

Uncovering UDL: UDL in Virtual Learning Environments (Melissa Bishop)

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MB **Melissa Bishop** 24:31

Absolutely.

I'm just going to get up here.

This screen let me see if I can get it going here.

Window.

There we go.

It's just a little bit slow, OK.

And are you all able to see that now?

KS **Participant** 00:15

Yes.

MB **Melissa Bishop** 00:16

Yeah, the full.

OK.

Ohh, and we're gonna go jumping ahead.

I think here hit present and it jumps ahead on me, so my apologies.

I thank you, rob for that lovely introduction too and my heart was really happy hearing that.

So thank you.

My name is Melissa.

I'm assistant professor at Keith Bretton University and I primarily teach in literacy and literacy instruction, and in the earlier years, so I've kind of laid out an agenda and in the interest of time, I'm gonna cut it down a little bit.

A lot of the pieces Lynn has spoke too, aligning nicely with what I'm doing in terms of my research as well.

So I'll tell you a little bit about me where my focus is what the research tells us and those barriers and potentials.

And then open it up for questions.

So for me, I'm a former teacher, and that's sort of where I come from.

My heart is within teaching.

In the early years and leveraging technology, so I've always sort of lived in that space.

So the current project that I'm really excited and I'm working on is looking at kindergarten and elementary teachers, narratives of curriculum and UDL in virtual learning environments and this sort of came about with COVID and that quick pivot.

One of those favorite words of the time to that online learning piece.

And what teachers were saying and how it was going.

And so part of that comes from some of my Masters research where I looked at leveraging virtual learning environments and digital technologies and indigenous language revival.

So I've always sort of had this stream coming through, so my research interests will get critical literacy narrative inquiry me in that virtual learning piece.

And so with that, I always like to start out with that narrative sort of piece of me and UDL.

So it's not that one size fits all, right?

And it's not sort of blending it all together, it's recognizing those challenges and naming them, highlighting them, celebrating and designing for them.

And I think that's that key piece, right.

Really designing for though the needs of the whole and so Katie Novak.

It's one of my favorite quotes about UDL, so I thought I'd share that today.

And so with the UDL in the early years, we're looking at those multiple means of representation of the content.

But then the expression part by students and that's where I really lived in when I was teaching online with three, four and five year olds.

And so part of what came out of this research when I started talking to teachers, they were seeing some of the same issues that I was seeing.

And what the research was telling us that with younger learners navigating and having that navigational support in a virtual learning environment was really tricky.

And given that they were so young, an adult needed to be present all the time.

Right.

And it's very different than in the physical classroom, where I could walk over and sort of hand over hand and help them with that access to the reliable Wi-Fi hardware software, and then just technical knowledge in general.

So not only were teachers telling me when I was looking at this research that they had to learn all of this technology, and sometimes it was changed part way through

the year.

So for an example, one of my teachers that I had these interviews with said, you know, we started out with Google meets and then all of a sudden halfway through the year, I had to teach my students how to use teams.

And so we've got these students using it.

I'm comfortable with it, and now we're switching it so that came up as a barrier because we think about teachers teaching content and that mandated those mandated curricular outcomes.

Now they have sort of this other curriculum coming at them that they have to teach too.

And they found that that was really challenging and a barrier to what they could do with those online pieces.

And so that's when I started working with school boards and and a few other eras and other agencies to look at.

How can we pull that tpack and so tpack?

Is the technological knowledge, pedagogy, or technology?

Pedagogy and content knowledge.

So how those pieces can all come together and we can really create a really nice virtual learning environment where students can learn and part of the other beers that came out of this research were, well, being in screen time, right?

So the synchronous the live sort of what we're doing now and those asynchronous, what you might do in sort of Moodle posts and things like that and balancing those times were different for younger learners.

And so in particular, because my research is situated in Ontario, there were two sort of different time frames that our Ministry of Education put out.

So if students were in kindergarten, like the students I was teaching, they had a lesser amount of time online than students in grade 18.

So 180 minutes compared to 225 minutes of sort of this face to face to face in the virtual sphere.

And that was really tough for young learners and tough for teachers.

When I was listening to those stories throughout their interviews, it was difficult to sort of manage that because younger learners were really tired right away.

So how can we build in those pieces to give them those breaks?

Give them those sort of pauses.

Look at chunking that the work done for them and organizing our days a little bit

differently.

One of the pieces, too, that had come out of this is when I started talking to teachers and to parents.

Is that in the virtual sphere we think about udl, we think about that whole approach.

Well, part of that is also looking at social work and ABBA specialists.

An occupational therapist that looked very different online if we had access to it at all.

And so having students being able to engage in the virtual spirit was different.

If they require support of, say, a hearing support educator or an ABA specialist who is not in that physical space with them, and so that kind of fits in with what Lynn was talking about, what's needed for those students as well.

And then in terms of literacy, because this is where it sort of where I where I live, my my area, UM, those phonetical challenges.

So we're teaching younger students to read.

We're getting them to form the letters with the mouth and they have to say it and enunciate it.

But if there's a break in Wi-Fi access, if there's a lag, if there's something sort of with technology that's not working, then students who might have already been at a disadvantage in terms of learning those literacy pieces now have that whole other challenge on top of that.

So what does that mean in terms of positive?

Because there's a lot of barriers that are coming out here.

When I started pulling pieces of the research, as we'll talk about those positives in a minute, but one of the big things that came up over and over again and I've kind of left this as this last point here is in terms of UDL really.

And teachers struggled with getting parents to understand the concept of UDL and allowing their child to struggle a little bit.

Right.

Because as parents, and if you're a parent, you want your child to be successful, you want them to read that word you want.

So you're getting a lot of prompting, right?

So then that made it difficult for educators to get a really good, accurate assessment.

And then if that child, say, needed those supports later on, they may not necessarily have access to that because they're showing their scores are really great.

Mom and Dad are helping them out.

So all these pieces educators were coming to me and talking about and saying, OK, I would love to do UDL.

But here's this laundry list of things that I'm struggling with.

And so when we started to dig into it and I started to work more with teachers in the school boards, I asked them to flip it on the positive side.

So let's look at the positives of what you're doing right now in your learning environment to support young learners, because we know they need a lot of explicit extraction and a lot of visual support.

So all those pieces that lens spoke to come right into this part as well.

And so you'll see.

I'm gonna.

I'm going to just go back for a second in terms of expression, right?

So students who wanted to express they had options, and this is a positive too, right?

They could write for those students who are ready to write, and it's in French, so apologies if you don't read or speak French, but this is a child who is working on her French immersion piece.

We were talking about Ruby bridges during Black History Month, so she was writing this up.

Someone else had drawn a picture and then I have another child down here who had the support of parents who was looking at black scientists for Black History Month.

And so they each had a way to express their knowledge.

And I said to the teachers, you know, this is a great way.

You have all these multimodal pieces of expression, but you've also given them whether you've realized it or not, different ways to access that content, whether it's reading a book, whether it's a video, whether it's just a conversation and discourse.

So there are things that you are doing.

Yes, we have barriers, but let's look at these positives, right.

So one of the interview the teachers I interviewed came out and said, well, I have, you know, a class of very active learners.

And in the virtual sphere I have a little guy who has a trampoline and he needs to move constantly.

So when he's on his screen, he's bouncing up and down on his trampoline to get his energy out.

But he's still focusing right?

Sometimes we'll ask if she says.

Sometimes we'll ask him to shut off his camera, so it's not distracting for others, but I know he's still there.

I know he's still learning that might be different in that physical classroom, right?

Because he was a he was a boy, she said, who liked to hum and to sing and to do all these things.

But this was a great way for him to still engage with the content to still move his body like he needed to.

And really not distract his other peers, right.

So those peers who might need just that direct focus, I need to, you know, really hone in on what's on the screen in front of me and not worry about what's around me.

They could do that while he was jumping and singing on his trampoline and focusing right.

So that was a really nice piece.

We also talked about and I touched on this a bit, those multimodal means of expression.

So here these are all within the same math lesson they're talking about adding groups of 10's and groups of ones, and so we have two children with whiteboards at their home.

These are actually twins, so we have that same table there, but so they're able to do the adding piece that way.

These two we were learning about Tree week at this point in time, the teacher had told me.

So they were creating groups of 10 to make one pump outs, so they countered her beads and groups of 10.

And then so they were able to just do things in a different way.

And Lynn, I'm.

I'm gonna talk to this persistence piece, too, because Lynn kind of touched on that.

One of the things that came out with our younger learners is, yes, frustration because they couldn't find, you know, the unmute button or the the video button, or you're going into breakout groups.

How do I get there and and So what came out of this was OK, let's really work on our social, emotional learning.

And so let's persist.

What can we do when technology isn't doing what we want?

We can be frustrated, for sure, but what are our next steps?

And so teachers really reported that those persistence levels started to increase for those younger learners because they wanted to get it.

They wanted to do what their peers are and they noticed the collaboration really started to increase as well in their classrooms and their virtual classrooms because one student might say, oh, I know a trick to that.

You can do a shortcut.

You can do it so they they started to use students as another sort of, and I hesitate. I'm saying this, but as a tool as a Co teacher, so they were learning from peers as well, which gives that other entry point part of what educators also reported in this research was the subtitles and using sign language translators to really engage students were really helpful.

Some students that were about five or six really had excellent decoding skills, so the subtitles were great for them.

And then prepare its two who were helping out.

So if there was a lag, parents could jump in and say, oh, I see the subtitles.

This is what happened.

Now I can support umm and then having in terms of UDL, recording was really important.

So a lot of our educators said, you know, I would record all day, every day, almost so with the permission of parents, we would record that they could see our day.

They could see our lessons and if they were stuck, or if there was homework, they could go back again and rewatch that lesson and resort of group at see those questions and hear those questions again.

So that was a really great way to engage with students as well.

And then this is something this was something that was new to me, that a teacher brought up in one of our interviews through the research.

And she had talked about pairing Hearables hearing aids with the individual audio sources.

So almost like we would have, like our earbuds for our iPods and that they could pair these audio sources.

And there's a trick to it.

And I'm meeting with this teacher next week so I can report back to Ron.

Maybe Robin was a little bit more about this than I do, but they could pair with what was going on in the lesson, but they could also pair like with the switch of a click of a

button or a switch pair with another device that would sort of give them that repeat or whatever happened to be going on there.

So it was really a really interesting topic that she had started talking about.

So I'm sort of excited to hear more about how this pairing here bills would work in that came out of this research.

So that was an exciting learning piece for me as well.

Well, there we go.

And so, as this research starts to and I say wrap up very loosely because there is so much more that can come out of this, some of the pieces, the three key pieces that really started to come out of this research were, umm, meeting the needs of students who are immunocompromised.

So I can speak to this personally.

When I was teaching online, I had a student who was attending doctors appointments for leukemia treatment, and so it was really great.

She could listen in.

She could follow along.

She could do with the class while she's sitting there with her iPad.

And what was awesome is the nurses eventually started to come into our lessons, and so she turned and share.

And the nurses would say good morning and then we would learn about things that were happening in the hospital, what the nurses are doing, what this looks like, so that just sort of pulled in a whole another level of learning.

But it also created a classroom community for this particular student because she had been so removed for so long, and her studies, and this was a great way for her to connect.

And then work in sport came out of this research too.

So a lot of children who are engaged in acting or extracurricular activities that are competitive sport perhaps could access uh content at any time, could access the the VLE and still be a part of that classroom community.

So that was really important as well.

And that really connects right into this rural and remote learners and then the language Revival piece, which is still sort of sitting in my in my research portfolio, right those keeping those connections to the home community and to to indigenous speakers.

And so I'm just.

I'm gonna flip back because I know we're very close on time here, just so I can see my screen there.

There we go.

But that was another really important piece that came out is connecting those further those further out in the community and making that connection together.

And So what I'll do is I will pause there.

I know I've kind of ran through super quickly, but I know we all had time as precious for everyone, so I will pause and and I'll stop sharing and come back to you and see if there are any questions or comments or thoughts or I can turn it over to Rob as well and open the floor to you.



Robert Power 17:00

Thank you very much, Melissa.

And somebody great lessons are out of those experiences.

Now I know both Lynn and Melissa have been talking about things in the context of a K12 classroom, especially in Melissa's case with with younger students.



Melissa Bishop 17:12

Mm-hmm.



Robert Power 17:15

And in Lynn's case with students with with different accessibility issues, but a lot of the lessons learned from this apply universally, they they benefit all learners, not just those with accessibility needs.

I always come back to that to that one little graphic that I love to share of the kid in the wheelchair at the bottom of the ramp on a snowy day.

Like, but if you shovel the ramp, we can all get in, right?



Lynn LeVatte 17:30

Yeah.



Robert Power 17:42

So it it these lessons learned can be a huge benefit to everyone.