



Laura Guido-Clark
Principal, Laura Guido-Clark Design
Us™ Chair Family Colors Q&A

Q. How did you begin the design process for developing the colors of the new Us™ chair family of products?

As contextual designers, we first explored the most recent data with regard to educational design. One source of information was a book called “The Third Teacher,” which deems the environment so important to learning that it is considered a “teacher.” We also incorporated Rudolph Steiner’s research on color’s impact on learning for specific ages. Our research and investigation told us that color is a major design factor that can help create enriched learning environments, which in turn enhances a student’s ability to learn, collaborate, concentrate, invent and perform a number of other important tasks. Research showed that bright colors can be effective in areas where students need to be stimulated and learn new information. Softer, cooler colors can be introduced in areas where students need to relax and be more focused.

Once we understood the context, we then developed a theory on how to treat color. For example, we began looking at neutrals for contemplative learning settings and intense or saturated colors for more active, stimulated learning settings.

Q. How did this work differ from any assignments/projects you’ve had in the past? Were there any special considerations you had to take into account?

This was the first time we’ve been asked to concentrate on a product for the education market, which was a wonderful opportunity for extended research. As far as considerations, we were mindful of the furniture designer, the company, who they are, what they had to say and what heritage they brought to the project.

Q. How would you describe the overall colors or the color palette you finally settled on, and how do they fit with the design aesthetic of the chair?

We believe there is something wonderful about the heritage/modern design of the chair. As a result, we created a palette which has hint of nostalgia but is also very forward thinking. This palette is not defined by time or place – in fact, it aligns nicely with the overall product design intent by Studio Weber to transcend people, place and time. The color palette is very relevant.

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Q. What was the process you used for creating the individual color names?

As mentioned, our research showed us that visual stimulation has lots of benefits to the learning process and the learning environment. We learned that color variety reduces boredom and passivity. Therefore, we created a really robust color palette in which the color names are very descriptive. We wanted people to immediately understand the color from the name and evoke a sense of emotional trigger. For instance, fresh cut lawn conjures great spring or summertime images. People will see that the palette is very nature based.

Q. From a color perspective, what do you think are the greatest benefits to a user who will be specifying this product?

I think they will have an enormous amount of fun playing with the palette, as all the colors work synergistically together. Designers can select from one or five colors and make them work. Also, I think they will feel tremendous pride in the ability to impact learning and enable people to feel the way in which the environment was purposefully designed to meet a learning need.

Q. What was your greatest thrill in working on this project?

The relationship forged between American Seating, Studio Weber & Associates and LG-C Design. Everyone was wonderfully collaborative with dedicated intentions of creating something special. We were united in our common cause and I'm very proud of the outcome.

About Laura Guido-Clark

Principal Laura Guido-Clark of LG-C Design based in Berkeley, Calif., is an expert in the skin of consumer products – their colors, materials and finish. In addition to textile design, Laura is the rare color and finish consultant whose expertise includes heavy manufacturing industries such as automotive, electronics and appliances. She has worked with such notable clients as Kodak, HP, Mattel, LG, Toyota and FLOR to design products that resonate with consumers and succeed in competitive markets.

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