Universal Design in Action

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) encourages instructors to design courses that give students options on how to engage in course activities, provide students with choices in how they access and interact with course content, and let students choose from among multiple ways to demonstrate what they have learned.

Applying universal design principles helps to ensure that a course is accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities, under as many circumstances as possible.

Three Ways to Get Started

1. Represent course content in a variety of media.

Allow students to access the same or similar information in a variety of audio, visual, and textual formats. For example, students learning about earthquakes could read an article, view an animation of a fault, study a labeled diagram, listen to an interview with a seismologist, *and* view a closed-circuit video of an earthquake.

2. Provide students with many ways to engage and interact with course content.

In class, engage students in active learning involving different senses. Students might interpret a print from a seismograph, identify potential fault locations on a topographic map, construct a miniature fault with clay, *and* experiment with blocks on a shake table. Alternatively, you might ask each student to choose two activities they find most appealing or most useful.

3. Allow students to demonstrate their understanding in multiple formats.

Provide students multiple ways to express what they have learned (for example, through group work, oral presentations, or report writing). Students could also write lesson plans or develop their own assessments. You can grade these diverse assignments with a carefully crafted rubric.

Want more help with universal design?
Visit **idea.boisestate.edu**
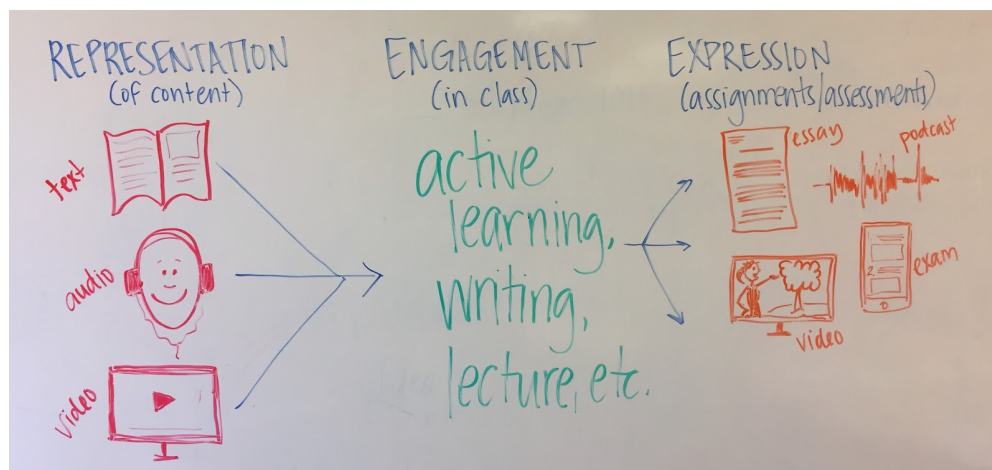and contact the instructional design consultant assigned to your department.

B
BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Multiple Means of Representation, Engagement, and Expression

A history instructor wants students to understand how the built environment reflects the habits, beliefs, and values of the culture that constructed that environment. In one lesson, students explore what bridges built in different times and places reveal about U.S. culture.

Students read historical accounts of travel into New York City. They read or listen to Whitman's poem "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry." They look at blueprints, photographs, and art depicting the Brooklyn Bridge and Golden Gate Bridge. They listen to oral histories of people who crossed the Golden Gate bridge on opening day.

In class, student groups annotate images, noting how the bridges reflect differing values across time and place. Each group shares its findings in an informal presentation.

In a final assignment, students apply the same analysis to their locale. One student creates a video tour of the public library, highlighting the values its architectural elements suggest. Another student writes an essay on the city's historic movie theater, a prime example of Egyptian revival architecture. Another conducts a tour of a memorial, explaining how its design reflects civic values.

Resources

For more information on UDL principles, visit "Accessibility and Universal Design for Learning at Boise State." (https://accessibility.boisestate.edu/)

To learn more about the theory and practice of UDL, explore the website of the National Center on Universal Design for Learning. (http://www.udlcenter.org/)