Designing for All Learners

Universal Design Principles
Purpose of Universal Design for Learning

• Maximize learning and motivation for all students
• Full inclusion in the learning process for diverse students
• Takes into account things like:
  • Learning preferences/styles
  • Age
  • Individual skills
  • Gender
  • Sexual orientation
  • Culture
  • Abilities
  • Disabilities
MULTIPLE MEANS OF

REPRESENTATION

ACTION & EXPRESSION

ENGAGEMENT
An Example of a Poorly Formatted Page (Apply This to Your Lectures)

Read the non-formatted version of the September 1, 2005 newsletter, and see why it is important to pay attention to the form of your lectures and not just the content.

Not Another Boring Lecture (Boring Version)

Sick and tired of your students looking sick and tired? Demeanorless after reading articles such as Declining by Degrees, an article by John Merson on the declining quality of education experienced by college students? **Frustrated by the students reading the newspaper in the back row of your lecture hall?** Here are some ways to improve the form of your lectures without degrading the quality or the content. Turn up your volume and go to Chile’s Great Armada (http://www7.nationalgeographic.com/news/0507/feature2/multimedia.html), a subite feature on National Geographic’s web site. What do you notice right away? (If this were a lecture I would pause here for answers.)

Here are some of the features from this site that can be translated to teaching. Each point will be followed by how you can apply it in your lectures, unless it is obvious. If your sound is turned on, you’re hearing music, there is a colorful picture, there is a concise introduction (let your students know what the take-home point of each lecture is), you are alerted to the fact that there are four sections (clarify how you will organize the lecture), there is a map, which leads to a timeline (present the material in different ways), there are “learn more” links (this is the homework – you don’t have to give all the information in your lecture – let them “link” to the homework later), there is a forum (allow time for discussion, perhaps by asking a provocative question). Although you might be thinking at this point, “I’m not teaching Kindergarten,” or “They came to college to learn, and they can take the information any way I give it,” consider what attracts and holds your own interest. I think about this every time I write a newsletter. Here is a sample of what I consider when first preparing a newsletter:

How can I get the reader to open this newsletter? What will make the reader want to read this entire article? How can I make this article of value? How can I entice the reader to look forward to my next issue? These points relate to your classes in a direct fashion. How do you get your students to think, “That lecture was really worth attending”? Or, “How do you give them what they need and want?” As one student told me, don’t make your students wonder “Why am I here, and not in my room, reading a book about this in bed?”

Here are some actions I take to make my newsletter achieve its purpose. I use color to engage the senses. I use links. I use examples in various forms. I show my own thought process when appropriate (click here for a brief summary of my thought process in creating this article). I use “white spaces.” Any graphic designer will tell you that you must leave white spaces on the page to allow the eye to rest (allow pauses in your lectures to allow the students’ mind a place to rest. Pace yourself. Ask for questions periodically.) I use bullet points to help students understand the organization of your thinking (as you proceed.) I try to be creative and interesting, in order to keep the reader interested.

If you’ve read this far, which I doubt, you have a high capacity for reading boringly formatted text. If this were a lecture, I would ask you to write down five ways that you could use the ideas from this article to enhance your lectures. Since this is a newsletter, I would only ask you to write me anecdotes of how you used this article to breathe life into your teaching.

**“My thanks to Rick Reis and the Tommorov’s Professor Mailing List (to subscribe: mailto:Major-domo@lists.stanford.edu with subscribe tomorromous-professor in the subject line) for the posting on this article.”**
Class Climate

• Welcome everyone
• Avoid stereotyping
• Be approachable and available
• Motivate all students
• Address individual needs in an inclusive manner
• Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any student
• Promote effective communication
• Make interactions accessible for all participants
• Encourage inclusive cooperative learning
Delivery Methods

• Select a flexible curriculum
• Make content relevant
• Provide cognitive supports
• Provide multiple ways to gain knowledge
• Deliver instructions clearly and in multiple ways
• Make each teaching method accessible to all
• Use large visual and tactile aids
• Know how to arrange for accommodations
Feedback and Assessment

• Provide regular feedback and corrective opportunities
• Set clear expectations
• Provide multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge
• Monitor and adjust
• Provide sample test questions and study guides
• Test in the same manner in which you teach
• Minimize time constraints when appropriate