

Neurodiversity in the Classroom: Universal Design for Learning



Dr. Jules Buendgens-Kosten
Goethe University Frankfurt

This talk will look at one type of diversity that can be found in every classroom: Neurodiversity, i.e. the diversity in cognitive processing.

Using the neurodiversity paradigm, we start from a perspective that values this diversity, and that acknowledges the challenges that arise when people of a minority neurotype have to deal with environments and activities that were tailored to the needs of neurotypical people.

I will discuss how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can help make classrooms and classroom tasks more accessible for learners of different neurotypes, focusing especially on providing options for sustaining effort and persistence, for self-regulation and for executive function.

Throughout, I will draw on the voices of neurodivergent learners, former learners, and educational experts, including interviews from the ELLeN project, to illustrate the points made and also to show the breadth of experiences and opinions within the neurodiversity community.

Dr. Jules Buendgens-Kosten is a teacher educator and researcher at Goethe University Frankfurt (Germany) and a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at UMBC. Their primary research focuses on inclusive education in the EFL context, including with a focus on technology, and on computer-assisted language learning, especially from a multilingual lens. They are part of the ELLeN project, which uses inquiry-based learning in teacher education focusing on neurodiversity. and language learning.