Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Courses and SLO Reviewed
Pages 1-3 Art History
Pages 3-8 Studio Courses

ART – 103B  Survey of World Art History-14th Through 20th Centuries.
1 Define and restate a canon of sculpture, architecture, and visual art by labeling the title, date, author/architect/artist, geographic region and civilization/culture.
2 Describe works of art and period styles with vocabulary used specifically for the study of art history.
3 Define and restate the major formal and iconographic qualities for art and artifacts originating in Mesoopotamia, Egypt, Ancient Greece and Rome, the Early Christian period, Islamic culture, Africa, Pre-Columbian Meso-America, Asia and the art of the Americas.
4 Demonstrate critical criteria in which to compare different cultures’ artifacts and art.
5 Define and restate similarities and differences in physical form, symbolism, and historical, cultural and historical contexts, unique to different cultures in order to identify the contributions of historically underrepresented cultures or perspectives from other groups to the development of the societies and institutions in the United States of America and Europe.
6 Analyze and synthesize primary texts and assess how these texts relate to the artifacts and art they are studying.

ART - 103A  Survey of World Art History-Prehistoric Through 1300 C.E.
The student will:
1 Define and restate in tests, class discussion and through long and short essay answers, knowledge of vocabulary relevant to the study of art history.
2 Define and restate the major formal and iconographic qualities for art and artifacts throughout the world after 1300 CE. The civilizations, regions, and cultures studied are Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.
3 Compare different cultures’ artifacts and art.
4 Define and restate similarities and differences in physical form, symbolism, and historical, cultural and historical contexts, unique to different cultures in order to identify the contributions of historically underrepresented cultures or perspectives from other groups to the development of the societies and institutions in the United States of America and Europe.
5 Analyze and synthesize primary texts and assess how these texts relate to the artifacts and art they are studying.
6 Describe works of art and period styles with vocabulary used specifically for the study of art history.

Department Dialogue and Discussion of Art History Classes

The following is not so much a dialogue with the department as it is a personal narrative by me, Prof. Kenney Mencher, about my experience of teaching art history at Ohlone college and my desire to improve students’ learning through the modification of curriculum and my teaching methods. Although occasionally the department hires adjunct instructors to teach art history. I have been the sole professor to teach art history at Ohlone for the last twelve years. I have overseen and redesigned the art history curriculum to dovetail with other Bay Area art history programs. To this end, I have kept my electronic grade books, which include statistics assignments and all the grades for all my students who’ve taken art history with me since I began in 1999. This report is an attempt to correlate the data from these grade books with my own personal observations and anecdotes to understand how to improve art history courses at Ohlone. The most surprising conclusion that I’ve come to is that the statistics and anecdotal evidence that I put together in this report shows very little change in student performance, despite significant changes in testing methodologies curriculum texts and lecture style except for in the case of providing multimedia lectures on Youtube as part of the classes texts.
Although there is a shared canon across all the schools for the types of monuments and works of art that are being taught for World Art History, there is no standard methodology for teaching art history aside from a traditional lecture format that includes some comparisons and the memorization of geographic locations, period and style names, and artists’ names. Most schools test using multiple choice exams with some labeling components however, these kinds of tests only assess low level skills. One assignment meant to teach higher level critical thinking skills, utilize art historical vocabulary, and serve as an example of the students’ abilities to synthesize the above is the assignment of research and or essay style papers.

Before I begin teaching at Ohlone I was teaching at Texas A&M international University where I established their art history and studio art program. In designing the art history program and its curriculum I undertook a series of comparisons of student performance between those who took multiple-choice tests with labeling against those who took essay tests and short answers. Students who took essay style tests and then were given multiple-choice tests did very well on the multiple choice tests. However, students who had taken only multiple-choice tests the entire semester performed very poorly on essay style art history tests. It would appear that multiple-choice testing does not allow the students to develop the ability to express ideas in essay form. In response to my findings the entire time that I’ve taught at Ohlone all testing in art history classes contains a combination of short written answers and long essays.

I’ve kept detailed notes and statistical style grade books and data for all my art history classes but I’ve taught at Ohlone since 1999. The following is an analysis of this data in general terms, and then I will conclude my analysis with some anecdotal evidence gleaned from discussion with my students and other professors.

The two major areas of statistics that I’ve analyzed have to do with retention rates as well as test scores and ending grades. Statistics concerning attrition do not seem to correlate to how much homework, testing styles or texts provided. There is a strong correlation between the additional resource of multimedia videos and retention. Less students are dropping now that I have provided video lectures on the web. The attrition rate for Art History classes between 1999 and 2011 has been just about 30% to 38% in face to face classes however the attrition rate was (until this year) nearly 50% for on-line classes. The statistics for overall grades for Art History Courses in the last 12 years, shows the majority of the grades for students completing art history classes were approximately 40% A’s and 30% B’s with a scattering of failures C’s and D’s. There was very little fluctuation in this statistic.

In looking over the arc of test scores during most semesters 50% of all the students who completed the class had improved test scores as they progressed between the midterms to final grades generally rose between 2% to 5%.

As a professor, I was interested in attempting to improve Art History Courses in two major areas. The first was in terms of attrition rates and the second was to improve test scores and student comprehension of material. The following is a short narrative in which I explain changes made in the course content and in testing methods in an effort to improve the course in these two areas.

Between 1999 and 2002 I assigned a standard five paragraph essay and research paper to students in the art history courses. This paper was due usually during the last third of the course while the students still had two exams to take. Integrating these essays I noticed that students had a hard time identifying topics and creating a strong thesis driven essay and in general had trouble utilizing the vocabulary and content that was part of the standard course material. They rarely mentioned or compared other works of art or cultures that they had encountered. I also did not notice a significant raising test scores after students had written. There are historical essays. The conclusion that I drew from this was that independent research essays did not significantly improve the students ability to use vocabulary identify works of art or critically discuss the works of art. They were studying and so I chose to shift the bulk of the writing into more directed worksheet style take-home assignments.
The worksheet style take-home assignments included labeling short definitions and longer essay style questions in which the student was prompted to use the vocabulary and works they had defined and identified in critical essays. These worksheets were then graded and used as study guides for each exam. The worksheets were discussed in classes and gone over to that students had a chance to review the information and correct or amplify their understanding of the materials before the next exam. Many students complained about the level of work they had to do for the worksheets while others expressed the idea that the worksheets really prepared them for each exam. However, the statistics indicated a slight drop in attrition after I had implemented worksheets in my curriculum.

I continued to use the worksheets for the next several years while teaching and tried different combinations of short answers and essay questions to try to help with the comprehension of course materials. There seem to be no significant change in test results when the majority of the worksheet was devoted to short answers versus long essay questions. However, it was my feeling that the longer essays fostered a more holistic understanding of the materials in class and I base this on class discussion.

One of the methodologies that I attempted to implement in the classroom was to devote class time to group work on these worksheets again, there was no significant change in test scores and some students actually resented this kind of activity in the classroom.

In response to discussions with students. I chose to provide the worksheets as study guides, online and allow the students to voluntarily complete them and bring them to office hours if they wanted. Review of them. I also encouraged them to work on these worksheets together. The effect of this was that I saw a slight rise in retention and slight drop in the attrition rate in my courses but it was only about 5% and this 5% was inconsistent.

The study guides were now voluntary and I had increased the tests from three exams to five exams during the course of the semester I saw no significant statistical change over approximately 2 years in attrition rates or in higher grades. At this point I became interested in ways of trying to help the students to do better on exams and to express a better comprehension of the materials. To this end, I implemented a series of short in class quizzes and when I ran into problems with in class quizzes with the FTS students. I began to assign these has take-home quizzes. Again, I saw no significant change in comprehension grades nor in student retention.

Most recently, as of September of this year 2011, I began to produced a series of videos that emulated, amplified, and reviewed in class lecture. The effect of these videos on the attrition rates seems to be pretty remarkable. The attrition rate in the class where I began to use these videos dropped from an average of 30% to 8%. However, there seem to be less of an effect on student test scores will and final overall scores. A seeming negative of this use of the videos is that some students don't feel that it is as necessary to have good attendance in the course. This may be true because the attrition rate and success rate in this course that is taught online has gotten much better. The attrition rate for most of my web classes as an historically close to 50% with less students completing the class but those who completed earning higher scores. This semester in online art history more students have completed the class but the great spread is more evenly distributed among A's, B's, C's and if several failures to about 25% in each one of these categories.

Simultaneously with the production of these videos, I have also begun using blogging platforms, Facebook, and e-mail more extensively to interact with students and create online discussion. Videos and discussions and discussion questions are posted on a blog and students are invited to come and answer some of the questions that are from the study guides on these blogs. However, participation is very poor even though the number of students visiting these sites is very high. Class discussion is better and students have expressed to me that they feel more connected with the class now that I’m using Facebook and the blog to foster a sense of community.
Conclusions
Based in some discussions that I've had with students who've taken me previously (some took one section of art history as long as five years ago with me) many of them have expressed to me that although they feel the course is easier, that they are less intimidated by the material, and that their comprehension better. They have expressed that they believe is primarily because of the YouTube videos that I provide as a primary text for the course. Two or three have also commented that they appreciate how I've redesigned the worksheets and study guides to more accurately reflect the actual order of the lectures and the types of material that we are going over in class. I have noticed on the exams that students essays contain more facts, vocabulary, and more comparisons. Because of the slight jump in retention and in the quality of some of the tests that I am reading right now, I feel that I'm on the right track.

An Analysis of the Studio Class

ART - 106A Descriptive Drawing
1. Create a portfolio of drawings generated from observation that demonstrate proficient use of a variety of media, including graphite, charcoal, ink and pastel.
2. Explore the use and application of art elements and principles, including line, value, perspective, texture and color, to produce effective compositions and depict form and space in drawings.
3. Critique artwork and discuss the merits of different approaches to specific visual problems.
4. Examine the impact of historic artworks on modern drawings

ART - 106B Intermediate Descriptive Drawing
1. Produce a portfolio of drawings generated from observation and imagination to effectively express visual experiences and communicate ideas.
2. Experiment with a range of traditional and non-traditional drawing media, techniques and approaches that address specific visual problems.
3. Generate contemporary drawings from appropriated historical artwork.
4. Identify and discuss the use of the visual elements and organizational principles of art as they apply to drawings in class critiques.
5. Apply and practice the concepts presented in class in a sketchbook or journal.

Department Dialogue and Discussion of Drawing Classes
As a department we chose to use the drawing classes as an example of our assessments. We compiled our data or information through individual meetings as well as electronically through e-mail. In our meetings we were able to discern that although our communication of assessments to the students varies from written to verbal and from the use of rubrics to the use of narratives, that we share almost exactly a criterion.

Assignments
All four professors give very similar assignment over the course of the semester beginning with

- Mapping or drawing the basic shapes.
- Shading and chiaroscuro
- Still Life and Drapery
Although many of the projects are clearly designed to teach craft, formal skills, and visual analysis we do address conceptual concerns through the evaluation of how clearly the concepts are expressed, as well as on the articulation of form, level of craft etc. In our critiques we address the ways concepts are both conceptualized and interpreted. Other conceptual concerns are addressed by introducing the student to historic and contemporary examples of drawing and painting in lecture as well as going on field trips. The art gallery is integrated into this by often having shows that demonstrate some of the skills and some of the concepts that are addressed in all the studio classes. Several of us also take the students on field trips to Bay Area art institutions such as the cancer center, the DeYoung Museum, the Legion of Honor, art galleries, and sometimes even artist studios. The assessments of student success for projects ranged from grading each project individually, to portfolio assessments, and or a combination of each.

Our shared criterion includes the type of assignments we assign, the use of demonstrations, and the use of a shared vocabulary. The following is an example of use of the basic drawing assignment and how we judge student success for this assignment.

Example: Basic Shapes Assignment

Drawing and shading the geometric shapes is a building block that allows students to understand how to accurately draw the contours and shapes and understand how these shapes are shaded. (The basic shapes relate to still life and later projects such as figures.)

All the teachers to teach the basic shapes project began by doing a demonstration. Then the students are asked to make drawings of the shapes after the demonstrations that the professors have done. In the assessment of each of these drawings is accomplished in different ways by different teachers. One professor, and the drawings in the hallway and then using a rubric grades each assignment and hands the rubric back to each of the students.

Other professors assess the basic drawing project by hanging the drawings in the classroom and having a group critique in which both the students and the professors comment and evaluate the drawings.

While the “Basic Shapes Assignment” is one assignment it is often referred to and or included in both the students final grade and often in a final assignment and or portfolio review.

Several of the professors record the grades for each and every individual assignment however several other professors choose to collect the drawings and also doing additional assessment at the end of semester in a portfolio. All of us use a combination of these types of assessments both verbal and written to record and evaluate and relate this information back to the students.

In several of the classes at the end of the semester professors have a day usually on the final day, in which they meet with each of the students and the student presents a portfolio of work and the student is provided with
an evaluation that portfolio for the whole semesters’ work.

The assessment of each portfolio varies from professor to professor. Several of us collect the portfolios in advance of the portfolio review day, and then spend several hours evaluating each portfolio recording grades and commenting in written form for each student. Each professor who does a portfolio evaluation then meets with the student in private and goes over the portfolio.

Professors who don't do a complete portfolio review sometimes substitute a final assessment day, given on the day final are assigned, with a group final critique. The group final critique is a day in which all the students hang a final project that is meant to be the culmination of all the assignments that they have done that semester and hang this assignment on a wall inside the classroom. The students are given time to look over and evaluate each other’s work and then an organized class discussion and critique are given for each of the assignments. These assignments vary from still life, to figure drawing, to more conceptual assignments.

The assessment of each and every individual project is based on what appears to be a universal criterion. This criteria can be broken down into some smaller steps were units such as, accuracy of the drawing, accuracy of the shading, composition, craft and/or neatness, as well as, overall understanding of main concepts.

In terms of accuracy of the drawing, what we are looking at is how accurate things are such as size, shape, size scale relationships, and they use of linear perspective (both one point and two point).

In terms of shading the drawing, we discussed with the students the accuracy of their depiction of light and shadow. We also discuss the vocabulary of mark making as well as the elements of light such as cast shadow, highlight, transitional tones, reflected light and core shadow.

In terms of composition, we discussed with the students specifically what their goals were and we establish a criterion with them through this. We analyze with the students, both verbally and through rubrics, the students use of symmetry, asymmetry, diagonals and proportion in their compositions.

Craft is a big component of learning how to draw and perhaps is one of the most important things that we can assess and the students work. Professors communicate with each student a level of craft both verbally, in group critiques, and in written form things such as, neatness, handling of materials, and presentation.
We also attempt to enforce and share the use of the common vocabulary while making these drawings and we reinforce this during group critiques as well as in written assessments.

Another element of assessment that we use overall in drawing classes is attendance and effort. Each professor has their own standards for communicating effort in the classroom. For example, one or two of the professors has an overall grading category as a rubric on their syllabi that includes a percentage of what attendance counts four and effort counts for. This category is further broken down into smaller subcategories that express the impact of each individual absence, as well as the students’ efforts in the classroom each day. Some professors even give a grade for each day’s effort. One professor succinctly described how they assess:

I collect and review the students’ portfolios several (four or five), times each semester. I use a rubric and give written evaluations of each assignment as well as of the portfolio as a whole, and I talk privately with each student about the individual projects, but I don’t then meet with each of them privately to review their portfolios. We have two or three class critiques during the semester, always one for the Final.

Classes such as drawing and painting are harder to provide clear empirical criteria for assessment. Most assessments of students work in the classroom must be accomplished through a combination of verbal communication, group critiques, and written assessments such as rubrics and more narrative communications.

Conclusions

An extremely positive and beneficial result of doing this report is that as a department we are very cohesive in our teaching methods are subject matter and how we assess our students. In all of our classes, the concepts of drawing, technique, color, and more conceptual issues are addressed. Additionally students are encouraged to think critically when they complete an organized assessment of their own and/or classmates work using a tool that summarizes the key concepts taught and discussed. Students’ ability to create and discuss their own and their classmates work are facilitated and they participate in non-judgmental analysis, interpretation, evaluation, description, explanation, reflection. Students review their own art work as a producer and their classmates’ art work as a consumer. All classes have both peer and instructor feedback/assessment.

The other things that we discovered in writing this report is how integrated our curriculum is an focused on our SLO’s for all our classes.

The student will:

ART - 106A  Descriptive Drawing
1. Create a portfolio of drawings generated from observation that demonstrate proficient use of a variety of media, including graphite, charcoal, ink and pastel.
2. Explore the use and application of art elements and principles, including line, value, perspective, texture
and color, to produce effective compositions and depict form and space in drawings.
3. Critique artwork and discuss the merits of different approaches to specific visual problems.
4. Examine the impact of historic artworks on modern drawings

ART - 106B  Intermediate Descriptive Drawing
1. Produce a portfolio of drawings generated from observation and imagination to effectively express visual experiences and communicate ideas.
2. Experiment with a range of traditional and non-traditional drawing media, techniques and approaches that address specific visual problems.
3. Generate contemporary drawings from appropriated historical artwork.
4. Identify and discuss the use of the visual elements and organizational principles of art as they apply to drawings in class critiques.
5. Apply and practice the concepts presented in class in a sketchbook or journal.

Drawing classes have a direct impact on later classes such as painting. Professors who teach painting have noticed that students who take drawing before are much better equipped to handle the project in painting classes. One of the things that have come up in our assessment is the idea that maybe we should require art 106A and art 106B before students can take painting art 111A.
For example if a student is learned have you draw the sphere and the other basic shapes as well as shave the shapes is often much better equipped to paint and a painting student who needs to be remediated in these areas. This is especially true in some of the more complex assignments such as still life and figure drawing.
Sharing and studying how we assess student success has allowed us to actually see that we are very strong and cohesive as a department. Perhaps one of the weakest areas that we have is in the overall relationship of Painting Classes to Drawing classes at this time. One of the suggestions that three teachers who teach painting have suggested that we implement is to design a prerequisite of Art 106 Drawing to the curriculum before students can take Painting art 111A.