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Advancing a Universally Designed (UD) Curriculum: How NH-ME LEND is Creating an Accessible Program for ALL



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Group Commitments

- Reviewed Self-Advocacy (SA) Discipline Competencies as of 2021.
- Researched Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Considered how each core of the NH-ME LEND program (seminar, clinical and leadership) might be seen through a UDL lens.
- Followed the flow of the academic year for reviewing materials, starting with a review of the recruitment and application process.
- Built faculty capacity to offer various types of assignments and presentation options, including videos and podcasts as replacements for written materials.
- Encouraged self-advocate trainees and faculty members to provide feedback on accommodations to make necessary changes.



LEND Faculty and Trainees working together during fall kickoff activities.

"Involving people with varying backgrounds, including self-advocate trainees in the program has added richness to our program." ~ Kathy Bates

NH-ME LEND Timeline

2014	• First NH-ME LEND Self-Advocate Graduate, Kathy Bates.
Spring 2022	• Program leadership convened a diverse group of seven faculty and staff to work on the development of the self-advocacy discipline within the program. The workgroup meets monthly.
Summer 2022	• Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Lens
2023-2024	• Supported a Self-Advocate trainee under the HRSA guidelines. • A second trainee is being supported this academic year.

HRSA Timeline

2021	• Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA) required all LEND programs to recruit and hire self-advocate faculty members.
2024	• HRSA requires a minimum of recruiting at least one self-advocate long-term trainee every year, paving the way for a new "Self-Advocacy Discipline" in LEND. • No educational minimum if individuals demonstrate experience as a leader, a readiness to further advance their leadership skills, and a willingness to share their lived experiences. • Doors are open for wider recruitment of self-advocates, including those with intellectual disabilities.

Discussion Questions

- How can LEND programs maintain graduate-level rigor while ensuring that the curriculum is fully accessible to all?
- How do LEND programs find time for faculty to develop UDL materials and resources - such as developing plain language summaries and revising recruitment materials?
- What strategies for building the capacity of LEND faculty should be used?
- Could a UDL curriculum not only improve the accessibility of the program but also the ability of trainees to model principles of UDL in their lives after LEND?
- How can LEND programs integrate concepts of accessibility and presuming competence into all aspects of planning and teaching?
- Is there a need for separate competencies or tracks for self-advocates if we apply the principles of UDL?
- How will can we continue to use the UDL approach to modify our curriculum and to learn from trainees, faculty, and HRSA?



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