

ART APPRECIATION--ART 100—3 credit hours

ART 100 BO1 and ART 100 007 were the two classes chosen for analysis; at semester's end (Fall 2010) there were 60 students evaluated

The above course is both an AA and AS degree program additional requirement under the General Education category of Humanistic Perspective. The purpose of Art Appreciation is to give students an introduction to great works of world art as well as to encourage them to question the nature and relevance of art to daily life. Students are also introduced to the elements and principles of design and asked to demonstrate comprehension of the principles of design by constructing a Principles of Design booklet.

For SLOAT, I decided to focus attention on the Principles of Design booklet, as it required a wide variety of educational behaviors in comprehension, knowledge, evaluation, analysis and application: distinguishing, comparing, interpreting, identifying, deciding, classifying and explaining the various principles of design: *variety and unity, symmetrical and asymmetrical balance, rhythm, scale, proportion, emphasis and subordination*. Students choose two examples of each principle from popular magazines, carefully place them in a booklet, and type an explanation of why each example was chosen.

The Principles of Design booklet relates to Course Goal number 4: “prepare and present information using a computer by doing the Principles of Design booklet” (ART 100 Course Outline, p.2) and to Measurable Performance Objective number 4: “use magazines to gather examples of each of the principles of design; use computers to type up explanations of why each illustration fits the criteria for the principles; assemble images, titles and explanations, along with a cover sheet, into a booklet.” (ART 100 Course Outline, p.2)

I prepare a handout of instructions on how to do the booklet (attached) for students, as well as speak extensively on the subject and show previous examples of booklets. Students read the relevant chapter in their textbooks to further enhance their knowledge of the principles. Finally, there is one day devoted to doing the

booklets in class, and then the students are required to complete the project on their own time.

For SLOAT, I prepared a checklist of how I would evaluate the booklets (attached) and got ready to check off 60 booklets to see how well the students understood the principles of design. The booklets, by their nature, take a long time to do, so I give the instructions about two months before the due date, which is the last week of class.

The last week, I collected the booklets and used my check-off sheets to determine what grade the student would receive for his/her booklet. That's when the problem became obvious. I discovered my so-called carefully-prepared list was totally inadequate to determine grades. Time and again, students (actually all of them) met all the check-off requirements, yet their booklets could not be given an A or a B+ grade. Many of the booklets were adequate, but lacked an indefinable something. For example, the illustration chosen might have been average or okay, but lacked subtle design qualities which would have made it superior. Or perhaps a student's explanation, while technically correct, might have been repetitious, showed a lack of imagination or awkward rhetoric or lapses in grammar.

The result of doing the SLOAT assessment was that I discovered that all my students **did** understand the principles of design and all **did** pass the principles of design booklet assignment, but that my instrument was too crude to predict grade distinctions. Therefore, if I want to figure out what is an A, B+, B, C+, C or D grade, I'll have to design a different instrument. The question is how do you absolutely define or measure what is a superior illustration, a very good illustration, a good one, an above-average one, a fair one, or a poor one? How do you communicate these distinctions so students will understand them? How do you design an instrument that will take these distinctions into account without being unduly cumbersome to use?

As a check on the rationale for doing the booklet, one of my final exam questions was: "On the back of this paper, evaluate the course. What worked? What didn't? What did you like the most and the least? What did you learn the most from doing? What could I do better in the future? This question is worth 10

points...and ..., you don't have to be positive. Negative comments are also helpful.”

Out of a total of 39 responses (students who had an A average weren't required to take the final, so there were only 39 instead of 60 students reporting), 23 commented that they learned most from either the lectures or the in-class projects such as the color wheel, the collages and the masks. Fifteen reported that the single thing they learned the most from doing was the Principles of Design booklet, and one commented that the booklet was too difficult, but that doing it was a helpful learning experience. Many students (14) didn't like doing the oral reports; some (7) didn't like watching the videos. Not one student reported he/she didn't like or didn't learn from doing the booklet. Not one chose it as something he/she learned the least from doing.

Therefore, I must conclude that students feel doing the booklet is important, but perhaps not as important as I believe it to be. Nevertheless, it is a valuable learning tool and I will continue to utilize it. I must try to develop a more subtle instrument for measuring the booklet itself.