

UDL in 15 Minutes
With Kelley Correio and Laurie Sarver
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. This episode is part of a special series about the Association of Educational Service Districts Inclusionary Practices Project where nine coordinators, one in each region of the state, work closely with 140 school leadership teams to implement UDL and improve and increase inclusionary practice. Today I'm talking with Kelley Correio who is an inclusionary practices coordinator with the 123 Educational Service District and Laurie Sarver, who is an instructional coach with the Kennewick School District in Kennewick, Washington. Today, Kelley and Laurie are going to share how UDL was brought to the coaching staff in Kennewick and how they moved it into the schools and their plans to keep UDL going. Hi Kelley and Laurie, how are you?

KELLEY:
I'm great, Loui. Thank you. How are you?

LOUI:
Great. Thank you.

LAURIE:
Thanks for having us.

LOUI:
Oh, you're so welcome. So, can you both share a little bit about the 123 Educational Service Center and the Kennewick School District?

KELLEY:
Ya. The Educational Service District provides a variety of support for Southeastern Washington School Districts, and providing professional development for school staff is a big part of that but it's not the only service.

LOUI:
Okay. And what about Kennewick School District?

LAURIE:
Kennewick School District is located in southeastern Washington. We're actually a part of what's called the Tri Cities.

LOUI:
All right. And what about your teaching and instructional backgrounds? And how did you come to UDL?

LAURIE:

Well, I've been a teacher in Kennewick School District for close to 30 years. I started off as a reading language arts teacher at the middle school level. And then I moved up to high school and there I taught English, Spanish, and I worked with our multilingual learners. For the past seven years. I have worked as our district's secondary bilingual literacy coach. And so basically I get to work with middle school and high school teachers, and para educators and support them in their work with multilingual learners.

LOUI:

Perfect and Kelley, what about you?

KELLEY:

Well, I started many years ago in early childhood, but ended up spending most of my career in a high school self-contained classroom. And at this time, we were pretty creative and committed to inclusion and for us, it seemed strong and innovative, but then after doing this work, I feel like we were just barely scratching the surface of what was possible. Then in 2018, I started at the ESD and was keeping busy with a few different roles that lend themselves more towards what I was already good at and what I already knew. And then in 2019, when this grant came along, and I was asked to be a part of that, I was like, but I don't know what Universal Design for Learning is.

LOUI:

(laughing)

KELLEY:

And they said, guess what, not a lot of people do so you'll learn. Becoming a trainer of trainers and that kind of thing has really helped and so fortunately, learning UDL was part of the job of getting into this.

LOUI:

Awesome. Thank you for being so brave because you're such a gift. That's wonderful. So Kelley, we know that the Inclusionary Project has been going on for a while, and part of that was during and right when schools are trying to reopen. So can you talk about the outreach that you're providing to schools and what you brought to Kennewick?

KELLEY:

So with this project, our first year we were really looking at leadership teams in buildings and sort of talking about inclusionary practices more broadly and making sure that schools would have systems in place to support teachers and that was during the shutdown. And so, there was kind of time built into teacher schedules as they were trying to learn new things. And even though things were a little, well, were a lot uncomfortable, they were still willing to learn and had the capacity to dive into whatever they thought might help them at the time. So, you know, people were pretty engaged that year. When we started back the following year, the goal was to start focusing more on UDL and for individual teachers and not so much a leadership focus. And people

were going back that fall expecting it to be calm and normal and then when they found out it wasn't, it was really hard to get people engaged. I had a lot of teachers who were saying, I do want to do this, I just can't do it right now. And so, things were kind of on the backburner. So, I wanted to hold that space for Kennewick and I knew that Laurie was working as an instructional coach at that time. So, I said, "Hey, I'm kind of holding space for four Kennewick teams. Would you like to learn about UDL?" And then I'll let her take over the story from here.

LOUI:

Awesome.

LAURIE:

Actually, it was really perfect timing because when we were teaching during remote instruction, it was really difficult doing trainings and presentations, because we switched from in-person to just 100% remote. So, a colleague of mine, Cory, who's another instructional coach, we were doing training on flipped classrooms. Of course, we were googling everything we could find about flipped classrooms and what it was. And everywhere we looked, this acronym would show up, UDL. And we both said, what is that? And so, we googled UDL and we saw the big framework grid, and went, ah no, we can't take this on right now. But we knew it looked interesting. So, when Kelley reached out and said, hey, do you want to learn about UDL? It was perfect timing because Cory and I had already wanted to learn about it. And so, someone walked up and said, here, let me help you.

LOUI:

That's perfect. That is serendipitous. That's wonderful. Love it. So then, Laurie, there is a coaching structure that you guys have adopted in Kennewick across all the schools, right? And so, in what way does that structure help coaches learn about UDL? What are the barriers that are inherent to that structure? So, what do you got going on?

LAURIE:

Well, right now we have five TOSA's, teachers on special assignment. And we serve as district level coaches. So, my focus is English language development at the secondary level. There's another who coaches basically my role at the elementary level. We have a GLAD coach and then we also have two coaches that work with dual language. So, we are working together on a team with Kelley, to learn about UDL and the different components and how we can use it to help us reach out to teachers when we're doing our coaching with them. Each building, well most buildings, have an instructional coach, at least at the secondary level. Elementary has reading specialists and multilingual learners specialists, things like that. But there are people at each building that we could work with. And then the goal is that those building level instructional leaders are coaches, and will then work with their teachers. So, it's like a tiered approach, I guess you could say.

LOUI:
Got it.

LAURIE:

In terms of barriers, one thing that can be an issue is that a lot of the instructional coaches at the secondary level are also teachers. So, there aren't very many who have a full day of coaching. And so, when we're trying to pull them to work with them, we have to be really creative because we have a sub shortage. And it's not easy to pull them during the day to meet and talk about these great things. So, we're having to be a little creative. A lot of times working with them after school, which is a challenge. With our elementary coaches, the majority of them are either multilingual learners specialists or full time coaches. And so, they're a little bit easier to pull. Right now, Kelley's doing a series of sessions with the elementary coaches and the few secondary coaches who can have release time during the day and working on UDL and inclusionary practices. So we're having to be creative, but I feel like we're getting there.

LOUI:

Yeah, you know, I appreciate you saying it and being honest about that, because I don't know anybody out there that isn't having to be creative. And unfortunately, we have this funny culture in schools of "Oh, we should only talk about what we're doing really, really well. Sailing down the road!" And instead, we need to be honest about this. And then like you said, it's being creative and just looking for those opportunities. And then you're looking for how to lower those barriers in our UDL speak.

LAURIE:
Exactly.

LOUI:

So Laurie, what was it about UDL that rang true for you when you thought about Kennewick? Where did you see an opening for UDL to come in?

LAURIE:

Well, one of the things that spoke to me, when I understood what it was, was the concept of removing barriers. Because of my own work with multilingual learners and then other students in my classroom, all students have barriers of some sort. And so this approach of looking at what's our goal for students, you know, what is it we want them to be able to do and what's getting in the way of that? I thought that that spoke to me with my background as a classroom teacher, but it also spoke to me in terms of coaching, because when I go into a classroom or I'm working with a teacher, so often it's about, you know, well what am I going to do to fix this student. You know, they're not able to do this. And how are we going to make them be able to do what I'm asking them to do? And I love the approach of, well, what's your goal for the student and how can we remove some barriers and provide choice and other ways for the student to show you what they know? So that's really been a mind shift for me in terms of coaching. I found that when I was in the classroom, I would look at it and go, okay, what else could I have them do to show me the same thing? But in terms of coaching, it's just been a really

good shift, asking them again, like I said, what their goals are and what is it that we can play around with in terms of helping the students reach those goals?

LOUI:

Ya. I appreciate what you're saying. And I also love that aspect of helping my fellow educators clarify, what is the goal? What are we going for here? And then it's just a great starting point. And not everybody is taught in our pre-service system to start there. So it's kind of a new thing for people sometimes, but it can really lower barriers to even lesson development, I think. Yeah. So Kelley, I understand that the project team uses The Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Everett Rogers to drive the UDL work. So did you introduce that theory at the end of these conversations, at the end, in the middle, have you even talked about the theory?

KELLEY:

So with this group, when I first joined Laurie and her team and was teaching them UDL, they had not been a part of that first year training where we had covered Diffusion of Innovation theory when I had worked with the building teams. And so as I'm teaching them UDL, naturally, those questions came up, going how can we get this to everyone? What do we do? How do we implement this? I'm like, oh boy, do I have some information for you! And so even though we finished, technically we finished the UDL training, we kept meeting together to look at implementation and action planning and how we can build UDL in the district.

LOUI:

Great. All right. So I know you guys are in early stages, but there's really good energy around it. So what are your plans to keep that energy up? What are your next steps?

LAURIE:

Well, from a coaching perspective, my goal is to keep supporting coaches and teachers who are using UDL, and then sharing their successes as examples to others. Kelley had suggested and then we started it, working with teachers, supporting teachers who are really using UDL, and they need some other teachers that are at that same level, not learning about it, but actually really implementing it. So it's been fun because we're able to meet with those teachers as a lack of a better word, you know, a support group for each other.

LOUI:

Yeah.

LAURIE:

Teachers like to hear about what's working, and a lot of times they just need real examples of the work, not the theory necessarily, but to see it in action. And so it's nice to be able to see teachers using it and then when I go and work with teachers who might be interested, or just a little nervous or scared, to give them real life examples of how teachers are implementing it. Because I think it's important and Kelley says this a lot is that it's not a checklist, you know, you don't have to do every single thing, but it's

starting to reframe your thinking. And like I had said before, focus on your goals and see what's happening and find ways to remove the barriers for students. And so when I talk about UDL with teachers, and I know I'm going to continue doing this and get better and better at it as time goes on, but you know, what is your goal and if it's content, can they show you that they understand content in different ways? Or if it's a skill, well can they demonstrate that skill, you know, using their choice of topic? Because I think those sorts of things, they help teachers reframe their own thinking.

LOUI:

You know, I love hearing real stories from teachers too. So I have this simple thing called my podcast. So that gives me this great segway to say thank you so much for participating in this podcast because this is going to be another valuable story that people are going to love hearing about. And it's gonna make people feel more secure about what they're doing. So Kelley and Laurie, thank you so much for this.

LAURIE:

Thank you.

KELLEY:

Thank you, Loui.

LOUI:

You're welcome. 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 on 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 develop expert learners.