

Let's Get Specific: Strategies for Supporting Students with Special Needs

ACTFL

11-22-2020

Cherice Montgomery, Ph.D.
Brigham Young University
Cherice_Montgomery@byu.edu

Image: Marisa04

<https://chericem.weebly.com/special-needs.html>



Supporting diverse learners who struggle due to unmet special needs is challenging.

This session provides concrete activities, strategies, and techniques for addressing the specific needs of learners with ADHD, anxiety, autism, dyslexia, giftedness, learning disabilities, hearing, and vision issues.

Image: Roberto Rizzo



Cherice Montgomery, Ph.D.
Brigham Young University

Experience

Reading

Image: Jenn Houston

A person wearing a white bucket hat with a 'UCLA' logo, a white long-sleeved sweater, and blue gloves is watering a green bush with a green watering can. The person is seen from the side, looking down at the bush. The background is a white wall and some red flowers.

**Who
are
you?**

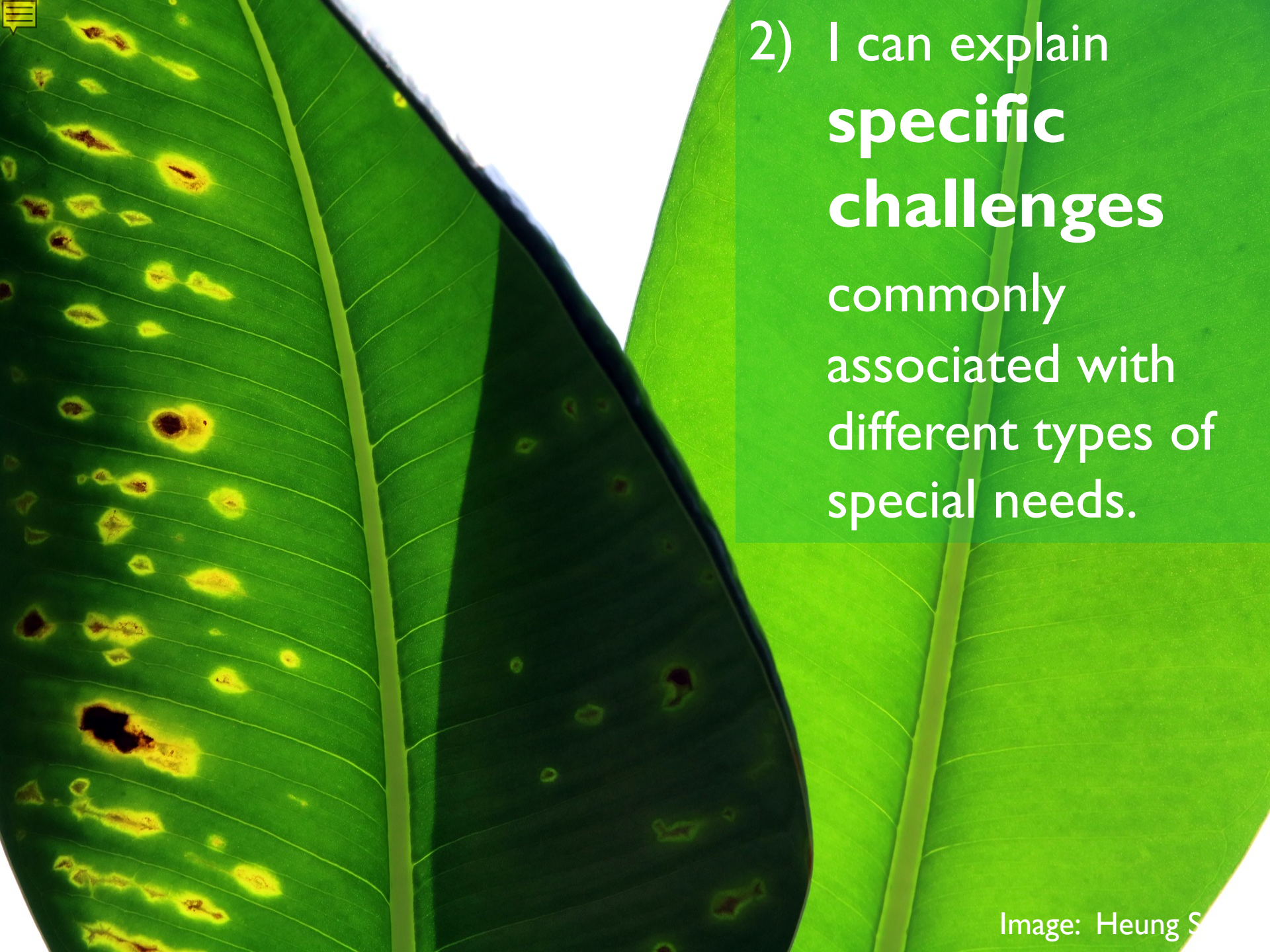
**What
level(s)
do you
teach?**

**What
language(s)
do you
teach?**



1) I can **identify and define** different types of special needs.



The image features two large green leaves. The leaf on the left is heavily damaged, showing numerous yellow and brown spots of varying sizes, some with dark centers, indicating a fungal or bacterial infection. The leaf on the right is healthy and vibrant green. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

2) I can explain **specific challenges** commonly associated with different types of special needs.



3) I can use specific strategies to support diverse learners.

Website Materials

Let's Get Specific: Strategies for Supporting Students with Special Needs



Image: Peggy und Marco Lachmann-Anke

ACTFL 2020 Workshop Description: In an era of language education for all, an increasingly diverse group of students are enrolling in world languages. Some of these students struggle to succeed due to unmet special needs associated with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders (AD/HD), anxiety and depression, Asperger Syndrome, giftedness (GTC), hearing/visual impairments, learning disabilities (LD), and reading difficulties. Many world language teachers feel unprepared to help such students, and special education teachers do not always know how to provide effective support in the context of a world language classroom. The purpose of this session is to demonstrate how small, simple changes and the application of practical strategies can support struggling learners effectively. The session will provide teachers with clear information, concrete strategies, and effective techniques for addressing the unique challenges of students with specific types of special needs

<https://chericem.weebly.com/special-needs.html>

Website Materials



Handout

Presentation handout from
ACTFL 2020

Download



PowerPoint

PowerPoint & Webinar recording
from ACTFL 2020

View



References

A bibliography of resources

Download Bibliography

<https://chericem.weebly.com/special-needs.html>

Website Materials

Strategies for Supporting Specific Special Needs in the WL Classroom



ADD/ADHD
(Attention & Focusing Challenges)

Strategies for ADD/ADHD



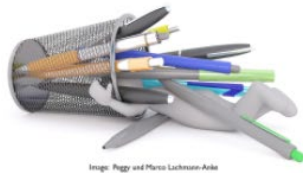
Autism Spectrum

Strategies for Autism Spectrum



Behavioral C

Strategies for Beha



Dysgraphia

Strategies for Dysgraphia



Dyslexia

Strategies for Dyslexia








Emotional C

Strategies for Social/

<https://chericem.weebly.com/special-needs.html>

Virtual Buzzword Bingo – Special Needs

Instructions:

- 1)  Read each term.
- 2) Mark each box with at least one symbol:
 -  = **Yes**, I have these students in my classes
 -  = **No**, I don't have these students
 -  = I am not sure if I have these students
 -  = These students are my biggest concern

Example:

speech
challenges



**You have 2
minutes!**



✓ = Yes

✗ = No

? = Not sure

★ = Biggest concern



ADD/ADHD	autism spectrum	behavioral challenges (BD)	dysgraphia
dyslexia	emotional challenges (ED)	giftedness (GTC)	health challenges (OHI)
hearing challenges	heritage & native speakers	learning challenges (LD)	mental health challenges (anxiety & depression)
physical challenges	speech challenges	visual challenges	other challenges

Buzzword Bingo: Students with Special Needs ♦ 2020 ♦ Cherice Montgomery, Ph.D. ♦
cherice_montgomery@byu.edu

Images: Capri23auto & Cherice Montgomery



**Name as many different flowers
as you can in 15 seconds**



Images: Beverly Buckley, Karin Herzog, Kito32, Maja7777, Vitoria Murakami Olyntho, Rene Rauschenberger, Romewo, Stux, Atiqur Sumon, Regina Woelk, Thomas Wolter, Zorro4, 8926



Students are like flowers because...





**A classroom is like
a garden because...**



Students In My Garden



14%
IEPs

- ADHD
- Color Blind
- Dyslexia
- Gifted
- Health Impaired
- Hearing Impaired
- Heritage Speakers
- Learning Disabled
- Native Speakers
- Physically Impaired
- Visually Impaired



It is illogical to plant a sunflower seed
and then expect a rose to grow.

The goal is not to help learners become more “normal,”
but rather to help them become their best selves.





One way to do
that is to put
yourself in their
shoes.



A miniature golfer in a blue and white outfit is captured mid-swing on a large, vibrant yellow flower. The flower's petals are large and layered, with some showing orange and red variegation. The golfer is positioned in the center of the frame, appearing tiny against the massive scale of the flower. The background is dark, making the bright yellow of the flower stand out.

**Think of an activity
you do not do well.**

**How does
participating in that
activity make you feel?**

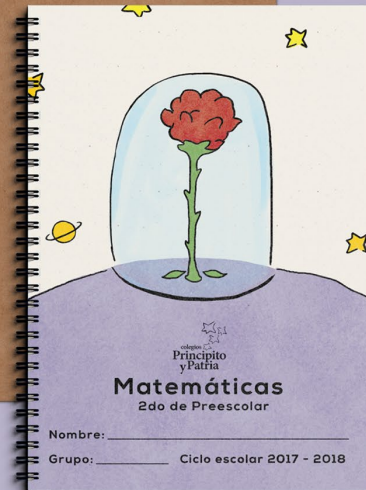
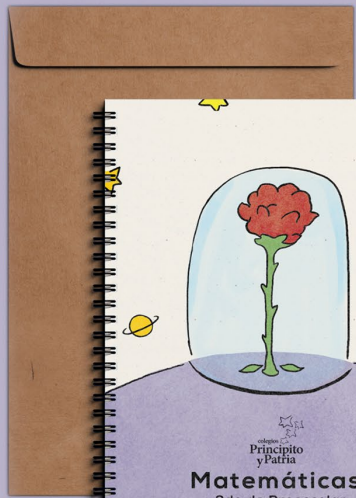
"Imagine going to work and not being able to do your job.
Now imagine that you can't leave your job.
Imagine having to do that every day.
This is what life is like for children with learning disabilities."

(Dr. David Urion, Director, Neurology and Learning Disabilities Program, Children's Hospital, Boston)





The story of
a little prince
who lived on
a planet with
a few
problems



One of his problems was a rose who had a lot of special needs.

One day, he decided he was tired of catering to her whims and he went to explore other planets.

Image: Lizeth Ricartti

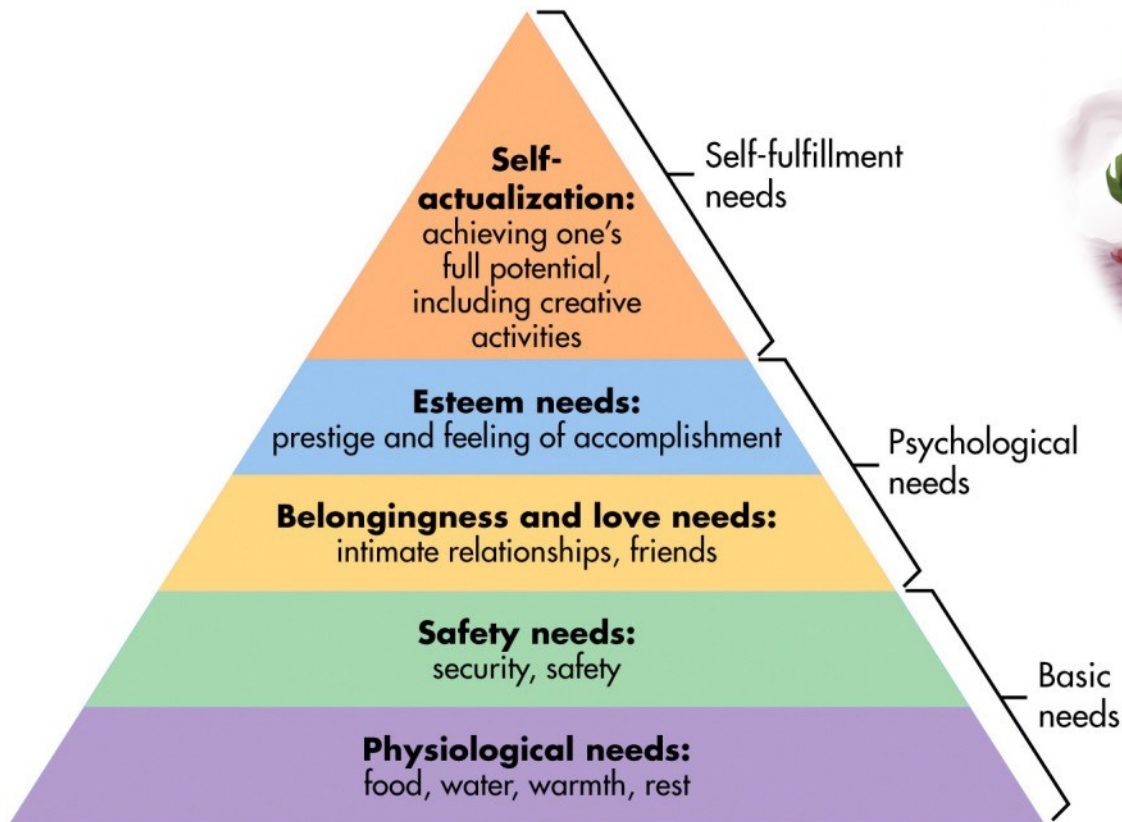


On each planet, he met someone new, and quickly discovered that each one, although unique, still had similar needs.



Each student has common needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Each student
also has unique
challenges that
require specific
types of care.



When students don't receive the care they need, they may grow "thorns" to protect themselves.



Image: Victor Maury

Every strength also has a shadow. It is often more effective to build on learners' strengths rather than to do battle with the shadows their challenges may create.



Think of one of your learners who has special needs.



Images: Jinho Jung, Ronald
Kötz, & Bianca Mentil



**What challenges does
the learner encounter?**



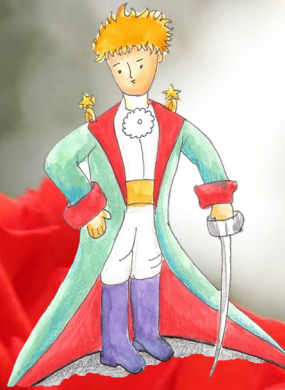
Images: Jinho Jung,
Capri23auto, &
Silke Wurm



What kind of care
does the learner
require?



Images: Arturs
Budkevics, Jinho Jung,
& Ronald Kötz



**What are the
learner's
strengths?**



**How might the learner's strengths
help them overcome
their specific challenges?**



Image: Jinho Jung & Konevi



ADD/ ADHD



Images: Beverly Buckley
& Tomekwalecki



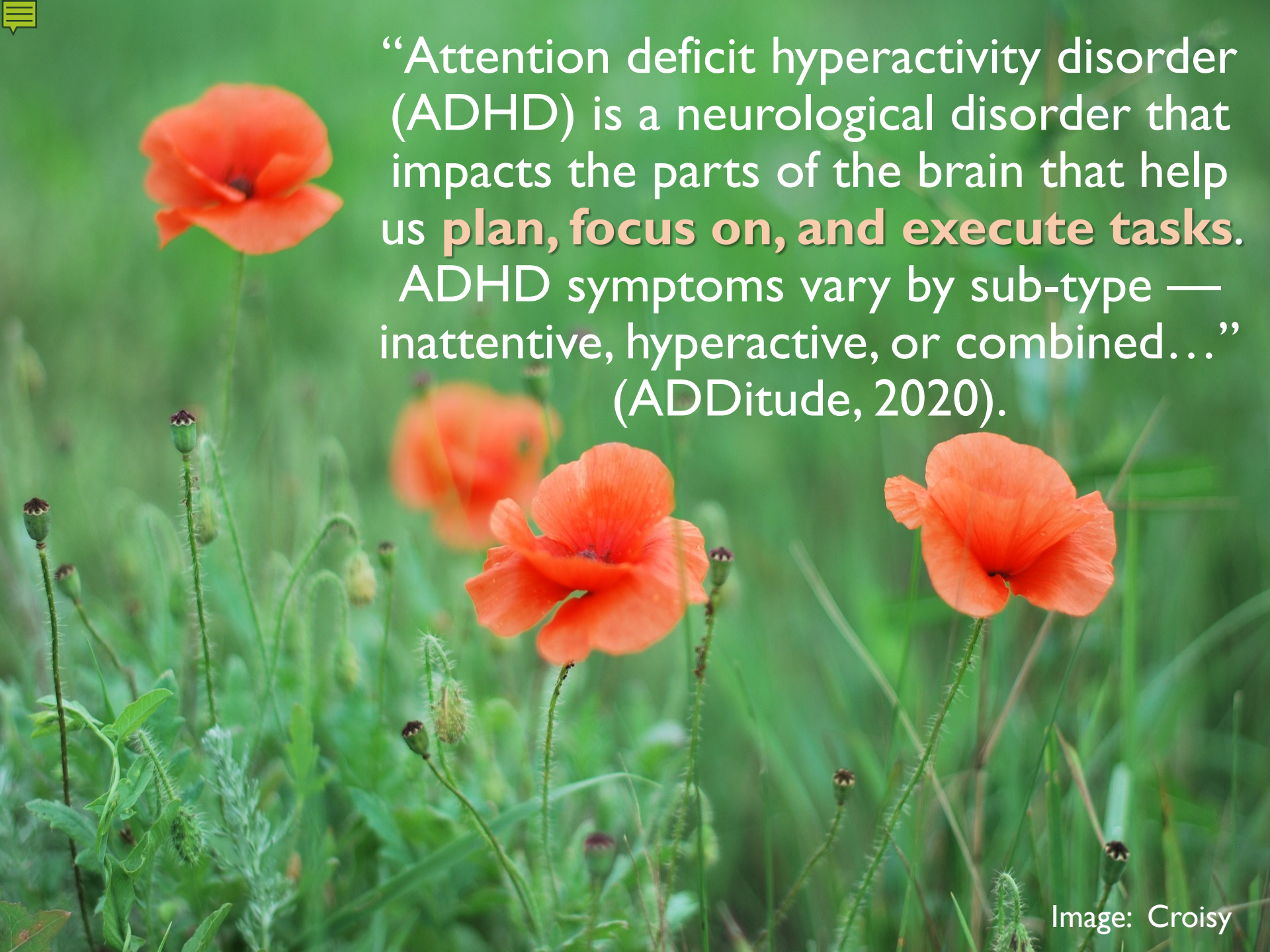
Challenges for Students with ADD/ADHD

- Anxiety
- **Attention/focus**
- **Emotional regulation**
- **Following directions**
- **Impulse control**
- Prioritizing and organizing
- Remembering info.
- Self-esteem
- **Sitting still**
- Task completion
- Transitions

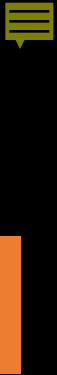
(Appalachia Educational Laboratory, 2020)



Image: Lee_seonghak

A field of vibrant orange poppies with green foliage in the background. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

“Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurological disorder that impacts the parts of the brain that help us **plan, focus on, and execute tasks**. ADHD symptoms vary by sub-type — inattentive, hyperactive, or combined...”
(ADDitude, 2020).



Strengths of Students with ADHD

- Associative information storage
- Conceptual understanding
- Creativity & innovation
- Keen observation and problem-solving skills
- High levels of energy, curiosity, & initiative
- Multiple interests
- Rapid cognitive processing
- Sensitive & helpful



Support
self-esteem

Make
progress
visible

Strategies for Supporting Students with ADHD

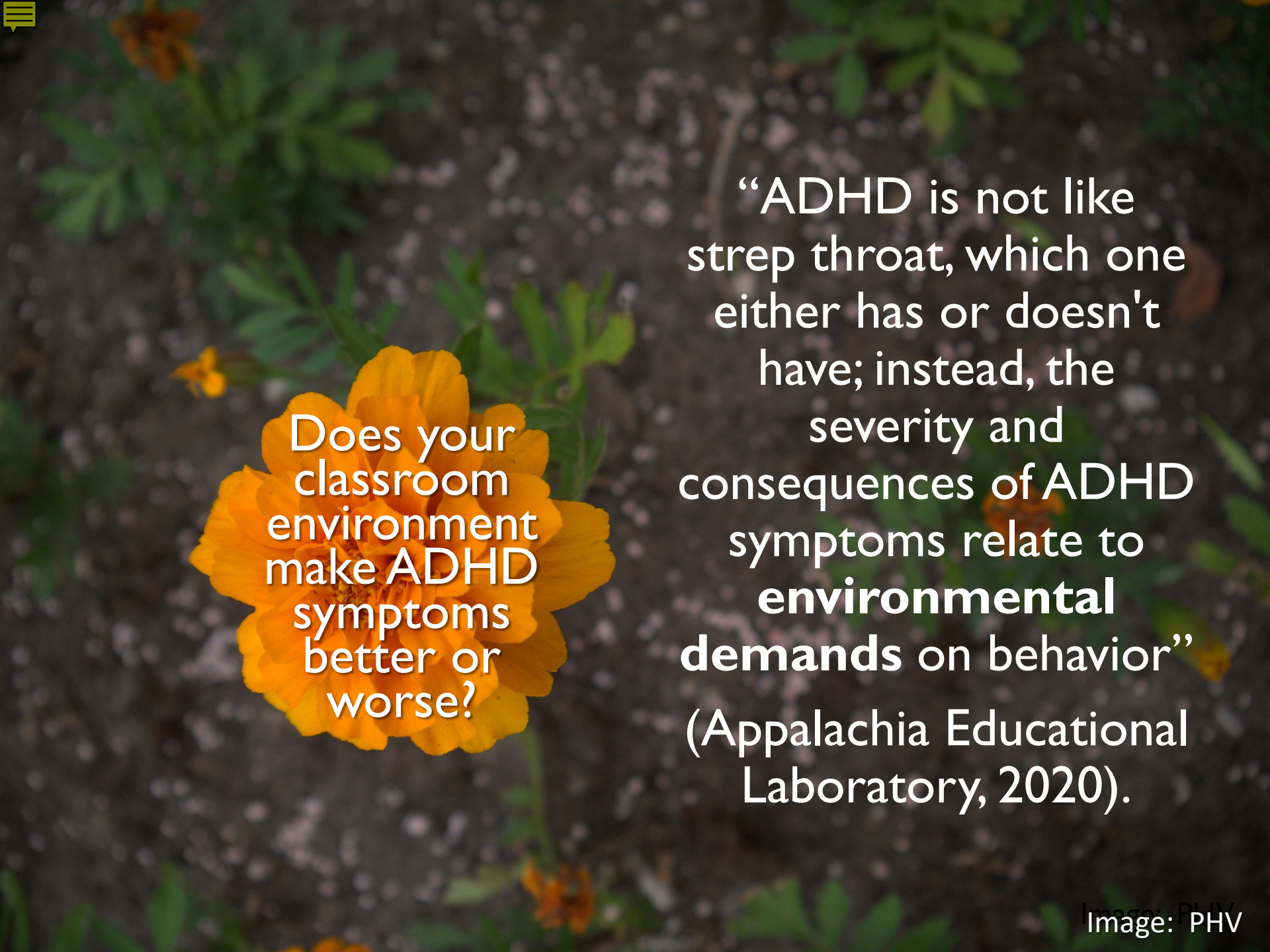
Active
learning &
activity breaks

Divide
content
into
chunks

Deliver
content
through all
5 senses

Highlight key
info. & help
with
organization

Reduce
distractions
(seating)



Does your
classroom
environment
make ADHD
symptoms
better or
worse?

“ADHD is not like
strep throat, which one
either has or doesn't
have; instead, the
severity and
consequences of ADHD
symptoms relate to
**environmental
demands** on behavior”
(Appalachia Educational
Laboratory, 2020).



Autism



Definition of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Image: Brenkee

“...a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges” (CDC, 2019)



Play

Communication

Change

**Sensory
overload**

**Object fixation
& repetitive
behaviors**

**Information
processing
(literal)**

Challenges for Students with Autism

**Eye
Contact**

**Social
interaction**

Empathy

Image: Public Domain Pictures

Strengths of Students with Autism

Pattern

Recognition

Sensitivity

Memorization

Attention
to Detail

Categorization



Carly's Café

What are some of the challenges Carly experiences and how might they impact her in a classroom setting?



Image: Carly Fleischmann

A pink flower with green fern-like leaves. The background is a blurred green. The text is overlaid on the image in white and pink.

Teach
social skills

Use
multiple
strategies

Iimages

Structured
support
(routines, tasks)

Advanced
preparation
for changes

Manage
distractions &
sensory input

Image: Nika Akin

Strategies for Supporting Students with Autism



**Autism
means I miss
what others
catch, and I
catch what
others miss**

~Grady's Mom

Does your
classroom
environment
make
symptoms of
autism better
or worse?

Dyslexia

A
secret
garden

Image: Cherice Montgomery



Dyslexia

Trouble
reading
quickly

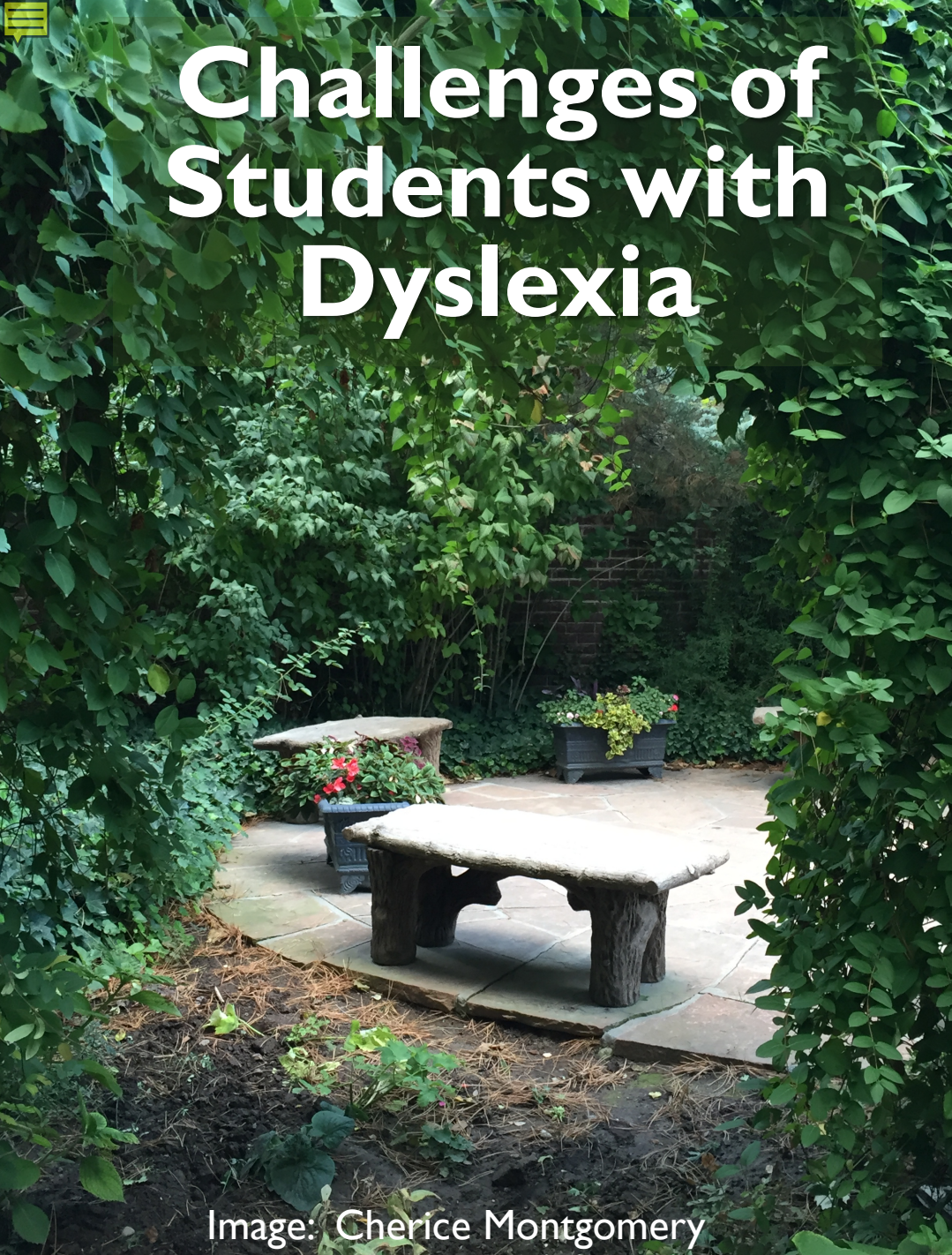
“...a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed” (Dyslexic.com, 2016).

Strengths of Students with Dyslexia

- Athletic, artistic, musical, and mechanical talents
- Creativity and imagination
- Curiosity
- Intuition
- Lateral thinking
- Problem-solving
- Synthesis
- Visual/spatial skills (3D)



Image: Momentmal



Challenges of Students with Dyslexia

- Automaticity
- Decoding words
- Differentiating left from right
- Note-taking
- Processing sounds (phonological processing)
- Rapid word recognition
- Reading, writing, and spelling
- Sequencing
- Short term (working) memory
- Trouble copying

Image: Cherice Montgomery



Scaffolding

Image: Karsten Madsen



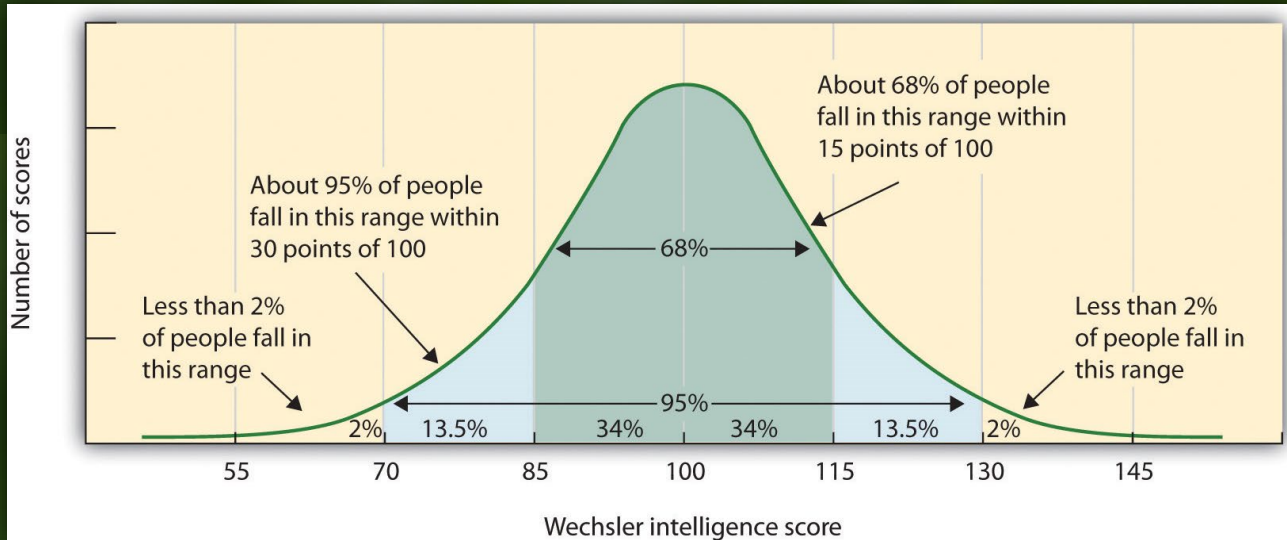
Strategies for Supporting Students with Dyslexia

- **D**evelop compensatory strategies
- **Y**es to frequent breaks
- **S**upport executive functioning & self-esteem
- **L**imit copying tasks and corrections to only the most essential
- **E**ncourage and engage (stimulate dopamine release through challenges, competitions, fun, novelty, playing videogames that require reading to move forward)
- **X**tra time for reading and tests
- **I**ntegrate images and interactive, multisensory methods/materials
- **A**udiobooks, advanced organizers, advanced notice of in-class reading, affirmations (Pokrivcakova, 2020)



Giftedness

How schools define “giftedness”



IQ
127+

Gifted

Talented

Creative

Extreme
2%

Giftedness does not always equal high achievement or stellar performance

Image: Monsterkoi



Enjoys school

Enjoys learning

Attentive

Engaged

Interested

Curious & observant

Bright v. Gifted?

Asks questions

Knows answers

Constructs
abstractions

Understands
ideas

Artistically
original

Technically
accurate

Self-critical

Self-satisfied

Prefers adults

Prefers peers

Listens

Debates



Characteristics of Giftedness



False Assumption:



Image: Klimkin

Because gifted learners
can often thrive without support,
they don't need special accommodations.



- Anxiety
- Boredom
- Emotional regulation
- Existential depression
- Fear of failure
- Imposter syndrome
- Intensity
- Perfectionism
- Procrastination
- Relationships
- Self-criticism
- Self-doubt

Challenges of Giftedness



**Asynchronous
Development**

**Extra-
sensitivity**

Image: Takashi Murakami



Gifted learners also need teachers
to nourish their growth

A close-up photograph of several bright yellow dandelion flowers with green stems, set against a dark background. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing the characteristic seed heads.

Strategies for Working with Giftedness

Generate a **growth mindset**

Invite independent, interdisciplinary, intellectual **inquiry**

Focus on **feedback**

Tell them growth takes **time**
(patience & persistence)

Encourage with emotional **support**

Develop **depth** of understanding
through multiple perspectives

Narrow their **need to explore**

Encourage an **environment** of play,
mistakes, and risk-taking

Support **self-care & social skills**

Sustain **small steps**

Image: Pezibear

Giving gifted students more work faster or having them “help” slower students are **NOT appropriate accommodations, instead try....**

**More
challenge**

**More
choice**

**More
chances to
explore**

**More
control**





Think of one change you will make to better support your gifted learners



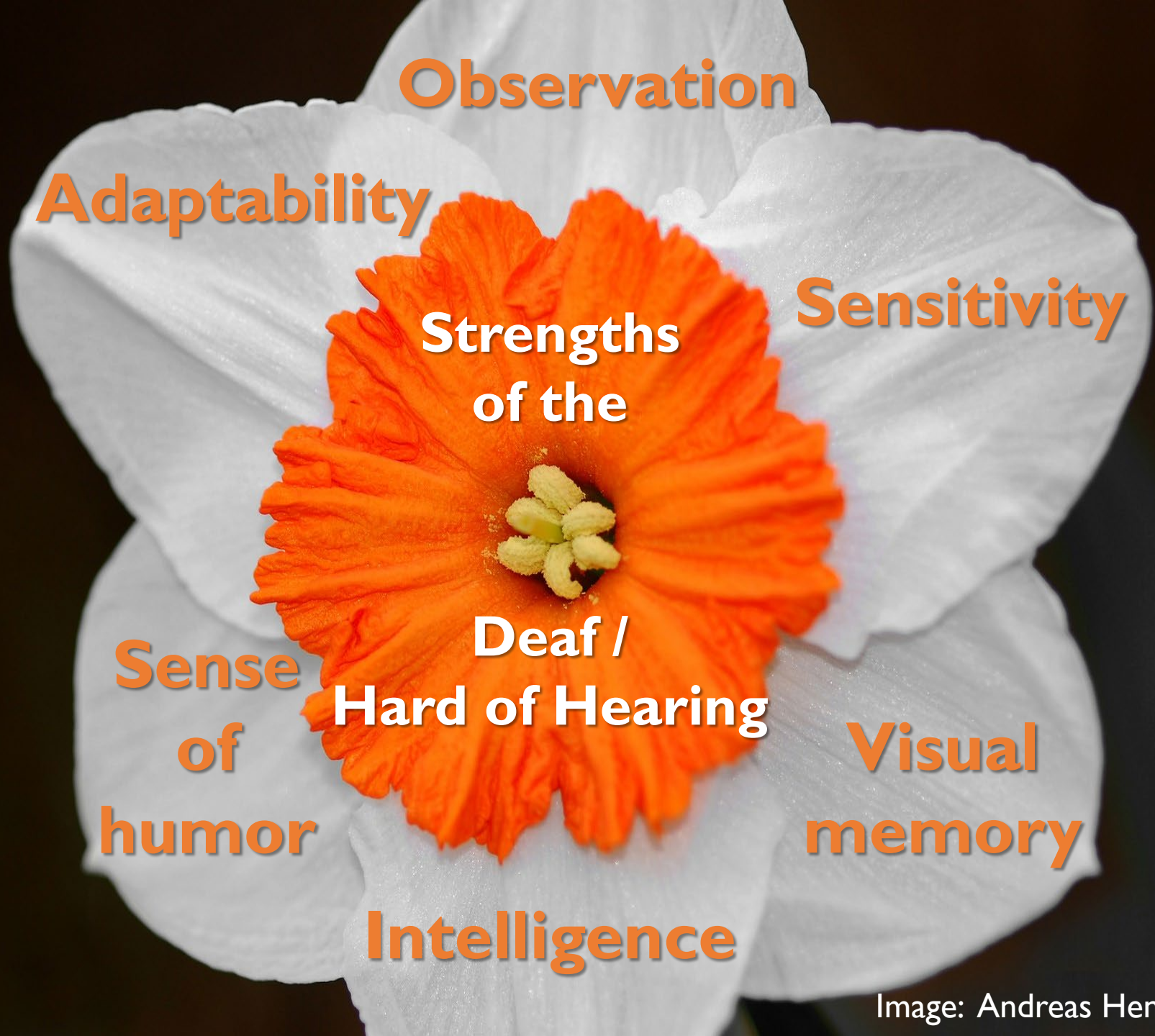
Image: Gerwin Sturm



Deaf or Hard of Hearing

“...a partial or total inability to hear”
(Wikipedia, 2020).

Image: 8926



Observation

Adaptability

Sensitivity

**Strengths
of the**

Deaf /

Hard of Hearing

**Sense
of
humor**

**Visual
memory**

Intelligence



Challenges for Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Background noise
- Classroom discussions
- Class set-up
- Cognitive load
- Fitting in
- Following class discussions
- Listening fatigue
- Oral reports
- Partner/small group work
- Poor lighting
- Reading & writing with academic language
- Taking notes
- Videos





Always...



Face the
student



Avoid
covering
your mouth



Capture
attention
before
speaking



Eliminate
external noise &
insist on silence
before speaking

...**your students!**



Supporting Learners who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- **H**ave the student sit near the front away from high traffic areas where others come between the student and an interpreter
- **E**stablish routines and procedures
- **A**lways FACE the student
- **R**epet peer responses
- **I**nclude processing time for visuals (i.e., don't give instructions between activities, when showing an image, or while writing)
- **N**ote-taker or closed captioning
- **G**ive information visually





“Deaf people can do anything hearing people can, except hear”

~ Dr. King Jordan



Image: Beate Bachmann



Anxiety & Depression



Image: Anviktorija

A photograph of a pond with large green lotus leaves and a pink lotus flower in bloom. The text is overlaid on the image.

Strengths

Analytic
Thinking

Creative

Brainstorming
Forgiving

Desire to do
well

High quality
work

Imaginative



Challenges of Anxiety & Depression

- Binary thinking (always, never)
- Catastrophizing
- Fear
- Fixed mindset
- Frustration
- Imposter Syndrome
- Insomnia
- Lack of Motivation
- Perfectionism
- Physical Symptoms
- Procrastination
- Rumination
- Worry



No

Xtra
time

Affirmations

Manage energy,
not time

Integrate mind,
body, & spirit

**Supporting
Learners
With
Anxiety
&
Depression**

Let little things go!


Exercise

Adopt a
growth mindset

Take one step at a time

Yoga

Calm app



"Self-care can sometimes be confused with self-indulgence or selfishness — but it is neither of those," she told me. "Self-care is a daily practice, one that is a deliberate and intentional and a process of tending to the mind, body and spirit." ~ Dr. Kristen Lee

Image: Cherice Montgomery

Learners with Vision Challenges



“...vision between 20/70 and 20/400 with the best possible correction, or a visual field of 20 degrees or less” (Mandal, 2019)



Strengths of Learners with Visual Challenges



Creativity

Listening

Memory

**Spatial
Awareness**

**Smell
& Touch**



- **Accessibility**
- **Copying tasks**
- **Eye strain/fatigue**
- **Mobility**
- **Poor lighting & glare**
- **Small print**
- **Test-taking**
- **Understanding visuals**

**Challenges
for Learners
who are Blind
or Have Low
Vision**



Supports for Learners with Vision Challenges

- **Variety of supports**—auditory, kinesthetic, multimodal, and tactile (such as concrete manipulatives or physical models)
- **Increase oral activities** & give individual copies of whiteboard notes
- **Seating** near front of room, keep floors clear
- **Universally designed websites** (meet web accessibility standards)
- **Audio books & recordings** of instructions, texts, and tests (iPod) (can be embedded into worksheets)
- **Lighting and large, dark print** with extra spacing
- **Sufficient time** for tests





Planning & Planting Your Garden

What should you consider when planning your garden?



"Viva La Vida"



**Cultural
Contextualization**



Interpretive Communication

You cannot make someone love you. You can only make yourself someone who can be loved.

– Derek Gamba

Every single girl will at some point find herself asking this question: is there just no one out there for me, or am I the problem? And girls who perpetually feel dissatisfied in their relationships might wonder if the love they want actually exists, or if they're being delusional.

The fact is, finding the right person is a matter of being the right person. And you can be just as lonely (or even lonelier) in a relationship as you are when you're single. Most women spend a significant amount of time looking not only for love, but the right kind of love. They believe they'll know it when they see it (or feel it), but don't quite know how to get it.

In this chapter, we'll look at some of the most common stumbling blocks that prevent you from getting the love you want...some are sneakier than you think. This chapter isn't just for the single and dissatisfied; even if you're married you'll

A close-up photograph of two purple flowers, possibly from the Ranunculaceae family, facing each other. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some petals fully open and others still partially closed. The stems are covered in fine, white, hair-like structures. The background is dark and out of focus, with a soft, warm light source creating a bokeh effect of small, glowing spots.

Interpersonal Communication

Image: Pezibear

Presentational Communication





Optimal Planting Time

Readiness & Relevance

Do you plant concepts & skills “in season” by providing choice & voice (v. too early/late)?



Soil Composition

Do your lessons provide richly contextualized opportunities for meaningful language use?



Image: CPK8240

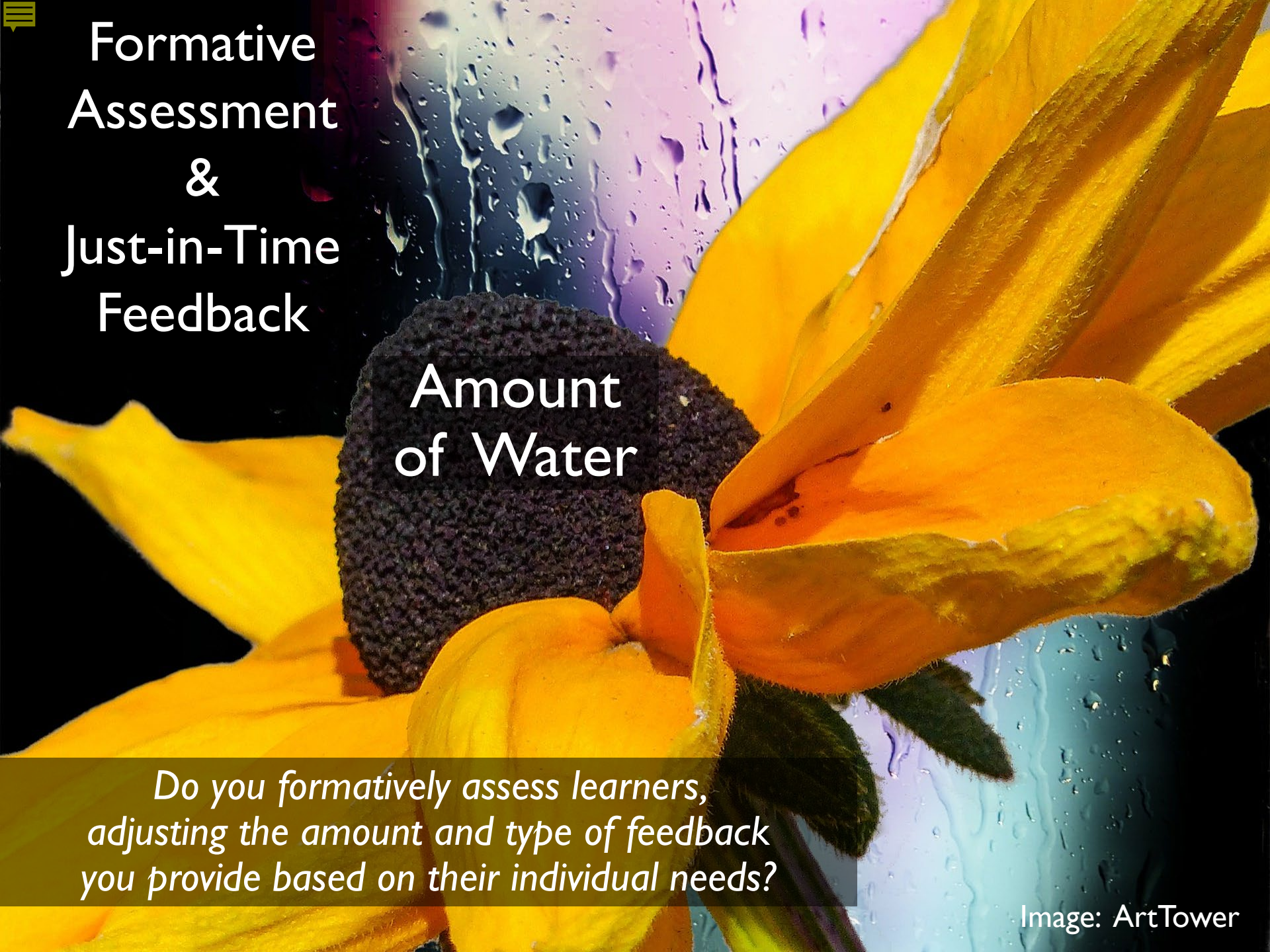
Depth of Planting

Do you scaffold to ensure that ALL students have the support they need to grow to their full potential?

A vibrant field of yellow buttercups and white dandelions under a bright, sunny sky with a rainbow-like glow. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the flowers against a clear blue sky. The sunlight creates a warm, golden glow across the top of the image, and a faint rainbow is visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is bright and cheerful.

Sunlight:
Help learners
access **content**
by engaging all
5 senses

Image: Gerd Altmann
image: Jess Bailey



Formative
Assessment
&
Just-in-Time
Feedback

Amount
of Water

*Do you formatively assess learners,
adjusting the amount and type of feedback
you provide based on their individual needs?*



Time to Germination

Some seeds take longer than others to sprout, become securely rooted, and bloom.



*Do your lessons **progressively spiral** instruction to accommodate different rates of learning?*

Image: Katerina Vulcova

Waiting on the World to Change





Image: Anncapictures



When our focus
is on what is
different...



...we miss what
is possible!



**“It is only with the heart
that one can see rightly;
what is essential is
invisible to the eye”**

**~Antoine
de St. Exupery**

The Little Prince & The Rose



We are roses.



Judging

When we plant a rose seed in the earth, we notice that it is small, but we do not criticize it as "rootless and stemless." We treat it as a seed, giving it the water and nourishment required of a seed.

When it first shoots up out of the earth, we don't condemn it as immature and underdeveloped: nor do we criticize the buds for not being open when they appear. We stand in wonder at the process taking place and give the plant the care it needs at each stage of its development.

The rose is a rose from the time it is a seed to the time it dies. Within it, at all times, it contains its whole potential. It seems to be constantly in the process of change: yet at each state, at each moment, it is perfectly all right as it is.

A vibrant bouquet of yellow tulips in various shades (yellow, orange, red, pink, purple) with green leaves, set against a background of a light-colored brick wall.

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Brigham Young University
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Image: Marisa04

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