

UDL in 15 Minutes
With Nicole Glynn and Nicole Peters
Episode 102 - The Transcript

[The UDL in 15 Minutes logo, a circle around the words UDL (in blue), in (in yellow), and 15 min (in red)]

LOUI:

Hello and welcome to UDL in 15 Minutes, where educators discuss their experiences with UDL. I'm Loui Lord Nelson, UDL author, and leader. Today I'm talking to Nicole Glynn, a special education teacher in USD 325, Phillipsburg, and Nicole Peters, who is an assistive technology consultant and occupational therapist for the Blue Valley School District. Nicole and Nicole are going to share how they facilitated the Kansas Interstate book study and provided activities for high-level thinking during those discussions. Hello Nicole and Nicole. How are you?

NICOLE GLYNN:

Hi, we're good. How are you?

LOUI:

Great. Great. It's so nice to meet both of you. So let's just get started. What's been your journey in education with UDL, and who wants to start? [Nicole Peters, a white woman with shoulder length blond hair, proudly holding her hand up and wearing a championship ring of the University of Kansas Jayhawks]

NICOLE PETERS:

I can go first. Hi, this is Nicole Peters. And I'll just tell you a little bit about my journey. I work in special education. And many, many moons ago, I was interested in UDL, and I started doing a lot of discussion with a lot of my sped peers in my district, and it was kind of like speaking to the choir a little bit. And then I had a really great director who sent a bunch of sped staff and gen ed staff to the UDL IRN conference, and we came back super excited—presented in our district. Started building that vocabulary a little bit between everyone. And then, you know, it's taken a while, and I'm starting to hear a

little bit more about UDL within my district. But it's there's always a process, so we keep talking about it, and then I keep discussing with different people in my district, but then I've also started having discussions with the Infinitec staff. And as they began to build the Access for All program, I supported that and continue to kind of progress through supporting other people in our state. And then we've continued to do this book study about UDL as well. [Nicole Glynn, a white woman with shoulder length brown hair sitting on rocks in a stream and wearing a powder blue sweatshirt]

NICOLE GLYNN:

Hi, I'm Nicole Glynn. My UDL journey is kind of similar to hers in a lot of ways. I was hearing about it a little bit. And then I joined the Kansas Infinitec Cadre, and we've spent a lot of time building up our knowledge of UDL and working through those kinds of things. And then I had a director who was beginning to push it. Ours is a little slower in I'm not hearing it as much in the administration and things around, but it is starting to take off, and we're starting to hear people talk about it more. So I'm very hopeful that in the future, with all the programs and like the Infinitec programs that are going on, it'll take off even more.

LOUI:

Okay. So talk about how all of this got started with the book studies, the model of the PLCs that you are using, and the coaching. You've got a lot going on around this, so share that big package with us. [An Infinitec logo with the words "infinite potential through technology"]

NICOLE PETERS:

Sure, really, all of this started with our state Infinitec program. And we started with the Access for All program, which is pulling out teams from different districts and focusing on UDL training and support for those teams. But those teams also wanted to look at some additional ways or optional ways to explore UDL. And so out of those Access for All teams and programs developed this PLC book study that we've decided to do. And we started with that. And we've kind of built on that our Infinitec Cadre, which is our

group of trainers in the state, have supported that. And we pulled in different people, not just staff members that were in Access for All, but we opened it up to other people in our state, which was really nice. So we could kind of meet a broader need there. Maybe they didn't have a team participating in the Access for All program, but they wanted to learn about UDL. Then we can pull them into this book study, and they can participate in that. So we started out that way within our state. And then we were able to open that up and develop a little bit more to move on to also including Illinois. Infinitec has a large presence in Illinois as well, and so they were able to promote the book study there, and we were able to pull in some candidates for the book study from Illinois. So then we had a nice diversity between Illinois and Kansas whenever we were doing it. [The goals of the book studies were 1. Participants will actively participate in a guided reflection led by facilitators on chapter content with other book study members during the online session. And 2, participants will discuss the principles of UDL, specifically engagement and autonomy, as cornerstones to the universal design for learning framework.]

LOUI:

That's nice. About how many people are in that PLC? Do you know? Or in the different, or are there different PLCs then, or is this like one big PLC?

NICOLE PETERS:

There's the Access for All groups, which are teams in the state. Nicole, do you know how many are in the. I'm not sure how many groups they have in that right now.

NICOLE GLYNN:

I'm not because it continues to grow and get bigger every year, which is awesome.

NICOLE PETERS:

It is fantastic. But I would say our book studies, like the first year, we've maybe had around 25, 30, and then next year, actually, is whenever Nicole popped in and started doing this as well. And we've grown by, I think we probably have closer to 50 between

being able to run two groups of it. So we have a pretty nice number, especially whenever we were able to include Illinois and Kansas together.

NICOLE GLYNN:

That was awesome because we got to see how we're all alike, but we're all different. So that added that just some depth to the book study, which was cool.

LOUI:

Yeah, that is that is. So how was the idea proposed to people to encourage them to join and be part of that first 25 to 30, and how did you get schools to sign on? [A screenshot of a Padlet page used for everyone to introduce themselves with pictures and statements about themselves]

NICOLE PETERS:

Yeah, that first part was kind of connected to that Access for All projects, so we've really pulled in those people were kind of the initial people, but in part of that, too, we gave them access to a free book or an audiobook. So in terms of materials wise, they did not have to really purchase anything or do something on their own. They just had to be able to read it or listen to it. And they were able to participate that way. And then it was just one time a month. So in terms of timewise what they were doing, it wasn't a significant amount of time. So I think that helped, too, to be able to kind of pull people in and know that they can just come and have an open discussion about the information that they read and share their thoughts and ideas.

LOUI:

Wonderful. So you have led us right into the next question that I have for you guys. We just asked about the design of the book studies how did you lay those out? What kind of questions or prompts did you bring? Like you just talked about open discussion, but how did you frame that? I'd love to hear more!

NICOLE GLYNN:

Yeah, when we were focusing on it, the first year, I was actually a participant in Nicole Peters book study. And so when we were looking at the next one, I was going to participate in the book study, but it was going to take place at 11 o'clock during the day. And that's when I had students, and I wouldn't be able to. And so they asked me if I'd be willing to help Nicole Peters do a second one in the afternoon. So that provided variability for our learners or adult students to join our book study with us. And then, as we were planning the book studies, we looked at the how could we get the people immersed into UDL. How could we set up our activities to give examples of UDL that they could use in their classroom? And then we really looked at those high-quality standards put out for adult education learners. So that's kind of some of what we did. Nicole Peters, did I miss anything? [The TASN Infinitec logo, the shape of Kansas with a sun rising out of the top and the words "High quality instruction, inclusive learning environments, Universal Design for Learning, co-teaching, assistive technology within that state outline]

NICOLE PETERS:

Well, I think you mentioned that we kind of went through the professional development standards. We did have a TASN, which is our state program to be able to have an evaluator to be part of it. And so as we've gone through the last couple of years, we've had somebody in there also helping us, giving us some feedback in terms of really hitting those professional development standards as we went. So that's been really great as well because we've looked at our UDL piece and our professional development, and we're sharing all this as we go.

LOUI:

That's awesome. So there was an overlap of the professional development standards and then the content of UDL, and bringing those two together is how you decided determined the design of the book studies. Am I getting that right?

NICOLE GLYNN:

Yes.

NICOLE PETERS:

Yeah, very much so. And that really helped us, and that kind of started off with the year that Cindy and I did the first one, and then we just took that feedback and improved on the second one. And then, as Nicole joined the next year, we continue to do that to be able to use all of that feedback to be able to improve on the UDL book studies and support all of our staff and give them options and variability as we went to be able to make it a good opportunity for them. You know, we have people from, as we said before, from Illinois and all over the state of Kansas, it's a large area. So meeting on Zoom and giving them those different opportunities. We use, we actually used the great book study pieces that came that Katie has with her books and Allison have with their books. So we were able to use some of those guiding book study principles that they already have set up, which is fantastic because that saved us a bunch of time. And then, we created some documents out of that that we were able to share with participants. We went through those so that everybody knew what our goals were. And we'd have an idea of the direction we were going whenever we had those meetings. And then, we also provided not only just those discussion pieces that I had mentioned before, but we would break into small groups and do some smaller discussion. There were some activities. We let people share out loud, we gave them choice and how they participated. Some of the things we did we would allow people to draw on their activities within a Google option or just list things. So we tried to give them different ways to participate within the group to make them feel comfortable as well. So I feel like we, a lot of times, were able to pull together some really great ideas in terms of just practical application of UDL based on what we were doing and being able to give people different options for their comfort level to be able to share ideas.

LOUI:

That's awesome. Well, if there's any of those artifacts that you're willing to share with others that, I can connect them to this podcast on my website, where everything sits, and people would be wildly appreciative. I know they would. So that's something you're willing to do, that'd be great.

NICOLE PETERS;

Sure, we'd be happy to.

LOUI:

Thank you so much. So my last question then is, do you have book studies set up for next year? Are you continuing on with this same model? Are you going to use the same books with new people? What's that looking like for the next school year? [Their exit ticket of "3 things you learned from the book or discussion, 2 things you plan to share with a fellow educator, and 1 action item, meaning something you want to try or focus on in the upcoming 3 weeks]

NICOLE GLYNN:

We actually do have our next book, we are doing "The Shift to Student Led." And so we actually started off at the end of this year because we had Catlin Tucker come visit for a day here in Kansas. And so we got to enjoy her and so to have buy-in and have people excited about it. We did meet already once and kind of go over what we learned from that day. And then starting next fall, we're looking at doing five sessions, I believe, for everybody to jump into the book and work on activities.

LOUI:

Fabulous. Well, I want to say thank you to you both and for everybody who's listening, I am listening my guests, Nikki P, and Nikki G, when we got started with this. (laughing) But Nicole and Nicole, thank you so much for giving your time, not only here but leading those book studies and helping spread UDL in a really effective way. Thank you. Thank you.

NICOLE GLYNN:

Thank you.

NICOLE PETERS:

Thank you. Appreciate it.

LOUI:

You're welcome. [Video captures of www.theudlapproach.com/podcasts followed by the UDL in 15 Minutes logo] So for those listening to this podcast, you could find supplemental materials like an image montage with closed captioning, that montage with audio descriptions, a transcript, and an associated blog of my website, which is www.theudlapproach.com/podcasts And finally, if you have a story to share about UDL implementation for UDL in 15 minutes, you can contact me through www.theudlapproach.com And thanks to everyone for your work and revolutionizing education through UDL and making it our goal to develop expert learners.