Project 1: UDL Before and After

Implementation in the World Languages Classroom

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This project has been designed in an effort to integrate the concepts related to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework in the World Languages Classroom. In essence, UDL eliminates the concept of the “one-size-fits-all-model” and emphasizes the importance of removing learning barriers in order to meet the needs of all learners. Subsequently, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has developed “Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century” to suggest curricular experiences needed to enable the students to achieve the standards. In addition, these goals must be used in conjunction with state and local standards and curriculum frameworks (ACTFL, 2015).

For the purposes of this assignment, a language lesson will be developed which combines the UDL framework, the ACTFL guidelines and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) in World Languages. The NJCCCS have been selected since the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in World Languages have not been adopted at this time. According to the New Jersey Department of Education (2015), “All students will be able to use a world language in addition to English to engage in meaningful conversation, to understand and interpret spoken and written language, and to present information, concepts, and ideas, while also gaining an understanding of the perspectives of other cultures.” The following components will describe the lesson objective, the ACTFL goal and the standard being addressed.

**Lesson Objective:** Students will be able to give and take orders from a restaurant menu.

**ACTFL: Goal 1.1 Communication:** Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions and exchange opinions.

**NJCCCS: 7.1.IL.B.2:** Students will be able to give and follow a series of oral and written directions, commands, and requests for participating in age- and level-appropriate classroom and cultural activities.

Prior to UDL, a traditional lesson would consist of a print-based media such as worksheets related to items of food in which students would record the responses to the questions with paper and pencil. It might also consist of a low-level activity such as matching the picture of a food to the actual vocabulary word. Additionally, the focus of communication would generally center on memorizing a dialogue between the waiter/waitress and the customer in a restaurant.

After applying *Guideline 5* as one of the guiding UDL principles on second language acquisition, ordering food from a restaurant, would look quite differently than the typical traditional setting. By providing options for expressions and communication, students can use the target language to communicate by using multiple media such as digital storytelling, illustrations, and video presentations which can be developed by combining voice, music and images. Vimeo is one of the software programs which could facilitate this project. Interactive web tools such as ToonDoo can incorporate the use of comic strips to create a restaurant scene using the target vocabulary while expressing ideas and promoting a collaborative project.

Another guiding principle would be *Guideline 1* which emphasizes the need to provide options for perception. In other words, key information should be perceptible to all learners and provided through different modalities (UDL, 2011). Text to speech generators such as Voki have the capability of creating avatars that can be used in a language classroom to engage students in conversations while providing options for visual information. This tool addresses the various modalities through vision, hearing and touch and can be incorporated as part of the role-playing scenario in a Spanish restaurant. In addition, since the software enables the customization of the look and sound of the avatars it ultimately increases student engagement as addressed in *Guideline 7*.

Using an online Spanish dictionary with visual images and text to speech experiences will afford the opportunity to pre-teach vocabulary and symbols in order for the students to identify the different types of food and beverages associated with the restaurant lesson which are some of the essential elements of *Guideline 2*. Using a Spanish dictionary with the ability to add or remove the caption and incorporating features to slow down or accelerate the rate of speech will also provide options for language learning.

Student success can be assessed authentically by incorporating the principles of UDL. In other words, a paper and pencil activity on ordering food from a menu in a Spanish restaurant can literally jump off the page by creating student-generated videos and comic strips with the same goals in mind. Learning goals can be assessed using a project-based rubric specific to the learning activity. By empowering students with choice and providing them with a variety of instructional tools to reduce the barrier to learning the possibilities are endless.

References

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