2012-2013 Assessment Report  
Program: Art, Lib Arts, BA  
College of Liberal Arts  
Art  
Art, Lib Arts, BA

Expected Outcome 1 Students will solve problem-based art assignments

Students will solve problem-based art assignments demonstrating the ability to synthesize formal elements, techniques, and where appropriate, concept.

Assessment Method 1: scoring rubric

Assessment Method Description

In the ARTS 4850 Professional Practices course, students prepare a visual presentation of a selection of their most accomplished artwork from a range of prior studio art courses, and an oral presentation describing it; they are expected to discuss the methods and concepts represented. Students are also assigned reflective writing exercises, describing the intentions of their artwork and placing it in historical context. This course assignment rotates among several studio art faculty; we have adopted departmental guidelines to ensure that each version of the course contains the appropriate assignments and expectations, and uses analogous assessment practices. The expected program outcomes are evaluated by the instructor using a rubric (below.) For this review, all BA majors in the spring 2013 offering of ARTS 4850 (14 students) were evaluated.

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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>BA Outcome 1: Students will solve problem-based art assignments demonstrating the ability to synthesize formal elements, techniques, and where appropriate concept.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly accomplished</td>
<td>Accomplished</td>
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<tr>
<td>The student’s work exhibits technical abilities. (Professional Studio Practices portfolio presentation through visual and oral presentation)</td>
<td>Student’s work exhibits highly refined technical ability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The student’s work integrates the formal elements of art. (Professional Studio Practices portfolio through visual and oral presentation)</td>
<td>Assignments are solved with an excellent understanding and highly refined use of the formal elements of art.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The student’s work integrates concept with technical and formal components. (Professional Studio Practices portfolio presentation through visual and oral presentation)</td>
<td>Conceptual solutions are highly inventive and original. Concepts are uniquely conveyed and are integrated in a sophisticated manner with technical and formal components.</td>
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This course is required of all BA Studio Art students, and is designed as a
capstone course for them. As such, it is the best opportunity in our BA curriculum to evaluate these students comparatively, and provides a good overview of attainment. There is the less-than-ideal circumstance that students are not required to take the course in their final semester, and thus some are better prepared for portfolio production than others.

Findings

Findings below indicate a near-universal attainment of benchmark expectations for art-making competence, but significant range. Our BA studio degree is more general and less studio-intensive than our BFA (50 hours of art and art history courses, vs. 82 in the BFA), and students use it to advance a range of career goals. Some of these majors achieve a high degree of technical proficiency in a single medium and a focused studio practice, and others seek a generalist’s acquaintance with our several media areas. This is seen to create significant variation in student performance.

We examined these goals within the expected outcome:

- For technical attainment in at least one art medium, 21% were rated highly accomplished, 35% were judged accomplished, and 44% were rated at our benchmark for appropriate competency.

- For understanding of and ability to successfully utilize the formal aspects of art, 28% were rated highly accomplished, 63% were considered accomplished, 14% were judged as at our benchmark for appropriate attainment.

- In their ability to develop sophisticated conceptual content in their artwork, and to integrate it well with the formal and technical aspects of their work, 35% were rated accomplished, 56% were seen as at our benchmark for appropriate attainment, and 7% were rated below expectations.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We have discussed these findings in our annual assessment meeting, and in our departmental assessment and curriculum committees. Findings indicate quite good instruction and learning in technical and formal aspects of studio art practice. Performance was lower in the student’s ability to generate and articulate conceptual content in their artwork. We hope to improve performance in two ways. We are increasing opportunity for discipline-specific writing in several studio art courses at all levels of the curriculum. We believe that greater expectation for such writing will help students produce more thoughtful consideration of concepts and content in their artwork. We organized a departmental meeting to share writing assignments and instructional approaches for teaching reflective
writing in studio courses among faculty. And we are advising BA students, who are not compelled to declare an area of concentration, to focus enough of their coursework on a single media area (painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, sculpture or ceramics) to allow technical and conceptual attainment.

The Department of Art is an early-adopter of the QEP ePortfolio initiative, and all our majors will soon be expected to document, and make available to faculty, examples of their best work (visual and written) from a range of courses. We are tailoring our ePortfolio efforts to address needs observed in this round of assessment. Our ePortfolio expectations will foreground reflective writing on the student’s collected body of work, bringing greater attention to issues of concept and historical context. We are planning for ePortfolio presentations and workshops this academic year to teach best practices to all our majors.

**Expected Outcome 2 students demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the arts and aesthetics.**

Through oral presentations and writing assignments in ARTS 4850 Professional Practices, students demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the arts and aesthetics.

**Assessment Method 1:**
**Assessment Method Description**
In ARTS 4850 Professional Practices, which serves as the capstone course for the BA in studio art, all students are required to produce several examples of professional, discipline-specific writing, and an oral presentation describing intentions and concepts in their artwork. These writings and presentations are evaluated by the instructor using a rubric (below.)
Findings

These assessment criteria articulate expectations for awareness of historical and contemporary art practice and incorporation of this knowledge into the student’s artwork. Our BA majors take a minimum of 15 hours of art history courses from ancient to contemporary, and a broad distribution of studio courses; all students in this cohort demonstrated a good grounding in aesthetic appreciation. We saw good understanding of the methods and media used to create original work, but less uniform fluency in conceptual and contextual aspects of the artwork.

We examined these aspects of the expected outcome:

- In the student’s ability to demonstrate an understanding of key methods, media, and forms relevant to the artwork presented, 7% were highly accomplished, 84% were accomplished, and 7% were at our benchmark for appropriate attainment.

- In awareness and understanding of concepts relevant to the artwork presented, 7% were considered highly accomplished, 21% were considered accomplished, 70% were rated at our benchmark for appropriate attainment.

- In the student’s ability to utilize knowledge of relevant historical periods and/or contemporary art practices to discuss their own artwork, 7% were seen as highly accomplished, 28% seen as accomplished, and 56% as at our benchmark for appropriate attainment.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We discussed these findings in our annual assessment meeting. We see evidence that students are generally gaining understanding of and competence in essential art making practices as a way of culturing and
deepening aesthetic appreciation. We see opportunity to encourage deeper engagement with conceptual aspects of art practice. As noted with outcome 1 above, we are tailoring writing opportunities, ePortfolio use, and student advising practice to improve student performance in this area.

**Expected Outcome 3: student satisfaction** with curriculum, mentoring, and departmental extracurricular offerings

**Assessment Method 1: exit interviews**

**Assessment Method Description**
We have implemented exit interviews with our graduating majors, an indirect method of discerning student accomplishment in the evaluated areas and a means of gauging student satisfaction. The department chair administers a questionnaire (below) and conducts oral interviews to collect information on student perceptions of personal accomplishment, and their opinion on aspects of our program that might be revised or developed for better support of student goals and needs. Because the students evaluated in the ARTS 4850 course (above) are not all in the final semester of their degree program, the cohort for the exit interviews in not identical. Eight graduating BA students participated in the exit interview process.

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<th>Exit Interview Questionnaire</th>
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<td>Your candor will be appreciated. I’m not trying to make this a complaint session, but I hope you will be open and honest about the strengths and weaknesses of our programs. Knowing what we do best and what we should focus attention on, from student perspectives, may be very beneficial to future students.</td>
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<td>What were the best experiences you had while an Auburn art student?</td>
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<td>How might we build on good experiences? How could we make the overall experience better? Do you have thoughts about ways of increasing the student and student-faculty interactions, and building camaraderie and healthy competition in the program? Do you feel there was sufficient mentoring in the program?</td>
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<td>What courses or programs, if any, do you wish we had that you would have benefitted from? (For instance internship, additional study abroad, other art history, digital art.) We’re thinking of adding an “Orientation to Art” freshman course. What do you wish you’d known or been taught at that point in the curriculum that would have been beneficial? The BA studio degree doesn’t have a culminating exhibition; is this an issue to be addressed? If you could have had an internship experience, what would you have liked...</td>
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it to be?

Were there other issues you’d like to see addressed? Changes in course content, scheduling issues, prerequisite or other curriculum issues, etc.? Did Professional Practices serve your interests? If not, what was missing?

Did you take advantage of departmental events and other art-related offerings (convocation, openings, visiting artist lectures, museum lectures and openings, etc.)? If not, why not? Would you liked to have seen more of anything, or different sorts of events?

What do you intend to do next, and could the program have better prepared you for it in some way?

I encourage you to stay in touch with the department, and let us know how you’re doing and what advice you may have as you build a career. You can start by friending Auburn Art on Facebook.

Findings
Nearly all BA studio majors interviewed expressed general satisfaction with the curriculum and quality of instruction they received. Students who studied abroad with our Rome program, who were active in our student organization and other extracurricular departmental events, and/or who had internship placements had highest levels of satisfaction. Students articulate a wish for more career guidance. Several students mentioned a perception that they would have been better served by more focused study in one media area of the program.

How did you use findings for improvement?
Since many of these students aspire to other art-related careers than as practicing studio artists, assessing other aspects of their career preparation is critical. Professional writing and speaking are being assessed; we are working to increase student participation in internships, to provide career-focused experience in museums and non-profit arts organizations, etc. We have this academic year appointed two faculty internship advisors in the department, who are creating a web-based collection of information and list of internship opportunities for art majors. We have scheduled faculty-led workshops for this term to inform and assist students in internship applications. We have begun a series of guest lectures on art career opportunities, and are working to expand the range of these presentations.

We have implemented changes in advising practice to address the observation that many students seem better satisfied with their
accomplishments in the program if they focus upper-level studio coursework in a single media area. Our curriculum committee is considering whether this should be a program requirement.

Exit interviews and the student questionnaire are providing quite useful information on student satisfaction and expectations. Responses are solicited in narrative form, using a number of open-ended questions to encourage detailed and candid opinion. For this academic year, I am revising the questionnaire to add more narrowly focused questions on areas we want to consider revising in the curriculum.