

Universal Design Learning and Design Education

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Abstract

This paper discusses universal design learning in design education, and how engagement, representation, action, and expression enhance student learning. Universal design learning is an approach to pedagogy that is responsive to a wide range of students with diverse learning needs. Moreover, it empowers students' activity, methodology, and motivation. The focus of this paper is on how we teach design courses under the framework of universal design learning. Teaching design approaches and working practices are strategies that teachers can utilize to deliver the content in a design course in multiple and creative ways. Therefore, teaching design approaches, like problem-based learning, blended, experiential, and collaborative learning are discussed. Moreover, working practices that apply in a classroom environment are discussed as well. These are demonstrations, online access, working in groups, criticism and feedback, and design experimentation. The above teaching design approaches and practices are reflected in several students' design projects that include a polymorphic pencils' box, a foldable lighting fixture, a small portable shelf, and a collapsible coffee table. The study provides design educators with the concept of universal design learning and its immediate relationship with current ways of design teaching. It is acknowledged that the term universal design derives from Design and Architecture disciplines.

Keywords: approaches, practices, project, studio, teaching