

## Chemical Product Design – Customer Empathy Activity

**Content Area:** An important part of product design is being able to get an understanding for how our customer values and or uses a product. This activity seeks to demonstrate to students what it would be like for them to be a customer and the types of experiences they may have when interacting with a new product. It then takes the activity one step further by putting them in a situation where they have a “handicap” that typically they might not think about when approaching design.

**Learning Objective:** Students will be able to critically evaluate a product and describe which features are distracting and not pertinent to product use. Students will be able to re-design features on an existing product to enable them to offer utility for a different customer group.

### **Activity:**

Part 1: Students break up into groups of 4 – 5 and are given an example of a bad clock radio (without instructions). They are told that they have the next 5 minutes to be able to figure out how to set the time on the clock and then to set a radio alarm for 6 am.

Part 2: Students are provided with thick construction gloves and asked to repeat the same tasks that they had previously performed with the clock radio. (This part of the activity is meant to simulate for students what it would be like to be an older individual with arthritis).

### **Debrief Questions:**

Part 1:

- What types of positive and negative features did you find on the clock radio?
- Did you have any trouble finding the necessary buttons to set the time and the radio alarm?
- What were some surprising features that you noticed about this product?
- What would you have done differently if you were placed in charge of designing the product?

Part 2:

- Did you find it more difficult to do the tasks required when wearing the gloves? If so, why?
- What do you think the use of the gloves was meant to simulate in this context?
- How could you modify the design to enable it to be easier for this type of customer?

**Timing:** This activity occurs in two parts with debrief activities both at the middle and end of the activity. Each component (not including debrief) should last about 5 minutes in length. The debrief portions will be targeted to take between 5 – 10 minutes depending on the discussion that is generated.