

COLLEGE OF VISUAL ARTS
Course Embedded Assessment Guidelines

Assessment of teaching and learning is required in all courses at the College of Visual Arts. It is a companion to teaching that will help faculty understand exactly how and what students are learning in their classes. Assessment has 2 purposes:

- ☞ To measure student gains in skill and knowledge in identified learning goals.
- ☞ To measure the effectiveness of teaching methods and strategies in promoting this learning.

Step one: Identify the learning goal(s) which are assigned for the course.

- ☞ CVA has identified the following seven learning goals:
 - A. Fluency in the visual concepts and vocabulary, methods, materials, and techniques of art and design.
 - B. Ability to communicate effectively visually, orally, and in writing.
 - C. Skills in critical thinking and in critical evaluation of ideas and information.
 - D. Sound methodology for acquiring and using information from many sources.
 - E. Knowledge of diverse cultures and beliefs, as a way of understanding human interactions and the diverse contexts of all art and design.
 - F. Skill in working collaboratively.
 - G. Commitment to life-long learning and sustained inquiry.
- ☞ Some departments have more specific learning goals within these broad areas.
- ☞ Department chairs will inform faculty of learning goals to be assessed.
- ☞ Focus on manageable elements of skill and knowledge within the broader goals – e.g. “analyzes possible solutions to a complex problem and evaluates them” rather than “engages in critical thinking.”

Step two: Devise a teaching method or strategy to promote learning under the goal.

- ☞ A teaching method or strategy is not just an assignment, but is either:
 - ▲ A way in which the teacher relates to or interacts with students as they do the assignment, or
 - ▲ A specified process or approach students will use in doing an assignment.
- ☞ This element of pedagogy is a variable which you will change through the semesters as you find strengths and weaknesses in teaching methods.

Step three: Measure student skill and knowledge at least twice: once before the lesson, and once afterward.

- ☞ The pre-test is done before the lesson begins and measures what students know as they enter your course.
- ☞ The post-test is done after the lesson and measures what students learned from your assignment and teaching method.
- ☞ Interim progress tests may be useful; assessment requires at least the pre- and post-tests, but you may use as many as you wish.

Step four: Measure student skill and knowledge using an objective standard with quantifiable results.

- ☞ Develop a way of describing student performance with numbers assigned to levels of achievement, ideally on a 7 point scale. Use your own rubric to describe what a “7” means as nearly perfect performance of the learning objective, and so forth down to a “1,” which means a nearly complete failure to do what you expected.
- ☞ Measure student performance individually, so you can track each student’s progress through the lesson. It’s important to know who benefited greatly from the lesson, and who did not.
- ☞ Also describe collective class performance with mean scores on the pre- and post-test exercises, to see how much the class improved, as a whole (e.g. the pre-test mean was 3.9 and the post-test mean was 5.8).
- ☞ Do not settle for anecdotal descriptions of performance: “most students did very well,” or “most seemed to grow with their experience.” These are not useful for understanding the dimensions of either learning or teaching.

Step five: Reflect on the results and their implications for teaching and learning.

- ☞ Did students respond to the assignment as hoped? How did results differ from expectations? What were some possible reasons for some student’s difficulties? What does the overall pattern of success suggest about the effectiveness of the teaching methods? What will you do differently next time?
- ☞ Candid assessment results will never be 100% successful. What’s important is learning what works and what doesn’t and planning changes that will move toward creating the most effective environment for student learning at our institution.