

Developing and Revising Assignments with Universal Design for Learning

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Welcome

Our hope for our time together is that you come away with:

- An understanding of the guidelines of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and practice applying them to an example assignment
- Selecting and incorporating at least one of the principles of UDL to apply to an assignment or task

Agenda For Our Time Today

- (5 min) Surface your goals and contexts
- (2 min) Highlight the role of goals/purpose of assessments
- (5 min) Transparent Design (TILT) overview
- (30) Universal Design for Learning (UDL) overview
- (10 min) Pause, reflect, and apply
- (8 min) Return to your goals, offer resources, elicit feedback

Please share with us

How does Universal Design for Learning potentially apply to your work?

What do you hope to leave with today?

The importance of purpose

Transparent design and UDL both emphasize that having clear learning objectives is critical. Learning objectives identify what we want learners to be able to know or do at the end of a course/activity/assessment and should be:

- Clear & specific
- Measurable
- Concise
- Tied to course-level objectives

Transparent Assignment Design

"Transparent teaching and learning methods explicitly focus on *how* and *why* students are learning course content in particular ways. Transparent assignments specifically outline three important aspects of the assignment: **purpose**, **task**, **criteria**. Providing a full picture of a specific assignment, complete with the purpose, task, and criteria and examples, can equip students to do their best work."

- Mary-Ann Winkelmes



Transparent Assignments

Benefits for Students: with clearly outlined assignments, students can focus their energy and creativity on the assignment rather than spending precious time trying to understand what the instructor wants.

Benefits for Faculty (including for our workshop today): grading can be more efficient with clearly defined expectations. Fewer questions from students. Clearer understanding of why you are having students do the assignment. Allows *faculty* to more clearly see and revise assignments for possibly barriers to student understanding and successful completion.

Transparent Assignment Template by Mary-Ann Winkelmes

Transparent Assignment Template

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This template can be used as a guide for developing, explaining, and discussing class activities and out-of-class assignments. Making these aspects of each course activity or assignment explicitly clear to students has demonstrably enhanced students' learning in a national study.¹

Assignment Name
Due date:

Purpose: *Define the learning objectives, in language and terms that help students recognize how this assignment will benefit their learning. Indicate how these are connected with institutional learning outcomes, and how the specific knowledge and skills involved in this assignment will be important in students' lives beyond the contexts of this assignment, this course, and this college.*

Skills: *The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course / in school / in this field / in professional life beyond school:*

Terms from Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives may help you explain these skills in language students will understand. Listed from cognitively simple to most complex, these skills are:

- *understanding basic disciplinary knowledge and methods/tools*
- *applying basic disciplinary knowledge/tools to problem-solving in a similar but unfamiliar context*
- *analyzing*
- *synthesizing*
- *judging/evaluating and selecting best solutions*
- *creating/inventing a new interpretation, product, theory*

Knowledge: *This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important content knowledge in this discipline:*

- ...
- ...

Task: *Define what activities the student should do/perform. "Action verbs" from this chart might be helpful:*

https://tilthighered.com/assets/pdffiles/revised_blooms_taxonomy_action_verbs.pdf. List any steps or guidelines, or a recommended sequence for the students' efforts. Specify any extraneous mistakes to be avoided. If there are sound pedagogical reasons for withholding information about how to do the assignment, protect students' confidence and sense of belonging in college with a purpose statement something like this: "The purpose of this assignment is for you to struggle and feel confused while you invent and test your own approach for addressing the problem..."

Criteria for Success:

Define the characteristics of the finished product. Provide multiple examples of what these characteristics look like in real-world practice, to encourage students' creativity and reduce their incentive to copy any one example too closely. Engage students in analyzing multiple examples of real-world work before the students begin their own work on the assignment. Discuss how excellent work differs from adequate work. This enables students to evaluate the quality of their own efforts while they are working, and to judge the success of their completed work. It is often useful to provide or compile with students a checklist of characteristics of successful work. Students can also use the checklist to provide feedback on peers' coursework. Indicate whether this task/product will be graded and/or how it factors into the student's overall grade for the course. Later, asking students to reflect and comment on their completed, graded work allows them to focus on changes to their learning strategies that might improve their future work.

Transparent Assignment

AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY Visual Assignment*

SHARED READING:

James Morton Turner, *The Promise of Wilderness: America: Environmental Politics Since 1964* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013)

ASSIGNMENT:

Create a “visual narrative” consisting of approximately 3-6 images with one-paragraph captions and list of sources. You should also include a “mind map,” as discussed, explaining the evolutions of thought, culture, politics under review. Imagine this will be part of an exhibit open to leading scholars of the field but also a general audience and undergraduate students. Due March 17 in class.

*Example from TILT website resources; used by permission of Andy Kirk, History Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences that guides the development of flexible methods, materials, and environments that **anticipate learning variability, minimize barriers in design, and develop expert learners.**

- CAST (the organization who created the UDL framework)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

How would you describe an “expert learner”?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

How would you describe an “expert learner”?

CAST defines "expert learners" as:

- Purposeful and motivated
- Resourceful and knowledgeable
- Strategic and goal-directed

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

3 Principles of UDL: provide multiple means of

- Engagement (the *why* of learning)
- Representation (the *what* of learning)
- Action & Expression (the *how* of learning)

Guideline 1: Multiple Means of Engagement

...learners differ markedly in the ways in which they can be engaged or motivated to learn. There are a variety of sources that can influence individual variation in affect including neurology, culture, personal relevance, subjectivity, and background knowledge, along with a variety of other factors.



Guideline 1: Multiple Means of Engagement

Some learners are highly engaged by spontaneity and novelty while others are disengaged, even frightened, by those aspects, preferring strict routine. Some learners might like to work alone, while others prefer to work with their peers.



Guideline 1: Multiple Means of Engagement

In reality, there is not one means of engagement that will be optimal for all learners in all contexts; providing multiple options for engagement is essential.



Guideline 1: Multiple Means of Engagement

In practice

- Make the goals/purpose clear and authentic
- Design for choice and agency (when possible)
- Foster collaboration
- Support self-assessment and reflection

How have you/do you already do this?

Example assignment: multiple modes of engagement?

Purpose: to provide an opportunity for you to do primary research in environmental history and to use your research in interpreting a topic that is important to students in the field.

Skills:

- Practice the techniques of visual analysis and deep reading of photographs that support it
- Use more familiar primary sources such as maps and documents to support deep reading of photographs
- Explain historic context with images as part of your analysis

Knowledge:

- Better understand interactions of nature and culture over time
- Gain insights into the environmental history of Southern Nevada and the American Southwest

Tasks:

- Survey the Landscapes of Southern Nevada digital collection and note photographs that you wish to study in more depth.
- Survey the primary documents and historic maps included in the collection and choose an individual image to analyze
- Search for one related primary document in the collection and one related historic map that will aid your analysis of your image.
- Decide what broader environmental history topic, theme or research area these three sources might support. For example, land use, resource conservation, water, etc....
- Use the Library of Congress Photo Analysis worksheet (attached) to guide your deep reading of your photograph, keeping in mind that you are using these sources to better understand an environmental history research topic, theme or issue.
- Based on notes from the worksheet, write a concise but detailed analysis of your photograph.
- Explain how this photographic primary source expands our knowledge of your chosen environmental history topic

Criteria for Success: Submit your completed (500-800 word) analysis with your photograph attached on our course Discussion board. Adequate assignments will include clear responses to all parts of the assignment. Excellent assignments will be complete, with careful analysis of the photograph and insightful use of the photograph as a source to understand an environmental history topic, theme or issue.

Guideline 2: Multiple Means of Representation

“Learners differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them. For example, those with sensory disabilities (e.g., blindness or deafness); learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia); language or cultural differences, and so forth may all require different ways of approaching content. Others may simply grasp information quicker or more efficiently through visual or auditory means rather than printed text. Also learning, and transfer of learning, occurs when multiple representations are used, because they allow students to make connections within, as well as between, concepts.”

--CAST



Guideline 2: Multiple Means of Representation

In practice

- Offer ways to customize display of information
- Offer alternatives for auditory or visual information
- Guide information processing and visualization (identify steps in sequences, cut unnecessary information, chunk information)

How have you/do you already do this?

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Guideline 3: Multiple Means of Action & Expression

“Learners differ in the ways that they can navigate a learning environment and express what they know. For example, individuals with significant movement impairments (e.g., cerebral palsy), those who struggle with strategic and organizational abilities (executive function disorders), those who have language barriers, and so forth approach learning tasks very differently. Some may be able to express themselves well in written text but not speech, and vice versa. It should also be recognized that action and expression require a great deal of strategy, practice, and organization, and this is another area in which learners can differ.”

Guideline 3: Multiple Means of Action & Expression

In practice:

- Allow students to use multiple media for communication
- Guide appropriate goal setting and planning
- Enhance student ability to monitor their own progress

How have you/do you already do this?

Example assignment: multiple modes of engagement?

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Putting it Into Practice: Plus 1

- Select just 1 thing per term to shift
- Designing with UDL may mean *less* work adapting your curriculum for accommodations
- Start by identifying a challenge for students/coworkers in your class/working group and look at the guidelines to see what might help you address that challenge.



Putting it Into Practice: Plus 1

- Try applying the guidance to the challenge.
- Elicit feedback from students/coworkers about how the change is working for them.
- Revise and repeat!



Pause & reflect

1. **Identify a challenge students seem to have in one of your assignments** (or colleagues seem to have in a task). It might be something they've expressed confusion about or access issues around. What is the challenge? Take a full minute to think and type it into the chat.

Pause & explore

2. Which guideline (multiple modes of engagement, representation, action and expression) feels applicable to your challenge? Choose one to explore from the list in the chat and visit the page to see examples of actions you can take (they call them “checkpoints--on the right-hand side of the screen).

1. [Provide multiple means of engagement](#)
2. [Provide multiple means of representation](#)
3. [Provide multiple means of action and expression](#)

Pause & apply


2. Which guideline (multiple modes of engagement, representation, action and expression) feels applicable to your challenge? Choose one to explore from the list in the chat and visit the page to see examples of actions you can take (they call them “checkpoints--on the right-hand side of the screen).


1. [Provide multiple means of engagement](#)
2. [Provide multiple means of representation](#)
3. [Provide multiple means of action and expression](#)

3. Select an action you think would help address a challenge students/ colleagues are having with an assignment or task. How would incorporating that UDL guidance change the assignment/task?

Transparent Design Template

Pat Fellows of UO Online has shared a Transparent Assignment Template in [Canvas Commons](#). You can review and download this template to get started quickly.





ASSIGNMENT

[Transparent Assignment Template](#)

Undergraduate - Graduate

Pat Fellows

↓ 2 ☆ 4

Feedback for Us

We consider this series to be a "beta version" of programming we would like to continue our own learning around and offer to others. We'd value your feedback as we continue this work.

Please take a few minutes to share your feedback on this [brief survey in Forms](#).

Resources for Questions and Support

Find the resources for this session on our [Accessible and Inclusive Design webpage](#). Contact TEP or UO Online on for any pedagogy-related support around captioning with [our "Contact" form](#).

If you have questions about captioning within the context of providing student accommodations, contact the Accessible Education Center at uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Canvas Support is available Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm

- In person @ PLC 68
- By phone @ (541) 346-1942
- By email @ uonline@uoregon.edu
- By live chat @ livehelp.uoregon.edu

Thank you!

