

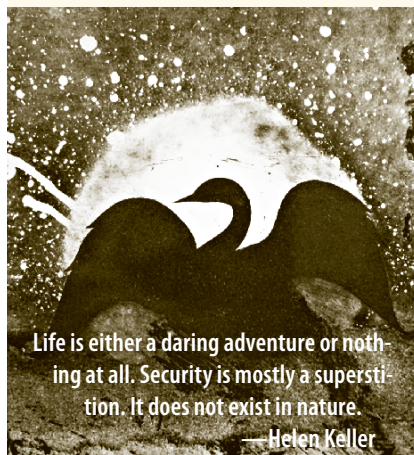
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What's in Our Stars?

The main hope of a nation lies in the proper education of its youth.

—Erasmus.



"Phoenix", copperplate etching, Penny Shrawder

Must-Know UID Concepts—An Important Development for Teaching Diverse Learners

Dr. Brian R. Shmaefsky
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An increasing number of college students have special needs or require developmental studies coursework; this trend means finding new instructional strategies.

Would you agree that lecture teaching is an especially ineffective educational strategy for special needs students? Are you aware, there are new instructional strategies for these learners that can be incorporated into a universal curriculum design that can benefit all of your students? And best of all, do you realize this can be done without completely redesigning content coverage or depleting resources for conducting your class?

The UID Concept

Universal Instructional Design (UID) is a fantastic way of creating a curriculum or a teaching method that feeds the needs of your diverse learners. It takes into account the different multi-sensory teaching modes that best address the various differences in the way students think and learn. At last, there is way to impart even abstract concepts and skills without excluding your students with special learning needs. What's more, it's a singular way to assure equal access to crucial-to-master science coursework. Finally, UID fully engages everyone without compromising learning outcomes.

But Can You Apply UID Concepts to What You Teach?

This well-researched teaching method views all students within

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For the Love of Teaching

When you love an activity, you want to do it well with passion so that you reap the satisfaction of personal accomplishment. For most of us who teach, we do it for our students. It's seeing students change, grow, and master new concepts and skills that brings the highest level of job satisfaction.

Teaching For Success is not about "quick and easy" although some ideas are truly that. It's about improving a little everyday, and being willing to be full engaged—surprised more and bored less. Success requires being more before you can do more.

It's a demanding mental discipline. It requires courage, stamina, perseverance and slaying internal dragons. When teaching becomes an adventure in becoming, only then will your actions powerfully inspire your students to do their best.



TFS Publisher,
Jack H. Shrawder

a continuum of learning abilities. And what's more, UID is applicable to any subject matter.

With UID, you can use an array of learning approaches and teaching strategies so that all of your students can participate fully, despite possessing a narrow learning style preference or disability.

It has even been used to improve the performance of English as a Second Language students enrolled in traditional courses.

The UID practice means doing the following:

- Create a warm, welcoming classroom climate.
- Determine the essential components of the course.
- Provide clear expectations and feedback.
- Explore ways to incorporate natural supports for learning.
- Use varied instructional methods.
- Provide a variety of ways for students to demonstrate knowledge.
- Use technology to enhance learning opportunities.
- Encourage faculty-student interaction.



UID uses an array of learning approaches and teaching strategies to ensure that all students participate fully.

What a UID Class Looks Like

UID research shows that you should create an encouraging learning environment that promotes:

- Inclusiveness
- A non-distracting learning environment
- Multiple delivery methods
- Information access
- Interaction
- Feedback
- Multiple ways of demonstrating knowledge

The UID Technique is Easy to Implement

The elements of UID can be achieved using very simple instructional strategies. The following daily actions checklist will tell you if you are successfully integrating UID into your course:

- ☐ Provide access to an outline for each presentation.
- ☐ Display outline of content coverage.
- ☐ Employ active strategies in lieu of traditional lecture.
- ☐ Call attention to due dates or expectations.
- ☐ Provide multiple ways of presenting information.
- ☐ Create group work projects.
- ☐ Use case studies.
- ☐ Include reading assignments.
- ☐ Give tangible examples.
- ☐ Clarify any feedback or instructions.
- ☐ Ask for questions.
- ☐ Repeat concepts.
- ☐ Provide additional examples of concepts.

Digging Deeper

Many good reference materials and guidelines exist for further incorporating UID into your courses. Many of the adaptations are more of a philosophical approach to

the UID principles that improve learning in any student. Here are some useful college and university websites for applying UID:

Center for Applied Special Technology, http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstruc.html

Montgomery County Community College, at http://www.mc3.edu/sa/stdisab/fac_res/uid/uid.htm

University of Guelph, at <http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid/>

University of Minnesota, at <http://ds.umn.edu/faculty/applyingUID.html>

University of Washington, at <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/instruction.html>

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The best economic stimulus package is a diploma.
—Bob Wise, *Alliance for Excellent Education*

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Using the Power of Early Success to Inspire Learners

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Not long ago, and I'm sure you've been there too, I was introducing the concept of assertiveness in my Business and Professional Speaking class. I asked who could explain to me the difference between nonassertiveness, aggressiveness, and assertiveness.

The Silence

I looked at a sea of blank stares for about 30 seconds, until this young man slowly raised his hand halfway up and softly explained it all, clearly enough so the entire class could understand.

Although I was taken aback, I practiced my "facial management" and just looked him in the eye, nodded and smiled and then with a "Vanna White-style" wave of my arm toward him, said, "Thank you, ____! You have saved us so much time by explaining this so clearly that we can now move on, and no one has to listen to me anymore!"

The Outcome?

This, of course, resulted in some grins and giggles and even pats on the back from fellow students for the normally quiet student.

Since that class, he has had perfect attendance and overall class discussion has improved.

This quiet, academically average student who sits in a far back corner pleasantly surprised me—and himself, I think.

What am I getting at?

Well, would you agree that students often begin college classes with no preconceptions, concerns,

or expectations, unless they have taken previous classes from the same instructor or have enrolled based on recommendations from friends?

Most students probably know nothing about how a particular professor grades, which is, unfortunately, a key factor of interest along with the ultimate need to complete the class "because it's required." Only the rare student takes a class because "it sounds interesting," or because "learning something new is so stimulating."

Getting to the Joy

So, how do we get beyond the grading and prerequisite need and move on to the joy of learning, the benefit of new knowledge?

And while we are proceeding through our course, how do we encourage our students to stay in the class and motivate them to do their jobs (as in studying, discussing, and completing assignments on time)?



A Magic Answer?

Okay, so I'm dreaming a little here. Or, perhaps, this is the question of the month—one to which we can all contribute. We know there is no magic answer, but I have found one way to at least boost my students' self-confidence and get them beyond the initial "new course anxiety."

A Simple Plan

Early in the term, within the first week, I assign a credited "no-brainer" task at which everyone can succeed—on which everyone could get 100% or an A, regardless of prior experience. In my speech classes, for example, I assign a significant open-book/supplemental CD-ROM "quiz," in which they can use either the CD or the textbook to find answers. This activity serves three purposes:

1. It requires students to study exactly what I want them to study in selected chapters within the first week of class.

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*Generations 101: Meet Your Students: The First Time in History Four Generations Work and Learn Together!

Group Name	Birth Years	Population	Traits
The Silents	1925-1945	45 million	Respects authority and structure, stick to it, stay with one organization.
The Boomers	1946-1964	80 million	Maximum Effort, health and wealth important. Learning to find balance, good learners.
The Gen Xers	1965-1976	49 million	Techo-hip, informal, balanced life, quick learners, like diversity.
The Gen Yers, Nexters or Millenials	1977-1994	73.5 million	Need structure, mobile, like fun, optimistic, need quick recognition. Prefer to know the "Why" behind tasks.

*Compiled from: "Generational Diversity—The Nexters," *ARON Journal*, Sept., 2003
"The Next Generation of Workers" Report by The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2007

Early Success

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2. It provides them with an “easy A” on which to build their grade foundation.
3. We can move more quickly when students complete this non-threatening assignment early preparing them to participate in topical discussions.

(No, the assignment is not technically a “quiz,” but labeling it so seems to focus student attention more directly.)

On the very first day of my Survey of Film course, I give my students a “pre-course survey.” Upon completion, they share selected responses in small groups before they turn in their papers. This helps them to break the ice, find common ground, or hear other perspectives on which we continue to build throughout the course.

Everyone gets 10 points just for completing the assignment. I also boldly add “100%” on their paper, and in the next class I announce, “Everyone has an A at this point—now it’s up to you to make it last!”

Isn't This Too Childish?

Do I realize that my students are not little kids, but adults, you ask? Yes. Do I see the nods and smiles and hear “Sweet!” or “All right!” when they hear this? I certainly do. Everyone needs a positive stroke now and then; everyone’s self-esteem benefits by an occasional boost, particularly busy community college students who are often trying to manage (and succeed in) many roles.

Post-secondary educators continually share thoughts about “how to encourage student learning by encouraging students.” This is evidenced by the wealth of related published resources on shelves and online.

Encouragements

In less than five minutes of online searching, for example, you

can find professional peers with advice ranging from verbalizing narrative to descriptive praise for open class participation (instead of general “good job” compliments). For example, I suggest, “That question shows me that you have read the material,” or “I can really see you are applying what we’ve discussed in this drawing.”

In addition, nonverbally showing encouragement with a thumbs up, handshake, or smile directed at the positive action is quite effective.

Off-Track Strategies

Even when responses are totally off track, I make sure I listen directly and try to figure out how students came up with such a response.

Comments like, “**That’s intriguing,**” “**Interesting how you related this information to that experience,**” or “**I can’t wait to find out how you came up with that analogy**” show students that I sincerely value their opinions.

Success Is a Team Effort

Similar comments send the message that we are in this whole learning process together.

To me, student success is not centered on grades or “assessment tests.” Student success is based on learning and growth: academic, professional, and personal.

The rate of this success, as well as the route, varies with each student.

However, if you are open to occasionally changing your own communicative behaviors, you will not only be able to see your students growth, but you will be able to savor the taste of your own success as well.

Win a Cash Prize

Win a cash prize and be published in TFS. How? Enter the Brilliant Ideas contest. Deadline: June 30, 2008. Details at <http://www.teachingforsuccess.com/author-info.html>

Quick Tips:

How to Maximize Knowledge Retention

The most important retention technique is teaching your students to adopt a regular review schedule. Good students have learned to review regularly; poor students have never developed this important learning habit.

Most students fail to review often enough. Here’s a very effective pattern that will produce terrific results. For maximum retention, teach your students to review after:

- One hour
- One day
- One week
- One month
- The end of course

Ways to Structure Knowledge

Part of your job as a teacher is to structure knowledge so that it is easier to learn. Some learners prefer overview to detail and others would rather learn the details and latter synthesize them into a meaningful whole.

There are five common ways to structure knowledge. If you teach for success, you should have these structures clearly in mind, and ready to use to help learners progress more rapidly through your course material.

Be ready to change structures when needed. You’ll know a change is needed when students disengage in class, report confusion, or produce low test scores. The five fundamental forms are:

1. Complexity—simple to intricate.
2. Age—forward or reverse chronological order.
3. Distance—near to far.
4. Solidity—concrete to abstract.
5. View—big picture to details.

Teaching: It's a Brave New World

Jack H. Shrawder,
Publisher, Teaching For Success

What could the Ken Blanchard companies, "2008 Corporate Issues Survey's, a compilation of major issues and trends facing organizations over the past six years have to say to a college instructor or administrator? It speaks volumes I dare say.

Quiz time; do you know what the survey pinpointed as the number-one challenging organizational issue for the sixth year in a row?

Not sure? Let's make it easier.

Multiple-choice:

- A. Wages
- B. Environmental Compliance
- C. Technology Advancements
- D. Competitive Pressure.

The answer is... D.

Competitive Pressure.

So What?

Even if you only follow the popular news media reports, and do not read widely in business publications, pointing the finger at "competitive pressure" as the top challenge of organizations is palpably on target.

World economic competition has drastically escalated to a minute-by-minute, everything-counts international contest for resources and influence. This worldwide struggle for resources, power, and economic gain is beginning to permeate our everyday thinking and doing.

This Blanchard Report continues by listing the

following items that complete a list of the top-five challenges institutions face today:

- Economic challenges
- Growth and expansion
- Skill shortages
- Cultural change



These three hot-button issues come in closely on the heels of competitive pressure. If you are a full-time or part-time educator you know that economic challenges are awakening each of us personally and institutions collectively as suddenly as being thrown in a cold shower at 5 AM.

But Its Only Business Isn't It?

Good question. Would a survey of institutions of higher education yield similar results? Does this list apply to your college or university? I'm guessing, educated guessing, of course, that it would.

Like it or not, the reality is that we live and work in a very competitive world, and the race is on. The choices are: to lead the field, remain stationary, or slide into mediocrity. Choosing either of the last two options leads to

a second-rate or worse economic and social life for all of us.

It should be no secret that colleges and universities are competing for funding, for students, for talented faculty, and for respect and acclaim.

Further as a system, the American higher education system, for the first time in decades, is competing directly with other countries for how many, how well, and how cost-effectively students can be educated to think creatively, do effectively, and wisely choose the best solutions for a better tomorrow.

I lament the trend that America's support of education in general and higher education specifically, seems to be so woefully expressed at least in the forum of today's political rhetoric.

Competition is not only impinging on higher education, but it's also becoming a primary challenge for high schools. The authors of the "Fact Sheet", March 2008 published by the Alliance for Excellent Education describe the situation thusly:

Students from Birmingham and Boston no longer compete against each other for jobs; instead, their rivals are well-educated students from Sydney and Singapore. But as globalization has progressed, American educational progress has stagnated. Today, the United States' high school graduation rate ranks near the bottom among developed nations belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

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Brave New World

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This is scary stuff since far from even 50 percent of all high schools graduates earn a college degree.

According to the NCES report, "The Condition of Education 2007" about 58 percent of high school students continue on to register for at least one college class. This is a marked improvement from 38 percent set in 1971, but still not as high as it needs to be. The percentage of bachelor degree holders among 25-29 year old group is only about 30 percent (Hispanics a disturbing 10 percent.). These rates have been nearly flat since 1995. These numbers seem important if one buys the argument that a bachelor's degree is really minimum preparation for many professional career options.

Work for Solutions

I don't believe in raising consciousness about a problem and not pondering on workable ways to personally act to meet the challenge they represent. At the fundamental level, we can help by focusing some of our personal energy on building a more positive public perception of the critical need to continuously improve education. In fact, it's past time to get active.

For instance, you could become educationally-assertive, and speak out on behalf of education to your community, neighbors, friends, family, business colleagues, fellow faculty, and government representatives at every opportunity. You can speak out at community service clubs, city councils, chamber of commerce's, etc. You can include support ideas in e-mails you write.

Little Things Count

For example, a couple of days ago I took an hour and composed

a pro "pass the school bond" message for the Letters to the Editor section in our local newspaper. I couldn't stand reading all the short-term thinkers, self serving comments about how horrible it would be for our property tax to increase even slightly to pay for school improvements.

So I tried to counter with a powerful supporting good schools and the value of properly educating our future workforce. At parties and receptions, I turn the talk from weather and sports to the value of the local community college to our town. I tell politicians that education is at the top of my list of national and state concerns.

What Can You Do?

Use your network and spread the word about your support and concern with improving all levels of education. Specifically, talk up the benefits of the institution where you teach. Take on the role of higher education promoter and marketer. In your class, work hard to lower attrition: provide flexible assignments, ways to make up a missed class or exam, give frequent, honest feedback, pay attention to your students as individuals and make them feel important and appreciated.

Teaching for success means that you don't buy into the assumption that a 50-percent attrition rate is normal. That level might be considered acceptable for other classes, but if you teach for success, certainly not in yours.

What Can You Do Before Class?

First, set a specific goal of reducing the drop rate this term. Set the goal at a modest 5 or 10 percent reduction in one term. Consider using UID concepts.

Then, grab a yellow pad, or open a simple text editor program on your laptop and write your goal at the top of the sheet or window. Next, list 20 changes that you could make in your class to lower the drop rate. The chances are excellent that somewhere in that list of 20 changes will be at least one idea that will help you meet or exceed your goal.

If you get stuck or have no idea why students drop courses, download, and breeze through a four-page Survey Highlights PDF produced by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement by going to: <http://www.ccsse.org/retention/retention.cfm>

How Low Can You Go?

Next, term go for another 3-, 5-, or 10-percent drop. Make it a personal challenge; see how low you can go. Finally, share your results with your colleagues and of course submit your ideas for publication in *Teaching For Success*. Bottom line, the health of the country, your institution, and your students can be improved by becoming more fully engaged in helping to solve the top educational challenges that we face.

The 1.6 Million Strong Impact

There are 1.6 million faculty hired over all. And as an adjunct or part-time faculty you are one of a group of 600,000 part-time instructors employed nationwide in higher education.

And as a faculty member, you teach a portion of the 11.3 million enrolled college and university students. So even if a small percentage of part-time faculty were to speak out on educational issues and funding, it could make a huge impact.

What could you do? What will you do to promote and improve teaching and learning today in this brave new competitive world?



Success Through Action: Bonus Gold Section

Success requires action. Here's how to get the most benefit from the success concepts in this issue...What's the big Idea?

Big Idea 1. Must-Know UID Concepts for Teaching Special Needs Students in Everyday Courses, pp. 1-2

UID Implementation Success Steps

Before Class UID Activity Checklist

Plan how you will accomplish each of the following:

- ☐ I will create an inviting and stimulating classroom climate by...

- ☐ List the essential outcomes for this class.

- ☐ My expectations for this class are...

- ☐ I can best communicate my expectations to my students by...

- ☐ To master-learn the essential outcomes what practice is needed and what form will it take?

- ☐ In addition to lecture/presentation, I will use the following instructional methods...

- ☐ My students will demonstrate to me mastery of the knowledge by...

- ☐ I can employ technology to enhance learning by...

- ☐ I will encourage faculty-student and student-to-student interaction by...

Big Idea 2. Using the Power of Early Success to Inspire Learners, pp 3-4

When you start a new class immediately choose and assign a significant, but low-stress learning assignment that will provide an early-success experience over a wide range of student abilities. This assignment should:

1. Require students to study exactly what you want them to study in selected readings within the first week of class.
2. Provide them with an opportunity to earn a "success grade" on which to build their grade foundation.
3. Prepare students to move quickly into more challenging assignments with greater confidence.

How to proceed. Introduce and maintain success communications by: dropping the use of general remarks such as, "good job!" Get specific and on target with your communications. Trying using more specific comments similar to:

- "That question shows me that you have read the material."
- "I can really see you are applying what we've discussed in this drawing."

Also, using nonverbal cues is an effective and quick way to communicate encouragement. Try using:

- Thumbs up/ OK sign
- Handshake/High five
- Smile
- Applause

Big Idea 3. Teaching: It's a Brave New World, pp. 5-6

Beat the challenge of increased competition. Check all the items below that you can accomplish in your situation. I can:

- ☐ Use my network and influence to convey the crucial need to support improvement in education.
- ☐ Speak out about the benefits of the institution where I teach.
- ☐ Take on the role of "higher education promoter and marketer" to my students and community.
- ☐ Work to lower attrition rates that waste everyone's time and resources.
- ☐ "Optionize" learning paths by:
 - ☐ Providing flexible assignments.
 - ☐ Adding alternative assessment modes such as papers, reports, journals, exams and other practical learning projects.
 - ☐ Creating convenient but fair ways to make up a missed class or exam.
 - ☐ Devising ways to give students frequent, honest feedback concerning their learning progress strengths and area for improvement.
- ☐ Pay attention to students as individuals and make them feel important and appreciated with communication suggestions in Big Idea 2.

Lower your class drop rate. Make it a fun, personal-challenge project. Proceed by:

- ☐ Constructing a specific goal of reducing the drop rate in your class this term.
- ☐ Setting the goal at a modest 5 or 10 percent reduction in one term.
- ☐ Keeping the effort on a fun personal-challenge level.
- ☐ Grabbing a yellow note pad, or open a simple text editor program on your laptop and write your goal at the top of the sheet or document.
- ☐ Brainstorming 20 changes that you could make in your class to lower the drop rate.
- ☐ Isolating the best idea from your "Idea List"
- ☐ Stuck? See Survey Highlights PDF produced by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement by going to: <http://www.ccsse.org/retention/retention.cfm>
- ☐ Trying for another 3-, 5-, or 10-percent drop next term.
- ☐ Seeing how low you can go.
- ☐ Sharing your results with your colleagues.
- ☐ Submitting your ideas for publication in *Teaching For Success*.

TFS and the Five Critical Success Factors of Good Teaching:

1. Leadership
2. Course/Class Management
3. Communication
4. Instructional Design
5. Evaluation and Testing

What is a Critical Success Factor? A CSF designates a job skill or knowledge area that is so essential to success that failure to master the techniques and principles that describe the particular factor will mean desired outcomes will not be produced.

Look for the Critical Success Factor targeted by each TFS article in header bar of each page.



Good Teaching Vocabulary: Perspicacity

\pur-spuh-KAS-uh-tee, *noun*:

Clearness of understanding or insight; discernment.

Two Growth Questions that Can Change Your World!

Memorize these two powerful improvement questions and then answer each after every class or online session:

- **What did I do right this time?**
- **What can I do better next time?**

Your answers applied to your teaching (or any other life task) today will affect your job performance and personal growth tomorrow.

Would You Like to Be Published?

TFS Needs Your Brilliant Ideas

Why not tell the world how you did it? Whether you have a quick tip or a longer article, just keep your writing on target, condensed, and accessible to part-time faculty. While *TFS* is a professional journal, please don't take the humanness or the humor out of your writing just because we serve an academic audience. We look for writing that is positive, energetic, inclusive, and designed to help instructors improve teaching and learning.