Speaker 1: I'm an adjunct professor in the aviation maintenance department.

Speaker 2: Why did you decide to come to this session of Flex Day?

Speaker 1: Just to learn more about UDL because I did have a hearing impaired student. It'll help me refine my teaching techniques.

Liesel: Welcome to the Magic Mountie Podcast. This is a podcast that's dedicated to helping faculty and other college employees as they try and navigate the challenging fabric of serving students. Especially at Mount San Antonio college. But everyone is welcome.

Christina: Hi. It's your cohost Christina. The episode you're about to hear is another capture from Spring Flex Day taken from equity inclusion with universal design for learning presented by art history professor Deana Hight. The very nature of universal design for learning or UDL is to develop pedagogy for creating equity and inclusion in the classroom environment that all students will benefit and become engaged in the learning process. Deana speaks of her own experience when having to adapt her classroom to accommodate a blind student that not only embraced the subject, but in turn was embraced by his fellow classmates. Here is professor Hight.

Deana: So I welcome you to my session today. My name is Deana Hight. The title of this session is Equity and Inclusion with Universal Design for Learning. I teach in the art history department. This session was brought to fruition from a couple of semesters ago when I had a blind student who enrolled in one of my art history classes. As you could imagine, I was a bit overwhelmed by taking on this task. Fortunately I had much support from the director of access, Grace Hansen, also alternative media services here on campus. What I learned is that universal design, I've been able to incorporate those strategies now in all of my classes. It was a great impotence to get me to start thinking about universal design integrate impotence to enforce this new way of learning and developing pedagogies surrounding that. I'm building each semester from that semester back in 2016.

Deana: The description of this session includes the very nature of universal design, otherwise known as UDL. It's to develop pedagogy for creating equity and inclusion in the classroom environment. That all students will benefit and become engaged in the learning process. This is something that was quite daunting once in developing this kind of pedagogy. I find that the students, all of the students love it. It's become quite an exciting element that I've incorporated in my pedagogy. With our session today, my hope is I'd like to revisit some of the concepts surrounding equity inclusion, with universal design in the classroom environment. Ultimately, for us to come together to exchange ideas about our current pedagogy and ways we've worked to develop new methods to enhance ultimately equity and inclusion in the classroom. UDL especially meets our commitments here on campus to our mission statement here at Mount Sac.

Deana: Our student equity plan also meets our commitments to student success and support program, accessibility resource center for students otherwise known as access. Then enables us to again, reinforce our commitment to guided pathways. I thought I would go ahead and define student equity because I think sometimes equity isn't always really clear. Student equity is basically a state supported policy that works towards creating equal opportunity for access, success, and transfer for groups historically under represented in higher education. The California Community College Chancellor's office requires that colleges must look at specific populations. The American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asian, or Pacific Islanders, blacks, Hispanics, whites, men, women, person's with disabilities, veterans, and foster youth when analyzing disproportionate impact.

Deana: We all know from either having children or working with students that no two students are the same and each of us have a unique set of needs and talents. Equity is more about getting each student or group of students the supports in place that meets their needs so that everyone can succeed. The other term I want to bring to our attention is what is an inclusive classroom. I found this illustration here that I thought was so funny. A little cartoon. You'll notice it's snowing out and this young man is over here in the corner. He's in a wheelchair and there's some students in the lower right hand corner. This man over here with a shovel who is shoveling the snow off the stairs. There's a ramp that's also covered with snow over here to the left. The young man here seated in the wheelchair says, could you please shovel the ramp? His reply is, all these other kids are waiting to use the stairs. When I get through shoveling them off, then I will clear the ramp for you. His reply is, but if you shovel the ramp, we can all get in. Inclusiveness is ultimately the essence and goal.

Deana: So clearing the path for people with special needs clears the path for everyone is what I want to make sure we're clear with. An inclusive classroom instructors are aware of diversity of students and work with students to create a safe and collaborative learning environment. Instructors use multiple methods to deliver course content and provide students with a variety of opportunities to share what they know. Universal design for learning is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience that guides the development of flexible learning, environments that can accommodate individual learning differences. The guidelines for universal design is based on three tenants. One is recognition, networks, the what of learning. How we gather facts and categorize what we see, hear, and read. The second tenant is strategic networks, the how of learning, planning, and performing tasks and how we organize and express our ideas. The third tenant is effective networks; the why of learning. This is how learners get engaged and stay motivated in the learning process.

Deana: When we break this down with regards to learning principles, representation is key to the why of learning. Ultimately what we want to do as instructors is provide multiple means of representation by presenting key concepts and one form of symbolic representation with an alternative form. IE, an illustration, dance, movement, diagram, table, et cetera. You get the idea. The other way in which we can provide multiple means of representation would be to provide descriptions both text or in spoken form for all images, graphics, videos, and animations. Then finally provide multiple entry points to a lesson and optional pathways through content. The second element to the how of learning is action and expression, providing multiple means of action and expression by way of allowing students to approach learning tasks and demonstrate what they know in different ways. That can be by way of hands-on activities, cooperative learning, peer mentoring, and internet based interaction.

Deana: Some of the other elements that might be included is using social media and composing in multiple media such as text, speech, drawn illustration, et cetera. The final is the why of learning. This is ultimately again, what stimulates and motivates learning. Providing multiple means of engagement is critical. Students ultimately are assigned with projects that reflect their talents and demonstrate their mastery of the material and information learned. IE, group student presentations, written projects, artwork, et cetera. Provide learners with as much discretion and autonomy as possible by providing choices. Then finally design activities so that learning outcomes are authentic. Communicate to real audiences and reflect a purpose that is clear to the participants. Before I had my student who was blind enroll in my class in fall 2016, I had taken a class called accommodating students with disabilities in the classroom. If you haven't taken this course, it's typically offered either in the winter or in the summer. It is invaluable. It gives you a broad foundation for dealing and working with students with disabilities. It gave me the foundation so when I had this student enroll, I had an idea and I was able to go through all the notes that I had from this class.

Deana: It's conducted online by Grace Hansen, the director of access. These are some elements that I think you can use as a starting off point. You want to ultimately create an environment that respects and values diversity. Most importantly include that verbiage in your syllabi so students know that you're committed and ultimately demonstrates your awareness about diversity. Provide print in or web based material, which summarize content that is delivered orally. With outlines for lecture, that is something I'm still working on each semester. Simple outlines that students can follow seem to be very effective. The third is face the class and speak clearly. Articulate clearly and especially with hearing impaired or even blind students. They're relying on your voice. I know sometimes when I get nervous I speak too fast. I have to be very cognizant of that. Using captioned videos from the internet or CD format. I included this for both in class and via Canvas, especially if you're teaching online classes, which I'm doing more and more of. You have to be very careful in making sure everything is captioned for students.

Deana: Then provide printed material in electronic format. This can be obviously via Canvas. I use Canvas to supplement my face to face classes as well as my online classes. I just post everything. I keep everything in Canvas. If they don't get a handout or miss the day I'm distributing out a handout, they can always go to Canvas to find that printed material. Use accessible web pages. Text descriptions of graphics are critical to make sure that you've got that available to you. I was notified initially by alternative media services that I had this blind student and that I needed to schedule an appointment to meet with them. The first thing I was made aware of is that I needed to make sure to request a textbook and alternate media formats. There are a couple of different formats. It can be an E text format or in Braille. The E text format is saved typically on a thumb drive and is given to the student. They can upload that E text. Some of the current technology incorporates a screen. It's working more like an iPad. That's also very interesting and they can manipulate from just this screen alone. It's advancing. The technology is advancing quite a bit.

Deana: These machines are very, very expensive. I was pricing them because I was curious. They're about six thousand dollars for just one of these machines. They can also use these to write their papers actually. Then they can download the document onto that thumb drive and then someone puts it out and email as well. They can actually communicate via email. Going back to scheduling this initial meeting. I also requested tactile graphics for the works of art that I would be looking at in class. I thought I'd pass some of these out to you so you can get an idea. I've got a number of these so I'm gonna pass them around so you get to look at them. What I would do before class is I would sit down with my student and go through these tactile graphics and guide their hand accordingly to the things I wanted them to pay attention to. The Braille is incorporated in these tactile graphics. These are made using another very interesting machine. Of course, I had to go look at the machines because I thought, how are these made? This is so interesting. The photograph, they would make copies of the pictures that I had onto special paper. The outlines that are black, once they run this through the machine, the black outline puffs up. It's called I guess sometimes called the fuse machine or the puffer machine, the tactile graphics machine, an embossing machine, et cetera.

Deana: I just thought this was absolutely fascinating. I have an extraordinary collection of all the works that we looked at. I just gave that tactile quality to learning. I think it was a very successful class. I was very taken by how this class embraced this blind student and how everybody really took a liking to him. He was very engaging. It was wonderful. He would get up in front of the class and start talking and he had read the material and he wasn't shy. He took it on. This challenge was an extraordinary challenge, but he took it on. I think the students embraced and he embraced the class. It was just a wonderful experience. I had never seen this collective. There's different elements. Each class you teach it's always a different kind of dynamic that emerges I think. With this class, it was just this love I thought. That's the only thing I can think of. This love for this young man. The students just embraced him and it was really wonderful. It made that learning process and engagement that much more than I have ever experienced I think. I'm always trying to think of new ways. How to engage this love in the classroom? You know? If you're focusing on one student and this one student is trying to engage with the material, everybody wants to collectively try to help with that. I just thought that was really amazing and so great.

Deana: The other thing that I worked closely with, with the technicians is making sure my handouts and the documents were electronically accessible. Documents like handouts that you're posting and what I would upload into Canvas. You need to make sure that computers can read those properly and that those documents are accessible. The other leading I had to make was with access and to request an in class assistant for the student. Most of this is already done for you, but I went ahead and made that appointment with access just to make sure I cover all my bases. I thought, I need to know what this process is because I did not know all of the steps and what was going to be involved. Also, I was able to get additional information about other assistive technologies that are used by the student. Do they have access to the internet? Do they have access to transportation? Do they have these things in place? Because that would add another element and dimension to being able to facilitate the class effectively. Then any background information that might be pertinent to the student.

Deana: The other thing that I failed to mention is sitting down with that student. I know that Grace Hansen, she said sit down with him and ask him why he wanted to take art history of all classes. I included at the top of my handout here. He said to me, he says, I just want to understand the world of visual arts that I can't see. That was so profound and amazing to me. I thought, okay. I'm gonna try to facilitate. I'm gonna try to help you do this. That's what he said to me. The other advantage I did have was that he had lost his sight at five years old. He was familiar with color and light. He understood those concepts. I have thought to develop UDL pedagogy to know what to do with a student who's never seen or has had limited sight, but really can't understand color or something like that. That I'm still working on. I haven't quite developed it yet, but I'm still working on those strategies. The other method and pedagogy I developed was also being much more descriptive and developing a vocabulary to discuss works of art. I do that already, but again you have to think even broader just to give that vision or that image in the mind of the blind student.

Deana: Then of course, other students get a better grasp, especially if you're looking at a sculpture that is 17 feet in height, which is the height of Michelangelo's Statue of David. Fortunately, my student, he knew color, he knew light, he understood some of these concepts already. He was 22, 23 and he lost his vision at five. That was helpful. That was really helpful for me to know with regards to being able to engage and just how deep I needed to go with making connection with him so he understood what I was talking about in class. Thank you so much for coming today. I'm hopeful that I've given you some ideas and tools that you can use going forward in establishing and developing new pedagogy for your classes. Thank you again for coming today. Thanks.

Liesel: Hey, thanks so much for joining us for the Magic Mountie Podcast. We love your likes. We love your shares and we love your comments. Please engage with our community. Download from wherever you love to get your podcasts. iTunes, Google, Rate My Professor, we're there. We want you to be back with us next week. Remember, any opinions that are expressed in this podcast do not necessarily represent Mount San Antonio college or any of its agents. We'll see you next time.