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Exploring Universal Design for Learning in the Art Classroom: Connecting Theory with Practice

Emily Heerten
University of Nebraska at Kearney

EXPLORING UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING IN THE ART CLASSROOM:

CONNECTING THEORY WITH PRACTICE

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Emily Heerten

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Abstract

This case study focuses on the Universal Design of Learning (UDL), specifically its impact into integrating it into the art classroom. I studied UDL to better enhance and implement flexible instruction in my art classroom the past three years. In this case study, I reflected upon my own art classroom experiences during this time. UDL has been an important aspect in my art curriculum in an effort to increase opportunities for artistic academic achievement for each student. I examined UDL and how to implement it into the art classroom. This was to fill in gaps in education that is meant to enhance learning outcomes in the art classroom. The different means of UDL included options for comprehension, expression and self-regulation. UDL is important to support every child's learning and teach to their learning style.

Keywords: universal design for learning, strategies, art education

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Being the only K-12 art educator within my district for the past six years, I have seen a wide range of learning styles and abilities within my students. Conventional teaching methods have been to instruct students all the same way using identical assessment. Students all learn, process, and receive information differently; they shouldn't be taught the same way because of these reasons. Every student is unique, along with their learning style, which is evident in the art classroom.

After my second year of teaching, I became frustrated that I wasn't meeting the academic needs of all my students. I identified this concern when my students were doing poorly on assignments, along with low engagement in the classroom and subpar projects. Our school implemented block scheduling with long classes, I realized that I was not keeping my students engaged or focused on the task at hand. Part of this engagement issue was related to this long time period. Upon reflection, I reflected that my students' lack of effort on projects and behavior issues was partially due to undifferentiated teaching methods to cater to unique learning styles. I examined different strategies that offered choice to each student that would aid each in how they learn best. I turned to UDL to help guide me with the goal of students creating *better* art that they were motivated to create and be engrossed in the curriculum.

I was introduced to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in college, but I wanted to further dive into research to better enhance and implement flexible instruction in my classroom. When first learning about UDL, I was amazed at the choice that it offered in every aspect for each lesson and for all learning styles. I noticed that UDL could be easily adapted to my art curriculum within each aspect of every lesson. In addition, I knew UDL would be valuable in

solving behavior issues for students that need kinesthetic options in the art classroom. Flexible instructional processes allow different delivery modes to teach to different learning styles.

Students are able to absorb information better through learning styles that best fit them. Such diverse delivery modes include visual, audial, social, verbal, physical, musical, and solitary methods. Each student learns differently and that is why flexible learning is so important in the art classroom. These modes allow students to dive into information in different formats that help them learn.

Since our school implemented block scheduling with long classes, I realized that I was not keeping my students engaged or focused on the task at hand during this long period of time. The implementation of UDL encouraged students to embrace the concepts I was teaching and served as a motivator for these techniques and objectives into their artwork. This is why I sought out a solution for my student engagement troubles that I was having within my art classroom. The answer to these obstacles was implementing UDL out of all the strategies I examined. UDL offered my students to diversify instructional methods that motivated student learning and student engagement.

Significance of the Study

Every student is a unique individual. So why don't we teach students with diverse learning styles? From the learning diversity within my classroom, behavior issues I was observing, and the lack of motivation from my students, I knew I needed to implement more options into my curriculum. This is not only essential for my art classroom but for art education. Art education is all about expressing creativity and critical thinking that is *outside the box*.

UDL is represented through multiple forms of expression. By teaching with UDL, class instruction prevents students from being pigeonholed with uniform expectations from each student. UDL takes into account all students learning needs. This is relevant to the art classroom and introducing projects, art history, and the steps for instruction. Students benefit from the more flexible environment and fight for this option in every project.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this case study is to examine UDL through the lens of integration in the art classroom. This case study is to evaluate three years' worth of implementing UDL and assessment of its success. My issues of student engagement and their lack of concern for projects led me to UDL and its importance of integration in art education. There are gaps in conventional instruction that don't teach to students learning needs in the art classroom. That is why UDL is significant to implement it into the classroom. This study will further dive into the opportunities that UDL offers, specifically within my art classroom.

This case study examines how UDL can be applied to the issue of student engagement and lack of motivation within my art education classroom. I examined UDL and its implementation to consider how it can enhance learning outcomes in the classroom. My curriculum included options for comprehension, expression and self-regulation. I looked at UDL and its importance to support every child's learning. This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How can the art education classroom provide multiple and a variety of ways for instruction, learning, and behavioral engagement for all students?

2. How can the art education classroom provide its learners with a number of and a variety of options for all students to express and communicate what they have learned and for behavioral engagement?

3. How can the art education classroom create relevance, excitement, challenging, and engagement in learning and behavioral engagement for all students?

Chapter 2

Methods

Study Overview

UDL was introduced into my classroom over 3 years ago and has developed from a beginning stage into a more fully evolved and immersive example of what UDL should exemplify. These real life observations were gathered from my own classroom. It was for these reasons that I chose to focus my research around a case study, which was meant to identify, describe, and analyze a specific topic. The purpose of a *case study* for qualitative research is to be conducted over an amount of time in real-life through detailed data collection according to Creswell & Poth (2016).

My case study focuses on evaluating three years' worth of implementing UDL and assessing its success. This makes it an *instrumental case study*. Creswell & Poth define an instrumental case that focuses on one specific issue and the research and solution to the problem itself. The problem for my own case study revolves around how to better engage my students in the art curriculum. It is based on my questions that analyzed issues within my classroom with UDL being the solution. I chose UDL to provide opportunities for a variety of methods for students to succeed. These questions in my instrumental case study all revolve around: why you should implement UDL in education and, more specifically, the art classroom.

Data Collection Tools

I realized that I was using my own personal experiences to conduct this research indirectly. The data I collected relates to my questions with how UDL is the answer in helping students learn and provide choice assessments and expression. These reflections were based on the multiple means of expression in UDL. Through observances in my classroom, field notes that

I have taken through the years, and data analysis of grades and pictures I have formed my case study.

TOOLS	PURPOSE	SOURCE OF DATA
OBSERVATIONS ***Participant as Observer** ***Complete Observer**	Learning from other individuals that were participants in research studies to offer experiential observations of teaching and learning.	PRIMARY SOURCES *Observations in the art classroom SECONDARY SOURCES *Interviews conducted by other writers
ARTIFACT ANALYSIS ***Journals** ***Editorials** ***Newspaper /Internet Articles**	For conducting and using research in historical, social, and conceptual studies in relation to my case study.	PRIMARY SOURCES *Journals and Editorials will serve as primary sources. SECONDARY SOURCE *Newspaper and internet articles.
FIELD NOTES	From observations from my classroom and conversations held.	PRIMARY SOURCES *Notes taken through observations SECONDARY SOURCE *Internet Sources

Figure 2.1 Outlines the data collection tools, purposes, and sources of the data.

1. **Observations.** Within my own classroom, I have observed my students and their

   interactions using multiple engagements and actions. I used qualitative research including

   assessing data from class engagement and past art projects. These resources are all based

   on past experiences with my students. These criteria included: attendance, listening

attentively, participation in discussion, following directions, turning work in on time, and enthusiasm for the project. I used these terms of measurement to deduce the engagement of my students during lessons and activities (See Figure 2.1). It is through direct observation through my senses that I can draw conclusions and the positive effect that UDL has on its students.

2. **Artifact Analysis.** I examined the artist statements of my students to understand the positive effects that UDL impacts students and their level of engagement. The study of these written works was my artifact analysis that was gathered indirectly from my students. The rubric of engagement included methods including attendance, listening attentively, participation in discussions, following directions, turn work in on time, and enthusiasm for project. This is assessed through observations. These different criteria are directly related to classroom management and engagement for positive student behavior. The use of UDL fills gaps in education that weren't intended for classroom management in its implementation.

3. **Field Notes.** It was through the notes that I wrote about my students and their performance realize that using my students within my own classroom is a limitation to my study. My time working with students with their thoughts and ideas was the focus of my field notes.

My data collection included observations and student artist statements from the las three years. I also used secondary resources to accomplish my research (See Figure 2.2) such as observations and field notes. This rubric divides up specific areas of engagement that can be assessed according to examining percentages of the class's involvement. Data includes: students' past art projects, the artist statements to go along with these projects, and art history papers and

worksheets created. The data I collected was from my own classroom which serves as a limitation to my research. The data collected from my own observations will be assessed using a rubric focused on engagement. The rubric for engagement that I used for my classes assesses student's participation in listening attentively, participation, turning assignments in on time, enthusiasm, and following directions.

Method of Engagement	Whole Class Engagement				
	Strongly	**Mostly**	**Neutral**	**Slightly**	**Not at all**
Attendance	95% most of the time	75% most of the time	50% most of the time	25% most of the time	5% most of the time
Listening Attentively	95% of the class	75% of the class	50% of the class	25% of the class	5% of the class
Participation in Discussions	95% of the class	75% of the class	50% of the class	25% of the class	5% of the class
Following Directions	95% of the class	75% of the class	50% of the class	25% of the class	5% of the class
Turn Work in on Time	95% of the time	75% most of the time	50% most of the time	25% most of the time	5% most of the time
Enthusiasm for Project	95% of the class	75% of the class	50% of the class	25% of the class	5% of the class

Figure 2.2 Table for data collection for observations and levels of engagement.

Boundaries of the Case

Case studies have parameters including location, people involved, and a timeframe. It was due to these boundaries that a case study was fitting for my research of UDL and its integration in my art classroom. The data collected and literature reviewed for UDL reflects the

opportunities that it provides within a short time frame. The people involved are my students within my art classroom.

The case study that I conducted is focused on past experiences within my own classroom of increasing classroom engagement and growing motivation for learning. This was done by exploring the effects of UDL on students. My research was focused on the affirmative behaviors presented by UDL in the art classroom. These behaviors intertwined with the art curriculum offer constructive change in behavior and motivation in art classes. I continued to examine and investigate UDL specifically on engagement and positive assessments and activities in the art classroom. The criteria based on a rubric looking at the whole class engagement (See Figure 2.1) that I used to measure the positive effects of implementing UDL.

I concentrated my research on the positive effects of UDL according to its impact within my own art classroom that classifies it as a *case study*. Figure 2.1 breaks down the behaviors I have assessed within my classroom. To assess these behaviors, I used the data collected through observations. I collected data at the beginning of implementing UDL within my classroom and again three years later to compare my results. These behaviors I will be assessing include attendance, listening attentively, participation in discussions, following directions, turning work in on time, and enthusiasm for project.

Limitations of the Case

I understand one of the limitations was time and resources. This was one of the limitations that I had for my case was the lack of time and resources. Because I have already implemented UDL into my classroom, I can look back on years of observations and conclusions

that I have formed. These methods allowed me to finish my research in a timely manner, yet still allowed me to be thorough with my work.

Protection of Participants

This study protects the identities of the students that I examined through my research. The secondary sources I examined protect the past students that served as subject matters for my case. The information that was gathered was from observances and documents within my art classroom, not through direct audible communication or through pictures. The information was either gathered from indirect observations and notes or peer reviewed texts and assessments.

My interpretation might have resulted in the form of bias. I did not disclose the identities of my students. This research offered sensitivity to those groups and individuals of people. The purpose of this case was specifically how UDL is the answer when it comes to student engagement and offering educational learning opportunities into the curriculum for my art education students. My research occurred in my classroom with my students, according to the suggestion for conducting research in a natural setting. The data collection was observances, data analysis, and field notes and based on students' engagement.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to develop a rationale for integrating UDL into the art classroom. This literature review is of how others carried out UDL in their classroom and how it brought reengagement to their students. The goal of UDL is to make each learning experience accessible for students. There are three areas that UDL focuses on – representation, expression, and engagement. Representation provides options to display information for learning and acquired. Expression provides options for response and navigation. Engagement provides options for relevance and authenticity. These principles allow educators to create instruction for all learners, including those with diverse and special needs (Spencer, 2011). UDL includes multiple means of representation and offers teaching methods concerning perception, comprehension, and language. This strategy also uses learning styles to address expressions that provide physical action, expression, and communication. UDL promotes options for engagement through interest, effort, and self-regulation for students.

Description of UDL:

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework used as a guide in planning lessons to teach today's diverse classrooms (Spencer, 2011). The purpose of UDL is to increase and optimize learning for all students. This is accomplished by teaching through various methods, or multiple means, addressing the *why*, *what*, and *how* of learning. UDL is a framework that is based on the research in fields of neuroscience, education, and technology (Hartmann, 2015). The use of UDL in the classroom allows students' individual needs to be addressed. In using UDL, educators are able to provide students with the way they access information, express what

they learn, and allow opportunities for individual's interests and motivation to be applied (Howard, 2004).

There are three means of UDL – representation, expression, and engagement. These principles allow educators to create instruction for all learners, including those with diverse and special needs (Spencer, 2011). In using UDL, educators are able to provide students with the way they access information, express what they learn, and allow opportunities for individual's interests and motivation to be applied (Howard, 2004). Through my own observations and research found, I can again address the importance of UDL in the art education classroom, specifically how it was used within my art classroom. Students obtain and attain knowledge in unique ways. As an educator, I use UDL to address these issues by offering a variety of methods to gain further achievement.

This means using methods outside of teaching through printed materials and lecturing. UDL encourages bringing in multimedia forms such as: websites, pictures, videos, and realia (Spencer, 2011). These multimedia forms can be used in the art classroom in Art History, process planning of the project, and learning of techniques. Through UDL students in the art classroom can use alternative forms to show what they have learned through their interests and abilities. The multiple means of engagement commends individualized choice for students - reducing anxiety and rewarding effort.

UDL Providing Multiple and a Variety of Ways for Instruction and Learning:

The first principle of multiples means is representation. Representation is "encouraging the use of several elements and materials to support instructional content" (Hall et al., 2004, p. 14). This focuses on the *what* of learning and specifically the resourceful, knowledge-seeking

learners. This means that during instruction many examples are given to create a concrete

understanding of a concept or theme. Tools to use to help these learners include: clarifying

vocabulary, audio, video, text, digital photos, apps, maps, closed captions, or amplified sound.

UDL is used in multiple ways to aid in learning through engagement and action. For

example, Howard (2004) mentions that instead of teaching through a read along, she provided

books for guided reading. Students were encouraged to view the books for the guided reading

assignment prior to the activity. The teacher then assigned each student to a book of their interest

and ability to read. The principle, multiple means of action, was attained through a kinesthetic

activity created for the classroom. Howard (2004) invited students to color match sticky notes

with the questions provided with the answers found in their books. These different strategies can

be applied to the art education classroom.

Participation of students is enhanced through the process of inclusion through multiple

educational activities (Glass et al., 2010). Technology and materials used are a key element in

UDL. Some examples of instruction materials or technology that can be used include: *Comic

Life, e-Speaking, Graffiti, KWL, Kuzweil 3000, Vocabulary Cartoons,* and *Visual Words.* The

videos that teachers are able to show their students can allow students to learn in new ways. E-

reading is another way that technology impacts UDL; students are able to highlight, if they don't

understand, change font size, or have the book read aloud (Spencer, 2011). These are all methods

that can be used in the art classroom for instructing and understanding processes.

There is direct correlation in UDL that allow students to be successful and engaged in

their learning environments (Glass et al., 2010). UDL is meant to provide flexibility while

students are engaged in analyzing lessons where the barriers have been removed. Glass et al.

(2010) describes options for instructional strategies including varied instructional and resource

materials, scaffolding, guidance to independent practice, and formative assessments. Through the multiple means of engagement, the students are given options of how to participate in the class through individual, partner, or small group.

UDL Providing Multiple and a Variety of Ways for Expression and Communication:

The second principle of Universal Design for Language (UDL) is multiple means of action and expression. This principle focuses on the *how* of learning. This principle thrives on including physical activity and multiple modes of expression and communication. According to Spencer (2011), the purpose of this multiple means is to give "a broad range of alternatives" for students to show their learning (p. 7). Tools to help these students to learn are kinesthetic activities, games, modeling, labs, or graphic organizers. The target group of specific learners are hands-on and goal – setting learners. These students thrive on varying the methods for response and communication, and a structured scaffolding system for each student to be able to break apart their learning.

There are multiple ways to involve students kinesthetically. Students naturally want to be active. UDL lends itself to activities that are versatile, engaging, and lively. In the art classroom projects or research tied to UDL can offer multiple means of expression. Students choose an option that caters to their strengths and engages the students (Spencer, 2011). Not only do students want to learn through these various activities, but each student will absorb the information and be able to recollect the information.

These forms of expression keep students engaged and focused on their work. Examples of these activities include art history related scavenger hunts, working together with a partner, or acting out information acquired. It also allows students to represent their learning in a physical

way. Students can choose through a variety of technology and activities to capture the content they have mastered (Spencer, 2011). The art classroom lends itself to this method inherently and supports student expression.

UDL Providing Relevance, Excitement, and Engagement in Learning:

The final principle is multiple means of engagement that is for the purposeful, motivated learners. This principle focuses on the *why* of learning and creating interest and motivation for learning. This is "how learners get engaged and stay motivated; how they are challenged, excited, or interested" (Hall et al., 2004, p. 11). Multiple means of engagement is focused on developing self – regulation, and an overall focus on including interests for the students. Tools to teach for this specific set of learners include optimizing choices, minimizing distractions, providing feedback, rubrics, and self –assessments.

Classes that integrate art into their curriculum observe students that "demonstrate goal-setting, self – monitoring, self – evaluation, and the use of learning strategies" (Robinson, 2013, p. 202). These aspects are the target goals of UDL. When students have a more positive sense of self, there is a decrease in stress, anxiety, and depression. Robinson (2013) analyzes how the theoretical framework is used to "explain the connection between the cognitive skills developed in the arts and functions these skills perform in academic work" (p. 202). UDL has been seen to create learning experiences that teach students varied learning styles. Through teaching in multiple means we, as educators, provide more opportunities of success for our students.

Integration of UDL in Art Curriculum:

UDL is a helpful tool for differentiation to help students with various abilities, backgrounds, and needs. By implementing UDL, students with severe disabilities will engage in learning, be resourceful, and act on what they know (Hartmann, 2015). Traditionally, planning a typical lesson is based on the abilities of the majority of the students. Afterwards, the teacher will create accommodations for diverse learners (Spencer, 2011). This method is an improvement compared to no accommodations, but doesn't completely remove barriers or allow accessibility to the curriculum. Teachers that use UDL as a proactive strategy build in differentiation from the beginning and make learning available to all learners (Spencer, 2011). It is through this framework of using diverse methods that not only aids the students with special needs, but can help everyone in the art classroom. This relates specifically to the negative behaviors within the art classroom when there was a lack of motivation for projects and building skills.

UDL is meant to benefit all students, including those with disabilities. I teach a wide variety of students including students with physical and mental disabilities. These students need help modifications and adaptations to the lessons. UDL offers students options to accommodate unique learning needs. UDL has been found to help students by allowing them to gain more access to information, be involved in classroom activities, and internalize further understanding. The goal is inclusion for students in the classroom, though the amount of inclusion may vary. When looking at inclusion, it can "appear very differently, at different levels and through different means, depending on the context and circumstances" (Glass et al., 2010, p.8). Within recent decades, there has been a driving force for inclusion that is a result of changes within the community and the creation of frameworks, such as UDL provided to educators.

By using UDL, teachers may realize that it isn't a lack of students' capabilities but a deficit in their instructional methods. Traditionally instructional strategies were catered to the

average student. The purpose of UDL is to "challenge professionals who hold tight to inflexible curriculum to consider how it can include option and varied support for all learners" (Hartmann, 2015, p 58). UDL offers benefits of positive student behaviors because of an increase in motivation, a variety of choices that allows a student's work to play into their strengths, and allows more students to become involved in the classroom (Spencer, 2011). It is through these benefits that we can help every child get closer to achieving their goals in the classroom.

It is through these multiple means of action and expression that help students build their knowledge and implement it into their learning. The choice of expression motivates learners through multiple means of engagement by allowing individual choice and heightening self-regulation. Allowing students to become enthusiastic and make further connections with the artwork. Students are also given more support through technology and options that cater to their needs and accommodations (Howard, 2004). These instances of UDL allow students collaborate with each other and learn through emotional and physical connections, while still focusing on the learning aspect. These learning approaches can be applied to the art classroom. Being able to connect multiple senses to a learning experience allows students to access, build, and internalize knowledge. This meets the goals of UDL for action and expression.

Assessing UDL In the Art Classroom:

In education, student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education (Sabbott, 2016). Criteria of engagement to show the effects of UDL in the art education classroom can be

separated into the three categories for my research. According to Sabbott (2016), these three categories are emotional, intellectual, and physical engagement.

In teaching using only one method, such as lecturing, many students are unable to fully grasp and internalize the information provided. There is an importance of keeping learning accessible to all students. It is too easy to *lump together* learning styles and use only methods that teach to a specific group of students that may be the easiest route for the teacher. Teachers need to meet our students' cultural, linguistic, and academic diversity to provide instructional, individualized needs for students (Glass, Meyer, & Rose, 2013). This includes learning in the art classroom and the lesson taught.

Through UDL, students are given access to materials, curriculum, and assessment that will teach to every learning style. When using UDL instead of trying to adapt to student needs, the framework allows the curriculum to be reformed instead of conforming to the learner (Hartmann, 2015). It is through the three multiple means: representation, action, and engagement that the gap between achievements and our disadvantaged students can be bridged and gain opportunities (Robinson, 2013). As an educator, I must remember that all students are capable of learning but not through the same methods and through UDL this achievement can be made possible. In the art classroom, using multiple means for teaching art history and techniques to my students was critical to their learning.

Solving the issue of students not being engaged or learning was how I came to the conclusion to use UDL to support instruction in my art classroom. According to Robinson (2013), UDL and the arts work together cohesively due to the hands-on based nature. The arts are directly intertwined with the multiple means in UDL. Robinson (2013) explains that by including the arts that it incorporates aspects of UDL, such as: individualized choice,

collaborative learning experiences, and self – regulation. Cross-curriculum art projects integrate the creative process with other skills and subject areas. The creative process involves examination, exploration, and development of craft, creation, reflection, revision, and sharing with others (Robinson, 2013). The arts are used as a form for understanding material in core classes, as well as boosting self-efficacy in a student. Art projects bring a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem to a student when completed.

Opposition to UDL:

When looking at all of the positives of UDL, we also need to consider some of the drawbacks to UDL. According to Edyburn (2010) instead of UDL being a specific teaching strategy it is just considered as *good teaching.* Edyburn (2010) makes the case that the checkpoints of UDL are based on strategies that worked already in the classroom. Through my findings, the intention of implementing UDL in the classroom and using multiple means is the difference between UDL and *good teaching*.

The question that Edyburn (2010) poses is if teachers, administrators, and researchers would even recognize UDL if they saw it correctly occurring in the classroom. From the beginnings of UDL and transitioning traditional classroom instruction to universal accessibility, UDL was founded on three main ideas. These three ideas include advocacy, accommodation, and accessibility. These foundational concepts have formed UDL into what it is today. Since the abbreviation UDL caught on in society decades ago, there has been confusion linked to varied terms to describe UDL according to Sewell, Kennett, & Pugh (2022). These terms include "Universal Design for Education (UDE), Universal Design for Instruction (UDI), and Universal Instruction Design (UID)" (Sewell, Kennett, & Pugh, 2022, p. 5). Out of this uncertainty of the

abbreviation for UDL sprouts hesitancy for the concepts and theories tied to UDL. This conveys

why there has been such a struggle to identify UDL correctly. Confusion arises out of the

abbreviations and needs clarification of definitions and strategies involved. This level of

confusion is the opposition to UDL.

One of the biggest critiques of UDL is that proper training isn't given to teachers to best

implement this strategy into their classrooms. This is relevant to my case study and the

opposition of not every teacher being able to implement UDL into their classroom. If I had more

teachers within my district that were aware of these strategies, I could've implemented them into

my classroom sooner. Short workshops offered by the state do not allow the time for educators to

deeply understand the UDL framework (Sewell, Kennett, & Pugh, 2022). UDL is not

consistently taught to teachers in training and educational programs. These UDL methods need

to continue to integrate them into educational school systems, specifically within art classrooms.

This is where UDL needs to provide consistency across the country and through schools to

benefit all students. According to Sewell, Kennett, and Pugh (2022), sixty percent of teachers in

training are taught UDL principles, and out of the sixty percent only 24.1 percent were able to

effectively implement these practices into their teaching. It is that lack of consistency and

unification that holds back UDL from being as effective as it could be.

UDL has been said that it isolates certain students that are outside the boundaries of the

framework of UDL. Students with special needs fall outside these boundaries (Sewell, Kennett,

& Pugh, 2022). UDL insists that it should be the backbone of education. There is still research

that needs to be done on the universal part of UDL. It is unclear if UDL can best be used for

students on an *individualized education plan* (IEP). Instead of looking at UDL as *good teaching*

to avoid lack of being effective, teachers need to be intentional in their teaching and curriculum

(Edyburn, 2010). One of the concerns of the UDL is the use of technology. Technology offers flexibility in instruction and assessment. Lack of funds and the ability to provide access to technology can be a daunting task for some districts.

The purpose of deciphering the flaws is to identify the issue for the problem to be solved. UDL is an evolving teaching strategy that is continuing to improve. Just like any teacher that stops and reflects on their own teaching strategies. UDL needs to be reflected upon and analyzed to continue progress and best serve future students.

Reflection:

UDL "challenges us to re-conceptualize our traditional views of learning, teaching, and disability" (Hartmann, 2015, p.63). I have reviewed literature that establishes the importance of UDL and how it has been integrated into the curriculum, and subsequently developed a rationale for integrating into the art room. This literature has helped establish the answer to my behavior issues in the classroom is UDL.

Through my review of the literature, I have identified several benefits of UDL, but my study will consider the aspects of students with learning accommodations and modifications. I have explored practices in offering support to students with diverse needs and how UDL best accommodates them. A gap has been identified in our current education system without the use of UDL and students being less likely to reach their full achievement. This means that our education system might be flawed in the fact that we blame students for not learning when there may be a deficit in instruction by the teacher. Finally, I have researched the importance of UDL in the art classroom.

Through my review of literature, there needs to be the continual promotion of implementing this framework in every curriculum, and this study examines how these practices translate to the art room. As educators, we need to examine whether it is the student that isn't able to learn, or is the flaw in how the information is presented to the student. Teachers need to be asking themselves if they are doing enough to help their students. This help can come in the form of instructional options that teach to all diverse abilities and backgrounds of students. UDL is not only meant to support the needs of diverse and struggling students but will benefit the entire class.

Chapter 4

Discussion

I organized my discussion based on my research questions that focuses on why UDL is the answer for solving classroom management and learning strategies in the art classroom. It is also about evaluating three years' worth of integrating UDL in the art classroom. These questions ask how can the art education classroom provide multiple, and a variety of ways, for instruction and learning. This also includes expressing and communicating what the students have learned and create relevance, excitement, engagement for learning for all students. My goal is to consider how UDL translates into the art classroom.

I gathered my data at different points during my UDL integration. The classes I observed with my rubric were my high school art classes. This observance of classroom engagement involved 45 total students. When I first began using UDL in my classroom, three out of the six categories were only slightly engaged (Figure 2.2). The slightly engaged criterion according to the rubric was whole class engagement at 25% of the time. These three categories were listening attentively, following directions, and enthusiasm for projects. The criteria for participation in class discussions and turning work in on time were neutral at 50% class engagement (see Figure 4.1). Although attendance was mostly high at 75% of the time, other areas were lacking that needed to be improved. The chart (Figure 4.1) is meant to compare the results of the different areas of engagement from before UDL, year two, and year three.
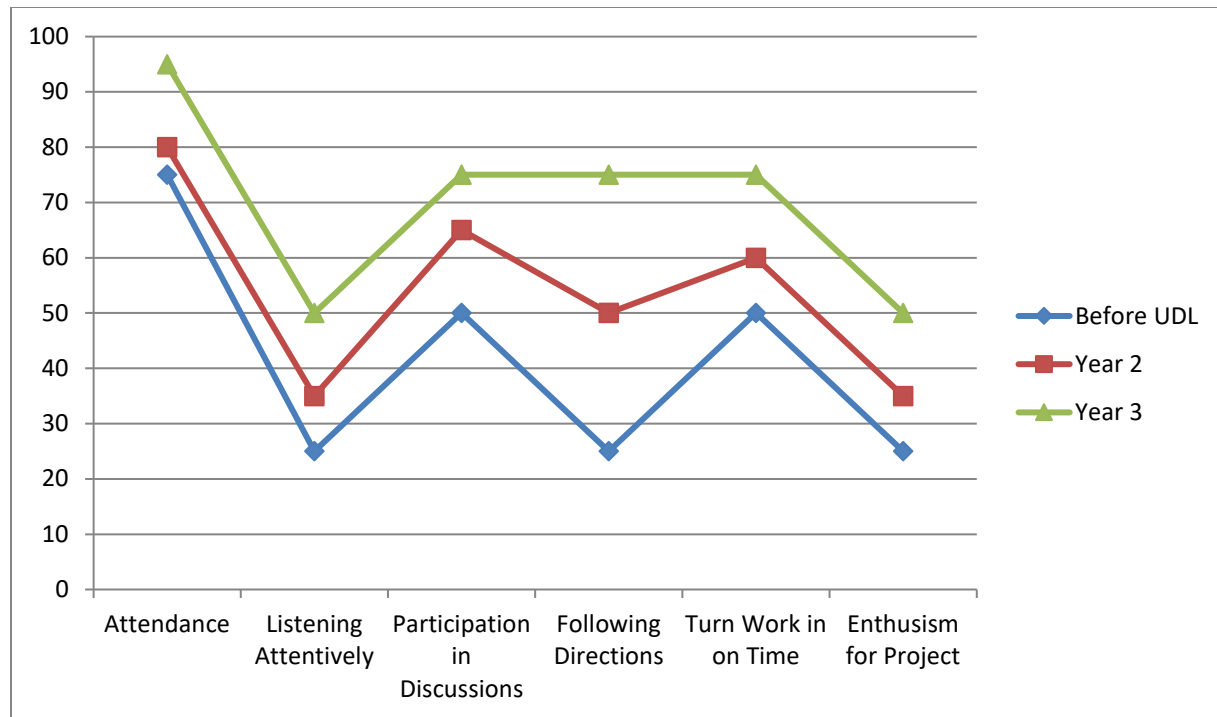
Figure 4.1 Chart for data on levels of engagement during a three year period.

Assessing UDL in the art classroom for instruction and learning for all students:

UDL is divided into three pillars of multiple means that delves into all areas of learning

for students. Offering different modes of instruction and learning is the multiple means of

representation in UDL; this is the *what* of learning. I have found that allowing options during

instruction for students brings more engagement to my students. Not only are they captivated by

the curriculum, but they are more likely to retain the information. This is relevant to my rubric in

Figure 4.1 according to the enthusiasm for the project. I know this from the results of the chart

that was assessed according to the past three years in my class (see figure 4. 1). The option of

multiple means of representation looks unique to each student based on their needs and interests.

For some students this includes: watching a video, reading a text, or to gather information based

on the objectives and standards that are the *driving force* for a lesson. Students are more ready to learn when their interests using technology are involved in the instruction of the material.

Since the beginning of my teaching career, six years ago, it has been an evolving process into integrating UDL into my classroom. It wasn't until the second year of teaching that I began to integrate more choice into my classroom. Even then I started with beginning steps that offered multiple means for instruction but all students were required the same assessment. For example, when teaching printmaking students created abstract patterns based on Islamic artwork. I had students watch videos about the history of Islamic art and write paragraphs about what they learned. Even though this is a differentiation than just lecturing, this is not a true example of UDL. All students were expected to have the same outcome. Each student was expected to write paragraphs, even the students that had special needs. This type of instruction didn't cater to all students and their learning needs.

UDL should offer more than one way to engage in the material. It wasn't until the last two years that I have implemented choice boards into my classroom. Recently my ceramics class was given the objective to create a ceramic fountain. For my students to truly understand the *what* for learning, I had each student fill out a tic-tac-toe choice board to fully dive into how a fountain works, the history behind it, as well as, sketching out ideas for a project. Each student had to complete three sections of this choice board. It is through these activities that I can assess what each student has learned and that they each have a full plan for their project they are about to start. This assessment was recorded according to the chart (see Figure 4.1) that shows the increase in engagement from my students.

Part of my research was analyzing what happened after implementing UDL into my classroom. One example of a material to blend UDL into the classroom setting was a tic-tac-toe

board for my ceramics students (See Figure 4.2). I offer nine different examples for research and

discovery for their slab fountain project. I collected the works from my students for their

projects. These different options include: a written paragraph (see figure 4.3), a Venn diagram

(see figure 4.4) an image reference page (see figure 4.5), a diagram of a fountain (see figure 4.6),

and a 3D model. In part of my discussion, I have included examples of my students' work to

capture the different options that were meant to give voice. These figures show how each student

was to able express their learning on the project according to their strengths and interests.

Students responded immediately with less groans about research and were excited at the options

provided.

Part of UDL is important to offer choice to each student whether through kinesthetically,

oral, and visual processes. It has taken me years to understand how to correctly integrate UDL

within my own art classroom. The different multiple means directly fills behavior gaps within

my classroom management by complying with different learning styles and interests. Students

began working on their research projects immediately becoming immediately engaged without

distracting others. Seeing this rise of reaction responds to the escalation of engagement according

to figure 4.1. This chart compares before UDL in my classroom till year three. This was under

the criteria of "Following directions" and "Engagement of Project" in the rubric on Figure 2.2.

Figure 4.2

Example worksheet of ceramic fountain tic-tac-toe board.

You must complete the center square plus two other boxes to complete the tic-tac-toe. Staple together all items and hand into the tray.

|		
Create a flow chart of the steps and drawing processes for creating a fountain	Create a reference page of 15 images of fountains that you could use for ideas.	Diagram and label all parts of a fountain
Write and summarize in a paragraph about how a fountain works	Sketch 3 different ideas for project.	Construct a 3D model
Make a list of 5 questions that you have concerning this topic and research and write down the answers.	Create a Venn diagram sketching out two famous fountains and writing about each one	Create a Timeline of the History of a Fountain

Figure 4.3

Student's example from choice option: paragraph about how a fountain works.

How *does* a water fountain work? The pump forces water upwards to create a falling effect into a lower basin. The pump uses water pressure and On the inside there is a clear flexible tube that forces water back into the reservoir to start the cycle over again. You can have more than two tiers, there can be as many as you want there to be.

Figure 4.4

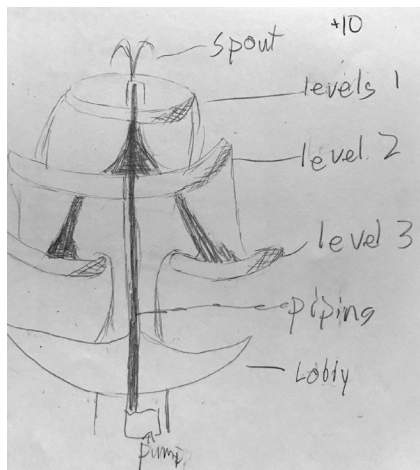*Student example from choice option: Venn diagram of famous fountains.*
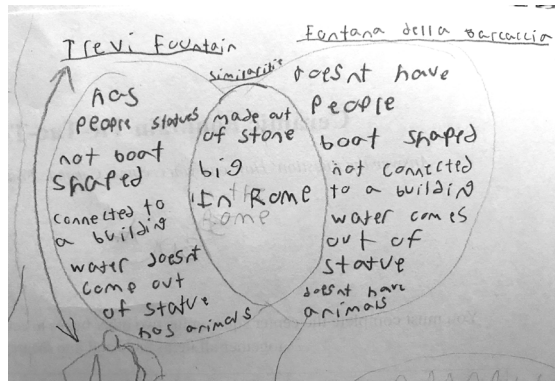
Figure 4.5

Student example of choice option: 15 images as references.

Figure 4.6

Student example of choice option: a diagram of how a fountain works.

Figure 4.7

Student example of choice option: construction of a 3D fountain model.

Assessing UDL in the art classroom for expression and communication for all students:

The different options for expression and communication are the multiple means of action and expression in UDL; this is the *how* of learning. All students are excited by choice options that give them the freedom to express their learning in their own way. The projects that I assign allow this choice of independence within my art classroom. Through options of media students have more options for assessment.

In my teaching, I offer a wide variety of options. This includes writing assignments, posters, blogs, artist statements to learn the art history portion and concepts. The data of implementing UDL is seen in the increase of engagement through the criteria seen on the chart on figure 4.1. Although students don't enjoy parts of the art history portion, it is part of the standards required within the curriculum. My photography class learned about famous

photographers from the previous century. I provided each student a list of photographers. It was

their choice on how they wanted to present them. I used a choice board using the multiple

intelligences to create interest. Through this flexibility each student was excited about their

project, and was an increase for the criteria of "Engagement in Project" according the growth in

years in Figure 4.1. UDL is adaptable to one of my special need's students with their

presentation being able to be modified. Students dove into their presentations discovering the

style and life of their chosen artist through a rap (See Figure 4.7), poster (See figure 4.8), written

paper, brochure, slideshow(See Figure 4.9), or timeline (See figure 4.10). I was able to assess

this engagement through the rubric in figure 2.2. The results of UDL were collected from before

implementing UDL till year three. Some students even chose to work with a partner to compare

and contrast their artist with another. This is a change to the lack of motivation before UDL

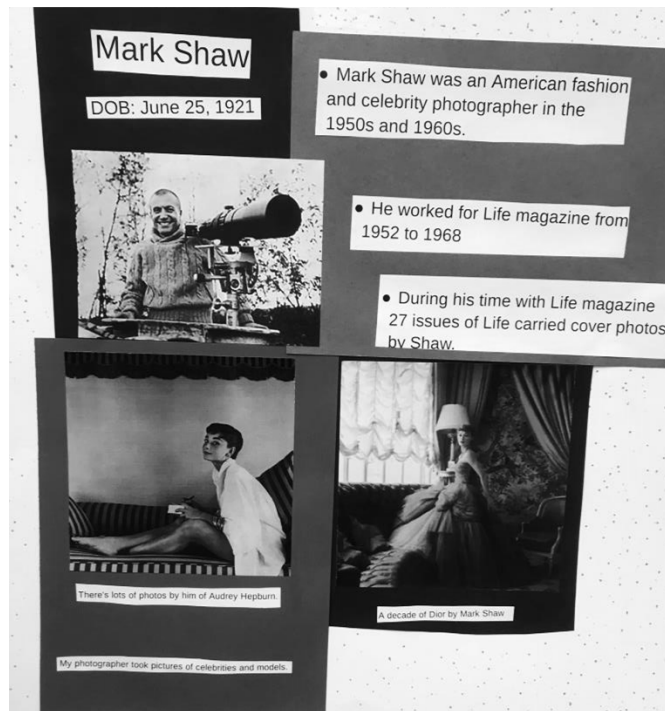where students were asked to work only by themselves.

Figure 4.8

Student example for an art history presentation about an artist: written rap.
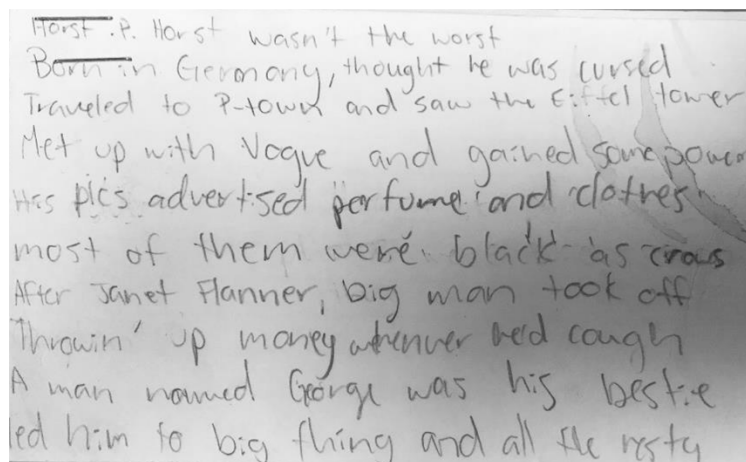
Figure 4.9

Student example for an art history presentation about an artist: a decorated poster.
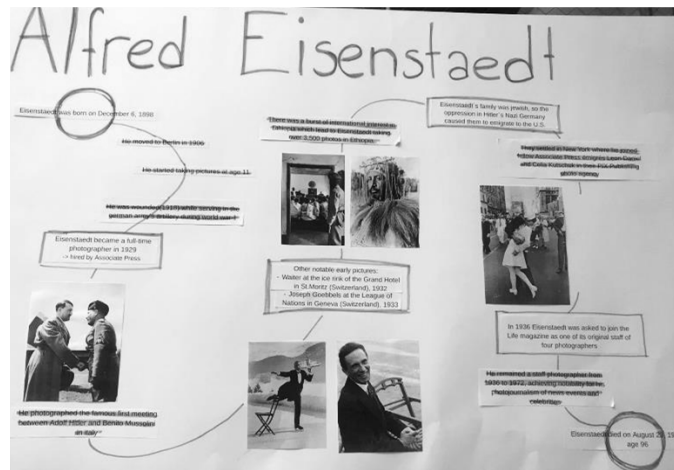
Figure 4.10

Student example for an art history presentation about an artist: Google slideshow of Mary Ellen

Mark's photography.

Figure 4.11

Student example for an art history presentation about an artist: timeline

The purpose of multiple means of expression and communication is to provide flexibility to each student. Each student was motivated to create their presentation using a variety of multiple means. This was assessed through observations and by the criteria for my rubric of engagement. Allowing choice through assessment and seeing the excitement of the students is why I sought out UDL to begin with as the answer to solve classroom issues. According to the chart (Figure 4.1), we can see the growth in engagement in this criterion. Students immediately started working on their project according to what fit their abilities and interests. UDL offers the flexibility of learning for students to succeed. Through the use of UDL students are encouraged to diversify assessments and projects. The choice that UDL offers within the art classroom caters to all students and their needs.

Assessing UDL in the art classroom for self-regulation and engagement for all students:

The final pillar of UDL is the multiple means of engagement; this is the *why* of learning. The question of *why* we are doing this project is the question that I hear again and again from my students. Satisfactory end products come from having self-driven students that understand the purpose of the project. The criteria used to classify engagement in Figure 2.2 shows attendance, listening attentively, participation in discussion, following directions, turning work in on time,

and enthusiasm for the project concerning whole class engagement for qualitative data

collection. Assessment was taken through observation before implementing UDL and three years

later after implementing UDL as seen in Figure 4.1. This is one of the ways that I collected data

through observation.

It is through the multiple means of engagement that help students build their knowledge

and implement it into their learning about what they want to investigate. The choice of

expression motivates learners through multiple means of engagement by allowing individual

choice and heightening self-regulation. Allowing students to become enthusiastic and make

further connections with the artwork. I assessed these according to the rubric of engagement with

the six criteria. In these instances of UDL, students collaborate with each other and learn through

emotional and physical connections. These collaborations still have learning as the focus for the

interaction. These learning approaches can not only assist when viewing artwork, but can be

applied to instruction and teaching processes in the art classroom. Being able to connect multiple

senses (sight, tough, hearing, smell, and taste) to a learning experience allows students to access,

build, and internalize knowledge. This meets the goals of UDL to be motivated, knowledgeable,

and goal-directed by students.

`   From what I have observed, students love the idea of choice and self-driven work. This

was seen according to increase in engagement over the past three years according to the data I

collected (Figure 4.1). This directly correlates with UDL and its intention of having each student

succeed. The purpose as a teacher in UDL is a guide or facilitator to help students reach their

goals. For the picture examples below, (See Figures 4.11 – 4.13) the students chose a country of

choice that they wanted to research for their project. After filling out information about the

country, students chose an image that reflected their country of choice. With the image they chose, each student used oil pastels to recreate the image as realistically as possible.

Figure 4.12

Rome.

Note. This oil pastel drawing was created in 2021 based on the scenery of Rome, Italy.

Figure 4.13

Window.

Note. This oil pastel was created in 2021 based on an image for a future trip of the student.

Figure 4.14

Night Lights.

Note. This oil pastel was created in 2021 by a landscape in his favorite country.

Data Collected through Direct Observation:

When I look back at the integration of UDL into my curriculum, I can see the positive effects that it has had upon my students. I can quantify this data using the chart that I created (see Figure 4.1) using the rubric in Figure 2.2. The rubric used to guide the criteria for engagement has been a direct way to gather this data for my case study. The categories of the rubric include attendance, listening attentively, participation in discussions, following directions, turning work in on time, and enthusiasm for the art project. I was able to collect data through these methods of engagement and classified this data into the chart to compare the responses of students in Figure 4.1. I was able to collect this data through direct observation of these different methods. It is usually easy to visually gauge if students are invested in the work they are doing. Students that are invested are excited to come to class and work hard and thoughtfully on their projects. The assignment is not so much a task to complain about, but an opportunity to strengthen their set of skills and invest time into something they care about.

I surveyed my classes through visual observations again three years after integrating

UDL into my classes. According to my chart, during the third year of implementing UDL the

criterion of attendance rose to 95% of the time. The other criteria of the engagement rubric

improved with the implementation of UDL in the classroom. Listening attentively, participation

in discussions, and following directions went up from 25% of the class to 50% of the class. With

implementing choice through UDL, enthusiasm for projects, listening attentively, and

participation in discussions were mostly engaged according to Figure 4.1. Participation in

discussions was strongly engaged motivated by excitement for learning. Although I haven't

reached my goal of classes being strongly engaged in every method, I know the different

strategies to continue to implement into my classroom to reach whole class engagement.

Reflection:

This case study was used to assess the importance of allowing choice and multiple means

in every aspect of an art lesson. An easy way to integrate UDL into an art lesson is through the

assessment portion of the lesson. But the data collected through these past three years has

revealed to me the value of multiple means in each form of the representation and is applicable

to see according to the chart on Figure 4.1. Seeing the excitement of the students with the variety

of multiple means is why I integrated UDL into my art classroom. Even though it takes more

upfront work for a teacher, the results and production of the students is worth it. The goal of

UDL is for students to be more successful and be able to reach their full potential, which was

revealed again for me through this discussion.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

A pivotal point within my teaching career was choosing UDL as an answer to solve behavior issues within my art classroom. UDL accomplished what I hoped it would. Students' needs weren't being met with limited individualized learning and low motivation to ingrain concepts and the material being taught. Something needed to change to help myself and my students. This is when I rediscovered UDL within my classroom to apply it into my art curriculum. Students are more excited to come into my classroom since implementing UDL and to work on their projects because they are self-motivated. UDL is the solution for many issues within our education that should be a necessary component in every classroom. UDL became an important aspect in my curriculum and in art education to increase opportunities for academic improvement and engagement for all students. This has been a valuable asset to my teaching and to assist each of my students.

Not every student responds as positively to the same instruction and modes of expression. That is why it is so important to offer multiple means of learning through UDL concerning instruction, activities, and assessment. It is through my findings and research analyzed that I have come to the conclusion that students need multiple means of learning in every area of the lesson. Offering flexibility and options in instruction, assessment, and through representation can have momentous positive effects for the students. UDL is the answer for the problems that were occurring in my class daily. UDL is broken down into three categories with multiple means of for instruction and learning, expression and communication, and excitement and engagement in learning.

To truly understand my findings of my case study, we need to contemplate my timeline. I have been learning to better wholly embrace UDL's multiple means of instruction in my classroom. Although using diverse instruction, I didn't offer multiple choices for students for instruction that helped students learn or best suit their needs. Now my UDL integration has evolved to fit each student's specific needs. In my classroom, I focus on teaching content through multiple means of representation by using videos, PowerPoints, guest lecturers, along with handouts. I provide choice to my students in the project they choose to target their interests and form a creative subject matter. The multiple means I use for teaching Art History and processes used within the art classroom. Students display what they have learned through a choice board including creating a pamphlet, composing a song, making a poster, writing a paper, or designing a slide show. UDL has its place in the art classroom, along with every other classroom.

As educators, our goal should be to help every student. This opportunity is found through multiple representations in UDL. My job is to encourage academic growth and learning for my individual students, specifically in the art classroom. It can be discouraging at times when students aren't engaged in the curriculum being taught. In art education this includes Art History, planning processes for projects, and demonstrations of techniques. Having students engaged and motivated in their learning increases academic success. This is where UDL fills the gaps in education where it didn't intentionally mean to fill. UDL's purpose was to a variety of methods to create equal opportunities for learning. Not only did UDL fulfill this issue, but classroom management and motivation issues that were occurring within my art classroom. Although these reasons weren't the original purpose for UDL, positive behavior in the classroom has been another result of its integration. UDL is successful not only for students but also in classroom

management for my art classroom. UDL and its positive effects of integrating it into the art

educational field was the solution to my problem. I studied UDL to better enhance and

implement flexible instruction in my classroom. This has been an important aspect in my

teaching to increase opportunities for academic improvement for each student.

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