The Educator Toolkit

Neuroinclusive teaching for classrooms, lectures and labs

FOR TEACHERS · PROFESSORS · TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Students differ in how they learn and participate. Use these checklists and examples to make lessons clearer and offer more ways to show learning. Choose changes that fit your course and your institution's requirements.

Start here | 10 minutes

1. Run the design checklist (section 2) against your next lesson or lecture; tick what is already true.
2. Add the assessment flexibility menu to your syllabus so it applies to everyone.
3. Pick one Translator row you have seen this term and try the supportive response.

1 Five Teaching Practices

- **Universal design first.** Plan different ways for students to access materials and take part.
- **Behavior is communication.** When a student fidgets, shuts down, or calls out, consider what support might help before responding.
- **Never diagnose.** Notice, support, and refer to your institution's learning-support pathway. Labels are for professionals and families.
- **Assess the learning, not the format.** Handwriting, spelling and presentation nerves are not the curriculum (unless they literally are).
- **Predictability is safety.** Use visible schedules, advance warning of changes, and consistent routines.

2 Classroom & Lecture Design Checklist

☐ Learning objectives stated at the start, in plain language

☐ Materials available in advance (slides, readings) and afterwards

☐ Instructions given verbally AND in writing; complex tasks broken into steps

☐ Multiple ways to participate: speak, write, poll, small group, async forum

☐ Movement and breaks built into sessions over 45 minutes

☐ Sensory audit done: lighting, noise, seating options, quiet corner or exit route

☐ Recording or notes alternative available for lectures

☐ Deadlines visible in one predictable place, with reminders

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3 Behavior to Need to Response (Classroom Edition)

What you might see	Possible need	Supportive response
Calls out answers, can't wait	Impulse control; fear of losing the thought	Whiteboards/jot pads; structured response turns; channel into helper roles
Won't start the task	Task initiation difficulty; unclear first step	Break into steps; explicitly name step one; quiet check-in, not public prompt
Meltdown or shutdown after transition	Change without warning; sensory overload	5-minute warnings; visual schedules; calm exit option without penalty
Refuses to read aloud	Decoding difficulty; anxiety	Voluntary reading only; offer pre-arranged passages; never cold-call reading
Brilliant verbally, weak on paper	Dyslexia/dysgraphia profile	Offer typed, oral or recorded alternatives; grade content over mechanics
Constant fidgeting, rocking	Self-regulation, not defiance	Permit quiet fidget tools; movement jobs; flexible seating
Intense niche interests dominate	Autistic focus; connection attempt	Bridge the interest into the curriculum; agree interest-time windows
“Lazy” bright student missing deadlines	Executive function overload, not motivation	Chunked milestones; planner check-ins; scaffold, don't shame

4 Assessment Flexibility Menu

Instead of only…	Also allow…
Timed handwritten exams	Extra time · typed responses · separate low-distraction room
Live presentations	Recorded presentations · presenting to teacher only · narrated slide decks
Long essays as the default	Structured reports · annotated portfolios · oral examinations · visual projects
Surprise quizzes	Announced assessment windows · open-note formats testing application
Group-grade group work	Individually-graded roles within group projects · clear role contracts

Offer ways for students to show what they know while meeting the learning objectives. **Explain the available options in your syllabus** and follow your institution's assessment requirements.

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5 Conversation Scripts

WITH A STUDENT (SUPPORT WITHOUT LABELS)

"I've noticed the written assignments seem to take a lot out of you, while your ideas in discussion are excellent. Let's find a format that shows what you know. What's the hardest part when you sit down to write?"

WITH PARENTS / GUARDIANS

"I want to share what I'm seeing so we can support [name] together. In class, [specific observations, without labels]. Here's what's working: [strategies]. Have you seen similar patterns at home? The learning-support team can also help us."

WITH A UNIVERSITY STUDENT WHO DISCLOSES

"Thank you for telling me. What has worked in past courses? Alongside anything formal through disability services, here's what I can adjust in this course right away."

6 Higher Education Specifics

- Explain available support in the syllabus and in week one so students know how to ask for help.
- Offer ways to show engagement besides speaking in class, responding without preparation, or using a camera.
- Offer bookable office-hour slots as well as drop-ins so students can plan ahead.
- Reference disability services in every module guide, framed as normal ("many strong students use these"), never as remedial.

Three changes I will make this term:

Go further: Find free school resources and request tailored materials at sharedlanguage.org/organizations. Try the Behavior Translator at sharedlanguage.org/translator.

Shared Language provides management and educational guidance, not medical, psychological, or legal advice. Formal accommodations should follow local law and involve HR, occupational health, or disability services. Possibilities, not diagnoses.

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