

The Biggest Bang for Your Buck

Quick and Easy UCD Strategies

Curriculum:

1. Simplify your syllabus – reduce text where possible, include online office hours, allow for electronic work submission
2. Have students complete a learning style the first day of class – For an example of a learning style survey go to:
www.chaminade.org/INSPIRE/learnstl.htm.
3. Ask students to answer three personal questions on the first day of class (whether aloud or written down). Use these responses when choosing your texts and developing your instructional plans.
 - a. What are you nervous about in this class?
 - b. What is your career goal in 5 years time?
 - c. What is one of your favorite hobbies?
4. Encourage students to consider buying digital textbooks – This allows them to listen to the text being read as well as manipulate it to a manner that works best for them.
5. Post all of your course materials online (BlackBoard, Moodle or a personal website) – This allows students to access the materials when and in a manner that works best for them.

Instruction:

1. Stop and change the way you're teaching every 20 minutes – Remember you will lose 80% of your student audience after 20 minutes of lecturing.
2. Post an outline of the day's topic on the board or online prior to beginning class – This allows both students and you to stay on track.
3. Post your PowerPoint slides for the day's class online an hour before class begins – This puts the onus on students as to whether or not they will print the slides and bring them to class.
4. Use group work to engage your students – This may include group teaching or working on an assignment.
5. Use Skype to bring in guest lecturers – this easy to use tool allows you to bring experts from around the world into your classroom.

Assessment:

1. Provide clear information about all assessments – when will an exam occur, what percentage will a project be worth etc...
2. Provide examples of good work – use examples of good work from previous students to show current students what you are looking for.
3. Provide clear rubrics for all assignments – post these online for students to refer to when completing a project.
4. Offer choice in assessment – this may be as simple as two different topics to write about or may be more complex in that students can choose between a paper or a video presentation.
5. Conduct a brainstorming session with your students as to what the final project should be – this allows students to begin taking ownership of their knowledge early in the class.

Environment:

1. To the extent possible rearrange the room so that the students are sitting in a circle – this allows you to engage with engage with each student individually.
2. Repeat any questions – if a student in the front row asks a question, repeat it so that everyone can hear it.
3. Provide periodic breaks – if your teaching a class that is longer than 90 minutes offer your students a break. This will help them to recharge.
4. Use an online platform to host discussions – online discussion boards allow students who are timid to post their responses in an environment that is comfortable to them.
5. Use an overhead projector – this allows you to enlarge topics so that the entire class can see.