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

Susan Zimmermann
Amy Frechette
Kathleen Bates
Marnie Morneault
Stacy Driscoll

See next page for additional authors

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Authors
Susan Zimmermann, Amy Frechette, Kathleen Bates, Marnie Morneault, Stacy Driscoll, Susan Russell, and Betsy Humphreys
Advancing a Universally Designed (UD) Curriculum: How NH-ME LEND is Creating an Accessible Program for ALL


Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies/University of Maine and Institute on Disability/University of New Hampshire

Group Commitments

- 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.

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

LEND Faculty and Trainees working together during fall kickoff activities.

HRSA Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>• Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA) required all LEND programs to recruit and hire self-advocate faculty members.</td>
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| 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. |

NH-ME LEND Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>• First NH-ME LEND Self-Advocate Graduate, Kathy Bates.</td>
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<td>Spring 2022</td>
<td>• 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2022</td>
<td>• Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Lens</td>
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| 2023-2024 | • Supported a Self-Advocate trainee under the HRSA guidelines.    
• A second trainee is being supported this academic year. |

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?