

Title of Article: Would You Recognize Universal Design For Learning if You Saw it? Ten Propositions for New Directions for the Second Decade of UDL.

Author: Dave L. Edyburn

Date: Winter 2010

Link: http://www.udlcenter.org/sites/udlcenter.org/files/UDL2ndDecade_0.pdf

Key Points:

In his introduction, Dave L. Edyburn speaks of UDL and its first ten years of implementation. He also speaks of the A3 model, which was invented by Edyburn, Schwanke, and Smith. This A3 model is a three-phase cycle meant to achieve universal accessibility (Edyburn, 34). The three phases are: advocacy, accommodation, and accessibility. Edyburn then explains each phase in length and describes advocacy as efforts to raise awareness of inequity and highlight the need for system change to respond to the needs of individuals with disabilities (Edyburn, 35). Accommodations are the responses to advocacy and means modifying environments and materials upon request (Edyburn, 35). Edyburn adds that while this is a significant improvement, it could still maintain inequality due to delays (i.e.: time to convert a handout to Braille), special efforts to obtain these accommodations (i.e.: call ahead to schedule), and or moving to a special location (i.e.:only computer with text to speech is in the library) (Edyburn, 35). Accessibility means having an environment where access is equitably provided to everyone at the same time (Edyburn, 35).

Edyburn continues his article by stating his concern with the fundamental problem of whether we will recognize UDL or not if we see it (Edyburn, 36). He then offers ten propositions to help educators identify UDL and how to effectively implement UDL.

Proposition 1: The first proposition is based on the knowledge that UDL is different from Universal Design for a built environment. While the premise of UDL is based upon architectural design, it is important to shift that importance to the instructional design (Edyburn, 36).

Proposition 2: The second proposition states that UDL is fundamentally about proactively valuing diversity. More often than not, there is confusion about the roles of technology in UDL and many educators feel they are implementing UDL just because they are using some form of technology. There should be a diversity blueprint that UDL designers use so that they do not assume everyone is like them and can use everything like them. Accessibility and usability should meet the needs of all individuals, however, it does not because designers do not understand the special needs of some (Edyburn, 36-37).

Proposition 3: The third proposition states that UDL is ultimately about design. Edyburn suggests that UDL should be rethought of as a product development intervention as opposed to teachers being the principle stakeholders. He also states that maybe the teachers role is to implement DI which could include some products that are universally designed (Edyburn, 37-38).

Proposition 4: The fourth proposition states that UDL is not just for good teaching. This seems to be a common phrase, however, Edyburn states that good teaching has never been able to fully address the full range of diversity in a classroom. He believes that we must find ways to define and measure implementation of UDL in order to differentiate when it is really being implemented and when it is not (Edyburn, 38).

Proposition 5: This proposition states that UDL does not occur naturally. Edyburn does not believe that there is a natural trait in teachers where they can naturally implement UDL. Instead, he

suggests that UD should be recognized as a learned skill that requires training and gets better over time (Edyburn, 38).

Proposition 6: This proposition states that technology is essential for implementing UDL. The difference between UDL being possible today versus the 1950s is technology. Edyburn proposes that technology should be provided for all students not just students with disabilities. By providing computers or assistive technologies for students with disabilities, we are maintaining a status quo and not really implementing UDL properly (Edyburn, 38).

Proposition 7: This proposition states that UDL is not simply assistive technology. This can be a point of confusion for educators, however, UDL is given to everyone with the understanding that those who need specialized support will use the tools when they need them. Principles of fairness indicate that equity is achieved when all students receive what they need (Edyburn, 38-39).

Proposition 8: The eighth proposition states that it is necessary to measure the primary and secondary impacts of UDL. This means that instructional designers need to clearly indicate intended users of products and once the products are placed in schools, research should be done on the impact of the product. Primary research should determine whether or not the product was effective, and secondary research should determine whether there were any additional effects of the product or whether it only met the needs of some (Edyburn, 39).

Proposition 9: This proposition states that claims of UDL must be evaluated on the basis of enhanced student performance. If UDL means nothing more than providing students with options, its true goals of achieving educational success for students fails and it becomes more of an attempt to argue that schools need more resources. We need to understand how to measure the contributions of UDL to sustained engagement and development of expertise (Edyburn, 39-40).

Proposition 10: Finally, proposition ten states that UDL is much more complex than we originally thought. (No kidding!) We need to understand all components of UDL fully – measuring the outcomes, understand the implementation of it, clarify the core stakeholders (teachers or designers), etc. (Edyburn, 40)

I chose this article because I felt that if we want to discuss implementing UDL effectively in our lesson planning that we should see what implications/ difficulties might arise. I found Edyburn's article to be informative and eye opening. Personally, I thought UDL could be simple to implement as an educator, however, there is much more to UDL.

There are some implications for teaching. I find it difficult to even begin to attempt implementing UDL after reading this article because I feel that many others and I still do not fully understand what it is. Also, when Edyburn speaks of if the responsibility for UDL implementation is on teachers or product designers, I can't help but wonder if we do not know the answer to that question/ have not determined the answer, how are we supposed to fully implement UDL. Also, when he says that we can never fully meet the needs for the range of diversity in our classes, it makes me wonder whether or not UDL is even effective or not? I thought that statement was a bit extreme.

Overall, I found this to be a good read and feel it asks some good questions as we continue to develop our website/discussions!

Edyburn, Dave L. (Winter 2010). *WOULD YOU RECOGNIZE UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR*

LEARNING IF YOU SAW IT? TEN PROPOSITIONS FOR NEW DIRECTIONS FOR

THE SECOND DECADE OF UDL. Retrieved from

http://www.udlcenter.org/sites/udlcenter.org/files/UDL2ndDecade_0.pdf