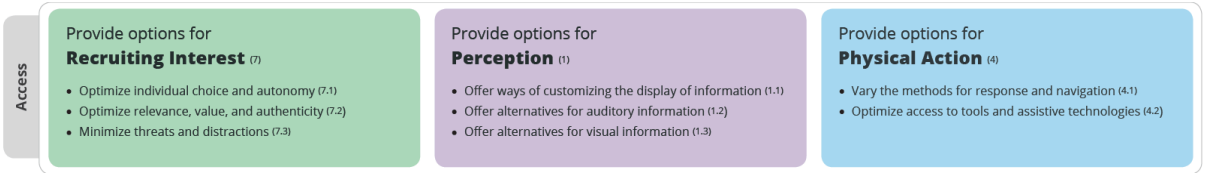
UDL in a Nutshell Bonus Episode 11

The Access Row: A Student Perspective



Description:

In this bonus episode, two students, Sara & Will, are interviewed by Erin Fitzgerald, Supported Higher Education Project (SHEP) CTP program coordinator. The students are giving their perspective on what works well for them in relation to the Access row (the top row) of the UDL Framework.

Transcript:

David: I'm David Cole, the media consultant at the University of Kentucky Center for the enhancement of learning and teaching. Perhaps you remember me from my breakout role in our multipart podcast series, *UDL in the Nutshel*l, where my colleague Jennifer Pusateri, walked me through the principles of universal design. As a supplement to that series. We're sharing special episodes that cover each column of the UDL chart from a student perspective in these episodes an instructor, Erin interviews 2 practicum students: Will and Sara. Our hope is that these interviews will provide some helpful context on why and how universal design principles are important and helpful. We hope you enjoy.

Erin: Hello! This is Erin. I am here with Will and Sara. How are you all doing today?

Will: I'm doing pretty good.

Erin: How are you?

Sara: Me? I'm doing fine, too.

Erin: We are here today to talk a little bit about universal design and Universal Design for Learning which is something we've been talking a lot about over the last semester and over this semester. And this is going to be a student perspective on universal design and universal design for learning. This installment of this podcast is going to be about elements of access and Universal Design for Learning. And I'm going to list a couple of those really quickly, and then we'll just start having a conversation about it. That sound okay to you all.?

Will: Yeah.

Sara: Sure, that's fun with me.

Erin: Okay, so as a refresher of things that we have been looking into there are 3 elements of access when it comes to Universal Design for Learning and one of them is options for recruiting interest. And this is about finding a way to make course content interesting to learners. And there are lots of ways to do that. Like giving choices about the activities they use for learning or letting people combine the content areas with their area of interest and also reducing distraction in places of learning, so that people can concentrate on what they're doing. So let's start talking first about recruiting interest. One of the things we started talking about in regard to this this week is just for each of you. Can you tell me briefly what is something you are very interested in?

Will: I'm interested. Is mythology, folklore books, theater, and Halloween.

Erin: Yeah, absolutely excellent. What about you, Sara?

Sara: Before interest I was able to fit into that question are animal care, because I have a dog, and I'm very infested into making sure that she has the best, healthiest life that she can have while she's getting older. I'm also interested in the study of music and the study of the paranormal field and the art field.

Erin: Excellent. So will you have expressed that you're interested in mythology and folklore and stories in general. Are there any characters in the stories that you like where people get treated differently because of them being different from other characters?

Will: And well, there's wicked by Gregory Maguire and Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley. Oh, yeah, those are good examples. How how are the characters in their treated, do you think? Well, it's because they look different and they don't belong in the norms of society.

Erin: Absolutely true. I agree with that. Are you familiar with those also, Sara?

Sara: I have read the novel Frankenstein that Will gave to me that I could read and it has like very visual. It has, like graphically designed images of the way that Dr. Frankenstein and his creation kind of talk back and forth. But the there are some films of Frankenstein's monster that literally take him and treat him as though he's not a human being, and literally call him Frankenstein's monster, because of the way he looks so he's portrayed as as a monster instead of as an equal being. Yeah, Creator that created him.

Erin: Yes. What do you? What do you feel about that, Will.

Will: Because whether you're not part of this. our society, you're against society, and you know. Appearances are people are blind by beauty. and they just don't care what's on the they only care what's on the and outside the inside.

Erin: That's…that's so true. We were talking about this a little bit earlier, and how a creature can be seen as behaving badly or not doing what they're supposed to do because they don't fit the norms of the world that they are in. And in the case of the story of Frankenstein. That was true, even though the Creator was responsible for the creation of this other being, but then still was disappointed in the way that the being acted. How is this similar, do you think, to issues that people have with access in our current world.

Sara: People blame someone who is different from other people's culture or society. or people who think different or look different.

Erin: Absolutely. I think that is very true. Il will agree with that. Do you think that there are ways that characters in some of those stories where the character who's being portrayed is being seen as other, or as not being seen as doing things the way they're supposed to do quote unquote. Do you think there are ways in some of those stories that those characters challenge the norms of society, or stand back up for their own unique ways of doing things.

Sara: I think probably the best example of that would probably, I mean…I have Guest songwriter's English translated Phantom of the opera novel that I have read. and I think the way he challenged society was that he just decided, no matter how deformed his face was looking. He was gonna build things, anyway, regardless of his face, looking like it. despite his face, looking the way it's described in the novel. He still went on to be an architectural and music. teaching genius because he knew how to build things, and he knew how to write music. despite society, poking fun at what his face looks like after he is unmasked for not just once by Christine, but she also unmasks him quite literally in Andrew Lloyd Webber's version a second time in a row. and the crowd is in horror at what his face actually looks like underneath it, because it's like, Oh, they weren't expecting his face to look that bad. It's not like he chose to have it. He talks in the novel about how he only remembers having that face for his entire life, and he's never known anything to look beautiful. So the stories that he teaches Christine music, despite his face being deformed, and is able to use all that he's fired while he was working in Persia, literally to taking the knowledge with him and applying it to the Paris Opera House. and was able to build the secret passageways that he has. So the phantom of the opera, and I know some listeners may or may not be familiar all the way with that story, but you gave a good synopsis of some of the stuff that happens in it. So it sounds like you're you're suggesting that people judged that character based on appearance and didn't quite give credit for the things that he was able to do because they were so stuck on the way that his appearance did not meet expectations of it.

Sara: It's the primary example of how he chose to start wearing masks on a mask, one at a time on his face. because every time he was unmasked he would literally pick a new one, and wear that on his face. So question for you will. and any of the stories that you were mentioned earlier, like such as wicked, and also such as Frankenstein. Do you think there are ways that any of the characters in those stories also challenge the norms of society, or stand up for who they are, push back against the way that they are treated well in wicked alphabet, the wicked rich of the West. I'm not really wicked, but misunderstood. She accepts herself. and she wants. as she

believes, in equal rights for all sentient beings, and Oz all living creatures to be treated as equally fair.

Erin: And that's not the portrayal that we often give her, is it?

No, it's not what it's not as well. It's because how people judge appearances than characteristics.

Erin: This is very true. So I know it might seem strange on anyone listening to this podcast like, we are talking about things that are not related to universal design for learning. But I think we are. For one thing. I think these are interests of yours, and this is a way that we have all had conversations about universal design for learning based on those interests. So, one of the other questions in our recent conversations about this was about. are there other examples of how an area of interest for you could be used either in an assignment or for a way for you to better understand or engage with a concept such as this concept? Can you give another example of that, Sara? Of…what is another way that that thinking about your interests can help you engage with new concept?

Sara: Well, it's that I could study legends about dogs for my folklore mythology class, and I actually have claimed a web site about some dog legends, urbanpaws.com.

Erin: So that is an idea of a way for you to have more engagement with your mythology class, because if you…if you have a choice in an assignment about what you're studying, and you find something that also relates to dogs that that will help you keep interest.

Sara: Yes, I think so. That makes that makes a lot of sense.

Erin: How about you? Do you feel that having these conversations that incorporate mythology and folklore and stories? Do you feel that that is a way to make talking about universal design more interesting? Yes. **Erin:** Do you feel that it makes you have a better understanding of it.

Will: Yes, I think so.

Erin: Cool. Let's move a little bit into talking about some things that we have done this semester and trying to explore access throughout the semester. Another element of access in universal design for learning, besides recruiting interest is options for perception, and that is about making sure that information is presented to learners and different formats. So in some of your classes you may have had instructors give you information in different ways. You mentioned today that you all watched some media clips.

Will: Yes, we did was, yeah, something that tell me what it is like when you're in class. And there's a media clip like that shown. What does that do for your interest in your ability to check in the information? I have a photographic memory. So if you, if you see visuals. That is a helpful thing for you to remember it.

Sara: Yes, yeah.

Erin: What do you feel? Are some of the ways of receiving information that work the best for you like reading it, watching it on a video, listening to it, or looking at charts. What are some things that work well for you, Sara?

Sara: I prefer to receive information by listening while reading a closed caption text. I like learning that way because I can understand, was being said better later. I like to read a transcript. I also like to watch videos with closed captioning. That's why Youtube had this one update on my phone one year when they came out with that update that I decided to update to that. And they've had that setting ever since. So that's listening listening to a video while also watching the captions at the same time helps you to get that information in there.

Erin: Yes, it does. What about you, Will? What are some of your favorite ways to take in information? I know you're a big reader.

Will: Yeah, I would tell them about my favorite books and give them a short synopsis of the story. It's...I learned some things that are new to me. I have already think I know. I also get new information I have to write down.

Erin: Do either of you enjoy discussion with other people as part of your method of learning?

Sara: Yes, I do. I do, too. Yeah, that's another example of different options for perception, for some people having a conversation like this makes it easier to learn and remember and hold on to information, and other people might prefer to just take it in without engaging with another person. And I…that's just another example.

Erin: And then there's a third way of access, a third element of access and universal design for learning. So we had the first one, which was options for recruiting interest, getting people interested. Access to the materials by how is that information being received by the learner which you just talked about, and then options for physical action. This is allowing learners to use different ways of showing what they have learned. So what we're doing right now is an example of that, because you all are doing this practicum class about universal design and universal design for learning, and this is an activity as a way to learn more about that and show what you know about that. So I would be interested in knowing other times during your college experience, or or your earlier schools. Experience, too. What were some different ways that you have tried of doing assignments? And how did those feel?

Sara: So I have used recorded interviews and podcasts to work on my current assignments. I have also been learning to use the notes, application on my iPad.

Erin: Cool. And what about you, Will? I know that you use a certain program when you're writing on your computer, that you have found helpful.

Will: Yeah, I use rewrite gold. What is helpful about that? Well, it happens to me. use some word prediction, and it also reads some sentences on the computer.

Erin: Yes, those are really good tools, because what I have heard you all talk about, and I have found myself as well is that if you're in the flow of learning something, or if you're in the flow of giving back what you have learned. anything that interrupts that flow can be frustrating. So if those tools, help you to continue your flow of giving that information.

Erin: Then that's a good tool. So I think it's good to use those things. Sara, which of the the methods that you've used…you mentioned that you had recorded interviews and podcasts as part of your working on assignments. Which of those have worked best for you?

Sara: Recordings of myself. Answering questions helped me remember what I wanted to say. If the assignment had to be written or typed. Listening to my recording helped me know when my answers were getting off topic, or if I really answered the question being asked sometimes it is best to say out loud when I think the question is asking. To be sure, I know what is being asked.

Erin: That absolutely makes sense. And, Will, has there been any assignment that you have done in the last semester or so that has been a favorite assignment, or something that worked well for you.

Will: Yes. I did a assignment on my legend, thesis. The changeling.

Erin: Yes, talk about that a little bit. That was a great assignment.

Will: Changelings are type of are kind of our ferry replacements that the very folk leave behind when they swap up a human baby for their own.

Erin: Okay. what happens in those in those stories? What is it that happens when people realize that there is a changeling, that that is a changeling?

Will: Well, there, they would either have to use to brew…make a brewery on egg shells. or expose the child, the changeling child with heated iron poker. or use any source that's considered child abuse in the today.

Erin: Yes, absolutely. They were not treated well once they were.

Will: Once they thought that they recognized that this being was something that that was in their minds. Negative.

Erin: How do you think that that relates to modern day, and the way that people are sometimes treated because they or think different from societal norms, or do things different? Do you think that creates a tendency for people to treat other people differently?

Will: Yes.

Erin: You had said in your in your assignment that it seemed sometimes similar to the way that people try to get people to change how they are. For example, if someone has a disability that sometimes other people will do things to either mistreat them or try to get them to change, to be

like everyone else. Yeah, which is very. basically about the dangers of conformity and conformity to a society and that is a danger in in universal design and universal design for learning. The the opposite is the goal is, instead of saying we're going to do this the way that will work for the majority or the norm. It is instead encouraged that people consider that every person is different and unique, and thinks and does things in different ways. Do you feel that with universal design or universal design for learning, that if we did things differently in our society. That would, people would be more able to learn or less able to learn.

Sara: Yes, they would be learned, they would be more able to learn.

Erin: I agree with that. Is there anything else that either of you would like to talk about in terms of access?

Sara: Well, I also have a link for that talks about museums, zooms in aquariums using universal design. So that's another thing. You were looking up to see how museums and zoos and aquariums, how accessible they are and how much they use universal design.

Erin: Yeah, that's another way to to take something that you're interested in and and learn more about how they do it. How about you? Will, do you have anything else to say about access?

Will: Yes, I think people who who have a, well limited hearing or eyesight may use, you know. headphones to describe what's happening in each scene of a movie you play and audio recording of a book.

Erin: Umhm. yeah, those are very important considerations. And hopefully, we're getting better about considering all of those things now than we used to be. But we still have a long way to go. Well, thank you all for talking to me about this, and look forward to more conversations in the future. Thank you. All right, thank you. You are welcome.