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Written Response to NAEA Webinar: Connecting With English Language Learners in the Visual Arts Classroom.

For this second writing, I chose to respond to the English Language Learner webinar because I have been an English Language Learner (ELL) since I was 15 years old. When thinking, analyzing, and trying to connect with the “Connecting With English Language Learners in the Visual Arts Classroom” webinar and “If Equity is a Priority, UDL is a Must” podcast, I cannot quickly assume that these two approaches will solve my classroom diversity challenges like a light switch. However, I wonder if both of these two strategies can be combine as one to help, support, explore, and approach to all groups of students in today’s society.

In the webinar, Villanueva and Febo (2022) defined an English Language Learner as “ A student who is linguistically diverse and who is identified as having a level of English language proficiency that requires language support to achieve standards in grade-level content in English.” I had never heard of the English Language Learner (ELL) acronym, terminology, and definition because I grew accustomed to English as a Second Language (ESL). However, English is not my second but third language; seeing a more universal choice is a plus. I was surprised that most

English Language Learners are U.S. Born, as mentioned in the webinar (Febo & Villanueva, 2022). Still, I wonder if my children would fall into the ELL school demographic, as the only difference is they only speak English.

As I was analyzing both strategies, implementing the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for English Language Learner can help provide better support and equal opportunity to ELL students. Equitable approaches are important components to establish equitable learning opportunities within a classroom environment with art across cultures. However, it speaks more of differentiation in a classroom; for example, I would have to only provide for students who need additional support so they can make progress. The equity approach is one of the most important in education, but realistically, how does it look in various school districts in arts education?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has multiple options and scaffolds to encourage and help all students, including ELL students. In the podcast, Chardin and Novak (2021) discussed that “UDL is a framework for designing learning experiences so students have options for how they learn, what materials they use, and how they demonstrate their learning.” Wouldn’t ELL students learn the same way as all other students through experiences in learning? Suppose ELL students followed traditional instruction forms with equitable approaches and access to visual art lectures and learning from textbooks. The presented and received information is much more different than accommodating options to reduce barriers with UDL.

Unifying equity and UDL approaches in arts education can

accommodate all spectrums or diversity of learners. It will not only create this universal opportunity for all students but for educators as well. I want to learn, grow, and have a deeper understanding of how my students learn from the various ways I can teach and provide visual art lessons in different representation, expression, and engagement strategies. It won't be easy, as it will take time, consistency, patience, and trial and error to combine designed curricula in arts education.

## References

- Febo, N. M., & Villanueva, T. (2022, February 2). *Connecting with English language learners in the visual arts classroom* (Webinar). NAEA. <https://virtual.arteducators.org/products/connecting-with-english-language-learners-in-the-visual-arts-classroom>.
- Chardin, M. L., & Novak, K. R. (2022, October 12). *If equity is a priority, UDL is a must*. Cult of Pedagogy. <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/udl-equity/>