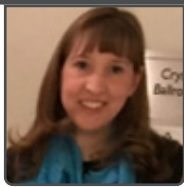
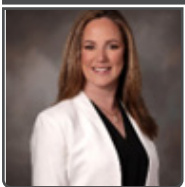


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Maximizing Project Based Learning for Neurodiverse Learners

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Project Based Learning (PBL) is becoming more common in K-12 classrooms (Ayton & Capraro, 2021). PBL is a pedagogical form of inquiry-based learning that allows students to learn while actively engaging in projects to explore authentic real-world problems or question while learning content. Students who find traditional classroom instruction challenging tend to thrive in inquiry based instructional settings (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008). Inquiry based learning improves student engagement, deeper learning, and decreases the achievement gap (inquirED, 2022). Neurodiverse learners benefit from PBL because having a variety of options leads to increased achievement. The student's role is based on their strengths giving them confidence to speak up and fully participate; motivation is high because it is an authentic solution; hidden or underdeveloped talents that may have never been discovered without the freedom of PBL; there is no "one-stop-shopping" for the answers; lastly it can help to develop social and presentation skills (Mississippi College, 2022). This presentation will discuss the accommodations and modifications, such as self-scaffolding and assistive technology that maximize an educators PBL pedagogy for neurodiverse learners in the classroom.

Biography:

Dr. Abigail Bergen joined Southern New Hampshire University in 2022 as Assistant Professor of General Special Education. Previous roles include special education administration and special education positions within public schools. Dr. Bergen received her Doctorate in Leadership and Learning from Rivier University. Her dissertation focused on special education students developing self-efficacy. Dr. Bergen's research interests include educational systems in emerging countries and educational trends and issues. Dr. Bergen's most recent professional endeavors include research and teacher workshops in Belize and serving as a member of the Round Table at the International Round Table Symposium at Oxford University.

Colleen Tapley is Program Coordinator for the Bachelors of Education and faculty at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Prior to joining UML, she was the Director of Undergraduate Research at Southern New Hampshire University. She has worked for over twenty years in the field of education and has experience at the elementary, middle and administrative levels, as well as in special education. Dr. Tapley is passionate about improving educator pedagogy through innovative research-based practices. Her research interests include issues of equity and access, disproportionate discipline rates and improving educators' cultural intelligence through both traditional and virtual study abroad experiences.