Accessible Education Tips

Teaching to students with different abilities does not mean the academic rigor is lowered. Teaching to students with different abilities pushes educators to be more clear, concise, and intentional about their teaching. Taking on a mindset of accessible education improves teaching quality and provides all students an opportunity to access course content in more effective ways. Accessible education aims to reduce accommodation needs and move towards inclusion.

Here are some tips for designing content and teaching with accessible education in mind (these tips are in no particular order and are not extensive):

1) Let students know of course material as soon as possible
2) Attempt to be specific when describing visuals
3) Use Alt. text on images
4) Read aloud anything that is on the Power Point or handouts
5) Be sure electronic documents can be used with a screen reader
6) Choose digital textbooks or books
7) Provide pdf documents as often as possible
8) Allow for multiple means of action or expression for assessments
9) Use plain language
10) Focus attention on important content
11) Limit distractions
12) Be consistent
13) Make lighting adjustments in classrooms
14) Meet students in alternate locations if your office is inaccessible
15) Caption your lectures and videos
16) Use large print and clear font
17) Make sure your course can be navigated by keyboard
18) Over communicate and be willing to repeat yourself
19) Use concrete examples
20) Make sure to make concrete connections between topics
21) Set clear guidelines for participation
22) Provide breaks
23) Provide step-by-step instructions
24) Deliver instruction in a variety of ways
25) Allow for partnership and collaborative discussion and projects
26) Provide visuals to support understanding
27) Use normal speech patterns
28) Ask clear and short questions
29) Repeat responses given from students
30) Provide a visual cue when necessary while speaking
31) If a student has an ASL interpreter, look at the student, not the interpreter
32) Be aware that the interpreter will interpret EVERYTHING that is said unless a private conversation is happening
33) Make sure there are clear pathways in your classroom
34) Provide choice for assignments
35) Create a flexible learning environment

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