

ACTAS

I Congreso Internacional de Enseñanza de Inglés en Centros Educativos



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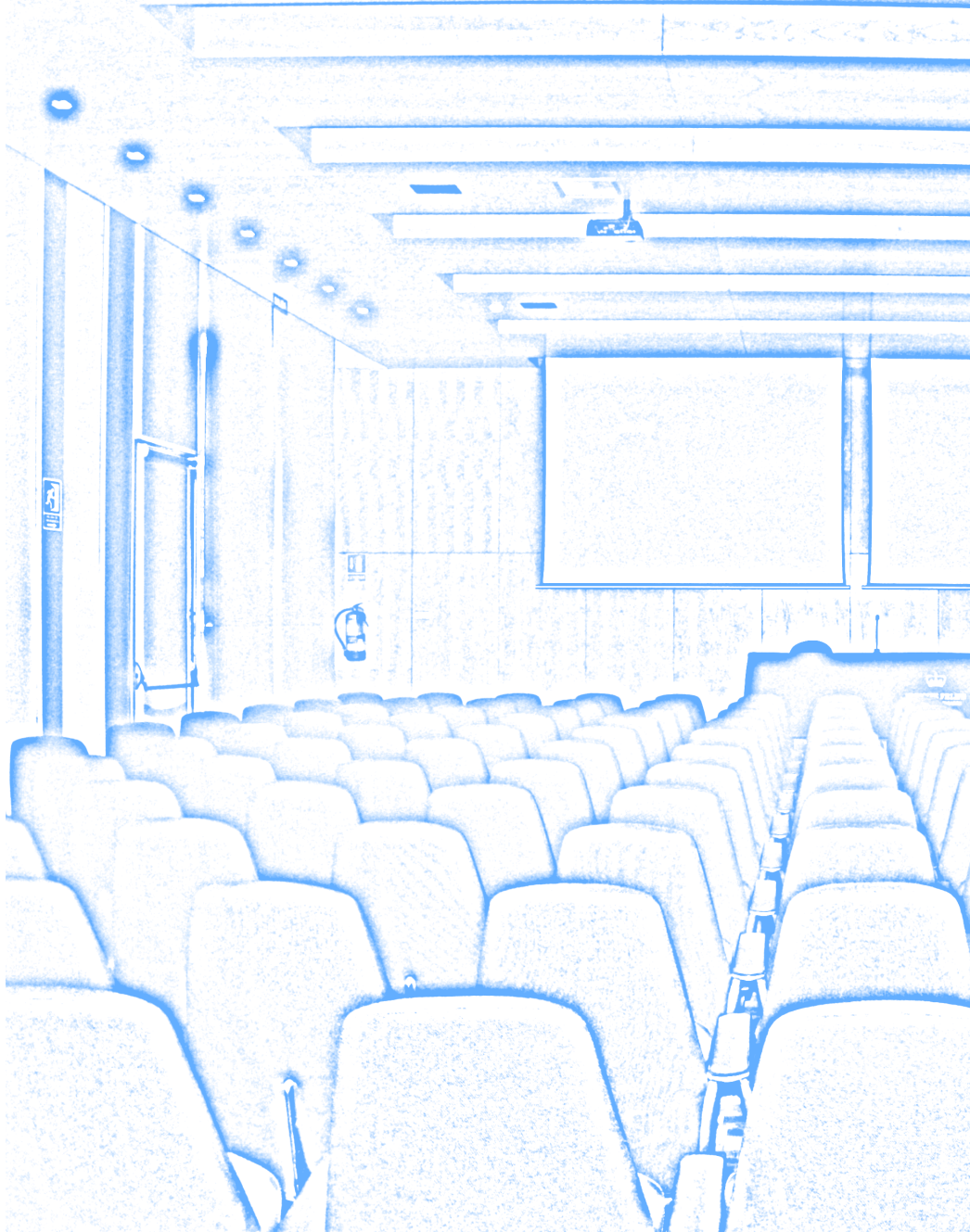


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**Actas del I Congreso Internacional de
Enseñanza de Inglés en Centros Educativos**

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(Coordinadores)



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Universal Design for Learning Adapted to C1

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Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was an architectural inspiration devised by Ronald Mace in 1963. It was later adapted by a group of nurses who founded the Center for Applied Science and Technology (CAST) to an educational framework. UDL is an approach to curriculum design which aspires to provide all learners no matter what their ability, disability, age, gender, or cultural and linguistic background may be with equal access to education regardless of the level. It is a blueprint for designing strategies, materials, assessments, and tools to reach and teach students with diverse needs. The author's first encounter with UDL was at Prince Sultan University College for Women. Once the teaching scenario changed she wanted to test the UDL blueprint in the new environment. This paper is a succinct delivery of how UDL was adapted together with the restrictions and limitations she came across during the process.

Key words:

approach, learning, teaching, methodology, UDL

El Diseño Universal de Aprendizaje (DUA) fue una inspiración arquitectónica diseñada por Ronald Mace en 1963. Más tarde fue adaptado por un grupo de enfermeros que fundaron el Centro de Ciencia Aplicada y Tecnología (CAST) al marco educativo. EL DUA es una aproximación al diseño curricular que aspira a dotar a todo aprendiz sea cual fuere su habilidad, discapacidad, edad, género o raíces culturales o lingüísticas dotándoles de acceso equitativo a la educación sea cual fuere su nivel. Es un plano para diseñar estrategias, materiales, evaluación y herramientas para alcanzar y enseñar al alumnado con necesidades diversas. El primer contacto de la autora fue en la Facultad Femenina de la Universidad Príncipe Sultán. Una vez que cambió de escenario, quiso probar el marco DUA en un ambiente nuevo. Este artículo es un resumen de cómo el DUA fue adaptado, así como las restricciones y limitaciones que se encontró durante el proceso.

Palabras clave:

enfoque, aprendizaje, enseñanza, metodología, DUA

"Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."

(Mace, 1996).

Background

The Centre for Applied Science and Technology provides three principles for universal design for learning although a fourth principle was added in 2009:

a) Multiple Means of Representation provides options for perception, language, mathematical expressions and symbols, and comprehension. When following this principle, instructors should offer ways of customizing the display of information as well as alternatives for auditory and visual information. They should clarify not only vocabulary and symbols, but also syntax and structure. They should support decoding of text, mathematical notation and symbols. They should also promote understanding across languages.

b) Multiple Means for Action and Expression offers options for physical action, for expression and communication, and for executive functions. Instructors catering for this principle will need to vary the methods for response and navigation. They will need to optimize access to tools and assistive technologies. They will use multiple media for communication as well as multiple tools for construction and composition. They will need

to build fluencies with scaffolded levels of support for practice and performance. This principle will guide appropriate goal-setting; it will support planning and strategy development; it will facilitate managing information and resources as well as enhance the capacity for monitoring progress.

c) Multiple Means of Engagement was the third core principle until 2009. It provides options for recruiting interest, sustaining effort and persistence alongside options for self-regulation. To cater adequately for this principle, instructors will optimize individual choice and autonomy. They will optimize relevance, value and authenticity. They will minimize threats and distractions. The salience of goals and objectives will be heightened combined with varied demands and resources in order to optimize challenge. Instructors will foster collaboration and community together with increased mastery-oriented feedback. Instructors need to promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation while facilitating personal coping skills and strategies in order to develop self-assessment and reflection.

d) Multiple Means of Assessment was incorporated in 2009 by the Rhode Island UDL Workgroup. They are a group of educators from colleges and schools in Rhode Island (USA) who received training in universal design for learning from the Centre of Applied Science and Technology for two years (2004-2006). They soon became aware of teachers' needs for more specific checklist components relating to assessment. Rather than having assessment issues imbedded within the three principles described above, they wanted to provide clearer guidance on how to apply variation and variables in the steps and process of assessment. Reacting to these needs, they modified and expanded the original checklist to include more explicit, more user-friendly terminology; thus, devising this fourth section which focuses specifically on assessment and the different options for varying the assessment process in order to address the needs of a diverse population of students. They came up with five key areas of variation to design a comprehensive, accessible assessment of student understanding: 1) Methods; 2) Formats; 3) Scope, range and level; 4) Product and outcome, and 5) Feedback.

IV. Use multiple means of assessment of student understanding	
<i>Does the teacher use multiple and ongoing assessments to adjust instruction and evaluate student learning. (All Networks)</i>	
10. Assessment for outcome determination (student understanding)	
10.1 Options for methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrete vs elaborative response (ie multiple choice vs essay). varied time allowance individualized vs group or peer-supported. location varies w/in the curriculum, embedding assessment opportunities, etc.
10.2 Options for formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual information: photographs, pictures, picture-symbols, written, computer text, computer text-to-speech, video, kinesthetic supports (w low-tech), etc. Auditory information: Oral, technology-supported (taped, computer speech-to-text, voiced word processing, kinesthetic supports (w low-tech), etc.
10.3 Options for scope/range/level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice in number of items, type of items Choice in focus. Deconstructs grade-level expectations. Connects across grade levels Tiered assessments - from "big idea"(all learners) to complex details (some learners) Multiple levels of understanding - concrete through synthesis, etc.
10.4 Options for product & outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider formative vs summative assessment. Consider authentic assessments with "real-world" products. Include differentiated products (e.g. plays, video productions, essays, point-of-view "rafts", "tic-tac-toes", debates, artistic productions, student-driven assessments, etc.)
10.5 Options for feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher: acknowledgement, probing, challenging questions, positive feedback, detained response, real-time vs delayed, etc. Student: journals, writing, prompts, reflection, peer feedback, self-evaluation, self-awareness, etc.

Figure 1. The full assessment section of the RI modified UDL Educator Checklist

The aforementioned checklist is self-explanatory and contains a detailed itemized list of the assessment values that instructors should take into account when providing student assessment.

With all of this information in mind, coupled with the C1 Andalusian syllabus, *C1cmedegginton* the C1 website serving as the instructional tool for two C1 2015-2016 courses at the government-owned language school in Málaga (Spain) was created.

Experience for C1 at the Language School in Málaga (EOI Málaga)

The school year started on September 16th, 2015. The first two weeks were dedicated to needs analysis of students taking the two courses (ING6L09 and ING6L11A). This needs analysis was carried out by having students take the June C1 exam (two Reading texts; two Listening tasks; two Writing tasks and two Speaking tasks) elaborated by the Andalusian government. The exam was carried out under strict exam conditions and subsequently corrected in detail.

Students were also asked to record a text and send it to the teacher. The text contained a variety of items which present difficulties to Spanish learners of English (-ed endings; pronunciation of long and short vowels, consonant clusters, stress, rhythm and intonation). Students were also given feedback on their performance.

Taking all of this previous information into account, the instructor developed an adapted version of the course syllabus and started creating materials which were uploaded to the class website.

Additional instruction tools that are used include: Pinterest, Class blog, Google drive, Whatsapp, Twitter and Facebook, and of course, email.

Each of the above mentioned tools serves a purpose. C1cmedegginton assembles the educational process while Pinterest provides ample lexical and structural information. The class blog serves as a communicative outlet for students to express their opinions and write creatively and freely. The google drive is a means of sharing documental information. Twitter offers the possibility of immediate summarized comments while Facebook offers photographs and narrative possibilities. Whatsapp and email are used as communicative tools from the students to the teacher and vice versa as well as a collaborative tool in which students share immediate information amongst themselves.

Students were also offered three projects over the school year. The first project was on immigration, refugees and war. Students were to download or purchase from the photocopier a copy of three extracts from *Goodnight Children Everywhere: Memories of Evacuation in World War II* by P. Schweitzer. They were to read the extracts over the Christmas holiday and summarize each one into about 450 to 500 words maximum. They were then to choose the story they liked best to perform in class taking the personality of the character they had chosen. The class was to vote on who carried out the best performance. The chosen students would then enter a school pool which would end in a selection of students performing their parts at the workshop where Ms. Schweitzer would be present.

The second project was on culture. Students were to choose a place in the world where English is an official language. They could not choose the UK or the United States. They were to prepare a 5-10 minute presentation on the place. They could choose their support for the presentation: pictures, a poster, a glogster, a ppt or simply a short speech. They were to include aspects such as geography, political organization, history, the people, beliefs, etc. They could also include something that surprised them or that they found out which they did not know before-hand.

The third project was on subject matter. A C1 learner is to reach "effective operational proficiency" in both their area of expertise and areas in which they do not know so there are some topics that we like more than others. Generally speaking, the topics we like are easily remembered. We take our time with them so they linger in our mind. This project was to be a demanding one as students were asked to look for a topic that they not only did not like but also, one that they knew little or nothing about. They were asked to find a reading (modeled on the texts they had worked with in class - about 900 words, including challenging vocabulary, expressions, etc. -) from a variety of sources and genres (newspapers, magazines, journals; articles, narratives, reports, reviews and so on). They were to create a reading card for the text based on the following model:

Text title	
Vocabulary area	
Verb tense variety	
Expressions	
Phrasal verbs	
Collocations	
Word formation	
Idioms	
Other interesting/relevant information	

The next step was to create a five-minute presentation for the class including as much of the new C1 level language as possible.

The final step was to write an essay on the topic as including the C1 level language.

Restrictions and Limitations

On going over the UDL principles and using them as a checklist to scrutinize their accomplishment or lack thereof, the author discovered that most of the principles and subprinciples had been catered for.

Using technological devices and tools greatly aided this achievement. Nonetheless, students were not only allowed the technological devices and tools, but also more traditional tools and methods because there were students who preferred to collect the modules from the photocopier rather than download them, print them out or use their tablet. There were also students who preferred email over Whatsapp.

Conversely, the area that was most lacking was precisely assessment. This was not for lack of diversity or opportunity, but due to the fact that students will be sitting for a universal level exam which will be supplied for the whole of the Andalusian region by the Andalusian government, much the same as the Cambridge or Trinity exams.

This fact makes tiered assessment at the end of the school year virtually impossible as no matter what grades they got throughout the year, their final grade, thus, whether or not the level is accomplished will depend entirely on the mark obtained on that exam.

Despite this circumstance, during the course of the school year, students carried out one official (whole school) mock exam as preparation for the final in January 2016. They were also provided with several websites from other regions in Spain which offer C1 exams in order to self-assess their progress.

Finally, another limitation was the fact that the website did not provide audio assistance. To partially overcome this, the instructor recommended Read Speaker (<http://www.readspeaker.com/voice-demo/>) via which the student may copy and paste under 250 words and have them read out. Although cumbersome, it did provide useful as students could listen to different English accents.

Conclusions

This second scenario for UDL practice has provided new perspectives and insights. The possibilities that varied and flexible ways to:

- a) Present or access information, concepts, and ideas (the “what” of learning);
- b) Plan and execute learning tasks (the “how” of learning);
- c) Get engaged—and stay engaged—in learning (the “why” of learning);

offer; are best carried out thanks to the variety of technological tools that the instructor renders and that the students may incorporate into their learning process.

Not only is instruction more motivating, creative and exciting, but also it encourages life-long learning, self-learning and self-assessment; not to mention that it aids more durable academic retention of the information and knowledge acquired.

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