion is a concept with a very **wide scope**.

Thus, the portrayal of inclusion can sometimes be **oversimplified**, potentially leading to harmful misconceptions. It's vital to **dispel the notion that inclusion is a one-size-fits-all approach**.

Certainly, regardless of the individual or the group addressed, **respect, dignity, communication and collaboration** are common principles and points of reference across the spectrum of inclusion and diversity.

1.2 Is Inclusion a one-fits all Solution?

However, even if we were to focus exclusively on persons with disabilities, the **practical challenges** they face can be completely different.

For example, compared to persons with sensory disabilities, an individual with reduced mobility faces more difficulties of **physical access**.

1.3 Intersectionality and Inclusion

Intersectionality is the condition under which a person experiences **multiple sources of discrimination or adversities** (Center for Intersectional Justice, n.d.).

It is important to remember that while a person may have a disability, it may be **even more difficult** for them to overcome challenges resulting from other aspects of their **identity**. This should also be taken into account, to ensure fair treatment.

In simple words, if a person is facing difficulties coming from two different aspects of their identity, it is not enough to offer a teaching strategy tackling only one of them. **Both should be taken into account** when crafting the solution.
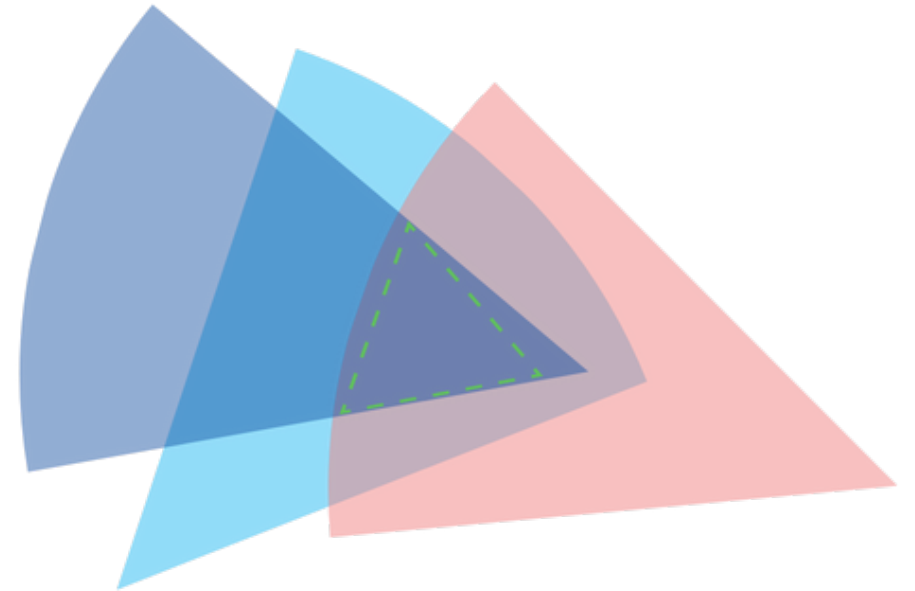
1.4 Why Strategy is the Right Word

As discussed above, inclusion is not one static approach. **Inclusion is an objective**, while **strategy** refers to the ability of combining the appropriate means with the objective.

That being said, while the objective - **inclusion** - stays the same, there are various means that can be used in different ways to achieve it.

UNIT 2

Strategies for Inclusive Teaching

2.1 Into the Logic of Strategy

Now that we have reviewed the **basics** surrounding the topic of inclusion, let's delve deeper into **strategies** that can achieve inclusive teaching.

Remember: The essence of inclusion is to ensure that every student, regardless of their physical capabilities, **feels valued and can actively participate** in the learning process.

2.2 Universal Design for Learning Principles

Every educational course is designed by **educators**. **The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach**, which modifies courses to cater to the diverse needs of students, is the basic principle to target persons with disabilities.

This approach revolves around three core **principles** (Center for Teaching Innovation, n.d.):

a. It offers content in **diverse formats**, giving students multiple methods for demonstrating their understanding.

b. It primes the educator to **assess the obstacles** and **remove them** from the students' learning experience.

c. It creates the right conditions for **student engagement**

2.2 Universal Design for Learning Principles

Watch this informative video about Universal Design for Learning!
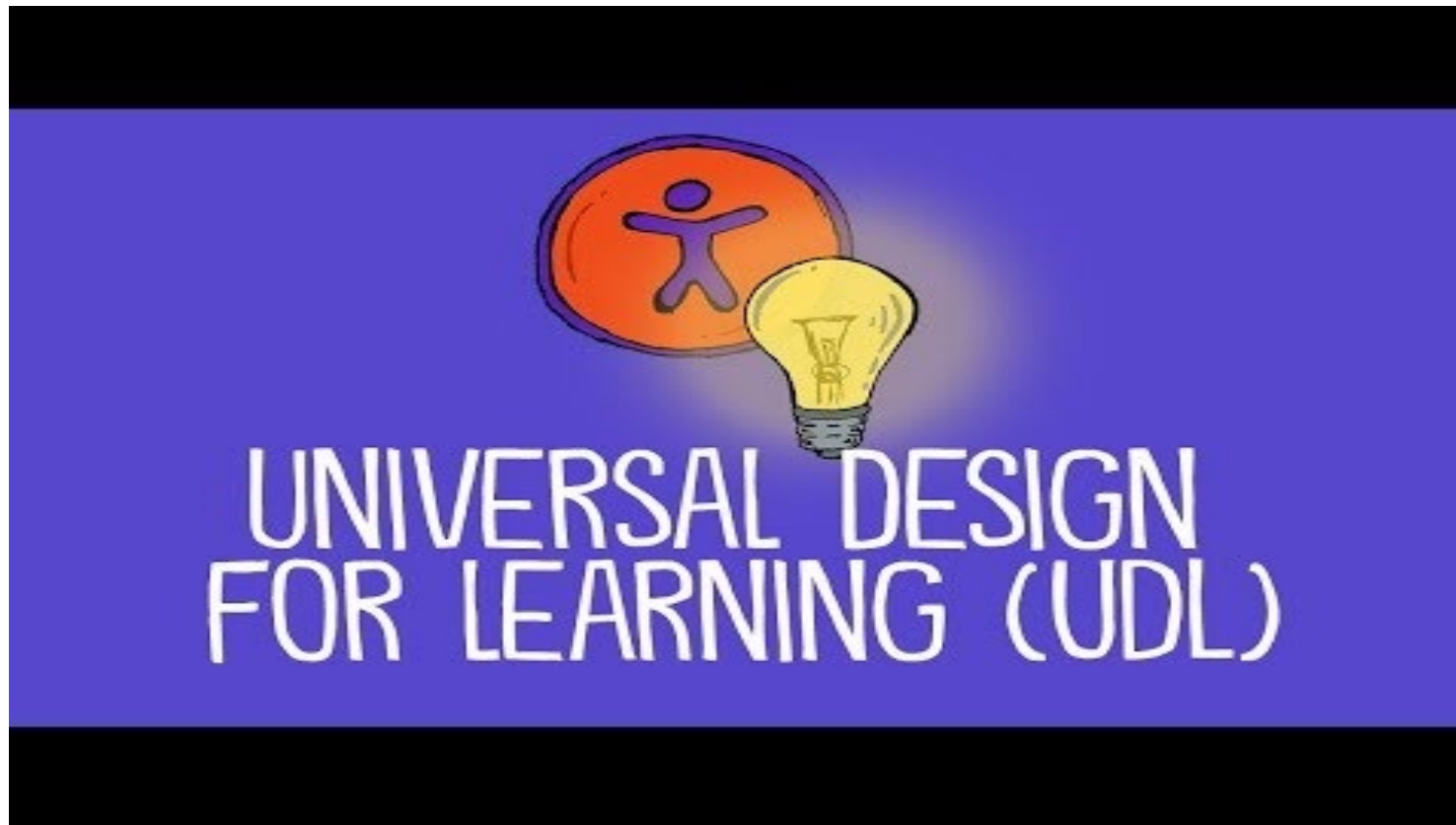
2.3 Diversify Instructional Formats

Have you noticed that some students react better to videos, as opposed to text?

Generally, the use of different formats can boost engagement, as some are best for expressing certain aspects of specific subjects.

In addition, when it comes to persons with physical disabilities, both digital tools, in general, and specific assistive technology can be crucial to ensure a positive learning experience.

Tip: Many accessibility features have inspired general features

2.4 Applying different formats and Assistive Technology

Let's view some of the **instructional formats**, which can be used in this context:

Using Videos

Videos can both be **shown to and recorded by learners**, assisting with problems related to reading or writing for a prolonged period of time (e.g. posture).

The same can apply to audio formats, which would require a setting, such as a website, with **visual points of reference**.

Utilizing Smartphones and Apps for Interaction

Applications, which have presence on smartphones as well, can become an interactive method to boost engagement in the class, while helping persons who are **not comfortable with PCs** due to a disability.

Some technologies allow you to **control your PC** with a Smartphones, which can help handling some its functions.

They may also be used for **assessments.**

Digital Whiteboard:

Contrary to the traditional blackboard and whiteboard, the digital whiteboard is a tool or an application, where everyone can write and participate at the same time in a **virtual space**, **without the need to stand up** and write in a confined physical space.

They also typically have great integrations with other digital tools and are great for visual representation.

UNIT 3

Ensuring Physical Accessibility

3.1 Physical Accessibility

Due to the non-material character of education, knowledge and exchange of information, it is not surprising that some individuals neglect **the importance of physical access in educational facilities**.

Possible **infrastructural obstacles** can deter persons with disabilities from pursuing self-improvement, inhibiting their potential and narrowing their opportunities.

To what principle of Universal Design for Learning does this refer to?

3.2 Arranging Space

In the Classroom

Creating a welcoming and accessible environment is crucial for inclusion. Thoughtful furniture arrangement is key to achieving this, allowing for easy movement, especially for assistive devices and walkers. Incorporating clear pathways around furniture ensures individuals with wheelchairs or walkers can navigate freely and cleaning clutter should not be underestimated either (Council of Ontario Universities, n.d.).

In the Facilities (Success for All, 2015)

- First of all, when it comes to the whole educational environment, **safety** considerations, such as regarding doorways and corridors are the top priority.

- **Toilets** should provide the appropriate space and installations.

- **Ramps** for wheelchairs must be installed wherever needed.

- Safety of equipment in the areas outside must be regularly checked.

- Staff must be available for helping with mobility between classes.

- Ideally the schedules must take into account the distances between classes.

3.3 Accessible Transportation

Have you noticed that when transportation to work is a bad negative experience, you are essentially starting your day off the wrong foot?

Transportation is an essential part of the **learner's experience**, because it may define their **mood during the lecture as well**. That being said, the bus drivers must be trained on certain behavioral patterns.

Without question, the relevant transportation should include all the necessary equipment and installations, such as **ramps and lifts**.

In addition, a **remote learning plan** should be in place as well, in case of an uncontrollable event. However such a plan must not be communicated as a choice but rather as a last resort.

Based on the UDL principles, should the transport of persons with disabilities be integrated to the default option provided, or should a separate bus/shuttle be used?

Remember: Learners with disabilities want to socialize with other learners without disabilities during commuting (Ross et al., 2020)

3.4 Using Technology for Inclusive Education

Having previously discussed the use of digital tools, now it is important to further view some of the more technologically advanced ones, available for accessibility purposes.
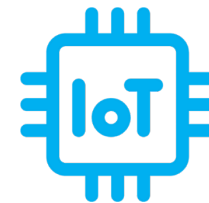
Text-To-Speech and Speech-To-Text:

These assistive technologies can be an alternative to writing or speaking.

Eye-tracking devices

One emerging technology allows persons with disabilities to interact with the computer screen by looking at specific parts of the screen (Bureau of Internet Accessibility, 2021)

Internet of Things (IoT)

The applications of IoT in inclusion are endless. Even elements of home automation for doors and lighting can greatly improve the experience of learners (Conure, 2022)

UNIT 4

Creative Approaches

4.1 Integrating the Classroom Creatively

One of the best approaches you can adopt, is to utilize creative methods and assignments, which can greatly increase student engagement.

One may wonder **how this is relevant to inclusion, as they can be used in any classroom**.

Since one of the goals is **proper integration**, greatly benefiting the flow of the lecture and the achievement of learning outcomes, it comes as no surprise that advanced creative assignments can **glue the whole classroom together**.

4.2 Blended Learning

Blended learning combines **e-learning and traditional lectures**. Often, the lecture material can be posted on an **e-learning platform** where the students can watch it or read it at **their own pace**.

This frees up time in the classroom for practical activities, where you can **involve persons with disabilities more actively.**

By doing practical tasks, the educator is essentially given more opportunities to **demonstrate their understanding** of how to address the needs of persons with disabilities, **helping the other classmates adopt this behavior too**.

4.3 World Café

The **World Café** (The World Café, n.d.) is a **casual, yet advanced participatory method**, which creates a casual space for a large open dialogue both in small groups and by addressing the entire audience.

Why is the World Café an activity of interest?

Since the setting must resemble one of an actual café, you can **assign learners or even other educators** to process, what is the best way to **accommodate persons with physical disabilities**, given the space their equipment may require.

4.4 Draft a Class Contract

Have you ever considered that your classroom is actually a team of allies, who can make the learning experience you provide better?

Indeed, **supportive behavior** by your students can make the difference in the implementation of your teaching methods.

A helpful solution is the **implementation of a Class Contract**. Essentially, a Class Contract is an agreement signed by the whole class in the beginning of the year, where everyone agrees on a common standard of rules, setting the appropriate expectations for behavior in the classroom.

This is of crucial importance because the **successful implementation** of inclusive teaching strategies depends on the **cooperation with all students**.

Synopsis

Now that you have completed this module, you should be able to:

- Analyze the principles of Universal Design for Learning and demonstrate their application in creating diverse instructional formats to cater to all learners.

- Explain the importance of physical accessibility, from arranging space to employing technology, in ensuring an inclusive educational environment.

- Apply the concepts of blended learning, World Café, and creative classroom integration as well as draft a class contract.

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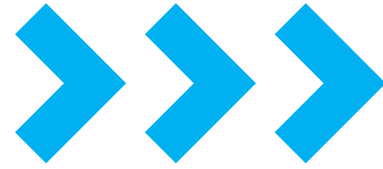
Thank you
for your attention!