

“ALL IN!”

Using Data Strategically for Systemic UDL Implementation

Kimberly Schiefelbein

District UDL Facilitator,
Oconomowoc Area School District
Oconomowoc, WI
schiefek@oasd.org

John Flannery

Director of
Curriculum/Instruction, Oconomowoc
Area School District
Oconomowoc, WI
flannerj@oasd.org

Shannon McCaffery

Greenland Elementary Principal,
Oconomowoc Area School District
Oconomowoc, WI
mccaffes@oasd.org

Jason Curtis

Nature Hill Intermediate Principal,
Oconomowoc Area School District
Oconomowoc, WI
curtisj@oasd.org



Derick Kiger

Director of Assessment,
Oconomowoc Area School District
Oconomowoc, WI
kigerd@oasd.org

ABSTRACT

Oconomowoc Area School District, Oconomowoc, WI, is in our 5th year of UDL Implementation. Consuming and interpreting data has helped us become more streamlined and focused when implementing UDL district wide. From the district level, to classrooms, to students, data and UDL help teachers address learner variability more strategically. A common, shared vision among stakeholders is important throughout implementation. This paper focuses on how data and UDL are interwoven in our District Strategic Direction, Building level Goals, School Wide Learning Outcomes/Professional Growth Plans, and Student-Centered planning.

INTRODUCTION

A powerful quote by Stephen Few (www.forbes.com), information and technology innovator, states, “Numbers have an important story to tell. They rely on you to give them a clear and convincing voice.” Our students all have important stories to tell and utilizing their data can help us bring their stories to life. Using data to inform decisions from the district to the classroom level, is now a cultural norm in Oconomowoc Area School District. As we strive to develop expert learners, we realize that every student is highly variable and that every student has a unique story worth telling. Data is a crucial piece of understanding our students’ stories. From our strategic perspective at the district level, to building level goals, to student centered planning, the marriage of UDL and data is helping us to better understand our students’ variability and their stories.

DISTRICT LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

In the Oconomowoc Area School District, the Strategic Plan is a driving force that keeps us centered on the work of empowering a community of learners and leaders. DuFour and Eaker (1998) describe the critical components of a professional learning community: participants develop a shared mission, vision, and values; they engage in collective inquiry. From the district level to the classroom, everyone is part of Oconomowoc Area School District’s Professional Learning Community.

Strategic Plan

Mission: Empower a community of learners and leaders.

Vision: To be an unrivaled learning community, seeking wisdom, honoring the past, and shaping the future.

Core Values: Perseverance, trust, integrity, responsibility, acceptance, diversity, innovation, collaboration, respect, safety, relationships, opportunity, quality, inclusion, and learning.

Strategic Directions Focus

Innovative instructional programs

Continuous improvement in academic performance

FOUR PILLARS OF INSTRUCTION MODEL

The Four Pillars of Instruction consists of four crucial components to district level implementation. See Figure 1.

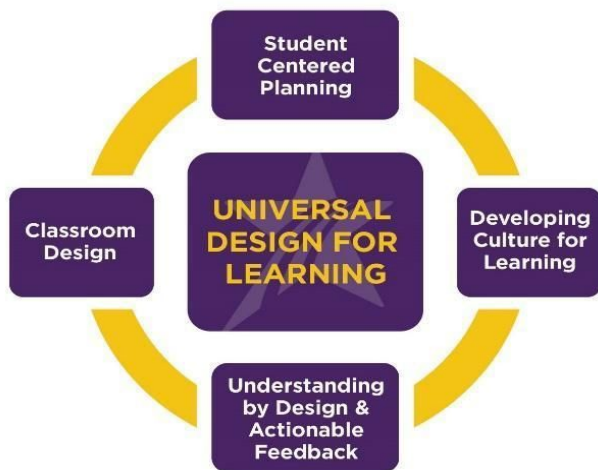


Figure 1. Four Pillars of Instruction Model

Student Centered Planning

Student centered planning focuses on knowing our learners, in addition to content and task development. Data systems like eduClimber, MAP, Skyward, formative assessments, and collaborative planning all contribute to knowing our learners in a deeper way.

Developing a Culture for Learning

In OASD it is important that **every** learner and leader views him/herself as a successful, contributing member of the educational experience. We strongly believe fostering a growth mindset in our staff and students helps us all to continuously learn and grow together. Focusing on engagement of learning and building expert learners is helping to support our mission of empowering a community of learners and leaders.

Understanding by Design and Actionable Feedback

Identifying what we want our students to know and be able to do and the assessment measures for demonstrating that knowledge, helps us to better design instruction to meet the needs of varied learners. Developing common expectations around learning intentions and success criteria, response to actionable feedback, and using qualitative/quantitative information from our data systems, we are better able to understand and plan instruction for every student. All are key components of building collective capacity.

Classroom Design: Flexible Learning Spaces (FLS)

The Oconomowoc Area School District implemented Flexible Learning Spaces (FLS) at upper elementary grade levels beginning in 2014-15 (See Figure 2). The innovative instructional spaces are conceptualized to improve achievement by facilitating use of Universal Design for Learning principles within flexible and technology-rich classrooms. As a part of the conceptual model, teachers work together to plan, teach, and assess student learning. Regular review of student performance data is a focal point of teacher collaboration.

Analysis of standardized test data (Measures of Academic Progress or MAP) since FLS implementation, along with UDL principles, indicates an achievement advantage, on average, for students learning in flexible spaces compared to the national and district comparison groups. FLS achievement benefits are largest for students with economic disadvantages. See Figure 3. (See also Appendix A for Academic Achievement Growth Charts).

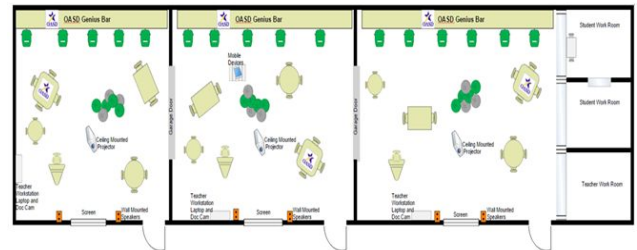


Figure 2. Flexible Learning Space Diagram

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP:

In terms of the link between a principal's action and student learning, there is one finding that stands out over time as more powerful than any other. The degree to which the principal participates as a learner in helping teachers figure out how to get classroom and school wide improvement (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Principals in Oconomowoc Area School district understand the role data plays in meeting the needs of all learners. Principals are active participants in continuous learning and in leading change. They lead data-informed instruction with a UDL lens in grade level common planning meetings, streamline data to inform change at the building level through Plan Do Study Acts (PDSAs), actively participate in continuous learning, and lead change.

Is there a significant achievement advantage for FLS students? Yes!		
Flexible Learning Space vs. District Comparison	Achievement Effect Size (d)	p
All Students	+0.26	<.01
Free Reduced Lunch	+0.48	<.01
Disabilities	+0.27	.12
Male	+0.19	<.05
Female	+0.30	<.01

Figure 3: Flexible Learning Achievement Effect Size Chart

Elementary Level: Using Data in Grade Level Common planning.

Not too long ago, educators lacked the data necessary to identify variability in their learning environment and make empirically based instructional decisions. Historically,

instructional decisions were based on anecdotal information or the “guess and hope” model. Educators were compelled to guess what a student could do, make a plan, and hope for the best. Maya Angelou said it best, “Do the best you can until you know better. When you know better do better.” Maya’s quote is the basis of the common planning that takes place every week in the Oconomowoc Area School District. Data and time to collaboratively plan sets educators up to do better for students. In the Oconomowoc Area School District, students are asked to engage in multiple assessments throughout the year in order to collect information about students’ academic achievement in order to grow and succeed. By providing teachers the opportunity to gather and analyze data from multiple sources, it empowers them to make individualized instructional decisions. Teams consisting of general educators, learning strategists, a literacy coach, and principal get to know every student better through historical and current data. After getting to know students through data, teams dive into curricular units of study and Common Core State Standards to craft Universally Designed unit plans. While teams are collaboratively planning, they are asking questions like: “Which students, while solid in their understanding, may need their learning extended”, “which students are reading at lower reading levels”, “which students have difficulty maintaining stamina and engagement” and “which students have language or communication barriers?” Asking such questions assists in improving the learning experience for students. This intentional student-centered planning has shifted education experiences for students from a one size fits all model to a model that meets the needs of individual learners. Following unit plan development, teams refer back to data and the units of study to develop small group and individualized strategy groups.

Intermediate Level

Using data to create building level goals, the Oconomowoc Area School District has defined a Key Performance Objective (KPO) of having all students (including subgroups) grow at the 80th percentile as compared to their peers on the reading and math MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessment. This past year our building goal focused on having 3 out of 4 grade levels meet this defined benchmark. In math, during the 2016-2017 school year, the 7th grade exceeded that goal (90th %ile) and 5th grade (77th %ile), 6th grade (56%ile) and 8th grade (38%ile). Results in reading were very similar with 7th grade exceeding the goal (88th %ile) and 5th grade (65%ile), 6th grade (52%ile) and 8th grade at the (36%ile). Three of our four grade levels represented high achievement/growth to meet our defined “unrivaled” status of the 80th %ile.

Our data revealed existing achievement gaps for marginalized groups (gender, race, disability, SES, ELL).

As a team, we analyzed the data to identify how subgroups performed in relation to their peers. Specifically, we identified ten potential barriers to growth within these subgroups. Subgroups include students with disabilities, those affected by socio-economic factors, and those affected by

mental health challenges. To reach the 80th%ile we needed to identify the barriers, engage staff in addressing these challenges, and try strategies to remove these barriers.

PDSA (Plan Do Study Act) and Professional Practice Goal and Learning Plan

Our plan as a building team involved developing action steps based on “community engagement.” We looked for ways to improve our communication with families, our level of engagement with the neighborhoods that we serve, and support for the teaching staff. Support of teaching staff as they address the barriers that prevent students and families from accessing the academic and social opportunities, has come to define Nature Hill. In our plan, once we began to address the barriers, we could better address the issues related to student achievement.

See Appendix B for the building level PDSA (Plan Do Study Act) and Professional Practice Goal and Learning Plan.

DISTRICT LEVEL COACHING/FACILITATION: UDL ACROSS STAKEHOLDERS

Utilizing data strategically across systems when implementing UDL requires everyone be “all in”. Harnessing the power of peers and both central and school leaders is needed for savvy change (Fullan, 2010).

Using Data in the Role of Coaching

The roll of the district level UDL Coach/Facilitator is to facilitate focused and cohesive interaction between peer groups. Support at the district level includes being part of the Teaching and Learning Team which designs and facilitates professional development directly tied to the strategic directions and vision of the district. The district level UDL Coach/Facilitator, using a Google form to conduct walkthroughs, can help identify patterns and trends that occur across the district, grade, and classroom levels. (See Appendix C). The District Coach understands the importance of data and UDL from the district, building, and classroom levels. (See Table 1.)

Building Collective Capacity Across District Levels

Building collective capacity from among all stakeholders is where the magic happens. Michael Fullan, *Motion Leadership*, puts it best: “System reform will never be a success if only leaders are working on it. There are not enough leaders to go around. But there are enough peers”. At the building and classroom levels, teachers and peers rely on data as the vehicle to better understand the variability that exists in students. Then, the UDL framework is used to address that variability. Co-planning and collaborative structures provide the platform for using data to inform instruction.

Table 1. District UDL Facilitator: Levels of Involvement

District level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supports Strategic directions. → Teaching and Learning Team: Professional Development (district) → UDL and Data driven.
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Building level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Supports building level PDSAs (Plan, Do, Study, Act). → Support Principals: Provide/deliver resources to support actions steps (staff meetings, resources, etc.) → UDL and Data driven.
Grade level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Participates/leads in Common planning. → Identifies trends in data and UDL practices across grade levels. → Walk-throughs identifying common grade level trends. → UDL and Data driven.
Class /student level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Coaching/planning/informing student instruction based on data and UDL. → Individual classroom walkthroughs (informal feedback) → Supports Student learning outcomes → UDL and Data driven.

Using Tools to Remove Barriers in Consuming and Interpreting Data

Analyzing student data at the grade, classroom, and independent student levels helps to better understand the growth of our students. Finding tools that allow teachers to be informed consumers of data is critical. Utilizing a tool like eduClimber (www.educlimber.com), teachers spend less time collecting and organizing data, and more time analyzing it. Data can be obtained from the district, building, classroom, and individual levels. Currently, eduClimber is used to gather attendance, behavioral, and academic data. Recognizing the need for a system that can aid in collecting qualitative data, we are currently exploring the development of student learner profiles within eduClimber.

Using data from eduClimber helps to better understand and meet the learner variability that exists in classrooms. In eduClimber, the scores of all students are demonstrated visually in a matter of seconds. For example, using MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) Reading data or Fountas and Pinnell scores that have uploaded into eduClimber, correlations can be made between Reading RIT scores to F&P levels (K-6) or Lexile levels (K-12) in order to front load instructional materials that are accessible and meet the variability of students. (See Table 2).

Table 2. Grade level, RIT band, Lexile level bands correlations.

Grade level:	Lexile Bands (College and Career Readiness)	Associated RIT Band
K-1	N/A	<202
2-3	420L-820L	190-212
4-5	740L-1010L	208-223
6-8	925L-1185L	218-232
9-10	1050L-1335L	225-241

11-CCR	1185L-1285L	232-264
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CONCLUSION

The Oconomowoc Area School District began UDL implementation almost five years ago. Connecting data and UDL implementation among all stakeholders from the district level to classrooms helps us to better understand learner variability. Connecting our data to UDL practices allows us to be more strategic and targeted in our implementation decisions in order to have the greatest impact strengthening UDL classroom practices and student achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In Oconomowoc Area School District, we have a powerful team with many players. Thank you especially to our Director of Student Services, Lisa Dawes, who had the original vision and passion for UDL implementation in our district.

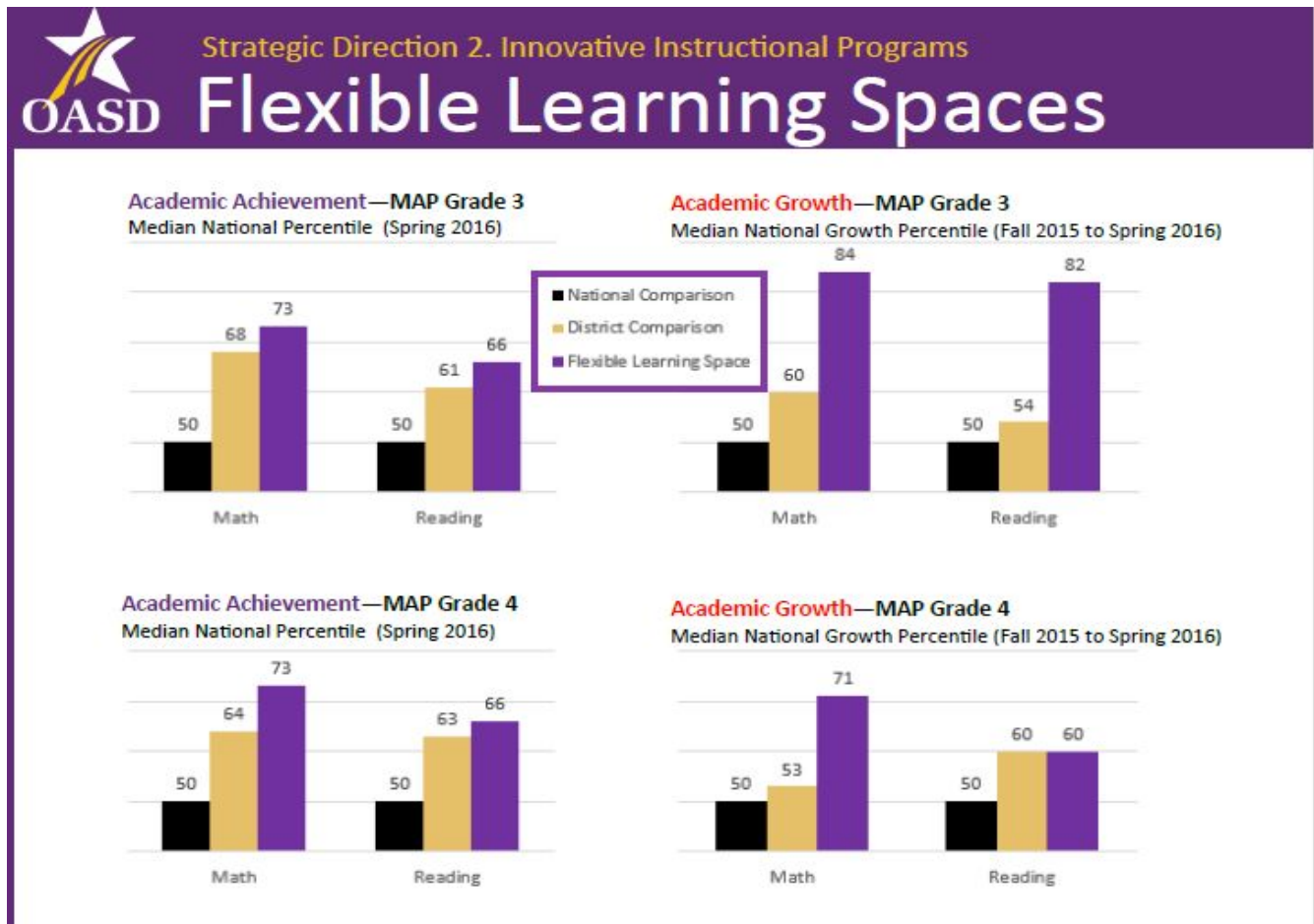
We would like to acknowledge the people, who every day, empower learners and leaders and are critical in leading UDL Implementation in our district: Our OASD Teachers and Staff; Superintendent, Roger Rindo; Program Support Coordinator, Dyanna Kadrich; Elementary Coordinator, Sarah Lang; Coordinator of Innovative Instruction, Michele Koper; High School Coordinator, Krista Werchowski; Additional Principals and Associates: Brian Stuckey, Jennifer Jones, Jason Schrieber, Jill Marr, Stacy Yearling, Charles Olson, Alicia Hedrick, Joseph Moylan, Jose' Frias, and Melissa Anders.

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Appendix A:



Appendix B:

[Plan Do Study Act](#)

Link: <https://goo.gl/3bzEDV>

[Professional Growth Plan](#)

Link: <https://goo.gl/t3WQWR>

Appendix C:

UDL Walk-through <https://goo.gl/DtV8dA>