

2018 PDIG Final Report: UDL at Greater Gatineau

Project Description:

The UDL team at Greater Gatineau prepared pedagogical support for teachers by delivering PD, creating UDL units and lesson plans and as well as creating a website to share our knowledge and journey. In addition, we started an ideas café to promote the sharing of UDL activities to encourage teachers to try them in their classroom.

To further reinforce the UDL approach, members of the team also co-taught the lessons they created to support each other, and reflect on their effectiveness to improve student inclusion and engagement. Other members of the Greater Gatineau staff shared their activities and lessons which we included on our website.

The project had both successes and challenges. The UDL team met regularly to discuss the scope of the project and to plan lessons and PD. Members were given release time to co-teach and write up the lessons and units. Team members collaborated as much as possible and effectively managed the tasks of the project as they were assigned. However, at times, it was challenging coming to a consensus as there were a variety of ideas about how to carry out the project. Even with some challenges, the UDL team demonstrated enthusiasm and was keen to implement UDL in their classrooms. During PD, other members of the staff were attentive and showed an understanding of UDL. However, implementing UDL as a school was a challenge to get everyone on board. With any change, there is resistance. In our school, some colleagues showed resistance because of the following factors: changing their teaching, more work/lack of time, a similar concept recycled, UDL is not completely understood, and adapting to a different teaching approach.

This PDIG experience has allowed our team opportunities to have planning time to collaborate ideas and work together to create UDL units incorporating multiple intelligences and promote student choice. It also has provided us with opportunities to push our teaching and learning outside of our comfort zone to create a variety of learning activities and try different teaching styles. When applying UDL in our classrooms we noticed students were more engaged. Students with different learning styles could express their strengths and show their learning in different ways.

Synthesis of Journal:

Our journey began with creating a UDL PowerPoint to present to Chelsea school to share our knowledge and experience. This PowerPoint was based on Jennifer Katz'

book called "Teaching to Diversity". We defined UDL and honed its benefits to promote inclusion in the classroom and student engagement.

We then presented a similar PowerPoint to our school to reiterate the importance of UDL for multiple means of presenting, engaging and demonstrating learning. It was also necessary to review the concept of UDL and professionally discuss any misconceptions about UDL within our school (such as UDL is buying/offering alternative seating and furniture in the classroom). During this presentation, staff collaborated in groups and used a multiple intelligences planning sheet to brainstorm activities to use and try in their classroom.

Next we had a PD on implementing Energy Stations in the school. The purpose of this program provides energy breaks (when needed) for students throughout the day to improve student well-being, concentration, and promote self-regulation skills. It also develops students' trust and responsibility skills. During this PD, we reviewed the various energy stations available in the school and explained the instructions. Immediately, there were some concerns about the noise level of students using the stations, causing a disruption to classrooms. Also, some felt that students wouldn't be able to handle choosing any station around the school. We resolved these concerns by designating a set station for specific classrooms, the materials at the stations would be rotated and asking teachers to report noisy students to their homeroom teacher.

After that, we created a Greater Gatineau UDL website with the following categories: what is UDL, why it is important, sharing UDL lessons in our school and energy stations. We also took this opportunity to take pictures of students involved in UDL activities and interviewed students for feedback regarding the energy stations.

Then, we took a day to begin planning a UDL unit for Grade 5: Loyalist Settlements in Lower Canada. We used backwards design looking at the QEP to look at social studies and science outcomes as a starting point to come up with a theme. We decided to have one group continue working on the above unit while the other started a new unit for grade 4 integrating all subjects.

Next, we began planning our grade 4 unit. Again we used backwards design, using the QEP science and social study curriculum outcomes. Our unit theme was called: Building a New Canada. We looked at math, science, social studies, art, and ethics to devise mini lessons plans leading to the culminating task of the unit. We took another 3 days to continue working on planning out and finishing the grade 4 unit. This unit is uploaded on our UDL website.

The other group continued planning the UDL Grade 5 unit and completed the planning the culminating task: creating an artifact in a museum. In this culminating task, students were given a choice to create a model, diorama, slideshow, interactive and then complete a written component explaining the chosen exhibit.

Then some of the UDL members worked together to update our UDL website. We uploaded the grade 4 unit and grade 5 units.

Next, we created another mini UDL unit on Alliteration: A-Z. This poetry unit focused on evaluating word choice and creates an alliterative poem using choice of presentation such as a poster drawn or on a computer, skit diorama or rap.

Finally, two teachers collaborated together to co-teach a UDL coding unit in grade 1. The students were introduced to code using a STEM kit to create a pathway with foam blocks and practiced giving verbal instructions in order to complete the pathway successfully. Next students used coding cards to help physically move their partner successfully along the outlined path.

How goals of the project were met

Creating UDL lessons	Delivering PD and Ideas Café	Co-teaching	Creating website	Team Meetings
<p>The members of the team met this goal by creating and delivering lessons in their classroom. The lessons will be shared with other members of the staff. Lessons and units created were grade 5 social studies, grade 4 social studies, grade 4 poetry, grade 1 math, kindergarten literacy, grade 4 math</p>	<p>PD presentation to Chelsea school about UDL. The same presentation was given to Greater Gatineau staff.</p> <p>PD on energy stations</p> <p>PD with 4 guided centers: 1)Tableau and literacy 2)Coding in the classroom 3) Creating drawings-comics to inspire writing 4)Fraction kits</p> <p>PD sharing grade 5 unit, grade 1 lesson and grade 4 unit</p>	<p>The grade 1 math lesson was co-taught but that was the only one. We will be exploring more possibilities to co-teach lessons as the same year level and across year levels.</p>	<p>A website was created to showcase the successful implementation of UDL at our school and to share lessons and units created.</p>	<p>The UDL team met regularly to discuss progress and next steps.</p>

Project outcome

The members of the UDL team gained a deeper understanding of the UDL framework especially improving student inclusion and engagement. Lessons were created keeping in mind multiple intelligences and bloom's taxonomy, which helped the participating teachers reflect about their own teaching practices and areas of growth. As well, 2 lessons units were created using Jennifer Katz's approach of integration. One of the members of our team was asked to co-teach a UDL lesson and at first was reluctant, but grateful that she did after seeing the students included and engaged in learning. The students quickly grasped the concept of making a code to move a student along a created path. Lessons and unit plans created are on our website.

Reinvestment

The UDL team at Greater Gatineau created many resources including lesson plans, units, and activities. All of the resources created were in line with the UDL framework ensuring student inclusivity and engagement. The resources were and will be shared with the Greater Gatineau staff through PD and our website. The resources can be of benefit as they promote best teaching practices following the UDL framework. Great thought was put into ensuring the lessons and units included multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy. The resources have been tried in the classrooms and were successful.

This project is a great stepping stone for our staff to further explore and apply the UDL framework in our classrooms. Next year, the grade 5 teachers plan on incorporating their UDL unit on Loyalist settlements in Lower Canada into their long range plans. They are also planning to make changes by integrating the theme into more subjects following Jennifer Katz's model. Finally, there are grade 4 teachers that are excited to implement the UDL unit: Building a New Canada into their classroom. Meanwhile, members of the UDL team will guide these teachers and support them as they execute this task next year.

Our UDL website is:

<https://sites.google.com/s/1jBSoURKAuApr1k0xUHY0 - MXCT51YEj/edit?authuser=0>