HANDOUT:

How to prepare neuroinclusive teaching materials?

Your task is to make your materials more predictable and accessible, allowing students to focus their energy on learning the content rather than struggling to understand the presentation format. To prepare neuroinclusive teaching materials, follow the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Here are key tips and hints for creating materials that support neurodivergent students:

- Visual clarity and organization

Materials should be easy to read, uncluttered, and logically structured to aid processing and focus.

  - Keep page layouts clean with ample white space. Avoid dense text blocks and excessive graphics or borders that can be distracting.
  - Opt for sans-serif fonts (like Arial, Calibri, or Verdana) that are easy to read. Use a font size of at least 12pt, or larger for younger students.
  - Use bolding for keywords and key concepts instead of italics or all caps. Use highlighting sparingly to draw attention only to the most critical information.
  - Use color-coding consistently for different subjects, tasks, or organizational categories. "Chunk" information into small, manageable sections using clear headings, bullet points, and numbered lists.
  - Incorporate relevant diagrams, flowcharts, graphic organizers, and mind maps to visually represent concepts and relationships.

- Text and language accessibility

Focus on straightforward language and offer alternatives to reading.

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- Use direct and simple language: write in a clear, concise, and literal manner. Avoid jargon, metaphors, idioms, and double negatives, which can be confusing for students who process language literally or have reading challenges.
- Provide glossaries and definitions: if specialized terms must be used, provide an easily accessible glossary or define them explicitly within the text.
- Offer alternative formats:
    - Ensure all digital materials (slides, documents, notes) are compatible with screen readers and other assistive technology.
    - Provide closed captions for all video content and offer written transcripts of lectures or audio recordings.
    - Where possible, provide an audio recording of complex readings or instructions.

- ### Supporting executive function and memory

Include tools within the materials themselves to help students plan, organize, and retain information.

- Provide structured templates for assignments (e.g., essay outlines, lab report formats) to reduce the cognitive load associated with initiating and organizing the task.
- State the learning goals/objectives clearly at the beginning of the material or lesson. Explain why the information is important.
- Explicitly link new concepts to previously learned material to help students integrate knowledge and build schema.
- Include review questions, concept maps, or self-check quizzes within the materials. For multi-step tasks, provide a checklist to track progress.
- If a task requires certain tools or prior knowledge, list those requirements at the very beginning of the material.

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- Prepare checklists and a schedule (e.g. in the form of a timeline showing the individual stages of the training so that participants can easily find out at what stage they are currently at).

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