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Adopting the Principles of Universal Design into International and Global Studies' Programs and Curriculum

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Abstract

The ideals of universal design have profoundly impacted instruction, policy, and infrastructure in course architecture and design within elementary education and at some universities. Within international and global studies, however, these principles have not deeply affected either pedagogy or scholarship despite the fact that classes in international studies may include more international students and third culture kids[1] than classes in other programs. Instead, in North America (as well as in much of Latin America and Europe), the current pedagogical model calls for students either to develop strategies on their own to succeed in class or to self-identify with documented disabilities if they need particular assistance or accommodation. This approach relies on a banking model for education, which does not focus upon learner agency. This paper argues that by adopting three principles—learner autonomy, the negotiated syllabus, and universal design—international and global studies programs can better meet the needs of diverse learners and reflect the field's commitment to inclusion and social justice.

Keywords: Active Learning, Banking Education, Learner Agency, Negotiated Syllabus, Pedagogy, Universal Design

Students, staff, and faculty at institutions of higher education in the United States are more diverse than they were a generation ago in terms of not only race, gender, and ethnicity but also students' learning needs. Multiple scholars have urged universities and colleges to better respond to the challenges of changing demographics by drawing upon best practices grounded in appropriate theory (Harper & Quaye, 2009). Current pedagogical scholarship stresses the importance of active learning, learner autonomy, and student engagement. Such engagement, however, is frequently contrasted with the lack of student engagement associated with traditional pedagogical practices, particularly those involved in lecture-based instruction (Prince, 2004; Bonwell & Eisen, 1991). Recent discussion regarding curricular reform has been significant but limited, as it has not always drawn on pedagogical changes on a fundamental level or the needs of diverse learners. Additionally, within the discipline of international and global studies, the concept of active learning has been applied to discrete activities (such as simulations) but has not actively shifted the fundamental mode of instructional delivery to meet the needs of diverse learners. Search terms such as "universal design and international studies" or "learner autonomy and international studies" do not bring back more than a handful of works, and these are not actually in the field (Higbee, 2003).

In their 2007 study, Harper and Hurtado observed a perceptual mismatch between what a subset of institutions said they were doing regarding diversity and inclusion versus what students perceived was happening. Drawing from his 2007 study, Harper suggests, "The misalignment of espoused and enacted institutional values must be addressed if students across various groups are to equitably accrue the full range of benefits associated with educationally purposeful engagement—there must be a greater demonstration of institutional seriousness" (Harper & Quaye, 2009, p. 12). We suggest here that enacted values most commonly reflect what Freire terms "banking education." Students are asked to listen, store, and remember what they are taught with little attention paid to students' agency as learners or to students' independently desired learning outcomes. The desires of learners whose first language is not English or of those who have learning differences or psychological or physical disabilities are not typically accounted for in syllabus design. This paper will present a conceptual argument based on grounded theory, which will emphasize the importance of learner autonomy, a negotiated syllabus, and universal design. These pedagogies have not yet drawn sufficient attention in international and global studies literature.[2]

The University Context

To understand the pedagogical issues involved, it is first necessary to discuss the broader institutional context for instruction. For the purposes of this paper, we situate international and global studies courses in a market-driven higher education system, in which students may be seen as a commodity; that is, the learner is the consumer in a tightly fiscally managed setting (Schrecker, 2010). Within this system, the knowledge base promoted reflects a somewhat singular approach. Efficiency and management of courses, time, and emotional issues are predominant. Foucault's notion of governmentality (1991) accounts for remedies proposed to assist students with learning differences. Within governmentality, the ultimate goal of a functioning system is for individuals, in this case learners, to obediently manage themselves by seeking only the assistance that institutions provide while ensuring that they are not a drain on institutional resources. This pattern matches with a pedagogy referred to as "banking education" (Freire, 1970), in which knowledge is determined by the dominant power structure, and students

are deemed successful when they can draw this information from their courses and reproduce it the way the instructor or institution expects. This approach to education has broader educational, social, and political implications, as Paulo Freire has argued:

> The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the student's creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. . . . [They] react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties and is not content with a partial view of reality but always seeks out the ties which link one point to another and one problem to another. (Freire, 1990, p. 100)

Within international and global studies courses, these dimensions of governmentality and banking education manifest themselves particularly in large classes. In these courses, basic classroom management may make creative assignments problematic, and there may be few options for students to increase their sense of self-worth or agency as they engage with global issues. In some classes at our institution in which students have requested accommodations, the Disability Resources Center has called upon instructors to deliver lecture notes and PowerPoint slides ahead of time, sometimes even before professors are on contract or classes begin. These conditions do not reflect contextual issues in international studies, which frequently call for instructors to adjust class content because of world events. Additionally, such expectations do not permit instructors to draw heavily on inquiry-based, active learning course design, which is also highly contextualized.

The banking approach has become a powerful framework in many educational institutions for reasons related to larger social and political pressures. This framework, however, does not always meet the needs of diverse learners; there are also problems with the current approach to meeting the educational needs of learners because of universities' bureaucratic structures. In university classrooms around the world ranging from the UK and North America to Israel, anywhere from 2% to 15% percent of any given student population may exhibit specific learning differences calling for accommodation or adaptation on the part of classroom instructors (Root, 1994; Heiman & Precel, 2003; Kormos & Smith, 2012). In many institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada, accommodations made are often the result of legislation to create a more equitable learning environment. However, not all learners with specific needs are accommodated. Generally, it is those individuals who are members of protected classes who are guaranteed accommodations if they register their needs with the equivalent of a Disability Resource Center. Many other learners may benefit from particular kinds of accommodations to be discussed in a later part of this paper, but because they are not members of protected classes, these learners present no pressing obligation for institutions to provide for their needs.

When some students are not given the necessary tools to succeed, they are more likely to drop out of courses or programs, changing the diversity of university programs (Harper & Quay, 2009). Willms, Friesen, and Milton (2009, p. 36) argue, "Students want their teachers to know how they learn. They want their teachers to take into account what they understand and what they misunderstand, and to use this knowledge as a starting place to guide their continued learning." Additionally, the way institutions frame their approaches to meeting the needs of diverse learners is often to problematize the differences in order to ameliorate the degree to which university resources are tapped to resolve them. A different pedagogical approach would be to bolster student agency so as to meet the needs of diverse learners, improve student retention, and create more equitable power relationships between faculty and learners.

Learner Agency, the Negotiated Syllabus, and Universal Design

This paper will stress the importance of an inquiry-based approach to education, in which education provides tools to solve problems or engage in creative processes rather than presenting and expecting students to master a fixed amount of content, as is the expectation within the banking model. This paper will also stress the importance of learner agency—an integral part of an inquiry-based approach—and the related concepts of negotiated syllabi and universal design. Together, these three concepts form the basis for best practices in addressing the learning needs of diverse international and global studies classrooms. Student agency and the negotiated syllabus empower students to obtain content in the manner that is most effective for them, while universal design is a pedagogical approach that makes information accessible for students with diverse learning needs.

Agency is directly linked to learner ability to self-direct, self-instruct, and self-access learning in ways that best allow individuals to learn (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Dickinson, 1987). This is learner autonomy; students learn because they are engaged. Holec (1981, p. 3) cited in Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 133) suggests that learner autonomy occurs when individuals are permitted "to have and to hold the responsibility for determining learning objectives, defining contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition, and finally, evaluating what has been learned." More specifically, drawing from Chamot's work (1999), Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 134) identifies four activities associated with strengthening learners' ability to learn autonomously: planning, monitoring, problem solving, and evaluating. However, learners cannot become autonomous without appropriate support. The autonomous learning process must be scaffolded to help students move from a space of dependency or learned helplessness (Hammond, 2015) to one of autonomy. It would be appropriate for faculty to devote professional development time to learn more about best practices and culturally responsive approaches. These will permit diverse students to achieve learning autonomy.

It has been our experience over the past twenty years that higher education has lagged behind K-12 education in providing in-service work to seasoned instructors to enable them to infuse greater learner autonomy into their classes. If university faculty teaching international learners have neither the knowledge nor experience that will help scaffold an autonomous learning process, such learning cannot take place. As will be discussed in a later section of the paper, activities that promote learner autonomy are appropriate not only for multilingual students and students with learning disabilities but for all learners.

The approach that promotes autonomous learning may call for a negotiated syllabus (Clarke, 1991), in which students have the autonomy to adapt assignments, materials, and content to their learning needs. For example, in an upper division course, a faculty member might assign five works for the week—e.g., a podcast with a transcript, two videos through the library's streaming video database, one academic article, and one book chapter—with a requirement that the student read, view, or listen *four* of these works. The student's ability to choose their works will help to create an engaged classroom, as students will have selected their preferred means of engaging with the material, while also allowing flexibility in terms of how students approach the content. Even though some students may attempt to game the system, steps to develop learner autonomy make students responsible for their own learning, and, in the end, all students must master the course content, which entails meeting the course learning outcomes. For classes that emphasize writing, for example, there should be scaffolded assignments that

have clear expectations and multiple opportunities for feedback. The learning outcomes and core skills do not change in an autonomous-learning oriented class; these courses are not "dumbed-down." In fact, they are the opposite in that they demand more initiative and engagement from the students, who now must take some role and responsibility for their own classroom experience. At the same time, the flexibility gives students choices so that they can choose the pathway to learn the content that works for them.

This focus upon learner autonomy can be paired with universal design (UD)—a learning framework meant to improve learning for all students by creating a flexible learning environment that accommodates learning differences—an approach based upon the core value of making resources accessible to all students. Most faculty in international and global studies are unfamiliar with UD, a pedagogy that emerged out of the learning sciences, particularly special education and neuroscience, and is now becoming more influential in higher education (Burgstahler, 2016). A core concept of the UD approach is that educational institutions need to reduce the barriers that impede access to materials while at the same time providing flexibility in how students achieve their goals.[3] The universal design approach allows instructors to think differently about teaching because it removes the focus from the individual learner and his or her "ability" to master the material and instead requires instructors to provide a variety of acceptable formats through which each student may engage the material; the UD approach is the opposite of the traditional banking approach, in which students who feel they cannot access traditionally presented material must make particular requests through the Disability Resource Center for finite accommodations. To understand why the UD approach is more relevant to classrooms today, we need to examine student demographics.

Who Are the Students?

Among the legally accommodated and not legally accommodated learners are students with learning disabilities, students with behavioral disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), students whose first language is not English, students who are first generation college students, students who are undocumented, and students whose lives are particularly complicated by financial or social obligations such as heavy work schedules, heavy single parenting duties, or simply a gap of a number of years between high school and college. These students participate in a wide range of classroom settings that include face-to-face, hybrid, and fully online courses, all of which present diverse learning challenges and opportunities.

As discussed earlier, some students are members of protected classes and qualify for Disability Resource Accommodations. It is important to recognize, however, that there are students in all classes who are not members of protected classes but who nonetheless need both accommodations and support. This is true even though the institution is not legally bound to provide them such accommodation. All undergraduates can benefit from the resources and accommodations often offered to students with learning differences, which is a core principle of universal design. It is our contention that all activities and resources that promote comprehension, scaffolding, engagement, authenticity, and agency will help a variety of students succeed. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss all of the types of students who can benefit from additional support, recommended success strategies may work for all students. Shrum and Glisan (2010, p. 365) confirm, "Research suggests that the instructional methods that are effective with students who have learning disabilities tend to be the same as those that are

effective with other students, except that students with learning disabilities may need more attention." We first profile two groups, international and multilingual students, and then those students with learning disabilities and behavioral issues to better understand the contexts within which the autonomy and agency of the respective groups can grow.

Multilingual Students

For the last decade, U.S. educators have used a blanket term for all students whose first language is not English: English Language Learner. Mitchell (2016) suggests that the lifespan of this term may be coming to an end. The same indexing problems linked to binary terms such as "developed" and "underdeveloped" problematize this term. If we are measuring a person's second language proficiency and simply calling them a "learner" no matter how fluent they are, we privilege the native speaker. Making the term additionally problematic is the fact that there are also different types of multilingual students. In international studies classes, there are typically three kinds of students who use more than one language in their home lives and frequently in their academic lives.

One subset of this population is the international student population, which comprises students who have come to the U.S. from abroad for a university education and have just finished their programs of English language study and are beginning to take academic courses. Another population whose first language is not English are upper division international students who have decided to major in international studies. Their academic English is typically stronger than the students who have just finished language work. They are more socialized into general university culture. Both groups of students may still need extensive proofreading and editing of written work. Tuition and fees paid to universities by these students frequently underwrite costs for domestic students, so such students are often viewed as "cash cows." However, their respective institutions do not always invest in success strategies for these international students, who frequently need both academic socialization assistance and academic writing support.

Another group of students with language needs are U.S. and Canadian citizens who are sometimes characterized as third culture kids. These students have grown up with more than one language at home, and their first language is often not English. While they have come up through K-12 education systems, their academic writing and what Cummins (2008) terms "cognitive academic linguistic proficiency" (CALP) may be weaker than that of their English monolingual peers. These students' academic writing issues (normally related to organization) often parallel the writing issues of their domestic peers. The scaffolding necessary for these three types of multilingual student groups involves (1) identifying campus resources where such students can get paper editing help; (2) out-of-class support for content material review, particularly vocabulary; and (3) permission for multilingual students to draw on resources in their first language and use them in their written work.

Multilingual students in higher education in the U.S. do not frequently receive praise or support for their multilingualism. Even in Canada, where French/English multilingualism is a requisite for much government employment, speakers whose first language is neither English nor French are not always encouraged to use their first languages in their studies. Rather, the distance of their English or French from native speaker English or French is often the only measure of their competence. Christa van der Walt (2013, p. 2) argues that this narrow lens of what she terms "monolingualism" is "restrictive of learning and teaching." She continues, "[A] value-added stance towards multilingualism, which pays attention to social justice and equity

prevents a perception of multilingual students and academic staff as problems that need to be 'fixed' by providing academic or language support of some kind" (p. 2). She suggests that greater movement towards internationalization will lead learners toward "epistemological access" and that this in turn will lead to greater student success. Multilingual learners can come to see their strengths and not simply their differences, all too often characterized as deficiencies. Part of the reason for the tendency to frame language differences as deficiencies is the larger social and educational context within which difference is understood.

Institutional and Legal Understandings of Learning Disabilities

In North America, the term "learning disability" has been loosely assigned to learners who have trouble obtaining information in academic settings. Today the phrase "learning disability" is entrenched with political, legal, and medical valances. The medical discourse related to disabled learners has done little if anything to improve the overall understanding of learners with special needs. Medical terminology used to describe disabled learners in the West up to the 1970s (such as "imbeciles" or "feeble-minded") is today considered to be inappropriate and offensive. Although this discourse has undergone a significant change in the past thirty years, there has not always been a complete change in the framework that determines how faculty and institutions approach learners with special needs.

Language use is determined by the social context that surrounds us all. Social constructivists such as Vygotsky (Kozulin, 2003; Gindia, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003) look at the role of both interlocuters (speakers or writers) and context. Power differences affect how information is processed. Van Dijk (1987) looks at Erickson's (Erickson & Schulz, 1982) concept of "gatekeeping." Individuals with power gate-keep entry into particular settings. Faculty play social roles in determining how learners in their classrooms become part of or are excluded from the classroom community and ultimately from learning. When faculty are insufficiently familiar with needs of particular groups of students and have not received institutional support for acquiring greater familiarity with current best practices or using such practices to restructure their classes, the faculty unknowingly exclude multilingual students and students with learning and behavioral differences from becoming full members of the classroom community. These learners become socialized in disengagement.

In relation to the term disability, the legal discourse reinforces the belief that the problem lies within the individual learner and not within in the academic system itself. Institutions privilege the legal requirements for compliance not because compliance ensures student autonomy and agency but because institutions fear the loss of all federal funds, including grants and student financial aid that could occur if institutions are found to be out of compliance. The traditional approach to accommodating students with learning differences is not designed to give students agency or the skills necessary to navigate aspects of their learning; rather, this approach provides only the most basic adjustments and accommodations possible to conventional classroom instruction. These accommodations range from physical classroom accommodations (furnishings, seating position, recording devices, etc.) to longer test times or software that has the ability to digitally transcribe text. For the student population outlined in this paper, these accommodations may be insufficient. As a result, sadly, not all students have a positive experience with their instructors, as this advice from a text for people with AD/HD suggests:

> Does the [Disability Support Services (DSS)] office help to mediate disputes between
> student and professor regarding rights and accommodations? Unfortunately, many

college professors are still not aware of the legal rights of students with a documented disability such AD/HD, and some are even hostile to the idea of providing accommodations to these students. The best way to maintain a positive relation with professors, especially hostile ones, is to show them [the learner] is engaged and ready to learn and work. (Quinn, 2012, p. 119)

The Disability Support Services Office does play a valuable role for the subset of learners who legally qualify for accommodations. However, neither this office nor centers for teaching and learning on campuses are responsible for expanding assistance to a broader subset of learners who have similar needs or could benefit from similar accommodations. Campus-wide training seminars to assist faculty in changing curricula or style of delivery of curricula due to student accommodation needs are not generally required for tenured faculty; attendance at such sessions is voluntary. Educators faced with new challenges within the classroom that are not easy to address may not possess the skillsets to support their students; they may be very late adaptors and for this, and students with learning differences in their courses may suffer. At an introductory level, if students with diverse learning needs are not successful, they may withdraw (Hammond, 2015) from the course and, ultimately, from their studies.

Students with Learning and Behavioral Differences

Kormos and Smith (2012) tell us that in a European context, around 10% of any given student population will have some form of learning difficulty that can be attributed to a learning disability, while in the United States, it is estimated that 15 % of the general population will have some form of a learning disability (Root, 1994). Within this 15%, students may suffer from disabilities that are readily apparent or from disabilities that are not apparent; in both cases, the disabilities may range in severity. Some students may have difficulty with the acquiring literacy and numeracy skills (dyslexia and dyspraxia), while others may have issues sustaining attention over long periods of time (attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder), and still other students may suffer with social interaction (Asperger's syndrome). Many of these students may have a co-occurrence of another disability (Kormos & Smith, 2012).

Learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia are often associated with visual processing and spatial problems in which students have trouble attaining reading, writing and orthographic skills. Archaic definitions of dyslexia proposed that patients suffering from visual and audial processing issues "failed to attain the language skills of reading, writing and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities" (World Federation of Neurology, 1968). Thus, this specific group of learners could be defined by their "unexpected, specific failure to acquire efficient reading skills despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence and sociocultural opportunity," (The American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Other disabilities such as Specific Language Impairment (SLI) cause learners to have phonological processing issues that may be difficult to distinguish from dyslexia. Though learners with SLI and dyslexia may have similar difficulties, there are distinct differences between the two disabilities that call for different kinds of assistance and accommodations. Within the realm of invisible learning disabilities, it becomes apparent that learners may have overlapping issues that need to be addressed separately.

Though attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) is generally understood as a behavioral disorder due to its central role in cognitive functioning, it still plays a central role in how learners are able to process information (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). As

generally understood, students with AD/HD have issues with inattention, impulsiveness, and hyperactivity (APA, 2000). These characteristics can often be detected in children but are not always diagnosed. Moreover, specialists within the field suggest that AD/HD is not a condition that children outgrow—although the severity of the condition may decline as people with AD/HD enter adolescence and adulthood. It is important to understand that "[a]ttention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) is a real, lifelong condition characterized by core symptoms of inattention, distractibility, impulsivity, and hyperactivity…. AD/HD is present from birth (congenital) and inherited in most cases" (Quinn, 2011, p. 2). Like other learning disabilities discussed in this paper, AD/HD often co-occurs with other learning disabilities such as dyslexia and dyscalculia.

Asperger's syndrome is a sub-type of autism, named after Viennese pediatrician Hans Asperger. Asperger investigated a group of children who showed different characteristics from classic notions of autism, noting that the children in his study did not exhibit the language delay that is often associated with autism. Asperger's work was largely unrecognized until Lorna Wing published an influential paper on the subject in 1981, in which she not only coined the term "Asperger's syndrome" but also changed the way in which people in both the medical and psychological community alike conceptualized autism (Wing, 1981). Thus, the term autism was able to incorporate a larger spectrum of behavioral tendencies (disorders). Asperger's syndrome is often understood as "the triad of difficulties with social interaction, imagination and communication" (Kormos & Smith, 2012, p. 52). Students with Asperger's syndrome often find social interactions difficult, and these difficulties can prevent them from being able to obtain the information that they need to succeed in a traditional academic setting.

While the literature typically focuses on narrow populations of students with learning differences and whether the population within any given class is 2% or 15%, everyone has a right to learn. When faculty demonstrate flexible approaches that are more inclusive of all students, students can draw upon this flexibility and inclusion moving into their own interactions with individuals from different cultures and from different countries.

This understanding is not unique to the international and global studies discipline. However, the general information about learning disabilities is not information typically shared in content-based disciplines. In other words, while education faculty and students may be learning about such disabilities, most faculty in other disciplines will only encounter active resources to infuse into teaching when attending university-wide workshops. From our perspective, when new information on pedagogical best practices comes into disciplinary journals and department-based in-service activities, there is a greater likelihood of an infusion of strategies into daily teaching.

When we have at least a superficial understanding of the myriad of linguistic, behavioral, and learning differences in our classrooms, we can work to construct a different learning environment. We can also understand why isolated accommodations may be insufficient to meet student needs. A different approach is required, which entails a reevaluation of dominant pedagogies.

Though the responsibility to comply with disability legislation is usually taken very seriously by academic institutions, the ways in which universities address accommodation at times does not sufficiently support learning objectives, teacher training, and learner autonomy. Simply put, institutions prioritize accommodations for particular students rather than considering a larger rethink of curriculum delivery that might benefit all student populations. The question about whether to offer additional support to learners should not depend on whether those learners

have a diagnosis. A problem does not disappear simply because it has not been diagnosed or is not severe enough to meet the criteria for an official diagnosis. Oftentimes, behavioral issues and learning disabilities go untreated, though they are readily apparent. All this means that faculty should not expect the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to fully represent or accommodate the needs of all their students. Instead, it makes sense to build courses based upon the ideal of learner autonomy and universal design so that students have sufficient autonomy to master content in a manner that works for them. Minor (Lopez-Burton & Minor, 2014, p. 225) observes that instructors may comply or move beyond compliance:

> So, at the bare-bones level, you must comply with the law. But there is another level that I consider just as important, and that is the level at which a teacher goes beyond what is required legally and tries to give a student with a disability the same chance as others at learning...and at becoming an integral part of the class. It requires not just following the rules but going the extra mile to do what is right. In order to do that, you will have to dedicate some extra time to re-thinking the way you teach.

Moving beyond legal requirements is a necessary step to support student learning, but faculty need the tools to achieve this goal. One way to help them do so is to expand academic principles to incorporate the needs of diverse learners and to focus specifically on the addition of the kinds of assignments and additional modes of delivery of material that draw on the principles of learner autonomy, negotiated syllabi, and universal design. All dimensions of negotiated syllabi and autonomous learning are part and parcel of active learning. All universal design principles augment typical delivery of instruction in a manner that benefits not only the three kinds of learners highlighted in this paper but the general audience of students in international studies courses. The next section of this paper reflects on ways to incorporate alternative principles in the international and global studies classroom.

Key Principles and Course Design

The principles of learner autonomy, negotiated syllabi, and universal design allow for a design shift in curriculum and course assessment that benefits not only students with special needs but all students. These principles are mutually dependent. For example, learner autonomy and a negotiated syllabus are dimensions of active learning. These principles also can define the adoption of new classroom modalities, such as such as the appropriate use of technology in an accessible manner to reinforce learning goals.

We need to encourage students to be active and autonomous users. One way to do this is to adopt principles of inquiry, which moves the classroom away from the banking education model towards a problem-based approach to learning. At the same time, it is important to recognize that students have diverse learning needs, and some students are attracted to conventional formats of instruction. One way to respond to this issue in the classroom is to use the dimensions of the Kolb Learning Styles Inventory (Kolb, 2007) when designing assignments and learning responsibilities. Some students prefer to reflect at home and write out talking points for an in-class discussion; others prefer lecture-type presentations. Still others prefer active learning such as simulations or even food-tasting activities, while others prefer the emotional support of co-presenting or co-planning with peers. There is no single approach to designing assignments that is most effective for all students. Therefore, while encouraging active learning

and student autonomy, faculty can also create multiple pathways to mastering the learning outcomes. This concept is at the core of the negotiated syllabus.

Allowing students to provide input on some parts of the syllabus may permit them to choose formats or materials that best meet their needs, promote greater creativity, and prevent plagiarism. Multilingual students can use sources in languages other than English. Students can complete a subset of material, such as reading or watching four out of five of presented elements (e.g. readings, films, blogs). Students can collaborate to create or refine the grading rubric used for particular assignments. In online classes, students may have different questions that they may select for their weekly discussion responses, and students can be given clear requirements to respond to their peers, drawing upon some course material. In a classroom focused on building learner autonomy, students take on more and more responsibility for demonstrating how they have fulfilled an assignment as well as for encouraging their peers to improve and complete their work.

In one of our upper-division classes, students create a digital artifact for their final assignment, which collectively provides the only content for the last week of class. During the preceding weeks, the students collaborate by reviewing drafts of each other's material. Students are intensely engaged with each other in the pre-delivery stage. They have chosen the mode for the delivery of their respective projects (podcast, slideshow, video, blog, or website) and their topics. The course goal is for them collectively create content, and as such, they are responsible for their own instruction.

In a lower level class, we have a digital artifact that requires students to choose from among previously covered course topics to create one PowerPoint slide with accompanying text. As with the upper division assignments, students examine a subset of peer PowerPoints and comment upon them. Such assignments engage students because they are sharing work with their peers. Such assignments are also more authentic in that they reflect student interests and allow for student creativity. A negotiated syllabus allows students to say what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Students can show the instructor how they want to receive instruction. This is a more profound change than simple accommodation, in which students may receive lecture notes in advance or be granted additional time to respond to a test.

Finally, faculty can adopt universal design principles to ensure that students have multiple pathways to learn information. By providing instruction with multiple means of representation, students will be better equipped to respond to the material using different modes of communication and will therefore be able to illustrate their level of engagement and overall interest in ways that optimize individual choice, agency, and authenticity. For example, if faculty lay out syllabi using fonts that can be read by screen-readers and that assist dyslexic learners; use visual material that has accompanying transcripts and/or closed captions; and provide captions underneath maps and diagrams describing the visuals, there is a redundancy available to assist all learners in reducing uncertainty regarding course content. It does not matter whether the uncertainty is fueled by a lack of language fluency, lack of familiarity with classroom expectations, or a physical disability. Likewise, if vocabulary glosses, pre-reading questions, and outlines of lectures or readings are provided ahead of time, students can come to class better prepared. Students with undisclosed psychological disorders such as anxiety may feel they have a better sense of what to anticipate. In a similar manner, students whose first language is not English are reminded of what dimensions of the material are important to focus on.

At its core, universal design is intended to create flexibility in the structure of course content so that all students can access the material; in this sense, this approach does not isolate

particular students as having needs that must be met but rather focuses on the collective architecture of the course (Nichols & Quaye, 2009, p. 51). This entails a fundamental rethink of how students access the course from the beginning of course design.

Conclusion

We have argued in this paper that there are limits to the current approach to supporting diverse learners in higher education. In most universities, the prevailing philosophy is compliance based; that is, the system focuses on meeting the legally required interventions for individual learners, rather than a larger rethinking of pedagogy. We suggest that a better approach would focus on three principles—learner autonomy, the negotiated syllabus, and universal design—which are deeply interrelated. This approach would better serve the diversity of needs that students bring to university classrooms. Whether students are multilingual writers, students with learning disabilities, or students with mental health issues, all students will likely benefit from a learning environment that differs from the current norm in higher education. We need to move beyond due diligence to meet the legal requirements of service and accommodation to having teachers inspiring their learners to seek out a powerful schooling experience. Olson (n.d.) and Canagarajah (2006) argue that students who are "agents of their own learning" receive more ethical treatment in settings as diverse as writing centers and actual classrooms.

Over the last two decades, there has been extensive discussion of active learning within international and global studies programs, which has focused largely upon simulations. This effort to rethink pedagogy has created new spaces and pathways for student learning. This discussion, however, has largely been isolated from broader discussions about pedagogy in primary education, as well as trends in course design, architecture, and software. The universal design movement provides a means for faculty to rethink their curricula in a deeper manner, which can serve the needs of diverse students. Within international and global studies programs, there may be more international students and third culture kids than other departments because such individuals are attracted to studying cross-cultural and global issues.

In the United States, international studies programs have undergone the same shifts in student demography as other units have, as education has become increasingly democratized over the last two generations. One of the many attributes that an International and Global Studies Department brings to its students is that its faculty members come from various academic backgrounds and bring a wide variety of perspectives for students to reflect upon. Thus, the very nature of an International and Global Studies Department is multidisciplinary in fashion. From this perspective, the discipline's teaching practices should reflect the diversity and multidisciplinarity of its faculty. International and global studies ought to be a space in which practitioners are actively engaged with the student population, learners' individual needs, and the stated learning objectives of each course while also promoting active engagement and student autonomy.

Learning should always be accessible to all students, and those who choose to teach ought to move past archaic notions of teaching to bring forth a new generation of critical thinkers who are prepared to face a new set of challenges that are based on self-agency and critical engagement. International and Global Studies Departments offer students a unique experience to explore the social sciences through various lenses, and therefore pedagogical choices such as building learner autonomy, implementing a negotiated syllabus, and exercising principles of

universal design are appropriate choices for this kind of academic setting. In this educational climate, the time is right for international and global studies programs to rethink their pedagogy based around the principles of learner autonomy, the negotiated syllabus, and universal design.

Notes

[1] Third culture kids (TCK) are those who spent a significant portion of their developmental years being raised in a culture outside of their parents' culture. The definition does not describe only children; adults with a TCK childhood may be described as ATCK (adult third culture kids**)**.

[2] There is a block of research suggesting that international education and by extension, the "internationalized classroom" are logical places to deliver an equitable education to all learners (Zhang and & Brunton, 2007; Robertson, Line, Jones,and & Thome, 2000; Haigh, 2002). Haigh (2002, pp. 61,62) argues "It may prove best to conceive of all students as 'international students' and teach a curriculum that is designed for international students and the new global economy."

[3] The National Center on Universal Design for Learning is the best single resources for learning about UD. A helpful place to begin is with their definition page, which shaped our use of the term: http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udldefined.

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