

Accessibility Services Newsletter

A publication for students, faculty and staff
at North Shore Community College

FALL 2017

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Director's Corner

By Susan Graham

I am pleased to share some exciting news regarding Accessibility Services. This fall we welcomed two new members to our Accessibility Services Team and had a change in rank to our part-time counselor.

Kendalle Jones who was formerly our part-time Danvers counselor was selected to fill the vacant full-time counselor position on the Danvers campus. Liz Dwyer was chosen to fill the vacant full-time counselor on the Lynn campus and Kaitlyn Rogers, was selected to fill

Kendalle's part-time counselor position in Danvers. Please join me in welcoming Kendalle, Liz and Kaitlyn!

This year Accessibility Services will also be conducting a Self-Study Program Review which will culminate in presenting our findings to the President's Cabinet in April. As the Chair, I look forward to working with the committee members which include Lucy Bayard from Accessibility Services, Josie Marichal from TRiO, Nicole Wade from Planning,

Research & Institutional Assessment and Mary Malone from the Occupational Therapy Assistant program.

As always, we are here to provide support to faculty, students and staff so as to provide the best possible services for our student population.

Best wishes for the remainder of your semester!



Accessibility Services Staff

Rita LoGrasso Agnello, Assistive Technology Learning Specialist

Lucy Bayard, Counselor

Liz Dwyer, Counselor

Susan Graham, Director of Accessibility Services

Kendalle Jones, Counselor

Irene Lynch, Accessibility Services Assistant

Estelle Rand, Accessibility Services Assistant

Kaitlyn Rogers, Counselor

Alena Vitvitskaya, Assistive Technology Learning Specialist

Allow me to introduce myself!

By Liz Dwyer

My name is Liz Dwyer and I am excited to join the Accessibility Services Department as an Accessibility Services Counselor. I recently graduated from Salem State University with a Master's Degree in Education. My program's focus was on school counseling. I enjoyed interning in Salem High School's guidance department last year and worked with many students on applying and transitioning to North Shore Community College.

I strive to foster an inclusive learning environment and am passionate about helping students reach academic achievement, navigate personal and social development, and plan for success. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, hiking, going to the beach, gardening, photography and cooking. I look forward to continuing my work counseling students at the college level. I am on the Lynn campus in LW121. I look forward to meeting you!



Accessibility Services Office Hours

Danvers and Lynn Office - 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Assistive Technology Lab Hours

Danvers: 9:00 am to 2 pm

Lynn: 8:30 am to 1:30 pm

What Kind of Molecule is THIS?

By Alena Vitvitskaya

It is challenging to be a student who is blind and take a biology or finite math course. This semester we have two students, our two heroes who do it. Both use assistive technology like JAWS screen reader, tablets with accessibility features set up to meet their specific needs, and smart phones with an array of apps, but all these powerful tools may become of no use if the study materials used in the course are not accessible. Every day we work in the Assistive Technology Lab to make sure that accessible materials are available immediately for our heroes who took the challenge.

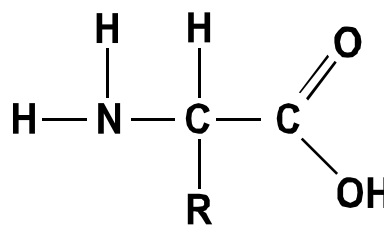
Having a student who is blind in a classroom may be challenging for an instructor too, but as practice shows not in the way of excessive workload, but rather in the way of remembering to include such a student. For example, a typical lecture on any given subject is primarily visually oriented. When lecturing to a class that has a student who is blind, instructors may have to adjust their teaching style and avoid using demonstrative pronouns like “this” or “that” when they point to things on a board. The whole class will benefit from more descriptive and meaningful references to the info on the board.

Usually, alterations made in instruc-

tional procedures for visually impaired students are minimal. Here is an example of what Professor Charles Wall, a caring instructor teaching biology here at NSCC chose to do on his exam. Knowing that a student who is blind would be taking the exam, Professor Wall included a short description of a diagram. He wrote:

“The following questions refer to the molecular diagram below.

Description: this molecule has a central carbon, a nitrogen functional group (-NH₂) on one end, and a carboxyl functional group (-COOH) on the other end.



What kind of molecule is this?”

Thank you Professor Wall, for your caring attitude and this simple and elegant solution for testing! Little things like this tremendously improve the experience of education for students who are visually impaired.

Singing Through the Silence

By Kaitlyn Rogers

This past season on America's Got Talent, there was incredible talent all around. From magicians, to comedians, ventriloquists, daredevils, singers and more. One contestant in particular shocked the world was Mandy Harvey. At the age of 18, Mandy lost her ability to hear due to a degenerative disease during her first semester of college where she was studying music. She described "feeling lost" and that she felt her life "no longer had a purpose". Due to her hearing loss and emotional turmoil, Mandy left the University before the beginning of her second semester. During the next couple of years she struggled with her identity without music in her life. With the continued support of her friends and family, Mandy learned to feel the vibrations of songs and beats through her feet, along with trusting in her own skill, and proceeded to begin singing and performing again.

Ten years after her hearing loss, Mandy took the stage of America's Got Talent. With assistance of a Sign Language Interpreter, Mandy told her story to the judges and the world. Once she began to sing her original song, the judges could tell that she was someone special- she even earned Simon Cowell's Golden Buzzer which sent her straight through to the live shows! Over the next weeks of the competition, she continued to sing and share her story about overcoming any obstacle. During the finale on September 20, 2017, Mandy took home 4th place! When asked about her experience she stated "this is not the end for me, this is just the beginning!" Mandy often uses a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. to guide her life, "If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream." Check Mandy Harvey out on YouTube to see some of her performances!



"Distance doesn't exist, in fact, and neither does time. Vibrations from love or music can be felt everywhere, at all times." -Yoko Ono

"I am not a deaf musician. I am a musician who happens to be deaf." - Evelyn Glennie

Prof gave me a syllabus. Now What?

Using a Syllabus to Stay Organized

by Rita LoGrasso Agnello

As a student, it is absolutely important to comprehend the expectations of each class. It can sometimes be rather confusing to keep track of upcoming due dates, assignment requirements and exam days. Confusion can lead to unorganized chaos and a very stressful semester. To alleviate chaos and confusion it is beneficial for all students to use a Syllabus to its full potential.

To clarify, it may be necessary to discuss what a syllabus is. The syllabus is a written guide that explains the course expectations in great detail. It normally includes information such as required texts, course policies, schedule of assignments, rules and regulations, office hours and much more. The professor provides a hard copy or online access to the syllabus on the first day of classes.

1. **Read through the syllabus**
2. **Ask the professor questions to clarify any confusion**
3. **Highlight important dates**
4. **Add dates to a printed or electronic planner/calendar**
5. **Keep the syllabus in a folder where you can access it in class to possibly make adjustments as needed.**

Check out this link for help with creating a study plan for upcoming exams.

<https://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Study-Schedule>

Tomorrow is often the busiest day of the week ~ Spanish Proverb

“If you want to make an easy job seem mighty hard, just keep putting off doing it.”

~ Olin Miller

Incorporating Universal Design for Learning into Discussion Groups

by Lucy Bayard

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research proactive approach to developing curriculum and teaching practices to promote access to course materials for students with multiple learning styles and abilities.

UDL PRINCIPLES of:

- **Representation** – presenting content in a variety of methods
- **Action and Expression** – providing various formats to demonstrate knowledge learned
- **Engagement** – providing multiple ways for students to access content based on their skills and interest level

Incorporating UDL Principles in Discussion Groups

Small group discussion reinforces knowledge learned through assigned readings and class lectures. Incorporating UDL principles in small group discussion allows for students to access content in multiple formats and engages diverse learners, which benefits all students.

Discussion groups may also occur in various formats, such as face-to-face or online, if appropriate to the course format and structure. Providing both formats for discussion encourages students with differing learning styles to engage in dialogue and demonstrate knowledge learned in a context most suited to their learning style.

Three Examples of UDL Based Discussion Groups

1. **A “feedback” group** with opportunities for students to discuss and receive input on assignments before they are submitted, view examples of projects, and discuss optional readings to provide background information on a topic.
2. **A “review” group** which allows students to ask questions about content presented during the week from lectures and readings. Students who find the content in the readings or lectures to be challenging or abstract may benefit from this discussion group.
3. **An “advanced” group** to encourage students who read and understood the week’s content to discuss a topic that extends beyond the material and connects to other ideas and similar content in a meaningful and challenging way. A new relevant reading may be assigned, presented, and discussed that is opposing in view.

For additional information, please visit: <http://www.udlcenter.org/>

Please share examples for developing inclusive course design with Accessibility Services. We will share your ideas and experiences with implementing UDL in future newsletters.