

# Untitled Note

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:01

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 Kim Babeu from Toltecalli High School in Tucson, Arizona about her high school anatomy class where she implements UDL. More specifically, Kim is going to share how she helps her learners move toward becoming expert learners by participating in a learning environment heavily focused on community building and her use of rigorous assessments. Hi, Kim, how are you doing?



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KIM: I am excellent. How you doing?



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LOUI: Good. Thank you! Hey, would you let everybody know about your teaching background before we get started?



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KIM: I certainly will. Well, I'm in the middle of my 38th year of teaching, which just blows my mind. I can't even begin to even think about that right now. I have taught physical education, sports, medicine, anatomy, physiology, biology, physics, chemistry. I've done an extensive before and after school program. I'm a retired high school principal. I don't miss that at all. I retired for about five minutes and missed teaching. And here I am a Toltecali

High School. And I just absolutely love where I'm teaching, teaching here in Tucson, Arizona, in the southwestern part of the United States. And I'm just in heaven.



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LOUI: That's awesome. And you were a Teacher of the Year for Arizona to weren't you?



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KIM: I certainly was. 2005 Teacher of the Year, and I was honored to represent Arizona throughout the United States in 2005.



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LOUI: Awesome. So you have a lot of pedagogical experience behind you!



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KIM: And I'm in heaven here in a very small school. 180 students. And many of our students here at typically high school are very underserved, and many are misguided and misunderstood. About 99% of them are credit deficient, many of them prefer a smaller school, they come here and catch up on their credits. And they just prefer a smaller environment. And lot of the schooling here is hands on activities. You know, we're not in an environment where it's a sage on the stage. If we taught that kind of a teaching classroom, we would get eaten alive by these kids. So it's the hit the ground when they come into the classroom, and they just want to do things instead of just sit there and listen to us. And thank God because I wouldn't want to listen to me for an hour anyway.



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LOUI: So that that was already in place. That kind of stuff was already in place. So then you you learned about UDL. So, kind of give people a sense of where you've taken that, what that meant to you to learn about it, and where you've gone with that.



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KIM: Well, you know, I always loved engaging my students. And this summer when you came and taught UDL, you just turned my teaching on a dime, Loui. Like I said, I love student

engagement, but the part that just stuck with me is student choice and self regulation. And I was blown away. You know, I always thought that I gave kids choices in school. And but the when I when I realized that I needed to give up some control in my classroom, specifically in terms of task analyses and my assessments in class. Specifically in my anatomy and physiology class, I started thinking, you know, what do I need to do so that my kids feel like they have even more of a choice? So what I did specifically with assessments is in my anatomy class, I'm teaching like, skeletal anatomy right now. And I, I give the kids a choice when, when I'm teaching them, and Loui, I can't tell you how many times in this last two months I've thought about you. And I've said, "God, darn that Loui!" Really, oh, my God, like I give them choice. You can either take notes or not take notes. You can, you can label the anatomy lessons, or you don't have to label them. I give them choice of multimedia design. They can use gel pens, they don't have to use gel pens. They can use crayons. They can use multimedia art artifacts. Or they don't have to, they can listen to music as long as they can put one ear bud in their ear, and not in this coming from me! I mean, I used to just hold on to that control. And I just have let it go. And Loui, they're learning and at an exponential rate. And I sit down with them and I say, "So how is this working for you", and they're saying, "Ms Babue, I cannot even believe how you relaxed this in terms of this kind of standard. You relaxed this, and I'm learning so much." But then Loui, it even gets more interesting and more exciting when it comes to the assessments we'll have what I used to call quizzes, tests, now I'm calling them assessments and the anxiety level with these kids has gone down and I'll and calling it something different. I'm calling it an assessment. And for the assessment days, I we talked about it before, before their assessment, days, quizzes and tests. And again, and and these days, I think about you and I think "God darn that Loui!", I say to them, I say okay, so look, let's talk about this. How about if you take your packet, and you can look at your packet if you want to, or you don't have to, and I'll give you I'll give you the choice, you can look at it up to five times during this assessment. Or you don't have to, if you if you choose not to look at it during this assessment, then I'll double the point value. But you get to choose that. And Loui, during the assessment. I'm walking around, I'm walking the trenches. And they're not choosing to look at their packet they're doing on their own, and the grades are unbelievable. We're two months into this now. And I have grades I have never had before. And these kids are getting high A's and you know what, Loui, it matters not if they're gifted, if they're middle of the road, if they're challenged learners, if they have IEP's,



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if they're traumatized learners, if they're if they're EL learners, it matters not, I'm finding that these kids are just rising up above and there I'm allowing them to grade their own test with a rubric. And they're walking up to me in the middle of the of the assessment (I was going to say test and I don't want to say test) as they're walking up in the middle of this assessment. And they're sharing these results. And Loui, I've sent you some photos. Yes, we're going out

into the garden and they're taking pictures of their A's on their assessments. They're taking them home, they're putting them on the refrigerator. They're taking them home to their parents and taking pictures with their parents. Now they're taking pictures of these assessments and posing with their animals, their pets at home. They're going across the border on the weekends to Mexico, and taking international photos Loui, so excited. Really, I have I have the highest level of grades of of tests of assessments in anatomy. And I've got two to two levels now. I've never had these grades ever in my life in anatomy, and I've been teaching for 38 years.



08:36

LOUI: It's just awesome! And so for people who are listening, I'm gonna create a spectrum of these photos sent me so many of them are there just so exciting. And, and so share, because initially, you had told the kids if you if you take it home, you take a picture of it on the refrigerator, because that's where it started, right?



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KIM: Oh, yeah, I gotta tell you, I told him to take it home and put on their rerefrigerator. And then the kids were saying, hey, I'm not going to picture on the refrigerator, I'm in high school But then I'm getting all these pictures of my inbox. And then they're saying, Hey, I'm getting extra money in my allowance. And then I'm saying to them, hey, if you get an extra money ir their allowance, and I'm a Red Sox fan, I want you to start sending me some Red Sox memorabilia! And now you should see my inbox, Loui, these kids are I mean, I'm being flooded with pictures of, and the community building. I mean, we had an open house last week. You don't know this, Loui. But we had an open house last week. And parents were coming up to me and saying, is this this crazy anatomy teacher that I'm seeing all these pictures of? And I mean, people are talking about what they're asking me, "what are you doing in my class in these classes", and teachers are coming up to me and say, "What's going on in the in the your anatomy class?" Loui, and I'm not doing anything different, excep that I've given up this control thing of, yeah, I know all this, I'm this omnipotent anatomy teacher. I'm giving up the control back to the kids. I'm letting them decide what's best for them as the learner and the grades are just soaring! And we're not just talking about one or two kids. I'm talking about over 50 kids, Loui, and it's not an outlier. We're talking. It's now October. And, we're talking almost to the end of the grading period and the grades just keep coming in. And in and in and in the end, I mean, I were blown me away, Loui.



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LOUI: Well, you and I've talked about this, because you're, you're brand new to UDL. And so this is not the time for you to be so concerned about the language of it. So I'm going to fill in here because you really hit in, like you said, on recruiting interest in that, that choice and autonomy. So helping your students make the choices about how they want to do their learning. And you gave them all these different ways to represent, so you represented information to them a lot of different ways. So how they would perceive it, and then how they're even understanding - these are complex words! This this, this is not just an you do both the Latin word and the what common word is that it?



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KIM: Yes, I do the Latin word, the anatomical word, and the layperson's word, and I hate say this, but I'm thrown in the Spanish and the English word.



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LOUI: But, you're, you're helping them with their language and symbols right there, there's no way these students would be able to access all that information if you weren't supporting their decoding of all that information, and really digging in to that next level of comprehension. So they're, they're comprehending that entire structure of the anatomy. And then we flip over to Action and Expression. And you've got all these different ways that they can express their knowledge. But then on top of it, when we think about executive functions, you know, these, these are students who I know, because we've talked, aren't



12:04

used to having success. And now, now they're setting goals for themselves. So maybe with that first one, they did set the goal of, okay, I'm not going to use my papers. But now the flywheel is just spinning like crazy. And they're starting to figure out and these are more pictures that you've sent me, but they're figuring out and strategizing how they can learn more effectively in your class. You know, using their own structures of note taking, and students who are drawing their "quote, unquote", doodling and then they're bringing those things up to you. And they're these incredible detailed pictures of the heart was one that you sent me.



12:44

KIM: Oh, yeah. And now will you you've created a monster with me. I don't even know what

to tell you. Because Halloween is coming up. And now they're like, when, when are these skeletons going on sale at Family Dollar and Walgreens and CVS? Because now they want to do extra credit with Sharpies, and they want to buy their own skeleton and then they want to draw the skeleton and hang them from my ceiling. You know the fire marshals, I'm going to get in trouble with the fire marshal. Oh, my God,



13:12

LOUI: Maybe we can brainstorm some ways so you can keep them up longer and you won't get into trouble. It's just you've done some you've done some marvelous things. And I'm just going to go back to the fact that you know, I think that is a collective because I was a teacher in the classroom to we'd hear about people who recognize just Teacher of the Year and, and rightfully so, these are people who do you know, pedagogy, you know your content, but you know how to teach it, or else you wouldn't be recognized. And you've been in the classroom for 38 years, yet you saw this framework and this just lit up on it. And it is just been fabulous to watch and listen to your stories and and hear about him.



13:58

KIM: I just I wish I knew UDL back in 2005. I just you know, Loui, I don't know the framework yet. I don't know the verbiage I just wished I knew this years ago. Because you have turned my teaching on a dime.



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LOUI: Well, it's giving you a lot of energy. So maybe going a little bit further. And I know that you're helping to impress others in your in your school that were both involved in and move forward with their own teaching. But I think you're a great model in your school. So I think that's going to continue.



14:32

Yes. So we are going to talk again, because you have an incredible system that you call S.P.O.R.T. that helps you you laid groundwork for students in that collaboration, that community building. So we're going to come back and do another podcast so you can talk about SPORT, we can talk about how that connects so well with Universal Design for Learning and, and talk about how you use those concepts of engagement to move your students so quickly forward, but at this point, we've hit our 15 minutes. So I'm going to say thank you to you for sharing your story.



15:13

KIM: And thank you.



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LOUI: You're welcome! So, for those who you are listening, if you'd like to share a story about your UDL. You can contact me through my website at [www.theudlapproach.com](http://www.theudlapproach.com), and thank: to everyone for your work and revolutionizing education and making our goal to develop expert learners.