

QEP Faculty Champion Reporting Template: Fall Semester 2014

Faculty Champion: Desmal Purcell

Directions:

Summarize the critical thinking activities that you engaged in by responding to the following questions. Include important details and attach relevant documents if desired.

How did you teach critical thinking in your courses?

Critical thinking goals: In ART1030 Critical Thinking is taught through the process of research, analyze, interpret and then produce a product that explores both form and function. The product for this assessment is a functioning boomerang of an original design.

Teaching strategies: Students are introduced to this project in the second week of the semester and encouraged to begin research. They are given access to books, articles and video links on the flight mechanics of boomerangs, the history of boomerangs and a variety of different aesthetic approaches to boomerang design. Throughout the semester, we revisit the project and introduce new materials, blank boomerangs and finished boomerangs. Around 7th week of the semester two guest speakers (who are both highly recognized in the field of boomerang design and sportsmanship) visit to the class to give a presentation on the topic and take questions from students. These speaks will stop back by intermittently throughout the semester to view student progress and offer advice and insight into student designs. This well rounded approach to learning should provide students with a solid foundation to move forward in designing their own boomerangs. They will have conducted individual research, viewed many examples of finished products, they have been granted access to professionals in the area of being explored and with that they will have the knowledge to create well crafted designs of their own ilk.

Rubrics/other assessment methods: Assessment methods covering an object with a very specific function (such as a boomerang) revolve more around testing the design. Students are encouraged to test their designs throughout the semester (both on their own and under the supervision of myself and occasionally guest lecturers). The students are giving a rubric to help them assess problems related to the flight of the boomerang (and different methods to correct these problems) but in the end, the design either returns to the student or does not. Craftsmanship is graded on following specific design procedures/process that revolve around treatment of materials. Again, there is not much room for variance here. The boomerang is either well crafted, which aids in function and aesthetic appeal, or poorly crafted which inhibits function and aesthetic appeal.

What worked best for you in teaching critical thinking?

I find that dragging this project out over the semester and approaching it from a variety of different angles really helps the students as a whole succeed in the project (therefor demonstrating critical thinking).

Did you encounter any unanticipated problems in teaching critical thinking?

No unanticipated problems- just the standard issues. Students postponing work on project, not reading materials, not taking notes during guest lectures, etc. These issues arise in with a couple of students in nearly every class I teach.

How you responded to these problems:

How did the introduction of critical thinking affect student learning in your courses? I teach critical thinking in all of my courses. As an artist (art student) the very nature of our process is one of critical thinking. One cannot take a blank canvas, an empty digital file, a blank sheet of wood, a blank sheet of paper, a block of clay or marble and transform it into something of value without thinking critically.

Qualitative assessment results: Seeing students excited about design, eager to share new risks in design and eager to assist other students in tips/techniques related to craftsmanship. These elements show me that the students have put the pieces of the puzzle (design process) together in a manner that allows them produce new works/designs that illustrate an understanding of flight and craftsmanship.

Quantitative assessment results: I set a 60% benchmark for this course and achieved a 75% success rate (see attached report).

How will being a faculty champion for critical thinking impact your approach to teaching? Again, critical thinking is a necessary element of my professional field. I have been teaching critical thinking since I my employment as a faculty member and I will continue to stress the relevance of critical thinking to my students. As I often tell my students during the first week of class: "We are problem solvers, we think critically and our pursuit of the creative process is an intellectual pursuit and should it should therefor be approached in that manner."

If you worked with a faculty mentor, who did you work with and how did the mentor assist you? I worked with Dr. Alan Brasher as my faculty mentor. Our discussions have explored the many instances of overlap within our disciplines and the potential for learning communities and shared learning objects (Art History II and World Lit II.) We have explored shared overlapping topics (in a loose approach) through our courses. These include Cubism, Modernism and Realism.