Universal Course Design (UCD) provides strategies to vary the development of course curriculum, instruction, assessment, and teaching environment for students' learning styles in today's college classrooms. UCD offers simple ways to ensure that all students have equal access to college courses. Bringing UCD into your classroom benefits all students, especially those who:

- Speak a primary language other than English
- Are not academically prepared
- Go to school part-time and lead busy lives
- Have disabilities

The diversity of learning styles in college classrooms can be challenging for faculty and staff. Universal Course Design (UCD) provides strategies to address these challenges. UCD offers simple ways to ensure that all students have equal access to college courses. Bringing UCD into your classroom benefits all students, especially those who:

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Questions About Universal Course Design? Find the Answers Inside!

- I have so many different types of students—can this strategy really help them all?
- How can I plan ahead of time for the diverse learners in my course?
- How can I work with my colleagues to improve students' course experiences?
- What are some simple options for bringing technology into my teaching?
- How can I make my instruction more accessible—without watering down my course content?

Build Your Course Quickly with the UCD Online Tool

No two college students learn alike. So professors are handed a challenge: how do you create a course that works for all learners? Inside this brochure, you'll learn more about how to use UCD to help you meet the needs of all your students. As we started working with faculty to bring UCD to their classrooms, professors kept asking us for an instrument to make this process easier and faster. We created the UCD online tool to meet these needs.

The UCD Online tool makes it quick and simple for you to:

- Build an entire course from start to finish, using UCD strategies
- Customize the course to fit the needs of your students
- Edit a pre-existing course, or create a new one
- Output your work in six different formats, including HTML
- Upload your work to any Learning Management System
- Work with a platform that’s fully accessible in both usability and output

Assessment

Professor Holland offered two different assessment choices for students in his journalism class. Students could either write a 15-page paper, or they could interview a local journalist and present the interview in the medium of their choice. Letting students select an assessment format increased their comfort level and their interest in the work their classmates produced.

Alternative Project (9 total)

- 2 short videos reports
- 7 audio reports
- 4 journalism papers
- 6 print journalism papers

Instruction

Professor Liu created a simplified online syllabus for his biology class. In the syllabus, she embedded links to websites with more information about course-related topics. This allowed students to explore specific topics at their convenience, and made the syllabus visually simpler and easier to scan.

Environmental Modifications

Professor Barbosa found that the traditional classroom layout was getting in the way of her courses. The large group. To make sure lecture attendance with such a large group. To make sure she was concerned about her course, Civilizations of the Ancient World. But she was concerned about lecture attendance with such a large group. To make sure students stayed engaged, she recorded her lectures using an iPod, and posted them on her course website. Students could access any of the past lectures at any time that is convenient for you.

Traditional Layout

Alternative Layout

The UCD Online Tool

www.UniversalCourseDesign.org
Quick and easy ways to begin using UCD in your classroom.

Assessment

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Quick and Easy Strategies for Implementing Universal Course Design (UCD)

**Course Curriculum**

Make your syllabus worth its weight in gold. In addition to the assignments and deadlines you’d normally include, add:

- Your complete contact info (including a TTY number if possible)
- Course expectations
- Long-term and short-term course goals
- Specific skills students will develop
- Options for students who need extra support

Make your office hours easier to attend.

- Ask for an accessible office location (if possible).
- If your office isn’t accessible, hold at least some office hours in an accessible area such as a cafeteria.
- Be available via email, in a chat room, by phone, or over Skype/video conferencing at a specific time every week.
- Survey your students at the beginning of the term to find mutually convenient options.

Make your media more eclectic. Try out the following to see what works best for you and your class:

- Video (online or via DVD)
- Podcasts and blog posts related to lecture topics
- Guest lectures to build off course materials
- Graphic models to illustrate key points
- Hands-on experience, such as field trips
- When you’ve found the media that work for you, keep these options in heavy rotation in your classroom.

**Instruction**

Frame the big picture. Then frame the smaller picture.

- State the main topic at the beginning of class, and again at the end. Have students restate it in their own words.
- When including a presentation or piece of media, explain its purpose before using it and again after using it.

Check in frequently. And even more frequently.

- Use essential questions to guide class discussions.
- Stop class at key points to briefly check students’ comprehension and engagement.
- Survey your students. You can use raised hands, pen and paper, or online tools to find out what your students understand and what is going over their heads.

Pass notes.

- Email or post your lecture notes on the course website. You can do this either before or after class.
- Make sure students know exactly when the notes will be posted and where they will be available.
- Let them choose whether or not to download the notes.
- Make it clear that you expect them to attend lectures and that you will be calling on students during class to check their comprehension.
- Add links to relevant websites in your lecture notes. This might include links to research sources, blogs about your class topic, or definitions of important terms in online dictionaries.

**Assessment**

Make a super-rubric. Make expectations clear to students:

- Distribute a scoring guide that explains what it takes to get a certain grade.
- Pass out examples of previous student work that received an A, B, or C grade. Discuss as a class.
- For independent projects, create a scoring outline with each student to clarify your shared expectations.

Offer a feast of feedback.

- When students are writing papers, provide feedback (maybe even a grade) at each stage: topic, outline, rough draft, revision, final draft.
- Provide opportunities for group evaluations where students can give constructive feedback on each other’s work. Provide a guideline on how to do this.

Check in so they don’t check out.

- Require students to complete a mini-paper at the end of each class to check comprehension.
- Have students restate each other’s questions to make sure everyone is listening during class discussions.
- Pass out Reflection Sheets that ask one essential question related to that day’s main topic. Use the last five minutes of class to discuss.

**Environment**

Shake things up and project your ideas.

- Move furniture around to create spaces for large and small groups.
- Make sure audio is amplified enough to reach all parts of the room.
- Repeat questions so all students can hear.

Get cozy with the online world.

- Post syllabus and assignments on your college learning management system.
- Use digital textbooks and supplementary materials.
- Share optional websites so students can investigate topics more fully and in different contexts.

Encourage classroom drama.

- Have students take on different roles during class: facilitator, recorder, presenter, etc.
- Have students tell you what roles they liked and what was hard.
- Use this info to guide future assignments and projects.

For more UCD ideas, visit www.UniversalCourseDesign.org

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The Universal Course Design initiative is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston, and funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Grant No.P333A050051.