Universal Design for Learning and the Common Core: The Power of THE PACT

**Liz Persaud:** We will get started in a few minutes. I wanted to do a sound check. If you will let me know you can hear by typing in the chat window I would appreciate it. I will see you in a few minutes.

We are going to get started. We really appreciate you taking the time to join us today. It is great to see our peers from across Georgia you are in for a wonderful week. I have been working with Phil in organizing the webinar for today. You are in for a wonderful learning experience. Today’s webinar is titled Universal Design for Learning and the Common Core: The power of THE PACT.

Hello Ben and Pat I will be going through some helpful tips. Pat will say a few words.

Today’s webinar is being recorded. We post them on the www.gatfl.org . If you have a barcode scanner you can scan it and it will take you to the homepage.

We are offering CEUs and CRCs for today’s webinar. For those that need CRCs they are approved for 1.5 hours. For all of you that need credits send me an e-mail with the title, date, organization, city, contact information, and your date of birth. My email is liz.persaud@gatfl.gatech.edu.

I will get you connected and get your form.

We have an evaluation we would like for you to fill out. Https://www.research.net/s/TFLwebinar. This is the link. If you can take a few minutes and fill it out, I would appreciate it. When it comes to partnering those series are focused on educators and those interested in K-12 assistive technology. We take a look at all of those.

We are trying to make it a habit to let you know about upcoming webinars. We have two coming up that are focused on apps. They will be led by Martha Rush, Customer Support Specialist. We will be doing a live demo talking about different aspects we are building in. Martha Rust has another webinar coming up. We will get in touch with all of our participants a head of time so you can let us know the apps and tablets you are working with and find out what you want to see more of. We will bring you those 2 webinars.

I want to share information with you about a conference we are a proud partner of. It is June 3-6 at Saint Simon’s Island. It is with Georgia Department of Education for Special Education Services. This conference is focused on K-12. There will be many session topics covering assistive technology, etc. There will be lots of parents and folks with disabilities there. We will have an exhibit hall on that Wednesday. We have a lot of great exhibitors that will be there ready to show you some wonderful assistive technology devices and services.

For more information go to the Tools for Life website, www.gatfl.org . We would love to see you there. We are offering credits for participation.

I want to let you know I posted today’s presentation. Here is a link to the wiki http://www.gatfl.gatech.edu/tflwiki . Take a look at it.

Here is our contact information. You can contact us through the website.

I will pass the microphone to Pat Satterfield.

        **Pat Satterfield:** Thank you for joining us today. I met Phyl Macomber through a mutual friend. She has a lot of energy and wonderful ideas. She has come up with a simple and strait forward way. Thank you so much for taking time out of your schedule to be with us. We would like to get you to Georgia. I do want to remind you our volume may be a little different than Phyl Macomber. You may want to increase your volume so you can get her and her videos. If you have trouble hearing let us know. If you have questions type them into the chat window. Thank you.

        **Phyl T. Macomber:** Thank you. I am so excited to be here. Let me tell you about me. I am a curriculum strategist and a pathologist. I have a background in nursing and psychology. Phyl T. Macomber, M.S. ATP, Curriculum Strategist & AT Specialist, President of Make a Difference, Inc.. I spend my time working with educators and kids. I love what I do. I practice and solve problems and make recommendations in the environment they occur. Today’s webinar is about a framework I published in April of 2010. You will see the journey about how this is being applied.

Let’s take a look at what exists in our field. It has problems, problems, problems. We will take about solutions. Every time the curriculum changes or the content we need to be able to teach a learner of any ability whether it be a language or developmental disability. The thing I find since I have practiced since 1988 has been we have all of these tools available. We go to conferences to learn more to better serve. There is the problem of the limited time we have to put the knowledge we gain into practice in a given school day. That is what we do each day. Our time does not permit us to go that extra mile. Sometimes I look at the teams I support. In the Northeast I reused in New England. My field work is a good percentage of what I do. I also do work in group homes, etc. I need to be able to say when you teach content to a learner, how do we adapt this particular content? That is the wrong question. We should ask how do we adapt anything for these learners. That is the solution answer.

I always say to people in leadership positions, I am sure many of you provide that kind of support, need to be able to walk the walk. Recommendations need to not just be evidence-based but should be modeled by taking on the role of the person that will need to implement them. I have been partnering with staff when providing differentiated instruction. That can be in any subject area. For example that can be in Social Studies. The programs are from real life examples. Meet Gale a classroom teacher. Her third grade class is sitting on the stairs outside of her classroom. She teaches from her bulletin boards by making them interactive. She has kids coming up and not just using them as displays. Kids help to build bulletin boards.

We can partner with educational staff. In science I coach lessons in Gale’s classroom in New Hampshire. Compared to where you are it may be a big area. It is quite small. I have co-taught in her class for almost 3 years. She has 17-30 kids in her classroom. They have various learning disabilities. I have partnered with different teachers. We relate to a “learn about, read about, write about, and talk about method.”

We teach writing with classroom writing teams. You will see examples of that.

I also participate at an older level in middle and high school. Here is an example of doing that. We are using the format in this 6th grade classroom. We are teaching our learners how the different lessons connect. It does not focus on vacuum lessons that are “activities” they are scaffolded language-based lessons that connect. They provide a solid understanding about why we are doing it and what comes next.

In addition we know that we live in a visually-based society. Schools are very visually-based. Teachers are anchoring learners with these tools. They are setting up displays in their classroom and have them available. They are up during the entire unit that is being covered. The bulletin boards are not just displays, they are teaching tools to build solid language content. Curriculum is language whether in pre-academics, pre-school, or in social language curriculum.

Let’s get into the pact. T.H.E. P.A.C.T. Is a four-step framework with four modules. It has things we learn about, read about, write about, and talk about. It stands for: Technology Helps Easy and Practical Adapted Curriculum Teaching. We embrace a simple technology solution package to get people off the bench and in the game. My uncle told me to live my life in the game even with outs and fouls rather than sitting on the bench. With all the paperwork etc. we never end up doing what we got in the field to do, which is teach. We want to provide an easy doable, and sustainable solution without a honeymoon period. Sometimes you hear a great idea. When you get back and sit at your desk you don’t know where to begin. The training notebook goes on the shelf. With T.H.E. P.A.C.T., you hit the ground running. The teachers and educators speak in their instructional settings. It is important to know that T.H.E. P.A.C.T. is based on research. I list models that have been in our field for a very long time. We used credible research models that show how learners process language. Everything is systemized. This is important.

T.H.E. P.A.C.T. is being used across North America, across the United States, and Canada. It was originally a response to the problem of team members struggling to adapt curriculum in a way that was manageable to do in a given school day. When my national organization asked me to contribute an article they said to write about something you are passionate about and T.H.E. P.A.C.T. was born.

Within a year of publication classroom teachers started coming to my seminars. They said this is not a Special Education framework this is how all learners learn. This is universal design for learning. This is before the common core was a huge initiative. Whether you live in the United States or outside the United States their standards have a direct line to ours.

It has been exciting that this is not just a Special Education initiative. It has become a regular education initiative. It is a foot bridge. I can hop over the creek. Regular education is asking how they can adapt this for McKaeala example.

It is used in regular and Special Education settings. This pyramid generated from a learner named Ben. He was diagnosed on the autism spectrum. He was one that beta tested T.H.E. P.A.C.T.. He said to me, “Do you know what T.H.E. P.A.C.T. does for me and my brain? It helps me to go to the right file in my brain. When I see a color and say a certain phrase, I know exactly what I am supposed to do.” My response was it is like a file cabinet. He said, “In my brain it is like a pyramid. If I don’t know what words mean I am dead in the water. He proudly pointed out that he used figurative language.”

This generated from a real life learner and how he learned, comprehended, and expressed language.

Let’s talk about how we link our instruction to the common core initiative. Let’s look at the mission statement.

In the common core it states that the common core provides a consistent clear understanding of weight students are expected to learn. I tend to be a practical person and focus on doable solutions so the common core speaks to me not just as an author and a leader but as a clinician and teacher. This speaks to the core of a logical math equation for me. Action equals reaction. T.H.E. P.A.C.T. provides a system using consistent and predictable activities. It tells you what you use to teach it and how to teach it. Those in Special Education and related services call those lesson plans. They are called lesson plans in regular education too.

T.H.E. P.A.C.T. aligns with each common core area. Language is the Learn About module. The reading are whether literary or informational ties to the read about. Speaking and listening are tied to the talk about module. With speaking and listening being such a focus, social communication and curriculum are no longer considered the hidden curriculum. It is very important for us to be focused on.

Let’s look McKaela. She is a third grader at Ben Franklin School in New Hampshire. She is in Gale’s classroom. She receives speech language therapy as well as physical and occupational therapy. She has a one-on-one instructional assistant. We call them learning partners.

Let’s look at McKaela. Take a look at the common core area of language. I am circling my mouse around this area on the left. Here is McKaela with her speech language pathologist. She receives one-on-one services. She was at one time non-verbal. In addition, her pathologist is using T.H.E. P.A.C.T. and is in her classroom. This is a one on one session for McKeala to learn vocabulary. I am pointing this out because I want you to look at her bingo board. I am a retired speech language pathologist. She tied her language-based games to the curriculum that is being taught in the classroom. So when she is learning about the solar system, magnets, etc., McKaela does this bingo activity to learn vocabulary.

It is critical for learners that when we put an activity in front of them and materials that the learner doesn’t have a question as to how that activity works. I want them to know that activity like the back of their hand. When you put it in front of her she knows it is bingo and exactly what to do. She knows she will be learning words about owls. It is all tied to the language strand . Her pathologist is also there seeing her in the classroom. She is working on a learn about and read about related to the solar system comparing the size of the earth with the size of the moon. She is making Play-Do moons and earth as you is learning about it and reading about it.

“Read abouts” are tied to literature and informational texts.

My favorite is the “write about” module. Many kids struggle with writing. I did as a child. I would stare at a white page. Everyone around me was writing and I was percolating and seeing a blank sheet. McKaela is now doing fill in the blank worksheets with pictures paired with text. Whether learning owls, the solar system, etc. she always uses this write about format. When you pull it out she knows how it works. Then we came up with great team based solutions for writing for her. So much is done with illustrations. McKaela is unable to do that. You will see a video of this. McKaela’s solution is she puts puzzles together she is proud of. This is her with her “boyfriend” and her speech language pathologist. She does consistent activities. Never before was she able to give an oral presentation. For the first time she is able to give a presentation. We are providing peer coaching for her. In addition to not always relying on an adult, she presents with a peer that is a friend to her.

The “learn about” module is color coated green. The learn about module focuses on building word knowledge we learn about vocabulary specific to a topic then the learner moves to more sophisticated structures and why would do that. Kids need to be able to write about ideas and details. I had a kid that was getting his drafts back saying that he needed more details. He said “Phil I need your help.” He said, “I don’t know about the details. I am supposed to add more details. How do I spell details? He thought it was a word he needed to insert.” We start by building a solid vocabulary.  
Write about is color-coated in yellow. It focuses on the four stages. Learners can see their thoughts in concrete visual form.

Then they are able to talk about what they have learned. They are in the least restrictive environment even if it is a one on one presentation that is then shared with the class by video.

In the “learn about” module you may be playing a language-based game like bingo. It doesn’t mean she is talking and acquiring sight words. She may be checking things off of a list. The forefront is learning about vocabulary. I describe T.H.E. P.A.C.T. as a four burner stove. One of the burners is larger. I could have all four on at once. On my big burner I could have a “learn about” on high that is boiling because we are going deep into word meaning. On my rear burner I am on simmer. In the “learn about” board game I have to turn over a card and read something. We can make that accessible if we need to. In addition we may also be keeping score. We are of course talking. We are taking turns. One comes to the forefront. Like Ben shared, he knows what file to go to.

We build comprehension through “learn about” and read about. The two clinical underpinnings are consistency and predictability. The philosophy is we don’t ask ourselves how to teach the upcoming unit. Instead we say, “How do we teach anything? we are teaching this learner for our class. Then we use those supports over and over again. We used consistent lessons and predictable materials. This decreases the cognitive demand on the learner because they understand how the activity works.

If I wake up in the middle of the night and need water I can navigate through my house in the dark not fully awake and get a glass and get water and navigate back to bed. That is motor learning. Motor learning is extremely important. Even if related to choice, the design does not change. It incorporates a particle balance.

Here is a photo of me with an 11th grader with down syndrome. She is reading and writing and learning how to have a conversation. She is sorting conversational messages. She can on the i-pad say this message goes with topic number 1. This goes with topic number 2. Most people start at the “talk about” module. Being partial and logical we know that children and adults cannot express what they don’t understand. If she doesn’t understand she can’t be successful.

We can increase word meanings with inclusive therapies. Gale dresses in the module colors to color code and cue the kids. She uses consistent activities. When teaching vocabulary she always does a “learn about” project. When the kids know they are doing a “learn about” project they get out specific materials. They know what to do. Simply brilliant..

We also have augmented users. They use adapted picture glossaries. These users use devices. They teacher set up all the learners devices so that when they go to a talk about school work page. They have folders on the speech generating systems. This page is green and has all the vocabulary listed. When they go to a different module, the color changes. It can also be used on ipads. In addition to using basic materials you have used for years. She took her favorite activities and assigned them to the different modules of the pact.

This is my friend Joshua with down syndrome. He was learning about the human body. He is using a read about diagram. Is it color coded blue. You can do this at a higher level in regular education. This is an example of the book The Giver. The read about module was in an app called Skrappy. She uses it across all the different modules of T.H.E. P.A.C.T.. You can do it with a learner of any ability.

Here is Angela with her students with speech generating devices. They have adapted versions of bookmarks. They can expand comprehension of the books they are reading. In addition to traditional books they can use an ipad to access table of contents and to begin in the read about module teaching the writing supports the eventually the kids will be able to use. I see learners accessing concept webs and they were never even taught what they were. In T.H.E. P.A.C.T., We are introducing them in the read about module and we are putting them together. For example if this was the Revolutionary War we could pick a character. We might pick Paul Revere. We can talk about his likes and dislikes with pictures and text. We are teaching the tools before assigning the learners to use them.

It is a simple recipe. One of the things that comes up on our course evaluation forms is that T.H.E. P.A.C.T. is simple and easy but it is comprehensive. Comprehensive means we are not cutting corners. It is thorough. We are digging in deep…Pairing that with simple and easy. That doesn’t mean absent of time. It means it makes sense. So many people when discussing read about and write about say it makes so much sense to teach a character map on owls before asking kids to write a character map on owls. This was in McKaela’s classroom. She had a picture version. She could participate with choices.

We employ ipad technology. We have writing partners in class. I highly recommend when approaching the writing process to form writing teams and partners as opposed to individual. Whether composing, writing, etc. it will be a good use of your time.

This old fashioned chalk board has a “read about” support that is related to the solar system. Our writing lesson is on the ipad. Trudy is holding a yellow board with writing choices on it. The kids are writing about an astronaut. They are using the exact same format. Gale takes ownership of all of her kids. McKaela is not a special education kid. All of the kids are Gale’s kids. Alexis is doing hers in a differentiated way but all of the kids are participating. This is an example of the pack power tools collection. This can be sent to an ipad for learn about read about etc.

Mapping out: Get you to the last module. You can see that McKaela and her partner Alexis do not have an adult next to them like in the previous picture. McKaela is becoming much more independent in her presentations. She has an earth puzzle just like the one she did for Owls America. Her family member said he was so pleased with how her work was coming home because it looked like she did it and not an adult.

We also have programs that help kids generate weight their favorite things are. It is transcribed on the bulletin boards. This is Stevie using a pen friend.

In addition to doing oral presentations and incorporating them into our ipad technology, let’s look at this in terms of practicality. The standards are designed to reflect knowledge and skills and are relevant to the real world. T.H.E. P.A.C.T. shows them how it relates to the big picture.

I am going to share my computer screen now and show you a video of some real life success with McKaela. In the write about module we are going to be looking at social studies.

**Liz Persaud:** You probably want to turn up your speakers on your computer or headset. On the upper right side you will see a button to go to full screen.

**Phyl T. Macomber:** You will see a “prepare for a writing project” in this video and how we prepared an ipad for this. The second video will be her actually completing her project.

I have something for you to help you understand what you are writing about today. Can we be partners today?

Wow. Now we are going to look at it again and find this picture in our read about book. Time to open your book.

Remember that is a house. That could be a man or a woman, a boy or a girl. Very nice paying attention.

        **Phyl T. Macomber:** It is extremely important for a learner to understand what they are writing about in that process. That app was a free app.

You can record and it plays back in the form of a video. I love using apps for what they weren’t intended for. I get the biggest bang for my app at no cost. Now you will see McKaela complete her assignment. The assignment is the Square Kings Tribe.

Here is your Keene history workbook. Open to page one. You always do “write about” diagrams and puzzles. Pick one. Very nice job. You are putting a Squaw and put the puzzle piece on Square Kings.

Right! Press the button. I see one more spot. Bottom - Right. Edit. Press down. Oh my goodness.

This is in your “read about” book and now it is in your read about writing workbook. That is step one. Let’s do more. I see pictures just like in our ipad lesson. Square Kings grew corn. We eat corn.

        **Phyl T. Macomber:** She continues to put pictures on her page. As you can see close-up, her puzzle and vocabulary. Now she will move on to spelling. Here is the letter S, terrific. You are a good writer. Next letter is q - right you found it right off. Q - Hey your writing looks like my writing.

I like that you are interested in writing. You are a good speller too. Do you know what letter comes next? What a good writer you are! You were writing in your ipad and your workbook. We are all done writing. High five writer! We are finished. Be in charge.

So, I think that you can see she is pretty proud of her work, and additionally really likes writing. She never had the opportunity before. She was writing about things she didn’t understand. They did not spend enough time on write about or learn about. This connects with why she was doing what she was doing and how it relates.

I hope you can see how you can use the conceptual framework for any course work. The “learn about” module does focus on academic vocabulary and the read about module further expands on that college into literary text, and it further expands college in the disciplines. The “write about” and “talk about” just brings it all together.

Using T.H.E. P.A.C.T. has shown increasing results in teaching strategies and to see what is missing from your material list. This has been embraced in many parts of the US and Canada. Thank you Liz and Pat. I hope that people fell that what you learned today can be another step into making a difference.

        **Pat Satterfield:** Any questions?

**Liz Persaud:** We have a comment from someone.

**Pat Satterfield:** One thing you have highlighted today Phyl is what the speech language pathologist can bring to the classroom. I hope you all will share this information with the speech language pathologists that you know.

**Liz Persaud:** If you have any more questions you can take these last few minutes and type into the chat area.

The site is www.aboutthepact.com

Thank you Pat and Ben with AT Excellence.

We encourage all of you to click on the link and hop over to our evaluation. Here is all of our contact information. Give us a call and let us know what we can do for you. We look forward to seeing you next month for next month’s webinar. We will stick around for the next few minutes.