

Professional Learning Meeting Agenda – 3/23

- MEVA Mission and Vision Review.
- Updates.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Other and our next Professional Learning (PL) Meetings is on Monday, March 30th via Zoom at 3:00 pm.


MEVA Mission and Vision

School Mission:

Maine Virtual Academy's (MEVA) mission is to develop **each** student's full potential with learner-centered instruction, research-based curriculum and educational tools and resources to provide a **high-quality** learning experience for grade 7-12 students who are in need of **alternative educational options**. MEVA will develop an **Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)** with specific learning goals to meet each student's needs. MEVA's **rigorous** curriculum is **aligned** to the eight Maine content areas, the **Maine Learning Results, the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards**.

School Vision:

MEVA will be a leading 21st century public charter school in Maine and will **improve student learning outcomes through individualized instruction**, as evidenced by **student academic proficiency, student academic growth, post-secondary readiness**, and the demonstration of 21st century skills such as **critical thinking, problem solving, and self-direction**. MEVA will empower students to acquire the academic and life skills needed to succeed in **post-secondary education and career opportunities**. Our graduates will be **prepared** for college or other postsecondary career training opportunities.



New SY2025/2026 Updated Assessment Calendar

Assessment Type	Fall Dates	Winter Dates	Spring Dates
NWEA	September 16, 17, 18, 2025 (Makeup Day - September 19, 2025)	January 13, 14, 15, 2026 (Makeup Day - January 16, 2026)	May 5, 6, 7, 2026 (Makeup Day - May 8, 2026)
MEA (ELA & Math)	October 6-17, 2025	NA	April 13-17, 2026
MEA (Science)	NA	NA	April 13-17, 2026 (HS) May 11-22, 2026 (8 th Grade)
ACCUPLACER	September 16, 17, 18, 2025, with makeup days scheduled throughout the year	Ongoing	Ongoing
i-Ready Diagnostic	ALL 7th - 11th-grade students will complete math & Reading. August 25 - September 9, 2025, during Math & English classes, with makeups held during FOX Time and HelpDesk	January 13-15, 2026 (For mid-year enrollees only)	May 26-29, 2026, during Math & English classes, with makeups held during FOX Time and HelpDesk

Upcoming Professional Learning Meetings

- March 30th – Updates.
- April 6th
- April 27th – Faculty work session; no meeting.
- May 4th
- May 11th
- May 18th
- June 1st – Final meeting for SY-2025/2026.

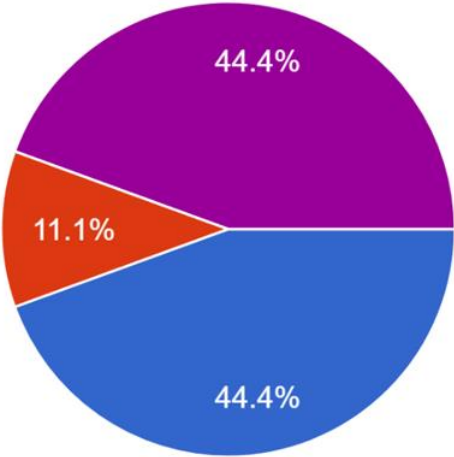
UDL - Session 4

March 23, 2026

Exit Ticket - Session 3

Where do you still feel stuck?

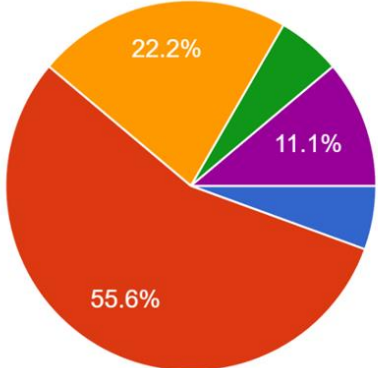
18 responses



- Live session engagement
- Asynchronous course design
- Balancing UDL with time
- Knowing Tier 1 vs FOX Time
- I feel on track

Which UDL Area would you most like additional support with?

18 responses



- Designing flexible assignments with a common rubric
- Increasing engagement in live sessions
- Making Brightspace courses easier to navigate
- Identifying barriers vs. skill gaps
- Using student data to improve course design

Additional Comments

What data supports our assumptions of the barriers that students have, with suggestions of surveying students. Limitations with surveys, as noted in research methodologies, is self-reporting can be inaccurate based on the individual's perceived "right" response, and will we actually have the disengaged students responding or only the engaged students?

However, I took the ILP survey, which doesn't necessarily focus on engagement, but some inferences can be drawn based on the questions that we ask.

What Our Students Are Telling Us

Understanding Engagement Barriers & Strategies to Remove Them

434

student voices behind
these findings

Before we look at the data

Think of one student who isn't showing up.

A

Not showing up to live sessions?

B

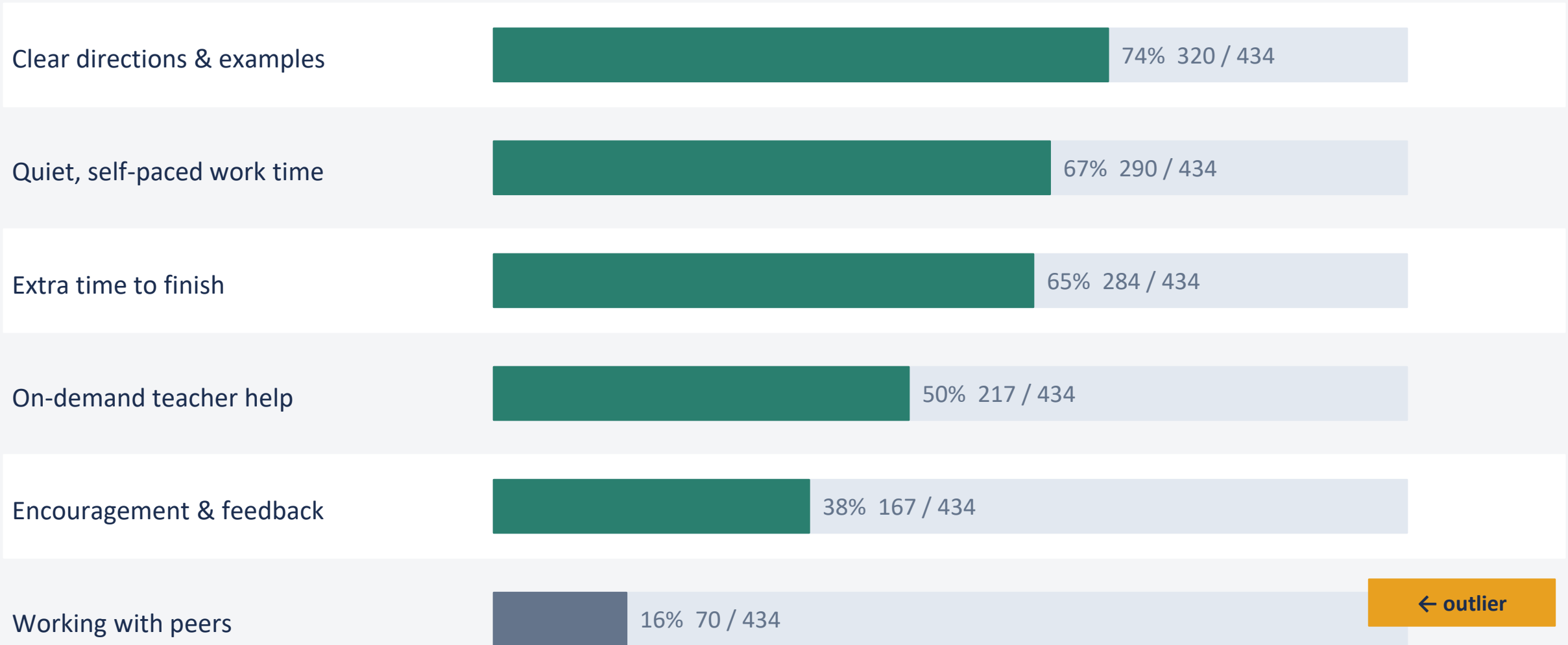
Not completing LMS work?

C

Present but clearly somewhere
else?

Hold that student in mind. We're about to look at what they may have already told us.

What our students said they need to feel confident



Only 16% of students said working with peers helps them — yet live sessions are built around group pacing and shared participation.

Six predictable barriers — identified by our own students

Live Class Sessions

1

Format-function mismatch

Sessions demand what students say doesn't work

2

Attention without scaffolding

Focus is the #1 growth goal — 162 students

3

Low perceived relevance

33% unsure of postsecondary path

LMS Course Content

4

Ambiguity at point of entry

74% need clear directions to engage

5

Time pressure, no way back

65% need extra time; late work = full stop

6

Content disconnected from identity

Students' lives don't appear in the work

The barrier

67–74% of students need quiet, self-paced, independent work.

Only **16%** want peer collaboration.

Live sessions are structurally built around shared pacing, social participation, and scheduled presence — the exact conditions most students said don't work for them.

This isn't a willingness problem. It's a format mismatch.

The fix: give engagement a private channel.

Strategy

Structured choice in how students participate

At the start of every session, post a visible participation menu:

- Respond in chat
- Answer a poll
- Work silently on the task
- Listen & submit a reflection after

This decouples engagement from performance in front of others — the specific condition that shuts most of these students down.

162

students named
staying focused
as their #1 goal

The barrier

Live sessions that rely on sustained passive listening or open-ended blocks of time lose focus-vulnerable students quickly — and quietly. They don't disrupt. They just disconnect.

The format demands the exact skill these students have told you they most need to build.

Strategy — Segmented sessions with a visible agenda and hard time markers

- **Open with a 3-item agenda on screen:** what we're doing, how long each part takes, what you walk away with
- **Transition out loud:** "We have 8 minutes left on this, then we're moving"
- **Why it works:** Attention is easier to sustain when the brain knows how long it needs to sustain it. The agenda also lowers anxiety — freeing cognitive bandwidth for the content.

The fix: give attention a container, not an open field.

33%

of students are unsure about their future plans

18

Grade 12 seniors with no postsecondary direction

10+

students oriented toward trades MEVA doesn't offer

The barrier

When a live session doesn't visibly connect to where a student is headed — or to anything they recognize as their own life — the cost-benefit calculation of showing up tips toward not showing up.

Students want CNA licenses, mechanics, cosmetology, horses, art. School hasn't made that visible yet.

The fix: make their world the example, not the exception.

Strategy

A standing real-world connection thread

Designate one recurring moment in every session — same place every time — where you explicitly connect the content to something outside school.

Over time, rotate whose world gets reflected. A student who works on boats. A student who wants cosmetology. A student doing childcare.

The barrier

74% of students need clear directions and examples to feel confident — making unclear LMS content the single highest-probability disengagement trigger.

In a live class a teacher can read the room. In an async module, there's no one to catch the moment a student hits a confusing page and closes the tab.

Ambiguity doesn't produce help-seeking in most of these students. It produces **avoidance**.

The fix: answer three questions before the content begins.

Strategy

A consistent module launch template

Every module, every time, opens with the same three elements:

- 1 What you're doing
- 2 How long it takes
- 3 What you'll be able to do when done

Not a paragraph — three lines. Format identically across all courses so students stop spending cognitive energy figuring out the structure and start spending it on the content.

65%

need extra time
to finish work

202

students flagged time
or late work needs

" Ability to turn in late work "

— student write-in response

The barrier

Rigid or clustered deadlines punish students whose learning profile already requires more processing time.

Students who fall behind once and see no visible path back in stop engaging entirely — not because they don't care, but because the system has communicated that the window closed.

The fix: leave the door open — always.

Strategy

**A visible, consistent late work pathway in every course
At MEVA we do this with the ability to accept work until the
last day of the semester.**

**How can we make this clear, but also keep students
working?**

A reliable pathway back keeps students in the relationship with the course even when life has temporarily pulled them out.

horses

cosmetology

auto mechanics

baking

CNA

art & music

gaming

sailing

carpentry

animals

basketball

real estate

welding

photography

cooking

*What students told us they care about — this is the bridge in.***The barrier**

Students' actual interests — trades, animals, art, work, independence — don't appear in the LMS content they're being asked to engage with.

When content feels irrelevant and no teacher is present to provide relational motivation, the path of least resistance is disengagement.

The fix: the standard stays firm — the on-ramp becomes personal.

Strategy**Interest-tagged task variations**

For major assignments, build 2–3 context variations that reach the same standard through different on-ramps:

- Trade / vocational context
- Creative / arts context
- Technology / problem-solving context

Students choose their version. The learning target is non-negotiable. The on-ramp is personal. The interest survey already gave you the map.

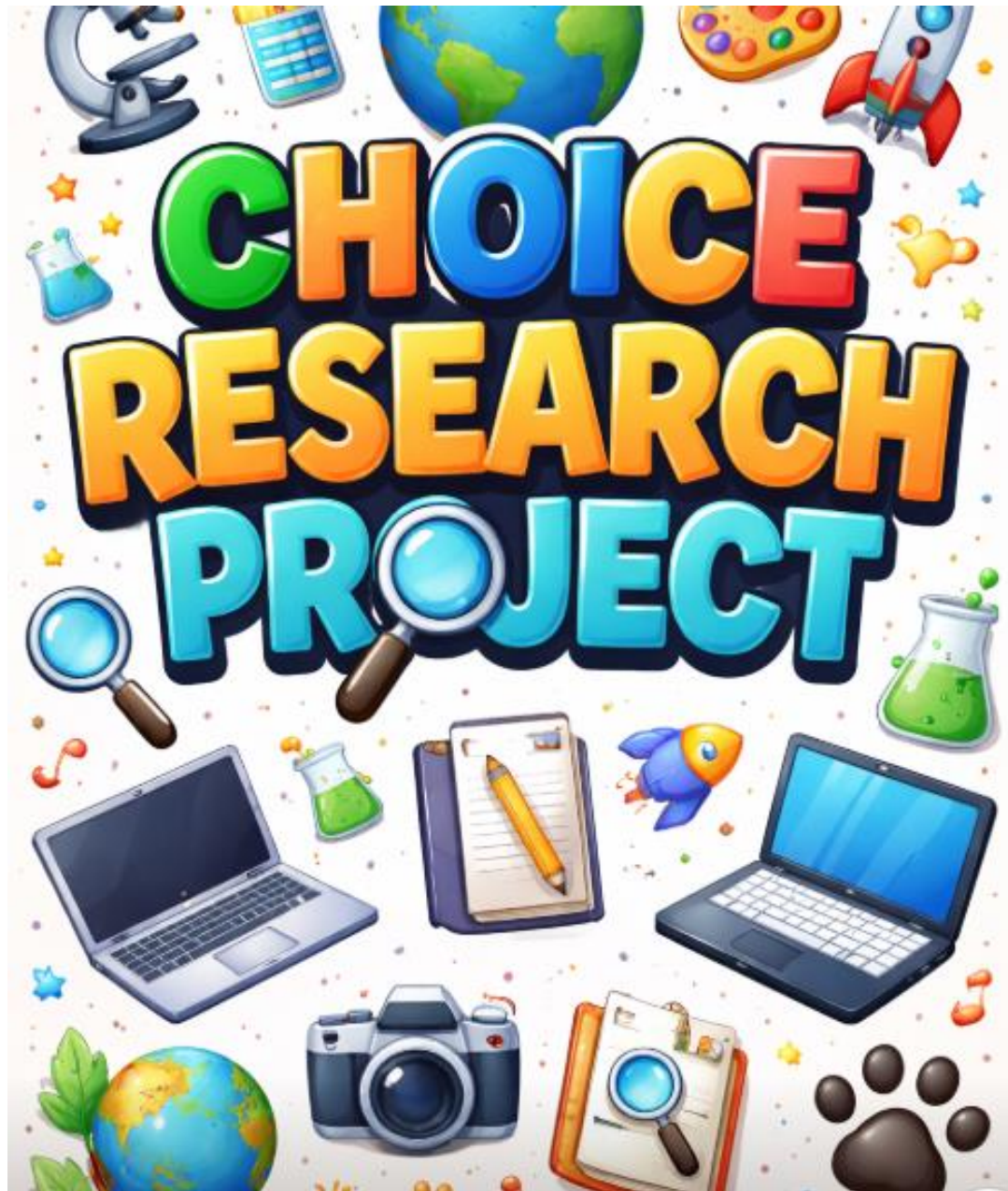
The principle behind all six strategies

Reduce friction. Not rigor.









Students who are managing focus difficulties, anxiety, unclear futures, or lives that compete with school don't need less rigor. They need fewer unnecessary friction points between themselves and the learning.

Clarity, consistency, flexibility in form, and visible relevance aren't accommodations for struggling students.

They're good instructional design for everyone.



Learner's Purpose

-  I can choose a strong topic and ask a researchable question.
-  I can turn my curiosity into a question that can be answered with evidence.
-  I can find reliable sources that match my topic.
-  I can use databases, books, and trusted websites to gather information.
-  I can tell the difference between a trustworthy source and a weak one.
-  I can check the author, date, purpose, and bias of a source.
-  I can take notes and organize my research clearly.
-  I can sort my notes by main idea and keep track of where my information came from.

🧠 Step 1: Choose Your Topic

Pick a topic you truly want to learn more about. Your topic must be school-appropriate and researchable.

Topic Ideas (choose ONE):

- A musician, actor, or athlete
- A country or culture
- A mental health topic (stress, anxiety, motivation, etc.)
- An animal or endangered species
- A social issue (bullying, pollution, poverty, etc.)
- A mystery, conspiracy, or historical event
- Video games and their impact
- Social media and teens
- A science topic (space, diseases, inventions, etc.)
- A book or author you love
- A time period in history
- A major invention or technology





Topic Approval

Assignment • Required

Edit Activity

Due on Feb 27, 2026 11:59 PM

Activity Content

Instructions

Please answer **all of the questions** in the textbox below. If all are not answered, the submission will be deleted and you will need to resubmit.

Which topic will you be researching?

What do you already know about this topic?

Why did you choose this topic?

What do you want to learn?

How will you present your research?

Choice Research Project: Research Notes Graphic Organizer

Directions: Use this organizer to take notes in your own words.

Remember: Do NOT copy and paste full sentences from websites.

✦ Topic: _____

✦ Student Name: _____

★ Part 1: Big Idea (Required)

Why did you choose this topic?

Part 2: Sources (Required)

Source #1 (Title + Website/Author): _____

Link or Database Name: _____

Source #2 (Title + Website/Author): _____

Link or Database Name: _____

Source #3 (Title + Website/Author): _____

Link or Database Name: _____

Fact #7: _____

Fact #8: _____

Part 4: Quote OR Statistic (Required)

Quote/statistic: _____

Where did it come from? (source): _____

What does it mean? (your words): _____

Part 5: Why It Matters Today

Part 6: What Surprised You? (Required)

Some Topics Picked...

- = Why do cats not like baths?
- = What is it like to be a Tower Technician?
- = Why did Led Zeppelin become so popular?
- = What are the different types of elephants?
- = How do mom orcas take care of their babies?

What is led zeppelin?

Led zeppelin is a legendary english rock band in the 1968, they are known for their heavy guitar-driven sounds and significant influence on the development of hard rock and heavy metal.

They have over 94 songs between 1968

And 1980s, they now have 276 songs(?)

(If you add the albums together)



Next Year...

- = Develop better rubrics that are student friendly
- = Offer some students to work as a group on one topic in a BOR with a teacher supervising
- = Use these as examples for new students (with names redacted) :)



Return to the student you thought of at the start. Pick the barrier from today that best explains what you're seeing — and work through the questions below together.

01 4 min**Name the barrier**

Which one barrier fits best for your student?

Is it a live session barrier, an LMS barrier, or both? What does it look like in practice — what specifically does the student do or not do?

02 5 min**Apply the strategy**

What would the matching strategy actually look like in your course or session?

Be concrete: what changes, when, and how would a student experience it differently?

03 4 min**Name one obstacle**

What's the most realistic barrier to making this change? Time, platform, policy, habit — be honest.

What would you need to make it possible?

Share back: one barrier named, one strategy change, one obstacle. You have 2 minutes per group.

Before you leave today

Identify

Which one barrier resonates most with what you're seeing in your own course or sessions?

Commit

Name one concrete change you'll make before next week — a module orienter, an agenda, a participation menu, a task variation.

Share

Bring one insight or one thing you tried to your department meeting. What did you notice?

Our students told us exactly what they need. The opportunity is in designing environments that believe them.

MEVA UDL Resources

Shared Drive: MEVA Resources & Plans → [UDL Resources](#)

I've included some resources that have been shared with me by different staff members, but I encourage you to build on these resources, adding what you find. There is a document, UDL Links, where I added sub-tabs for different types of resources: Podcasts, Articles, Websites, Examples within Brightspace, and Project Ideas. Please add to these, please use these as resources if you are stuck.

[Post PD Survey](#)

Other

- Other and our next Professional Learning (PL) Meeting is on Monday, March 30th via Zoom at 3:00 pm.
- **April Break is April 20th – 24th. Please cancel all your live sessions.**
- MEVA virtual high school graduation on Friday, June 5th at 2:00 pm. MEVA virtual eighth grade recognition ceremony on Friday, June 12th at 11:00 am.
- Looking ahead, the Last Day of School is June 12th.
- PL Meeting Materials are posted at:
<https://www.mainevirtualacademy.org/essaesserlau-elresources/meva-professional-learning-pl-meeting-materials>
- Thank you for all that you do to support your colleagues, your students, and their families.

SY-2025/2026 Panorama Survey Action Plan

- Target **Rigorous Expectations (Students)**: Overall, how high are teachers' expectations of you?
- **Action Plan (Students): Have a healthy competition in class.** From Panorama Playbook "Creating a competition around issues such as homework completion, note-taking, or talking during class is an effective way to motivate students to change behavior for the better. This move works to establish routines and increase engagement in what might otherwise be less-exciting activities."
- Target **School Climate (Teachers)**: On most days how enthusiastic are students about being at school?
- **Action Plan (Teachers): Increase training on how to encourage student engagement in the virtual setting.**
- Target **Feedback and Coaching (Teachers)**: How often do you receive feedback on your teaching? How much feedback do you receive on your teaching? How much do you learn from the teacher evaluation processes at your school?
- **Action Plan (Teachers): Increase teacher/peer observations and feedback through peer observations and presentations at department meetings.**
- Target **Professional Learning (Teachers)**: Through working at your school, how many new strategies for your job have you learned?
- **Action Plan (Teachers): Increase targeted professional learning/training at weekly Professional Learning (PL) Meetings (formerly Process Improvement Meetings).**