

SCHOOL OF ART ASSESSMENT

B.A., B.S. in Art

May 2019

This document is intended to be both reflective and forward looking. It illustrates a moment in time, but also acknowledges its own elasticity and changeability. Assessment in the School of Art does not fit into a traditional model, just as some of art's practices and procedures eschew many academic paradigms. A collaborative effort between School of Art faculty and administration, this document was initiated by posing a series of questions, such as *What does it mean to succeed in a studio course, art history course, graphic design course, art teacher education course? How does a student receive a passing grade and how is his/her learning measured? What tools are used to disseminate information, inspire independent thinking, and encourage students to make connections between concepts introduced in their courses? What might improve students' learning experience?*

BA/BS in Art

In order to proceed from an introductory level to an intermediate and advanced level, all BA/BS students need to demonstrate progress and perform successfully in studio foundations courses: Art 103 (2-D Fundamentals), Art 104 (Drawing Fundamentals), and Art 109 (3-D Fundamentals). By way of lectures, lab sessions, critiques, and assignments, Art 103 introduces students to elements of visual language such as line, shape, color, texture, balance, proportion, and perspective. Art 104 uses lectures, discussions, assignments, and critiques to build students' observational drawing skills. In Art 109, students are introduced to elements of dimensionality such as space, structure, volume, mass, form, and void, through demonstrations, discussions, critiques, and assignments.

All BA/BS students also take foundation courses in Art History. These courses, Art 155 (Survey of Art I), 156 (Survey of Art II) and 275 (World Arts: Visual Art), are designed to provide students with an overview of the development of art and art styles throughout the history of the world. Via exams, quizzes, "gallery gallops," and in-class written reflections, students identify works of art and accurately place them in their historical context; correctly use discipline-specific terminology to describe and discuss works of art; explain the function, meaning, and historical context of a work of art; and recognize the impact of art made in past cultures on other historical periods, cultures and the modern world.

BA/BS in Art - Studio Art

BA/BS students must demonstrate the ability to learn and apply technical skills appropriate to one of the studio disciplines (painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, photography, glass); use all studio tools and equipment safely and properly; undertake material exploration; understand the historical and contemporary context of one's own work; develop and explore content; engage in critical discussion of one's own works as well as those of others; successfully progress through beginning, intermediate, and advanced courses within the discipline (with grades of C or better), becoming increasingly more adept in all areas listed above. In each studio area, the faculty organizes different techniques and practices into levels of beginning, intermediate, and advanced course work. For example, in ceramics, beginning students are introduced to modeling, coiling, slab and wheel throwing, and glazing. Intermediate students learn wheel throwing and hand-building of utilitarian forms, glazing, kiln loading and basic firing. Advanced ceramics students must demonstrate a self-sustaining proficiency in the production of utilitarian forms and/or sculpture using hand-building, wheel throwing, mold making and casting, advanced glazing techniques and glaze making, clay making, kiln loading and firing.

BA/BS in Art - Art History

Art History majors begin their studies in the same way studio art students do. By taking Art 155 (Survey of Art I), 156 (Survey of Art II) and 275 (World Arts: Visual Art), students receive an overview of the development of art and art styles throughout the history of the world. In addition to exams, quizzes, “gallery gallops,” and in-class written reflections, students also use a debate format (for example, in Art 240: Greek Art and Architecture, students divide into teams and debate whether the Elgin Marbles should stay on display in the British Museum in London or be returned to the Acropolis in their native Greece). There are also opportunities for peer teaching/learning, where students select a topic presented in their textbook, research it more fully, and present it to the rest of the class for questions and discussion. Students also write exam questions on the material they presented and the faculty member includes many of them in the semester’s final exam.

BA/BS students in the Art History sequence take a selection of 200 level courses from three specific time periods: ancient, medieval, and early modern periods; the modern period; and the recent modern and contemporary periods. Through short research and writing assignments, exams, quizzes, and class discussion, students are expected to identify and explain the function, meaning, and historical context of artworks in specific historical periods; describe major movements in terms of their stylistic development and contextual influences; analyze the rhetoric and content of primary sources written by and about artists; and evaluate art historical narrative meaningfully and independently. Art 290 (Art History Research and Professional Skills), a requirement of all Art History majors and minors, focuses on research skills, methods used in art historical writing, and professional practice. As students proceed through the sequence they take 300-level courses, which are seminars designed to engage students in advanced research, writing, and discussion in the discipline. Upon completion of these advanced courses, students are able to contextualize the function, meaning, and historical context of art from a variety of media and time periods; discuss and critique major questions addressed in contemporary scholarship on art history and theory; analyze the rhetoric and content of primary source material; and evaluate art historical narrative in depth using primary and secondary sources.

Students in the Art History sequence are asked to go beyond receiving information and spitting it back to the faculty in a test or paper format. For example, if a student is writing an analysis of a primary source (an Art 304 assignment), not only must he/she present the information, but also interpret, contextualize, and explain it. The emphasis is on analysis and examination rather than summary. Faculty look for organized, clear, concise, and grammatically sound writing that acknowledges and cites research properly and follows the required format. Research is done through library resources and viable, academic websites.

BA/BS in Art - Graphic Design

BA/BS graphic design students must demonstrate the ability to create using varied software; understand the historical context of one’s own work; understand the contemporary professional landscape within the field of graphic design; and understand the client-designer relationship. They must also progress successfully through Graphic Design courses, each with its own technical, formal, conceptual, and methodological objectives.

Beginning assignments are formal and geared toward students' gaining a basic understanding of graphic design methods and processes (critical thinking skills, creative and iterative process). In beginning classes students also learn about and demonstrate their understanding of graphic design history, type and typography, and the combination of image, media, and meaning. Beginning graphic design courses introduce software such as InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, HTML, and CSS.

Intermediate assignments encourage students to build upon what they learned in beginning classes, as well understand interaction design, web and motion graphics software. Students are also introduced to the various careers that use graphic design.

Advanced graphic design assignments utilize all the formal, conceptual and methodological developments thus far, and emphasize experimentation. They are geared toward students' articulating their thoughts; discussing ideas clearly and articulately; developing a sense of how one learns, creates, responds, and makes an impact; engaging with the local/global community; and building a healthy sense of self.

BA/BS graphic design students can participate in an internship elective on or off campus, applying the concepts and practices that they learn in the classroom to real-world scenarios. Internships teach students many things: how to present themselves and their work in a professional manner, how to collaborate and work with varied clients, and how to use their skills, sensitivity, awareness, and experience toward civic engagement and social impact. Ideally, internship providers will assess the intern's work and deportment. However, this occurs in varying degrees depending on the nature of the internship, the kind of work the student does, and the atmosphere of the work environment.

Throughout the length of graphic design internships, student interns meet with their faculty so that the faculty can assess student performance as well as the rigor of the internships. For the BA/BS students, there is an optional group exhibition as a capstone experience.

BA/BS in Art - Art Teacher Education (ATE)

BA/BS students pursuing a degree in Art Teacher Education (ATE) write reflective papers and complete studio assignments that demonstrate their understanding of culturally relevant teaching practices, real life experiences as a source of knowledge within the classroom, and issues of pedagogy and classroom management. In Art 309 (Professional Art Education Sequence), ATE students start their teaching experience by working with K-8 Bloomington-Normal community children enrolled in a five-week, twenty hour Saturday art school program. They create and teach student-centered elementary level lessons that demonstrate age appropriate content level knowledge. ATE students are required to explain their pedagogical choices, analyze their teaching practices, and connect these practices to current educational theory, which includes teaching diverse populations and students with disabilities. As ATE students prepare for a semester of student teaching, they create a K-12 art education curriculum scope and sequence that includes art content knowledge, critical questioning connected to artists and art world practices, effective use of art making technique, and assessment of student knowledge.

Prior to student teaching, ATE students must successfully complete the following courses in the College of Education: TCH 210 (Child Growth and Development); TCH 212 (The Teaching Profession in Secondary Schools), which requires 20 diverse clinical observation hours; TCH 216 (Principles and Practices of Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools), which requires, which requires 53 hours of clinical experiences; TCH 219 (Integrating Multiple Literacies and Technology Across the Secondary Curriculum); and EAF 228 (Social Foundations of Education), which requires 15 hours of clinical experiences in a diverse setting. Other concrete measurable ATE outcomes required prior to student teaching include passing the Illinois Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) and the Illinois K-12 Content Exam.

During their student teaching, ATE students teach and reflect upon developed standards-based secondary and elementary units of study under the direction of a cooperating teacher. These developmentally appropriate, student-centered units include knowledge from the field of art, effective classroom and materials management strategies, adaptations and modifications for students with disabilities, and means of formative and summative assessment. As contributing members of the school community, ATE students also gain experience interacting with school personnel, including parents and support staff.

To qualify for licensure, all ATE majors must successfully complete at least 100 clinical hours in observation and teaching, 50 of which are in diverse settings; successfully complete a semester of student teaching in elementary and/or middle school and/or high school settings; and pass the edTPA exam. Furthermore, faculty and academic advisors recommend that ATE students complete a second major with a studio art or art history concentration.

Indirect Assessment

Faculty discuss student learning informally: in friendly conversation, comparing teaching methods, or even talking about how students they share process information and perform differently in different courses. Less casual discussion might occur in the context of curricular revision or student retention.

In other contexts, such as area meetings and studio discipline meetings/critiques, student perceptions of their learning are gathered by faculty and considered on a micro-level. For example, at the end of each semester, the printmaking faculty meet individually with their graduates and advanced students to recap the semester and look toward the future. This is a good time to ask students about the overall quality of their experience and how assessment enhances it or detracts from it.

Another manner to collect feedback, especially undergraduate feedback, is through student response forms; students are asked to describe the extent of their learning in a course as well as faculty grading. By extension, faculty can also address student perceptions of their learning in annual dossiers.

Gathering and studying student perceptions of their learning necessitates tracking students who have graduated. Again, this is an informal process. Faculty who have established long-lasting relationships with their students are a kind of student tracking device, and faculty who are contacted as references can stay abreast of student goals, activities, and accomplishments.

Social media is another informal way to keep in touch with alumni.

In any way the School of Art gathers information about student perceptions of their learning - or about their lives in general – there is currently a focus on student successes rather than those who do not continue to make art, teach, or work in art related fields. There are certainly many ways to gage “success” among School of Art alumni; creative problem-solving skills, work ethic, analytical ability, and professional bravery are strengths in many facets of the working world. Art students learn and possess a plethora of transferable skills and these often go unnoticed if the only recognized goal is graduating students who continue to work in creative or visual art fields.

The School of Art has worked with Alumni Relations to survey alumni, but with very little response and not in recent years. Generating a tool to survey or track School of Art alums would not be easy, and building a reliable, thorough database of alumni contact information would also be quite difficult. Nevertheless, learning more about alums could benefit the School of Art immeasurably.

Assessment Sustainability

The word “assessment” is not part of the everyday vocabulary of the faculty, staff, or administration of the School of Art. The only area that truly understands its meaning, outside of its dictionary definition, is Art Teacher Education because of assessment’s essential nature in state licensure. School of Art faculty assess. However, assessment is not discussed, tracked, or addressed in ways that may be commonplace in other schools and departments on campus. If this document is to be used, kept up to date, and adopted into School of Art culture, the onus is on the faculty, staff, and administration. The worth of those efforts has yet to be determined.

For better or worse, the School of Art has established itself as an exception to many of the actualities of University culture. One small example is that most faculty shun their academic titles in class; students and faculty address each other using first names. This is perhaps a result of the small studio classes. In the facilities in the Center for Visual Arts, there can be as few as 8 or as many as sixteen in a hands-on, process intensive class such as ceramics or printmaking. Another example is discussed in the section “MFA in Studio Art.” At the end of their three-year program, MFA studio students exhibit their thesis body of art work. The accompanying statement, which can be upwards of 30 pages, is approved by the Graduate School and published by ProQuest along with the written theses and dissertations of other graduate students. However, the faculty make it clear to the students that the art work is their thesis, which they present and discuss during their thesis defense. Furthermore, faculty debate with and relate to their students, and each other, in a way that might not exist in the College of Business or the College of Nursing; the creative nature of artistic practice encourages its participants to be different, to stand out. Some might even call the School of Art abnormal.

This document is the first of its kind in the School of Art, so its continued use and sustainability are largely unexplored. In its writing, it has already been of use; faculty have put into words the hurdles, modes of evaluation, and goals for students and the resulting self-studies are united into one end-product. This exercise, in and of itself, is of use. Further uses are up for debate.

This document can apply to curricular/programmatic research and revision. In studying assessment,

part of the exercise is looking at *how* students are encouraged to learn. One might also ask *what* students learn, and what might be missing in their educational experience. Recently, after a faculty-wide conversation, faculty started to require that their students attend artist lectures at University Galleries. The School of Art has an extensive line-up of lectures scheduled every year; visiting artists, faculty, visiting curators, and artists exhibiting in University Galleries share their research with the general public. However, students are often absent at these lectures and miss out on seeing artwork, hearing about the studio practice and ideas of others, and understanding what their faculty do when not in the classroom. Requiring attendance and a written response encourages students to think beyond their immediate experience, see examples of successful artists, and perhaps even set professional goals.

This document can also be used as a recruitment and informational tool. The faculty have already discussed using excerpts to address and introduce assessment to potential students, especially those who are looking at the MFA Studio program. However, at this time it seems that the most obvious use for this document is to prove to the University that the School of Art does indeed employ assessment in its programs.