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ARTICLE

High-Impact Practices, Universal Design and Assessment Opportunities in Liberal Arts Seminars

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This paper explains several teaching strategies derived from the Universal Design for Learning movement and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research in High-Impact Educational Practices, especially the work of George Kuh. Two broad themes unite the successful approaches: creating opportunities for intellectual practice through cycles of feedback and establishing relationships between student and instructors, as well as among student peers, throughout the course of a semester. Furthermore, assignments and learning outcomes are enhanced when expectations are made extremely clear through multiple means, including rubrics and labeling of taxonomies of learning. The author argues that employing these methods creates better learning outcomes for all students, not only those with official accommodations. The author uses practical examples from seminar courses in Asian studies and art history to demonstrate specific ways these strategies can be employed to improve student outcomes over the course of a semester.

When we teach courses about Asia to students without experience in the field, creating meaningful assignments which do not overwhelm them can be a particular challenge. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is expanding with new insights to help us understand what makes strong assessments and how to provide the richest possible educational experience to students we may only have in our classrooms for a single semester. Specific ideas, such as using High-Impact Educational Practices (HIP) to create learner-centered courses, and incorporating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into course assessments, help provide models and inspiration for ensuring that both creative digital assignments and more traditional writing assignments provide students with the best possible learning environment. Research related to High-Impact Educational Practices and Universal Design for Learning reinforces the benefits of some strategies well known to experienced educators, and introduces new methodological approaches which may be particularly helpful to junior faculty developing their pedagogy. This article will use two assignments from my own teaching to explore practical ways that best practices from pedagogical research can be incorporated to demonstrably improve student outcomes in writing assignments.

I teach art history and Asian studies in the honors college of a large, public university. Honors College is a small program within the university that offers a liberal arts, seminar, and writing-intensive experience to top students from colleges and departments across the university. Because of this structure, students come from a variety of disciplines and even in upper-level courses may be encountering a subject or disciplinary approach for the first time. This is especially noticeable in my Asian studies courses, because opportunities in Asian studies are limited. The mission of the institution, to provide access to a college education for students from all backgrounds, also means that even smart, motivated students often come from high schools which inadequately prepared them to make the transition to college. These students need guidance and support to perform to their potential. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and approaches from Universal Design for Learning can offer productive ways to provide that support. Incorporating the goals of Universal Design for Learning into assignments (and the course structure in general) has proven to be one way to guide these students while still expecting them to meet the high academic rigor of our program.

Universal Design for Learning is an outgrowth of the Universal Design movement to create buildings and physical environments that can be comfortable for anyone, regardless of their physical needs. UDL originally referred to ways of making courses accessible for all students irrespective of their disability status. Rather than students seeking accommodations to help them function successfully, instructors build courses to be accessible to all students, regardless of any additional need. Burgstahler suggests that when UDL is functioning perfectly, an instructor would never need to know who in the class had a disability or required any kind of accommodation (see for example 2015b, 196). She also argues, "Simply stated, good teaching for students with disabilities is good teaching for all students" (2015a, 49). An important feature of UDL is offering multiple means of access to information and opportunities for students to demonstrate confidence (see for example Gordon, Meyer, and Rose 2010, 7; Kumar and Wideman 2014). Furthermore, UDL is important because evidence suggests many students who could benefit from accommodations do not request them (see for example Davies, Schelly, and Spooner 2013, 196). Universal Design for Learning and best practices from The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning can be brought together to create assignments that help us support our students to excel as much as possible and enrich their learning experiences in our courses. This is especially important as they are making a transition into college-level academic work or to a new subject area like Asian studies. Using Universal Design for Learning helps give all students the opportunity to be successful.

High-Impact Educational Practices and the work of George Kuh present concrete ways we can understand what makes successful learning experiences for our students and reveal features we should seek to incorporate into course and assessment design (Kuh 2008; Kuh and O'Donnell 2013). Kuh originally identified ten practices:

1) first-year seminars and experiences,
2) common intellectual experiences,
3) learning communities,
4) writing-intensive courses,
5) collaborative assignments and projects,
6) undergraduate research,
7) diversity/global learning,
8) service learning/community-based learning,
9) internships, and
10) capstone courses and projects

(Kuh 2008, 9–11). His recent research has added an additional practice that reflects the growing use of technology in education; he recognizes the successful use of ePortfolio as a High-Impact Educational Practice (see Kuh 2017; Eynon and Gambino 2017). This is the first HIP that specifically acknowledges the way technology and digital assignments are changing the classroom. However, he sees ePortfolio as important for its process, not merely for its technology (Kuh et al. 2018, 16). We can control some of these practices at the classroom level while others need greater support within departments, colleges and universities.

Honors College courses inherently use two of the practices – first-year seminars and writing-intensive courses. As an Asianist, my courses offer global or diversity learning and I strive to include that in my non-Asian art history courses as well. Other practices, such as learning communities, clearly go beyond what a single instructor can provide in an individual course. However, awareness of larger practices can help us bring some of their features into the classroom. When designing a single humanities course, we can most readily draw upon the practices of writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, diversity and global learning, service learning/community-based learning, and ePortfolio. Multiple high-impact practices reinforce each other, so Asian studies courses that can incorporate at least one additional practice are already able to offer extra enrichment for students. The classroom experience and relationship between teacher and student underpin High-Impact Educational Practices. According to Kuh, one of the benefits seen from several of these practices is the close relationship generated between students and faculty (2008, 14) that improves learning outcomes for students. High-Impact Educational Practices are also important because, while they offer advantages to all students, they disproportionately improve results for underserved students (Kuh 2008, 17–19). UDL also improves outcomes for all students, regardless of disability status (see for example Al-Azawei, Serenelli, and Lundqvist 2016, 51). Thinking about High-Impact Educational Practices in conjunction with Universal Design for Learning can help instructors create assessments which not only evaluate student learning, but enhance it as much as possible. We can look to pedagogical research to reveal

what makes these practices successful and how to incorporate those strategies into other approaches as well. Combined, these methods support students while also encouraging rigorous academic work.

The assignment series from my introductory honors seminar, *Samurai and Geisha: Understanding Japan*, presents a concrete example combining strategies including High-Impact Educational Practices and UDL which results in demonstrably positive outcomes for students. The first section of the course addresses the history of samurai. When that section is mostly complete, students are required to write an evidence paper defining "What is a Samurai?" Their evidence should be drawn entirely from course readings, so they have already had a chance to practice analyzing and evaluating all the material that will form the foundation for their paper. This is titled an "evidence" paper to make the learning goals clear; that students will apply content directly from the course rather than their personal opinions or impressions from popular culture. Because students have already practiced identifying evidence through class discussions and short written assignments, scaffolding for the assignment begins with peer review of a drafted paper. Peer review is a low-stakes public presentation and collaborative project related to significant learning outcomes. Students are randomly assigned at the beginning of the semester into small groups for two brief collaborative assignments. Those same groups are used for the first peer review so students will already have an established relationship with the members of the group. For peer review of a later assignment, they are intentionally split into different groups so students can be exposed to new perspectives from both the evaluation of their own writing and the approaches of their peers. Students are guided through the feedback process by a questionnaire which encourages positive feedback, identifies specific weaknesses, and introduces the rubric which will later be used to evaluate their completed papers for a grade (see Appendix A). Students take the feedback from their peers, revise their draft into the final version, and submit it to me. I provide extensive feedback on the final version, but do not actually assign a grade. After receiving my comments, all students are required to meet with me to review feedback. The rewritten version is evaluated with the same rubric used in peer review, and is assigned a grade. I am careful to call the peer-reviewed version the

"draft" and the version submitted to me "final" because some students might delay serious work on the assignment until the last stage – when they will see a grade.

The third paper in the course comes at the end of the semester and is also an evidence paper, this time defining "geisha" (they wrote a second paper on a different topic between the two evidence papers). This allows students to practice a format with which they are familiar and from which they have already received feedback. The rubric for the final evidence paper is virtually identical to the rubric for the first paper. Because the course is ending, formal peer review and rewriting of papers is not feasible. At this point, however, I hope students have had a chance to practice the skills necessary to complete a successful paper on the first submission, and that they have formed relationships with classmates enabling them to organize their own peer-review groups. I cancel one class and extend my office hours shortly before papers are due to ensure that all students who wish to can meet with me to discuss their papers in progress. The final paper is due on the last day of class and no final exam is given in the course. It would also be practical to make the paper due sometime during final exam period, such as during the designated exam time for the course. Because this paper is a natural outgrowth of course discussion, I prefer to have it due on the last day of class to keep continuity in the students' thought processes over the semester. Students have expressed that they like completing the work for this course before the crunch of exams for their other courses.

This assignment sequence (clearly defining learning goals; offering practice, feedback and scaffolding; using rubrics; and public presentation) offers a tangible example that can lead to strong learning outcomes for students in small seminars. Furthermore, the amount of writing (approximately 30 pages including revisions) qualifies the class as a writing-intensive course. Students also benefit from other High-Impact Educational Practices including first-year seminars and diversity/global learning. Of 27 students in two sections who completed the course in the fall of 2016 without major problems,[1] the median improvement between the first paper and the

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[1] A plagiarism case was removed from the data set. Tardy penalties were also removed from two grades to more accurately reflect student skills.

third paper was four points. In my grading scheme, that is enough to represent a letter-grade step at most intervals, i.e. from a B+ to an A-. The four-point spread is even more significant than the raw number suggests. The grade on the first paper was from the revised version, not the initial version submitted to me. Many students made vast improvements between these two versions. Furthermore, in my opinion, the sources for the second evidence paper were harder to use than those for the first evidence paper. Crafting a strong paper required more intellectual creativity the second time.

Clearly connecting assignments to specific learning outcomes helps make those assignments more beneficial for students by visibly communicating to them the intended emphasis for each assignment. Bloom's taxonomy of learning is still the common vocabulary for these types of learning (Bloom 1956). His categories of learning (from least complicated to most complicated) are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.[2] These categories move from simple tasks such as rote memorization for an exam to more sophisticated approaches which need to be evaluated through more complicated assignments. More recently, Fink offers a relational taxonomy in which the types of learning intersect rather than build upon each other (2013). His terms are foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn. Applying these terms helps us articulate to both ourselves and the students what we want them to gain from assignments. They make the goals and meaning of the assignment clear, which is part of UDL. Using Bloom's graduated scale also helps students and teachers understand the relative difficulty of learning tasks, which can be used to check that the difficulty level of an assignment is appropriate for its place within the larger course structure. In the *Samurai and Geisha* course, the evidence paper reflects Bloom's synthesis and his evaluation learning outcomes. In Fink's model, it reflects application and integration. Using the learning outcome in the title of the paper can immediately signal to students the instructor's expectations.

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[2] Anderson and Krathwohl's revision changed some of the terms and placed synthesis at the top (2001). See also Fink 2013, 33.

In art history courses, I often assign students the typical art history project of a research paper about a work of art. However, it is not identified just as a "research" assignment or the very generic "paper" but as a synthesis assignment. This communicates that while my students must perform research as part of this assignment (and specific requirements for that are outlined), they are not merely to gather facts about their work of art (which might be 'knowledge', 'comprehension' or even 'application'). The final paper must demonstrate that they can bring together approaches and arguments from multiple sources and place them in dialogue with each other. As reflected in Bloom's taxonomy, this is a harder task than only understanding the material. Fink posits that significant learning happens when students are guided to go beyond content-level knowledge (2013, 38). Calling the assignment an "evidence paper" or a "synthesis paper" helps students understand that the goal of the assignment is to move beyond basic knowledge and comprehension to apply their own critical thinking to the project. Carefully defining these assignments and articulating goals to the students increases the likelihood that they will experience the kind of significant learning desired.[3]

Part of carefully defining assignments is creating strong rubrics to support them. Rubrics can be an incredibly useful tool for guiding students though assignments. The clear guidance they offer to students shows a specific way UDL-assignment design benefits all students in the classroom. A good rubric can help lead students through a complicated project and actually teach them skills as they follow it. A rubric also helps ensure there is no misunderstanding about expectations for the students. This is a particular concern for instructors like me whose students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and disciplines. Diligent students could incorrectly assume that expectations for similar papers in other courses are the same as in honors courses. A solid rubric helps students understand disciplinary differences in requirements for a research paper or other assignment. Rubrics also help meet goals for UDL by ensuring instructions are clear (Ketterlin-Geller, Johnstone, and Thurlow 2015, 167–8); they ensure that the grade reflects the students' mastery of the material or

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[3] See Ambrose et al. 2010 on clarifying goals. Instructors often underestimate their clarity.

skill, not their comprehension of the instructions (Ketterlin-Geller, Johnstone, and Thurlow 2015, 171). Rubrics also present information about the assignment in an alternative way than the assignment prompt, which is central to UDL (Kumar and Wideman 2014, 130). For all students, rubrics clarify the instructors' goals for the course, which makes written assignments more meaningful (Ambrose et al. 2010, 145). Rubrics used in this way are not primarily about assessing student performance; instead, they articulate for students what is expected of their performance. In a UDL framework, prompts and rubrics are two of the multiple means used to communicate an assignment. A solid rubric, thus, seems even more critical for a creative assignment where the process and final product may be more unfamiliar to students than for "typical" papers. Rubrics also demonstrate the intellectual rigor necessary to complete these projects; they are not just "fun" assignments (although they can be that, too). For high-achieving students in Honors College, in particular, anxiety about the expectations of an assignment is common. Using a UDL approach to communicate the parameters of the assignment in multiple ways helps reduce that anxiety.

For written assignments in the humanities, I have found rubrics with built-in point systems too confining to properly capture my evaluation of students' work.[4] Instead, I use a text-based rubric with criteria and descriptions of how it can be met, or common ways a student might fail to excel. I use a table format, with the criteria on the left side (arranged mostly in order of importance) and levels of performance along the top of the grid (see Appendix B). The four default levels are "Exemplary," "Proficient," "Weak," and "Underdeveloped." Whenever possible, I retitle these levels to help reinforce course content. For example, on the rubric for the samurai evidence paper in my *Samurai and Geisha* course, the levels are "Shogun," "Daimyo," "Hatamoto," and "Gokenin," reflecting ranks of the samurai class. The levels do not correspond directly to a letter grade, although naturally a paper which meets all the criteria of the Exemplary level will receive an A (at least 95 points). It is

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[4] For a useful example of a rubric with points that don't correspond to grade percentages, see Bean 2011, 279–282.

quite common for students' performance to cross levels within a single criterion. For example, a student may propose a clear thesis (proficient) but inadequately support it (weak). Comments can be marked in multiple grid boxes as necessary and additional comments appended if the students' performance does not match the scenarios envisioned on the rubric. The rubric does not replace comments on the paper itself, but it does help limit repeatedly writing the same thing on multiple papers. More generally, the rubric system allows me to grade more efficiently by providing students with substantive comments relatively quickly.

Scaffolding provides another essential step in creating learning-centered assignments that support UDL. Through scaffolding, students practice discrete parts of the assignment before being responsible for putting them together into the larger project or getting feedback on the assignment while it is in process (see Ambrose et al. 2010, 133). Scaffolding is an important characteristic of a learning-centered approach (Junisbai 2014, 344) and is also essential for UDL (Gordon, Meyer, and Rose 2010, 109). All students can benefit by working on pieces of a high-stakes assignment. In the art history synthesis assignment discussed above, the first step is a quick credit/no credit in-class assignment in which, at the end of class, students submit a single source found during research instruction by a librarian from the university library and explain why it looks promising. This allows the instructor to immediately determine if the student can identify a scholarly source and at the same time correct students who have an early misunderstanding, either about sources or the content of the assignment. It also allows students to practice and solidify their learning of a skill which was just demonstrated for them in class by a librarian. The first graded step is an annotated bibliography. Each entry contains a summary (what the text is about), an assessment (how the text functions), and a reflection (how is the text useful for the student).[5] Students are required to evaluate more sources for the bibliography than they will include in their final paper. This helps students understand that a source can be interesting and appropriate without fitting into the scheme of their

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[5] I use the sample annotated bibliographies on the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) as models for my students. See https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/1/.

project. The annotated bibliography stage enables students to practice evaluating and analyzing sources before combining them into the written paper. It also provides another opportunity for instructor feedback to redirect misguided students and challenge top-performing students with additional suggestions. By breaking these steps into component parts, it reduces the "cognitive load" on students as they are learning. Before the final submission, students have already received feedback about the quality of their sources and the individual student's interpretations of their sources. This frees them to only focus on one step at a time: learning the technical skills of research; then comprehension and interpretation; before advancing to synthesis of the material. Ambrose and her collaborators have shown that students perform better when they can focus on one or two learning goals at a time (2010, 105). The cognitive load should be reduced for parts of the assignment that are not the learning goal (Ambrose et al. 2010, 106). Scaffolding allows a more complex assignment without overwhelming students. Even students who do not have any kind of accommodation benefit from working in this way. In particular, students who are studying Asia for the first time may already feel overcome by unfamiliar subject matter and confusing names. Reducing their cognitive load helps focus their energy on the learning goals of the assignments.

In the case of the assignment sequence for the *Samurai and Geisha* course, scaffolding occurs within individual assignments and through the three papers (two evidence and one comparison) written throughout the semester. All three papers are drawn from course readings rather than research, so students can focus their cognitive load on practicing written analysis rather than research or evaluating new sources. Introductory research skills are practiced through a separate assignment that focuses on content knowledge, rather than analysis. Students have a formal peer review opportunity on the first and second papers, but not the third; this graduates them into greater responsibility. Students are required to rewrite the first paper to experience the value of that process. They are not required to rewrite the second paper, but are strongly encouraged to do so and many students do. The third paper is the only one for which students cannot submit a rewrite because the paper is due at the end of the semester. These conditions create a cycle of practice and feedback

that is significant in improving learning outcomes (Ambrose et al. 2010, 126). While scaffolding is extremely useful for teaching students what the proper stages of a project should be, a disadvantage is that it does not allow them to practice developing their own plan (Ambrose et al. 2010, 207). Presumably, that practice will be offered in another semester in a course without assignment scaffolding.

These scaffolding examples demonstrate two other factors that make a significant difference in learning outcomes – practice and feedback. Just as students need to practice their sports or musical skills, they also need to practice their academic skills (Ambrose et al. 2010, 124–36). This metaphor will perhaps resonate with many students. Practice and improvement, however, often occur over longer periods of time than just a semester. For instructors working within the context of one class in a single semester, the key is to create opportunities for effective practice and feedback within that compressed timeline (Ambrose et al. 2010, 136). Scaffolding is one method for creating practice by breaking out component parts. Scaffolding works well when it guides students through the assignment, with each stage becoming more complex and incorporating aspects of the earlier stages. When parts build upon each other, students can practice skills used early in the assignment at later stages and in more sophisticated ways. That is the intention behind the scaffolding for my art history research/synthesis paper. Students gradually take on more cognitive load at each step of the process so they can practice skills leading into the final product. In the case of the *Samurai and Geisha* evidence papers, the second paper allows them to practice a format in which they have already received feedback. The feedback cycle in scaffolding also brings the instructor and student into regular, direct contact either through face-to-face meetings or written comments. Developing productive relationships between students and instructors is one beneficial feature of both High-Impact Educational Practices and UDL.

Another method for intellectual practice is rewriting papers. As scholars, we know that good writing happens in revision and we hope (or assume) that students are not turning in their first drafts. Students, however, may not have internalized into their processes the usefulness of rewriting. Formalizing revision into the grading

scheme, either as part of assignment scaffolding or as a stand-alone component, allows us to model best practices for students and enables them to experience the benefits of improving a paper through revision. In Honors College, instructors are strongly encouraged to offer opportunities for rewriting all but the final assignment in the semester. Some instructors build a draft and a final version of papers into their syllabi, while others encourage an initial version and a rewrite. Required rewrites are more common in our introductory-level courses than in upper-division courses. Rewrites may not prevent students from submitting their first draft for the first deadline (either to peer review with classmates or directly to the instructor), but they do ensure that students will have a second opportunity to review their writing and, it is hoped, improve it. If papers are submitted electronically, the instructor will already have the first version available, but for hard copy submissions it is helpful to have the students resubmit their original paper (with the instructor's comments) along with the rewrite. Finally, students can be asked to highlight the changes they made between their original submission and the rewrite or to even write a statement about the changes (see Ambrose et al. 2010, 152). These methods encourage students' metacognition – to think about what they are learning and to reinforce the lessons learned during their academic practice. For students to have the best outcome from rewriting, the instructor must commit to thorough and constructive feedback which can guide students in their rewriting. Feedback also benefits students by helping them to develop closer relationships with faculty, which is a feature of High-impact Educational Practices (Kuh 2008, 14). In my introductory-level courses, I require students to meet with me to discuss feedback on their first major writing assignment (I cancel class to make time for this on both my part and the students'). In addition to providing them assistance with improving the paper, this establishes the practice of visiting during my office hours and having direct conversations with me that encourage the development of our instructor/student relationship. Rewrites and feedback also benefit from carefully using rubrics to articulate expectations.

Providing students with opportunities to "publicly demonstrate competence" further contributes to significant learning (Buyarski and Landis 2014, 50; also

Kuh and O'Donnell 2013). There are ways to incorporate a public component into assignments without formal presentations. Peer review is one straightforward way to do this, for which we often do not make time in our courses. Peer review has the advantage of not only providing a context for the student to present their work to others, but it also allows them to get productive feedback on their work. While students may have had experiences with peer review in high school, it is important to explain the purpose and significance of peer review to earn their commitment to the process (see Vu and Dall'Alba 2007). Peer review can be guided through a targeted worksheet and the rubric for the assignment (see Appendix C). I also talk explicitly about my own experiences in writing groups so they understand this is not just a classroom exercise but a professional skill. Furthermore, I emphasize that good writing happens in collaboration, rather than with the author/scholar in isolation. It is easy to see the advantage of modeling academic behavior and sharing our own work processes with graduate students, but undergraduates can benefit from the same perspectives. Peer review also ties into creating opportunities to practice academic skills. The more opportunities students have to revisit and rewrite a paper within a semester, the stronger they can make it; hopefully, this will also lead to increased learning.

Students regularly report positive experiences with these assignments. Throughout my individual conferences with students, they comment on the helpfulness of peer review both for the feedback on their own writing and the opportunity to see their peers' perspectives on the material. A particular student disclosed that she always considered herself a good writer and had never received as much feedback as the rubric and comments provided. She was grateful for the guidance to understand what she was doing well, as well as the guidance for improvement. In the course evaluations from the fall 2016 cohort of *Samurai and Geisha*, numerous students stated that they felt their writing skills had improved. Other comments which reflected on the written assignments included: "The papers and peer reviewing were very helpful," and "Assignments were clear but left room for individual ideals/creativity," and "Writing papers has never come easily to me (which is why I'm an engineering major) but I think this course really expanded my

ability as well as confidence when writing academically."[6] The students' self-reported improvements match the data from the grades that semester.

Over all, students of all kinds benefit from more specific assignments rather than the typical "term paper." This shift away from term papers is also reflected in Universal Design for Learning approaches to student assessment. As a scholar and teacher, I still see great value in assigning large writing and research projects. These assignments help students solidify knowledge and learn many of the skills we would like them to gain from a liberal arts education. However, an unmodified term paper without features of High-Impact Educational Practices, Universal Design for Learning or other successful pedagogical strategy does not generate the best possible learning outcomes for our students (see also Walvoord 2014, 83 *passim*). A large assignment due at the end of the semester without intermediate steps or unrelated to earlier assignments in the semester does not provide opportunities for practice and feedback or for stimulating metacognition in students (Walvoord 2014, 64). By guiding students more directly through the successful completion of their assignments, we also have an opportunity to frame the intellectual work of the assignment as the most important part of process, not correct formatting and the proper number of pages, however they are produced. Designing the course schedule to allow for the major assignment or project to be due two-thirds or three-quarters of the way through the term provides space for optional or required rewriting of the assignment. That also opens space at the end of the course to try more creative or experimental assignments. For example, the art history synthesis assignment discussed above is the major assignment of the course and is due in week 12 of 15. Papers are returned at the beginning of week 13 and students can re-submit at the end of week 14. A more creative assignment is due in week 15. There is also some sneaky scaffolding for this assignment built into the previous one; students need to perform research for their creative assignment, a skill they practice in the research-heavy synthesis assignment. This enables me to teach (and students to practice) the typical art history skills of a research paper on a work of art without creating

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[6] Course evaluations are on file in the department administrative office.

conditions that encourage last minute writing and plagiarism so often found in a term paper. Selfishly, that also means students do their most intensive work for my course when they are less distracted by final papers, projects, and exams in other courses. This model only works in a small seminar when students' other courses are mostly large lectures which would not use a similar approach.

As this paper has shown, inspiration from Universal Design for Learning and other new approaches to teaching enlivens the assessments we use to measure student performance and creates assignments in which the process of executing them is as much the focus as the final outcome. I hope that the suggestions in this article will encourage some instructors who have moved away from assigning research-based projects and papers to reconsider using research within the framework of Universal Design for Learning. Two themes that unite many successful approaches are practice (through scaffolding and rewriting) and relationships that students develop with their instructors and peers as they respond to feedback throughout the academic term. Often these successful strategies are things many of us do by instinct. However, applying research from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning can help us clarify whether what we are doing works well for all students. The strategies discussed in this paper generally work best in small courses in which the instructor is able to devote more than minimal time to grading and providing feedback. However, some of the ideas can also be adopted in larger courses. Methods such as the ones outlined above can guide us to provide students with the maximum opportunity to challenge themselves and experience significant learning. Strong assessment design is as crucial to learning outcomes as content design.

Additional Files

The additional files for this article can be found as follows:

- **Appendix A.** Evidence paper, rubric example. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/ane.284.s1
- **Appendix B.** Synthesis paper, rubric example. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/ane.284.s1
- **Appendix C.** Peer-review feedback questionnaire. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/ane.284.s1

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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