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 (attached.) For this review, all BA majors in the Fall 2013 and spring 2014 offering of ARTS 4850 were evaluated.
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 below indicate a universal attainment of benchmark expectations for art-making competence.

Our BA studio degree is more general and less studio-intensive than our BFA (50 hours of art and art history courses, vs. 76 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, 38% were rated highly accomplished, 25% were judged accomplished, and 38% were rated at our benchmark for appropriate competency. No students were considered below expectations.

-For understanding of and ability to successfully utilize the formal aspects of art, 13% were rated highly accomplished, 62% were considered accomplished, and 25% were judged as at our benchmark for appropriate attainment. No students were considered below expectations.

-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, 13% were rated highly accomplished, 62% were seen as accomplished, and 25% at our benchmark for appropriate attainment. No students were considered 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 general competence in technical and formal aspects of studio art practice, and in the student’s ability to generate and articulate conceptual content in
their artwork, and are somewhat higher than last year’s numbers. This seemed to be a successful cohort of students; we attribute this in part to improvements in advising, encouraging our BA studio majors to focus their coursework sufficiently to gain competence in a chosen media area; given positive outcomes we will continue to focus on advising practice. We are continuing to increase opportunity for discipline-specific writing in several studio art courses at all levels of the curriculum. We believe that greater expectation for such writing has and will continue to help students produce more thoughtful consideration of concepts and content in their artwork. The Department of Art’s ePortfolio initiative is being tailored to address needs observed in our assessment. Our curriculum committee has developed a new Orientation to Art course with expectations for reflective writing, documentation of individual artwork, familiarization with portfolio practices and curricular concerns.

Additional Comments

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 of oral presentations and writing against a rubric

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.
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 grounding in aesthetic appreciation that meets or exceeds our benchmark expectations. We saw good understanding of the methods and media used to create original work, but less uniform competence in using familiarity with and understanding of historical precedents to inform their creative approaches.

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, 42% were highly accomplished, 25% were accomplished, and 33% were at our benchmark for appropriate attainment.
- In awareness and understanding of concepts relevant to the artwork presented, 17% were considered highly accomplished, and 33% were considered 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, 17% seen as highly accomplished, 33% as accomplished, and 42% as at our benchmark for appropriate attainment, and 8% as below expectation.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We discussed these findings in our annual assessment meeting. We see evidence that students are gaining broad 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 historical and conceptual aspects of art practice, and a better understanding of how this may be used to enrich their own work. As noted with outcome 1 above, we are tailoring writing opportunities, ePortfolio use, and student advising practice to improve student performance in this area. The new Orientation to Art freshman-level course is expected to benefit this endeavor also.

Additional Comments