**UDL in 15 Minutes**
**With Lukas Fehlings and Stewart Campbell**
**Episode 142 – The Transcript**

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 with Lukas Fehlings, special educator and special education consultant for the Canton of Basel-Stadt in Switzerland, and Stewart Campbell, currently a lecturer at the University of Osnabrueck. Lukas and Stewart are going to talk about the networking they and others are doing across German-speaking countries to create a UDL community. And they are pardoning me for my poor pronunciation. Welcome, Lukas and Stewart

STEWART:
Thank you.

LUKAS:
Thank you very much for having us.

LOUI:
Oh, you're so welcome. You're so welcome. So I'd love for each of you to just go ahead and introduce yourselves.

STEWART:
My name is Stewart Campbell. I'm, as you said, a lecturer at University of Osnabrück in the area of English language education. We deal mostly with English as a foreign language. And I've also been teaching English in several different contexts. and prior to that, in adult education, secondary education, and tertiary education. So I'm kind of a jack of all trades in many ways when it comes to English teaching. I'm also a fully trained secondary teacher in the subjects of history in English in the state of North Rand Westphalia in Germany. I like to do lots of things. So I'm also a research assistant in the area of teacher professionalization for the last couple of years. And I'm also working on a PhD at the University of Münster at the moment.

LOUI:
All right. Well, you are busy.

STEWART:
That's for sure.

LOUI:
Lukas, let us know about you.

LUKAS:
Thank you. My name is Lukas Fehlings and I live in Germany in Freiburg down south, but I do

work in Switzerland in Basel, and what I'm mostly doing is consulting services for schools, teachers or school teams. We develop concepts, provide support for school development issues. We offer continuing education and training, or we conduct interdisciplinary or interdisciplinary exchange rounds. That's, like, mostly what we do.

LOUI:
Okay. Lovely. And you too are very busy. You wear multiple hats. I can tell. So thank you both for being here. Most of my podcasts, they share steps educators have taken with UDL. We decided that this one was going to focus on what you are both creating. And I think it's a really important topic because UDL is growing around the world and educators in all contexts need to hear what others are doing to create an environment where others will join them. But before we get into that, I want to start with a question that lets you share a bit about yourself and your connection with UDL. So what made you fall in love with UDL?

STEWART:
Well, you know, Loui, I didn't really get to know it till I would say rather late just because it kind of, you know, originated more on the state side, so to speak, right? And we both are based in Germany. And, I think I got to know it during my in-service teacher training, which was about 2017. So, and I first met it, I was kind of like, “Oh, wow!” but I was kind of like, it was kind of a bit much and I didn't really know what to do with it. And it wasn't until I started teaching as an adjunct on the side of the class on how to teach, like, diversity, inclusive teaching in the EFL context. And then I really started looking at it more closely and I just thought, wow, this is great because It's not just like an add-on, like an extra chapter in a book or something like that. It's more like a framework that just kind of bundles everything up. And I think that's what I really liked about it.

LOUI:
Yeah, very nice. Thank you. and Lukas.

LUKAS:
I think I first heard about UDL during my studies in special education when another student wrote his thesis about it. And back then I think I didn't really understand it and not how powerful it was. But some years later UDL came fortunately back into my life. I can't really say when it was, but from that moment I couldn't think differently. And everything I knew about teaching suddenly made sense. So you could say, just click with my beliefs about inclusion and good education. And what I really love about UDL is it's easy to understand at first sight, and the principles are clear, practical, and you could say like close to what teachers experience every day. But at the same time, it's incredibly deep and complex. So the more you or the more I learned about it, the more I discovered new layers and connections. And that combination keeps me curious and inspired.

LOUI:
Yeah. I'm in the same boat with both of you. And I know that when I first learned about UDL, like

you were just saying, Lukas, the same thing, that things just, they resonated with me. And I thought, “Well, gosh, everybody should just love this and know this!”, and then, and I too continue to dig into it 17 years later and find new lovely connections. And part of that is because we have wonderful research in our field that helps us learn new things and bring them into our classroom. But this interview is about the work you guys have done together. You were both striving to understand and apply UDL before you met each other. So what did those paths look like?

STEWART:
I already mentioned that I kind of got to know it during my in-service teacher training, right? And then I was also teaching a course for teachers who are in a pre-service teachers. And so that's kind of where I kind of really started using it and really noticing the potential for it. And then with that, I actually then applied for a PhD position at the University of Münster just because I was interested in how do I, you know, become a better teacher when it comes to being inclusive, being more diversity sensitive, etc. And I've been doing some work on there. So I actually designed a course for students at the master's level, how to then plan lessons because UDL is very much of it when it comes down to planning, and this idea of thinking about things beforehand. So I was able to create a course there and kind of implement it as an intervention. So that's been working on my PhD work. Also, we have another network here called the Network of Inclusive English Teaching or Netzwerk Inclusive English-Bundereich, the official title in German, and that's a group of educators in the EFL context here, mostly in Germany then, but also in Switzerland. And there's two in Austria, I believe as well. But there really is this focus only on teaching English, and UDL only plays a minor role there because some people work with it, some some people don't. Me and Thomas Müller, who's from the Pedagogische Hochschule, or like a professional school of education in Lusanne in Switzerland, we got to know each other there. And we've been doing a lot of collaborative work since then. For example, we actually translated the latest version of the UDL guidelines into German. We've collaborated on working on, we've made three UDL explainer videos, in the kind of EFL context together. And I've also been working, well, I'm finishing up on working on a project that also uses UDL in like a teacher professionalization module that will then go on to a digital platform that will be then made available to different teacher training organizations in the in-service teacher area later this year. So it's been quite a bit of a way there, but it's kind of through the connection to Thomas Müller, I think, is how Lukas and I got to meet each other then.

LOUI:
And then, Lukas, your path until you met up with Stewart?

LUKAS:
Like Stewart said, that I met Stewart during my networking and the networking started with self studies. I read books about UDL after I discovered it and joined online courses, for example, with Katie Novak or CAST. And yeah, listened to people who have been working with UDL for many years, such as you, for example. And at some point I became really curious about how all these people were connected and learn together. And I saw this strong community, especially in the US. And then I saw, yeah, maybe there are people like this in the German speaking world

as well. So I started searching first by joining webinars and reaching out to people online via email. And yeah, then later on, and I started in Switzerland with some colleagues and then in Germany where I live and bit by bit, I started to find others who shared the same passion as I. And that's how I met Stewart through this networking. As he already said, he translated the UDL guidelines together with Thomas Müller, which was an incredible step. And yeah, together we realized that if we combine our efforts, we maybe could help UDL grow faster and reach more educators in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

LOUI:
Excellent. And I appreciate you both going into this detail of the work you've done on your own. And then we're right on the precipice of talking about what you're creating together, because I think it's important for people who, no matter where they are in the world, to see that others are doing this self-exploration and finding courses, whether those are online courses, finding books, having conversations, reaching out to others. And that's just what it is. That's part of it. And it's exactly what I did here in the U S and continue to do around the world. And just to help everyone, we don't want anybody to feel alone. It's just that there are plenty of people that are doing this work. So now we get to talk about what you two are doing collaboratively. So you're working to form a network of UDL enthusiasts in German speaking countries, and what steps have you taken to create that basis for your growing network?

LUKAS:
Yes, as you said, the network doesn't really exist yet. It's still a vision. But as you can hear, like our vision is a strong one, and it's starting to take shape. So yeah, there are other people in the German-speaking area and they share the same passion as we, and they want to move UDL forward. That's why we created a group. Some people from high schools in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. And at the moment we try to get our shared goals and to see how we can support each other, work across the borders, and yeah, see how we can connect, exchange our experiences and to make UDL more visible in German speaking areas. So the next step is in November where we plan our next meeting. Yes, it's still in the beginning, but it feels like something's growing and yeah, that's very very exciting.

STEWART:
Yeah, I mean, one thing I found was interesting was I remember when I was working with Thomas Müller on translating the guidelines into German, I said, you know what would be really cool as if we actually had some kind of like network here in Germany, because we kind of feel like we're kind of working on our own little bubbles a little bit, right? And I mean, we had to have some people, we kind of bounced off our ideas and some people like Lucas Lepelt, for example, at Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelburg and so on and others, took a look at our our translations, but it was just kind of like, you know, sometimes we had questions like, you know, how would maybe, you know, this is how we translate it, how what kind of resonance would be there? But we didn't have a whole lot of people like to really bounce our ideas off of. But then, you know, it was just lucky because Lukas just happened to write me and said, hey, look, I'm looking to kind of form this network. I was like, this is exactly what we need. I'd like to do myself, but I was kind of like, I got too many things going on. I was like, do I really want to do this

myself? So I'm happy that Lukas kind of took the initiative.

LOUI:
Yeah, I think that's wonderful. And again, it's reaching out and connecting with others. So every project begins with a vision and yours has one. So talk about that vision.

LUKAS:
Yes, as we said, our vision is still growing, but we are already taking some first steps to bring it into life. I try to be active as a networker. As I said, I wrote emails and stuff, and especially on LinkedIn, where I share my ideas and connect with other educators, who are interested in UDL and to support the German speaking community, I also created an open access task card board, which is available on LinkedIn as well. And the main idea is so that teachers can find and share UDL resources in German because the language barrier is existing in Germany. And together with Stewart, we are involved in translation work. For example, we recently translated your UDL Gears into German, which was published just a few weeks ago. And yeah, these are maybe small steps, but it makes UDL more visible and accessible. And for me, that's what this whole journey is about, like creating access, building connections and see where it goes.

LOUI:
Yeah. And I'm very, very, very appreciative of the German translation of the Gears, the mindset, skills, and practices that the literature say are aligned with the implementation, the use of UDL. So I think it's helpful for people to see those. This is research from around the world. It's not just US-based. We're talking throughout Europe and Canada and Africa. You know, just all over in Asiatic countries. And so, that's one of the reasons why I wanted to put together those Gears. So you both have recently thought about your base design through the lens of UDL, but here's what we know, the process of applying UDL is a cycle, and that cycle includes reflection and adaptation. So would you be interested in coming back next year to share what you've learned along the way?

STEWART:
Oh yeah, sure.

LUKAS:
Yeah, we would be grateful for the chance to share our story, and hopefully we can tell that we started our network in German speaking areas and share our experiences.

LOUI:
That would be wonderful.

STEWART:
I'm excited for the things to come. And in the meantime, maybe there will be similar networks sprouting up across the world who have maybe similar ambitions who may also think that, you know, language might be a bit of a barrier. And then maybe that, you know, by working within these groups within a common language, that might be useful. And then you know we also think

about, you know, if we use language as a basis, I mean, of course, we've been talking about Germany, Austria, and Switzerland at the moment but then again you know there are people who speak German all across the world and there are other countries like Belgium, and Liechtenstein for example, who also have a lot of numbers of of German speakers so you know we don't want to say it's only for us but you knows it's just ideas that we're you know we're thinking across this language aspect and we're looking for people maybe get in contact with us.

LOUI:
Absolutely. Well, I hope people do reach out. So anyone who is listening to this and thinks, oh my gosh, I want to get a hold of Lukas and Stewart, and even if you're not in a German speaking country, but to speak with them about their experiences, then you'll see their contact information along with this podcast at my website. But before I talk about all that, I want to say thank you to both of you for coming on to the podcast and talking about this big, wonderful idea and vision that you have. And I'm excited to put it on the calendar to check back with you in a year.

LUKAS:
Yeah, it would be great. Really looking forward to our next conversation in 2026.

LOUI:
Wonderful. So for those listening to this podcast, you can find supplemental materials like an image montage with closed captioning, that montage with audio descriptions, a transcript, and an associated blog at 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 in revolutionizing education through UDL, and making it our goal to build learner agency.