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ABLEassembly2024](https://tinyurl.com/ABLEassembly2024)**

**MAKING
NEURODIVERSE
MOVES IN AN
ABLEIST WORLD**

WITH MILES WILCOX

ABLE ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE 2024

OUTLINE

- **Introduction**
- **Universal Design for Learning - UDL**
- **Physical Space**
- **Emotional Connection**
- **Content Support**
- **Communication**
- **BIAAE 'Ukulele Ensemble**
- **Summary**
- **Questions**

INTRODUCTION

A blurred photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, there are several rows of light-colored wooden desks with attached metal frames and blue plastic chairs. The desks are arranged in a grid pattern. In the background, there is a whiteboard and a chalkboard. The whiteboard has some faint writing on it, and the chalkboard has the word 'READ' written on it. There are also some posters and notices on the walls. The overall scene is slightly out of focus, giving it a soft, dreamy appearance. The text 'INTRODUCTION' is overlaid in the center of the image in a large, bold, black font.

ABOUT ME

➤ MR. MILES

- **BA in Music** : Bard College at Simon's Rock
- **Masters of Music in Music Education** : Boston Conservatory at Berklee
- **Berklee Institute for Accessible Arts Education**: Private Lessons, Music Class for Young Children, Rock Band, 'Ukulele Ensemble (2015–)
- **Newton Public Schools** : K-5 General Music including 'ukulele, chorus, band, orchestra (2020–)



LEARNING TARGETS

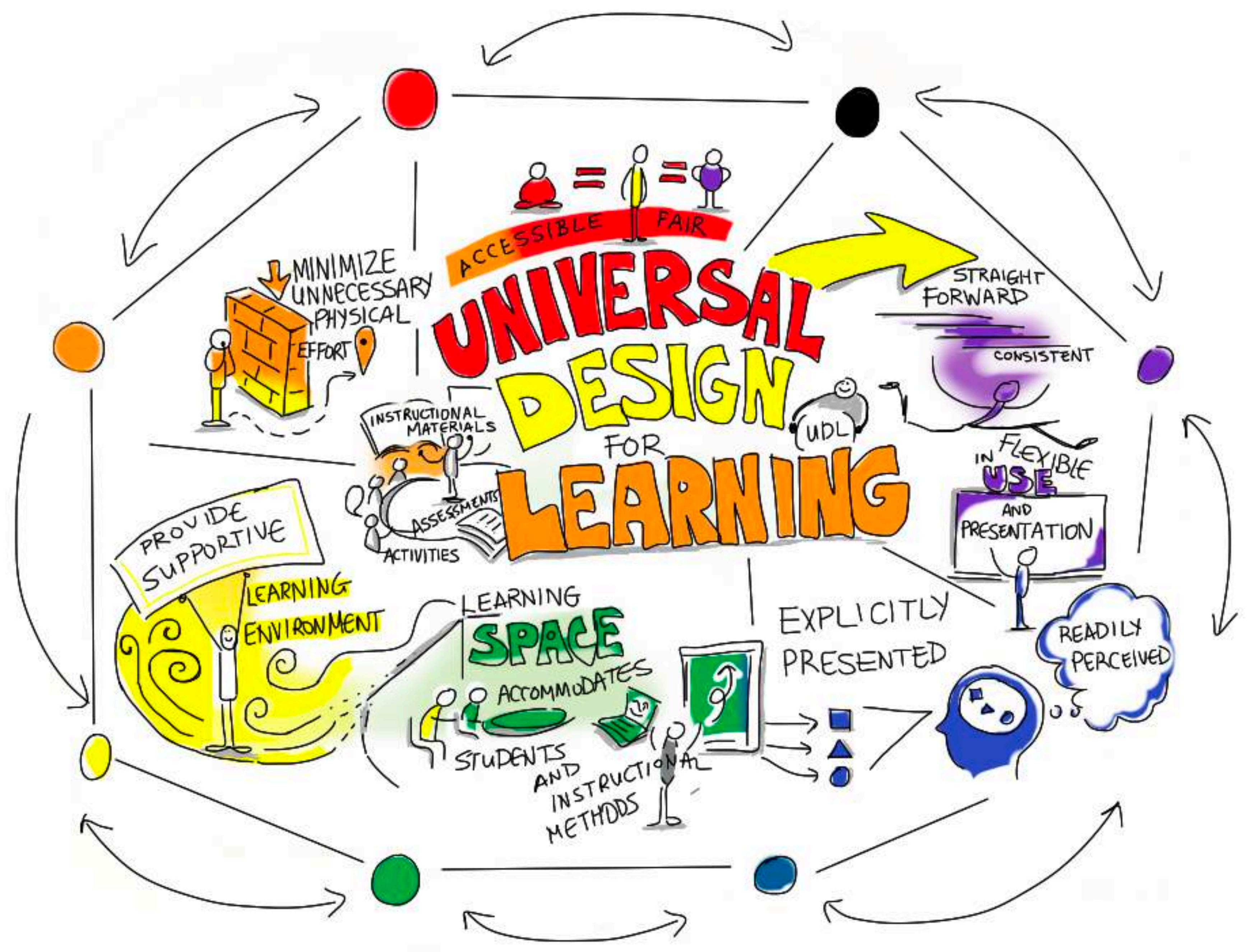
- ©I can explain the basic principles of Universal Design for Learning
- ©I can choose language that minimizes students' anxiety triggers
- ©I can identify next steps to ensuring my neurodiverse students are celebrated in my classroom



***There will be time at the end
for questions— feel free to
raise your hand at any point!***

A photograph of a woman and a young child sitting on a patterned rug, playing ukuleles. The woman is on the right, wearing a pink top and a headband, looking down at her instrument. The child is on the left, wearing a blue top, also looking at their instrument. The background is softly blurred, showing a window and some indoor plants. The image has a warm, golden light and is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal and pink gradient.

UDL: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING



UDL provides multiple means of...

Engagement



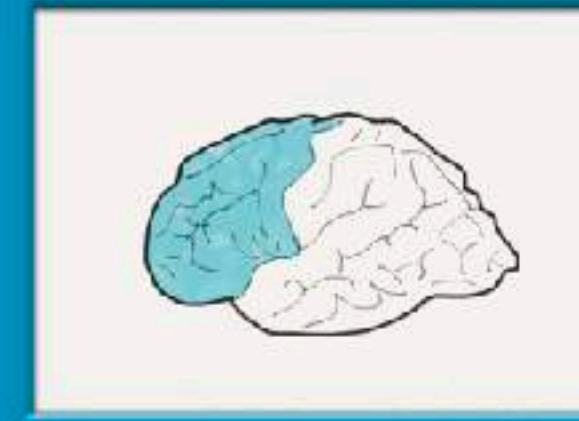
Offer options and supports to stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning

Representation



Present information in different ways to support access and understanding

Action & expression



Offer options and supports to all so everyone can create, learn, and share

Provide multiple means of Engagement



Affective Networks
The "WHY" of Learning

Provide multiple means of Representation



Recognition Networks
The "WHAT" of Learning

Provide multiple means of Action & Expression



Strategic Networks
The "HOW" of Learning

Access

Provide options for Recruiting Interest

- Optimize individual choice and autonomy
- Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity
- Minimize threats and distractions

Provide options for Perception

- Offer ways of customizing the display of information
- Offer alternatives for auditory information
- Offer alternatives for visual information

Provide options for Physical Action

- Vary the methods for response and navigation
- Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies

Build

Provide options for Sustaining Effort & Persistence

- Heighten salience of goals and objectives
- Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge
- Foster collaboration and community
- Increase mastery-oriented feedback

Provide options for Language & Symbols

- Clarify vocabulary and symbols
- Clarify syntax and structure
- Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols
- Promote understanding across languages
- Illustrate through multiple media

Provide options for Expression & Communication

- Use multiple media for communication
- Use multiple tools for construction and composition
- Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance

Provide options for

Provide options for

Provide options for

Affective Networks
The "WHY" of Learning



Recognition Networks
The "WHAT" of Learning



Strategic Networks
The "HOW" of Learning



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Internalize

Provide options for **Self Regulation**

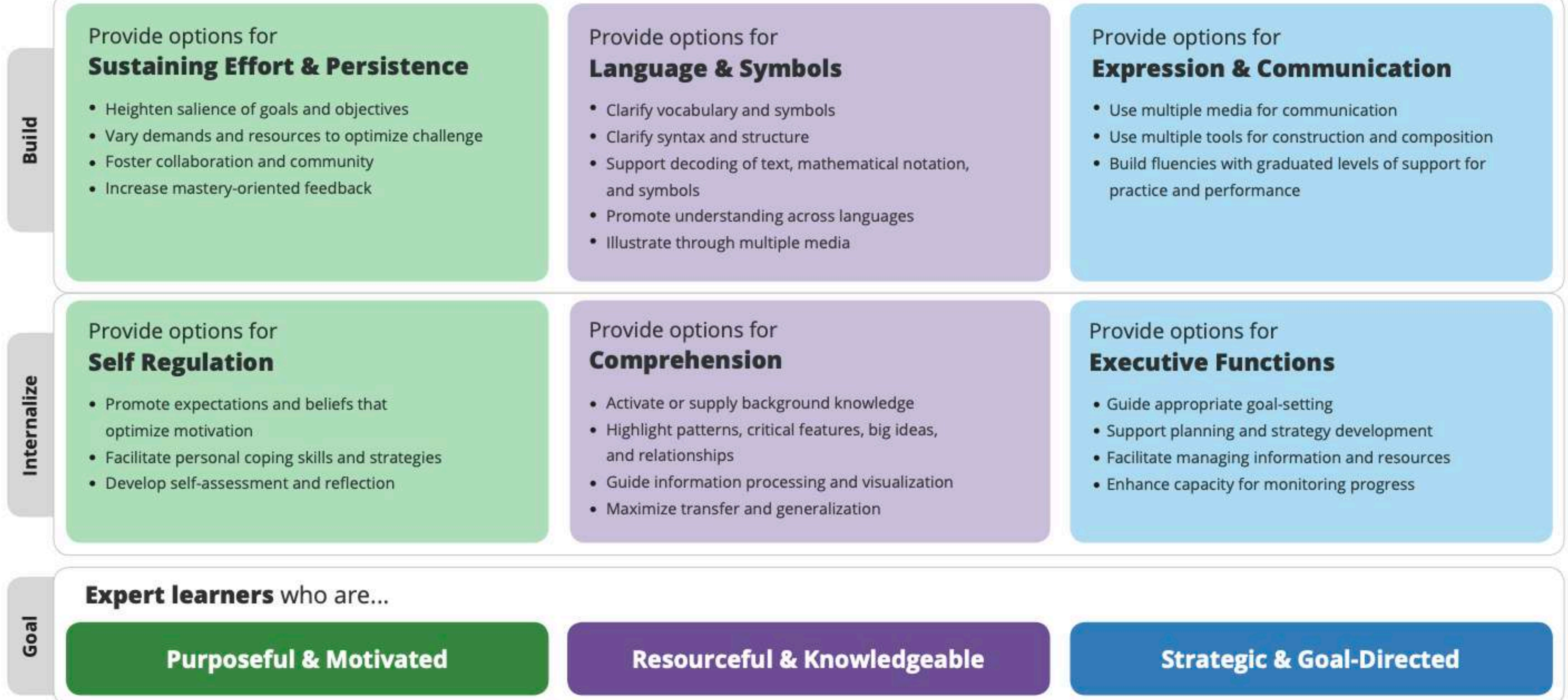
- Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation
- Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies
- Develop self-assessment and reflection

Provide options for **Comprehension**

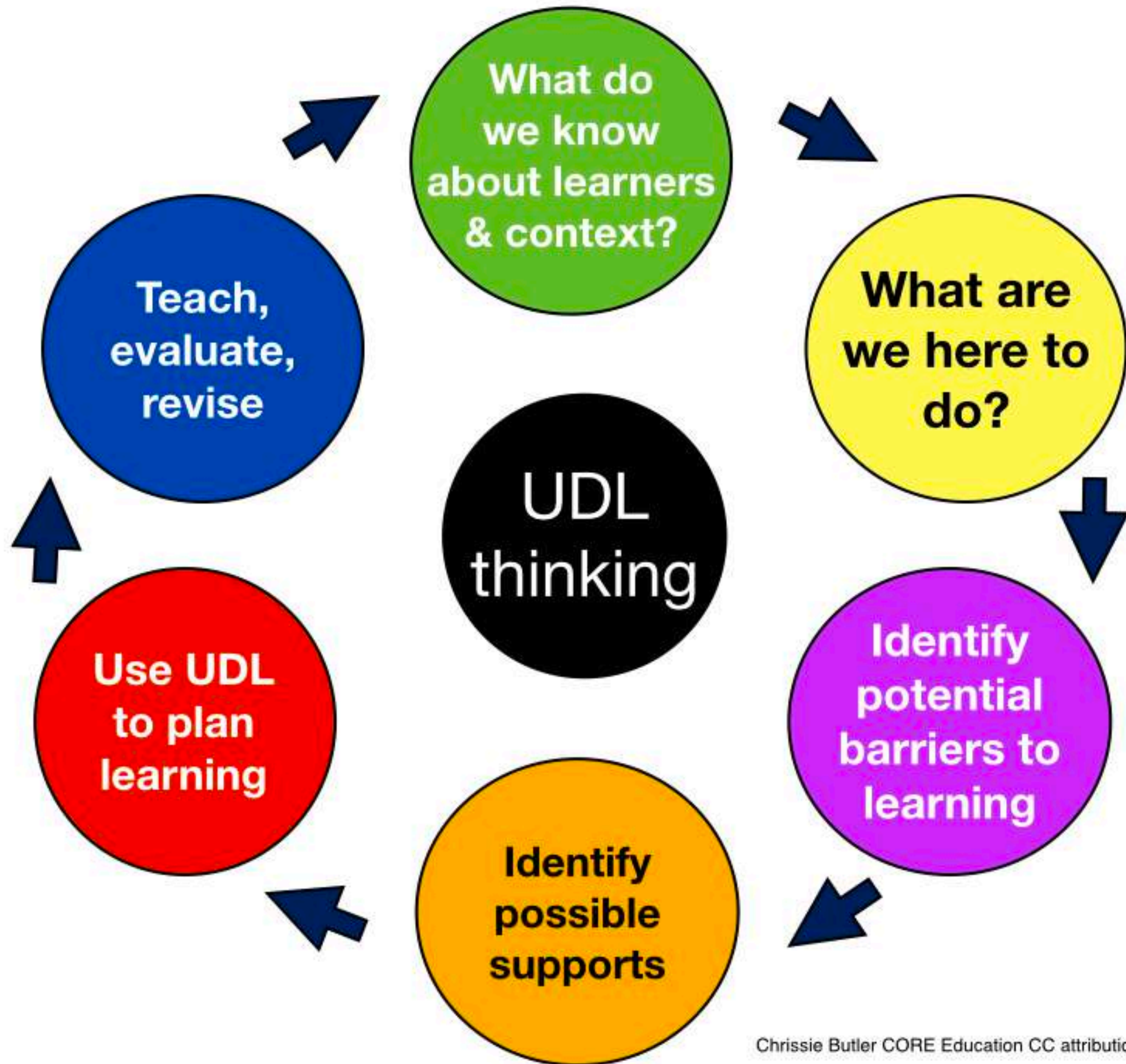
- Activate or supply background knowledge
- Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships
- Guide information processing and visualization
- Maximize transfer and generalization

Provide options for **Executive Functions**

- Guide appropriate goal-setting
- Support planning and strategy development
- Facilitate managing information and resources
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress



When using UDL, we design our lessons under the premise that all learners experience the world differently, and rather than adding accommodations and modifications after the fact, we can create universally accessible lessons from the start.





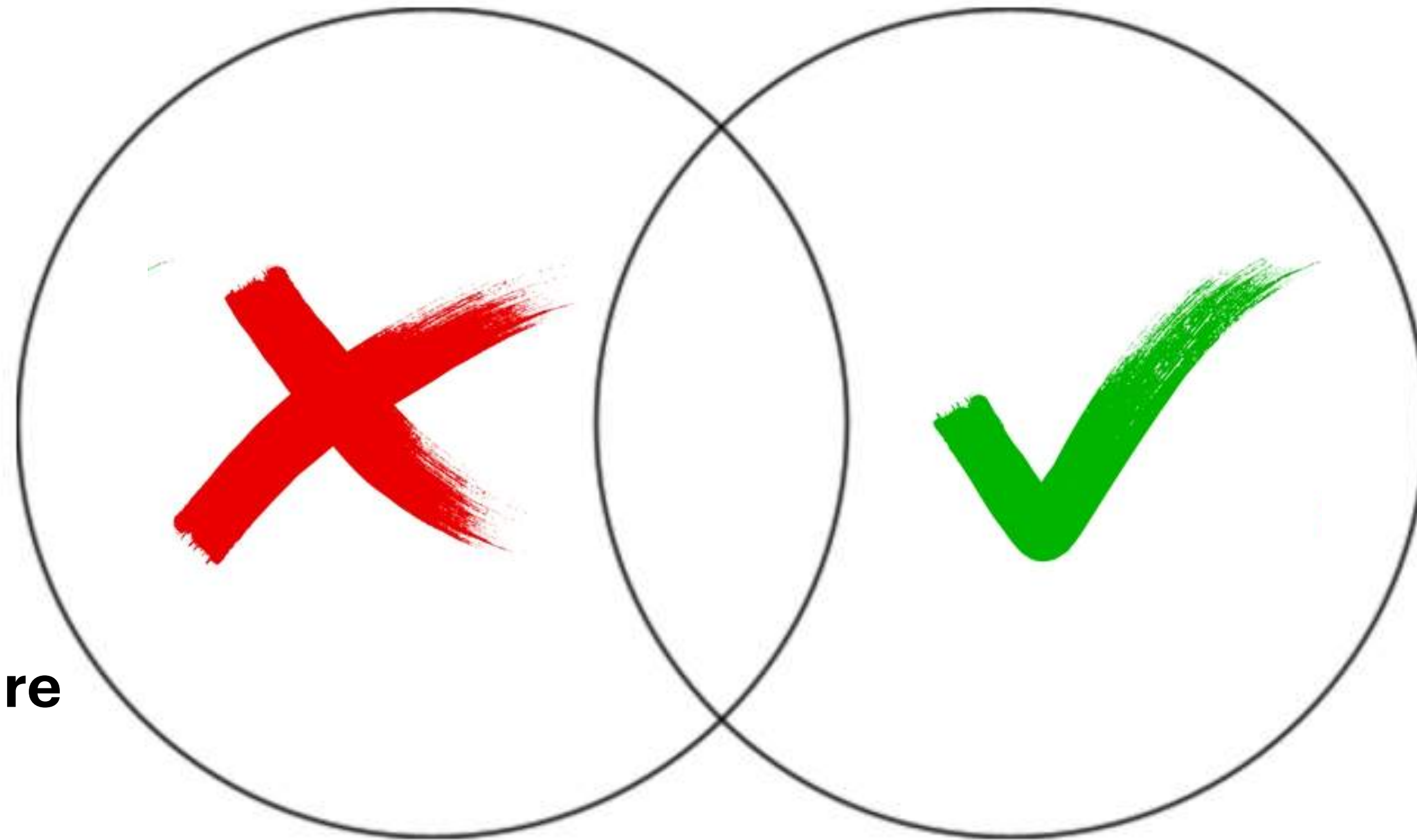
**Allow folks
to engage
in their
own way,
in their
own time.**

PHYSICAL SPACE



WHAT I DON'T HAVE CONTROL OVER

- Old Building
- Administration
- State/National Standards
- District Guidelines
- Who my students are



- My own space / classroom
- My interactions with students
- My communication with families

WHAT I DO HAVE CONTROL OVER

CALM CORNER

- Establish routines
 - Toolbox including fidgets
 - Sound-cancelling headphones
 - Silent and non-messy fidgets
 - Emotions chart
 - SEL connections
-
- No judgment or punishment associated with the space
 - Access to the group instruction if the student chooses



SENSORY PROCESSING DIVERSITY

SENSORY SEEKING VS. AVOIDING

Likes to be upside-down, often climbing on furniture and sitting in unusual positions.



twoemb.medium.com

Needs to touch things to "look" at them, often runs hand along walls while walking.



Enjoys loud music, bright lights, and other sensory stimuli that seem "too loud" or "too bright" for most other people.



Often chews on things that are not food such as the collars of shirts, fingernails, ends of pencils, etc.



May become anxious or irritable when personal space is invaded.



Sensitive to certain textures. Certain types of clothing may be painfully uncomfortable.



twoemb.medium.com

Highly sensitive to loud noises or bright lights.



May seem like a "picky" eater, but it's much more complex than that.



**HOW CAN WE USE UDL
PRINCIPLES WHEN WE...**

- 1. SET-UP OUR CLASSROOM OR
EDUCATIONAL SPACE?**
- 2. INVITE STUDENTS INTO OUR
SPACE?**



EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

INDIVIDUAL CONNECTIONS IN A GROUP SETTING

A. UDL sets you up for success,

B. Interact with each student individually each class,
using their (chosen, correctly pronounced) name

C. 2 -2 -2 method for students you seek to connect with

A. 2 minutes - Twice a week - 2 months

D. Connecting through activities for all

A. Stretchy Band activities, with diverse access points



NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Calm Corner

TECHNIQUES

Inclusive Language

- Use language to your advantage
- Challenge biases
- Include all! Disabilities, genders, identities!
- “PDA” — Pathological Demand Avoidance or Persistent Demand for Autonomy
- The language you choose to use can reduce anxiety in your students, especially those with a PDA profile



Tips for Low-Anxiety Language

QUICK TIPS FOR DECLARATIVE LANGUAGE

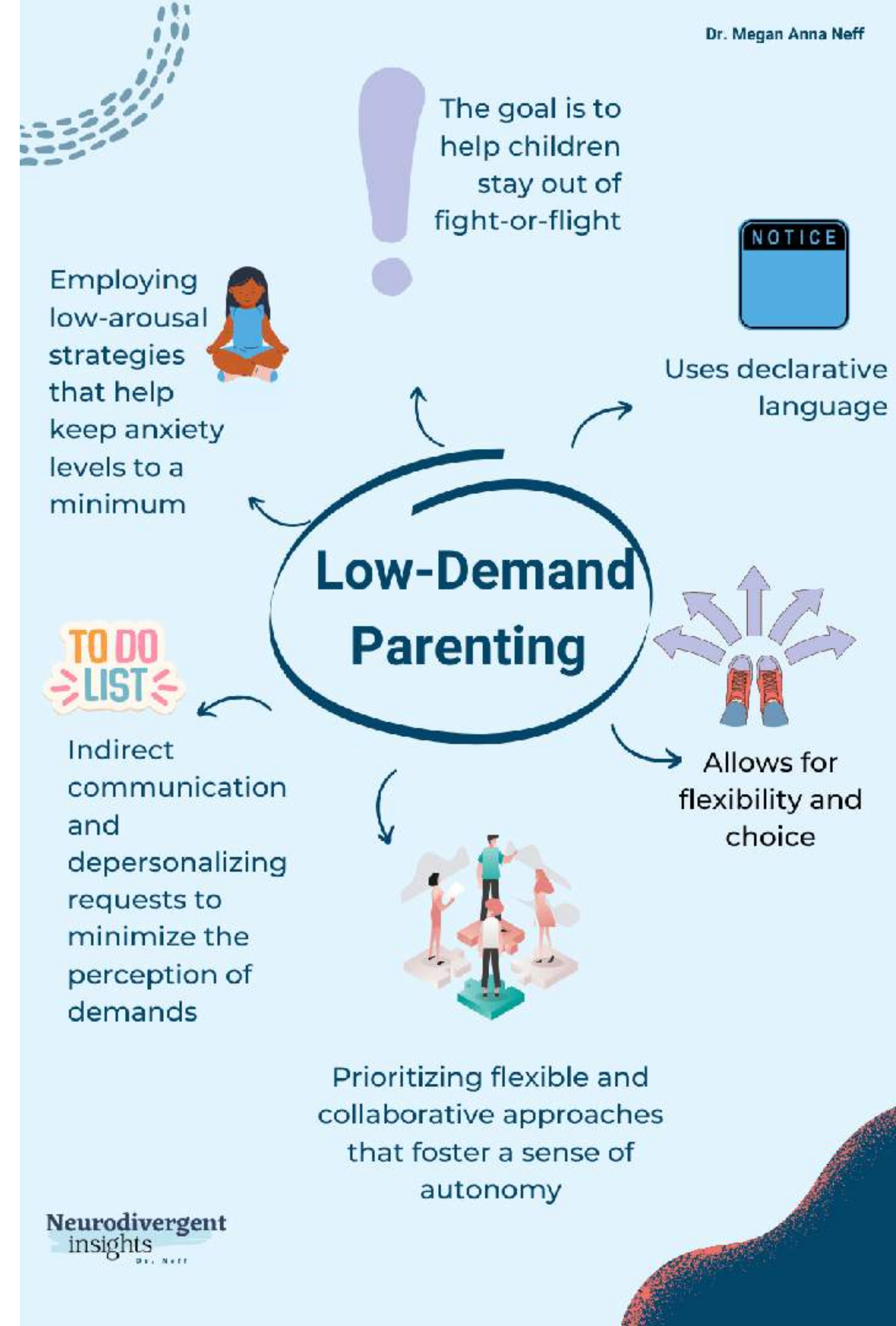
- Take a question you were going to ask & turn it into a statement instead
- Try rephrasing any directions into an observation instead

WWW.ANDNEXTCOMESL.COM

DECLARATIVE LANGUAGE WORDS & PHRASES TO TRY

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------|
| • Notice | • I don't know |
| • Feel | • Might |
| • See | • Sometimes |
| • Hear | • What a great question |
| • Think | • Let's find out together |
| • Imagine | • I'm not sure |
| • Forget | • I like |
| • Wonder | • I don't like |
| • Know | • Let's |
| • Remember | • I, my, me, mine |
| • Perhaps | • We, us |
| • Maybe | • Emotion words |

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Berklee Institute for
Accessible Arts Education

CONTENT SUPPORT



***Where do you go to
connect with like-
minded colleagues?***

MUSICIAN SPOTLIGHT



Anilee List



Anilee List Singer & Actress

Born 2000

- Born and raised in Los Angeles, CA
- One of the top 24 contestants on American Idol, season 19
- Always enjoyed playing music in school
- Appeared on the Oscar-winning film DOLA
- Has been on the TV show with the Executive Producers of America since she was 13 years old



meeting Mr. Miles' student Kareem in October at Berkeley

Listen To This!

MUSICIAN SPOTLIGHT



Ronald Braunstein



Orchestral Conductor

Born 8/19/27, 1928

- Conductor of Me2, the world's only college music organization created for individuals living with mental illnesses and the people who support them
- In 1973 he began college at the Juillard School of Music studying composition
- He then changed his course of study and graduated from Juillard with a Bachelor of Music in conducting in 1978
- A 25 because he had to learn to use the First Prize Oud Mous in his student orchestra
- Diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2005
- Passed away in 2011 with wife Caroline Wadsworth
- Subject of the documentary film "Orchestrating Change"
- Was conducting the Me2 at Newby High School on May 18th



You are not alone. Don't be afraid to ask for help. You can always ask to talk to our school social worker Mrs. Woods, or school psychologist Mrs. CBoss.



Listen To This!

Me2/ Classical Music for Mental Health
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

STIGMA-FREE
at Boston Symphony Hall

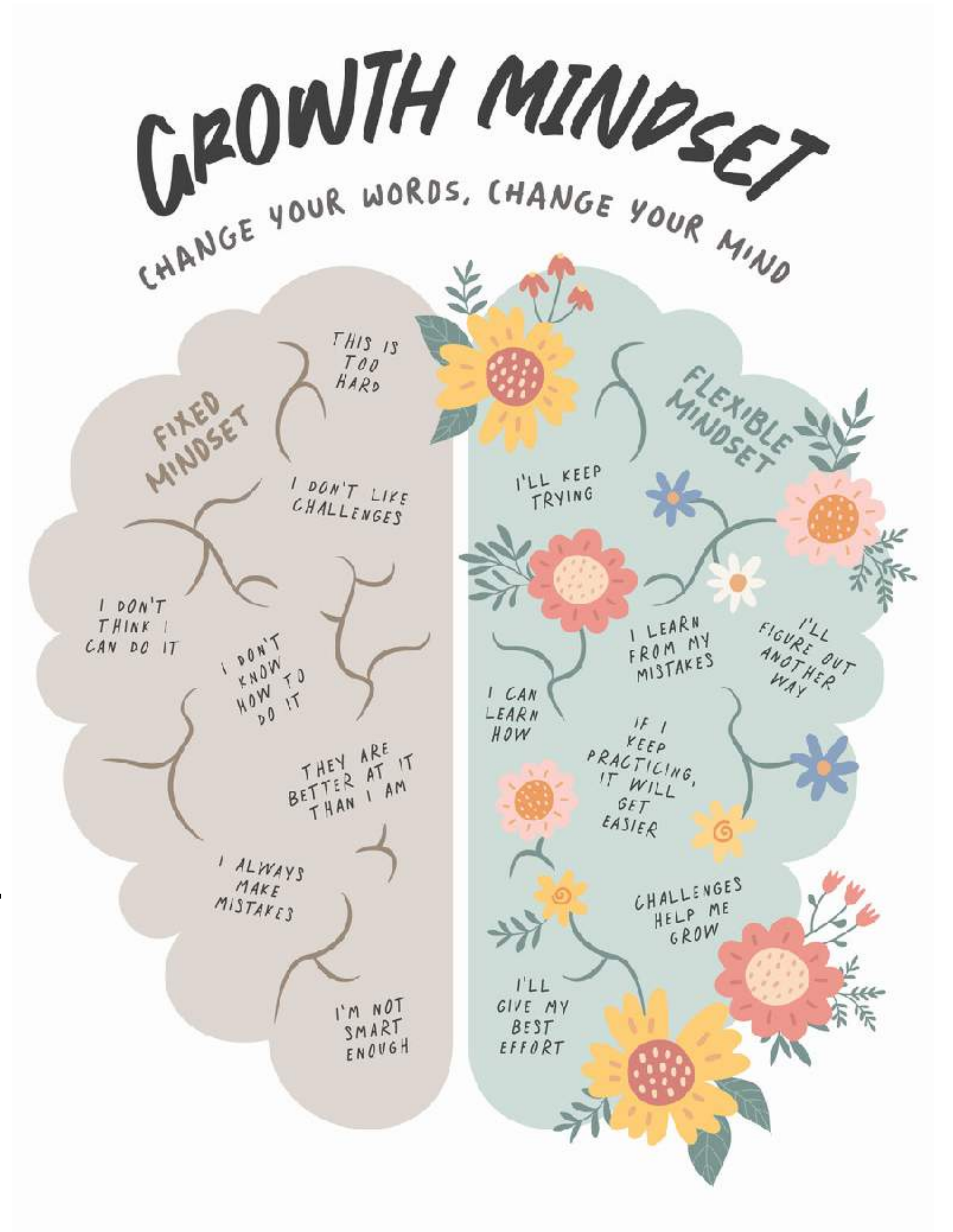
Sunday, January 23, 2022
3:00 pm

Reserve FREE tickets at www.me2.org



Growth Mindset

- * I'll keep trying
- * I learn from my mistakes
- * I'll figure out another way
- * I can learn how
- * If I keep practicing, it will get easier
- * Challenges help my grow
- * I'll give my best effort



For educators that means...

- keep searching for new materials**
- accessible resources**
- more ways to engage**
- more ways to represent**

... what else?

A close-up photograph of a person's hand interacting with a communication board on a tablet. The board is a grid of colorful icons and text. The person's index finger is pointing at a question mark icon. The board includes categories like 'SOCIAL', 'TIME', 'ACTION', and 'QUESTIONS'. The word 'COMMUNICATION' is overlaid in large, bold, black letters across the center of the image.

COMMUNICATION

QUESTION TRADITIONS

What were you taught about music education that has ableist undertones, or even explicit ablism?

What are we doing as educators to dismantle the systems of oppression in place that disable our students?



I'm a General Music Teacher



Does anyone have a message for families of Kinders that are reluctant singers/speakers? I want to send something out about the importance of participation, how understanding music will become difficult if they don't, and maybe a connection to reading. Thanks for sharing if you have something!



Care



Comment



Send



Miles Douglas Wilcox

Top comments ▾



Miles Douglas Wilcox

Nope, because I teach many kids with disabilities and diverse needs/experiences, and there are infinite reasons they may not participate and all are okay. "Any response is a response" is a mantra I live by in my teaching, and I want all my students to feel accepted as they are, as I meet them and their needs where they are. UDL (Universal Design for Learning) practices encourage teachers to find multiple means of expression and evaluation, so I hope you are able to discover other ways for students to participate when they are reluctant singers/speakers.

Just now Like Reply

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

- Accept all forms of communication
- Offer nonverbal options such as choice boards
- Model for your students what non-verbal communication can look like



... IN WHAT WAYS DO YOUR STUDENTS COMMUNICATE NON-VERBALLY?

A young boy is shown from the chest up, playing a ukulele. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The image has a soft, artistic feel with a blue and green gradient overlay. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

BIAAAE
'UKULELE
ENSEMBLE

OUR ENSEMBLE

- **Ages 7-12+**
- **Started online July 2020**
- **Met & performed May 2022**
- **Saturdays for 45mins - hybrid**
- **Experienced multi-instrumentalists plus absolute beginners joining each semester**
- **Diagnoses including ASD & ADHD**



DIFFERENTIATION:

When I teach an 'ukulele ensemble of various levels

**Level 1: Strumming on One
Chord/Note**

**Level 2: Strumming Chord
Progression**

Level 3: Plucking Melody

Reggae Vibes

The sheet music for 'Reggae Vibes' is presented in three systems, each with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first system (Level 1) shows a single C chord being strummed throughout. The second system (Level 2) shows a chord progression of C, C, F, F, C, C, F, F. The third system (Level 3) shows a plucked melody line with chords C, C, F, F, G, G, G, G, C. The melody line includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.) with a double bar line and repeat sign. The first ending ends with a D.C. (Da Capo) instruction. The second ending ends with a final chord C. The bottom system shows the bass line with fret numbers 7, 7, 5, 3, 7, 7, 5, 3, 2, 2, 2, 3, 5, 3, 0, 0, 0, 0.

MR. GRAY'S MUSIC CLASSROOM



FOCUS ON ABILITY

WHAT SKILLS ARE STUDENTS ALREADY CAPABLE OF?

- **Steady Beat**
 - Tap on strings
 - Strum open C tuning
 - “Chuck” with left hand muting strings
- **Plucking or strumming**
- **Left or right hand dominance**
- **Aural, visual, kinesthetic preference**

**Always have students leave a
lesson or class feeling a sense
of ACCOMPLISHMENT.**

SUMMARY

Mistakes
ARE
PROOF
YOU ARE
TRYING

PLANS GOING FORWARD

- **Universal Design for Learning principles reminders:**
 - Flexible ways to present **what** we teach and learn
 - Flexible options for **how** we learn and express what we know
 - Flexible options for generating and sustaining motivation, the **why** of learning
- **Use these principles to frame your physical classroom space, the emotional connections you make with students, the way you communicate and accept communication with students and colleagues.**



QUESTIONS?

GET IN TOUCH!

MILES WILCOX

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RESOURCES

Berklee Institute for Accessible Arts Education: <https://college.berklee.edu/BIAAE>

Universal Design for Learning: <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

Bear Paw Creek Stretchy Band: <https://musicandmovementproducts.com/shop/movement-props/bear-paw-creek-best-selling-stretchy-band-music-movement-prop/>

Blog Post: What's the Problem with Whole Body Listening? <https://autloveaccept.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/whats-the-problem-with-whole-body-listening/comment-page-1/>

Me2/ Orchestra: <https://me2music.org/about/>

Mr. Gray's Music YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/MusicwithMrGray>

More presentations by Mr. Miles: <http://mileswilcox.weebly.com/blog>