

Aesthetic Appreciation Assessment for the LA&S Review

Summary:

Beginning in Spring 2009 Aesthetic Expression was assessed with a rubric that contained 2 criteria: Aesthetic Analysis and Contextual Analysis. In Spring 2009 100 English papers were assessed with this rubric. No artifacts were assessed from Fall 2009, but the rubric was used again in Spring 2010 for 15 Art History research papers and Fall 2010 for 10 text analysis papers from an American Literature course.

Starting in the fall of 2011 Fitchburg State University made a minor change to the Aesthetic Appreciation rubric. Artifacts of student work could now be scored on one additional criteria related to composition and/or performance. This criterion was added to allow for the assessment of students' original artistic work. We have data from Fall 2011, Spring 2012, and Fall 2012. The artifacts range from History of Architecture research essays, to World Literature Art Museum field trip assignments, and Asian Cinema analyses. Aesthetic Expression artifacts were collected in Spring and Fall 2013 as well as Spring 2014. However, assessors have not finished scoring these artifacts yet.

There were not substantial changes in the rubric from 2009-2013, so it should be possible to draw some conclusions from the data across multiple assessments. However, the analyses suggest no consistent pattern of weakness in either analysis or art in context relative to the other category. The only consistent pattern was that in each case that the revised rubric called for composition/performance, the scorers determined the artifacts could not be assessed in this category.

Overall, it is hard to use the data to make any suggestions about improving instruction. This may in fact represent a weakness of the rubric. We should explore whether the rubric captures all the criteria we are looking for in the area of aesthetic appreciation and whether the language of the rubric properly describes different levels of competency in a way that will allow us to reveal consistent patterns of student strengths and weaknesses. In addition, it is possible that we could get more informative data by having more standardized assignments and collecting larger sample sizes of student work. Finally, we must determine whether composition/performance is an important criterion we would like to gather data on since all of our assessments so far have failed to be assessable for this criterion.

Analysis of Data:

In Spring 2009, 100 assignments from four English classes at the 2000 and 3000 level were rated for aesthetic appreciation (Table 1). Scores were fairly evenly distributed between proficient, sufficient and deficient ratings for both Artistic analysis and Art in context. Scores were slightly higher for Art in context.

Table 1
Aesthetic Appreciation
Spring 2009

	Artistic analysis	Art in context
Proficient	35%	48%
Sufficient	38%	32%
Deficient	27%	21%

The data for Spring 2010 was based on 15 art history research papers, each assessed two times (Table 2). Sufficient scores were more frequent for both artistic analysis and art in context, but there was no clear pattern of difference between these categories as artistic analysis had fewer deficient scores, but art in context had more proficient scores.

Table 2
Aesthetic Appreciation
Spring 2010

	Artistic analysis	Art in context
Proficient	20%	33%
Sufficient	67%	47%
Deficient	13%	20%

Data for Fall 2010 was based on 10 text analysis papers from American Literature II each assessed two times (Table 3). These artifacts received more deficient scores in each category than either of the previous two assessments. Unlike the Spring 2009 and 2010 data, placing the art in context received the most deficient scores with 55% of scores deficient in that category.

Table 3
Aesthetic Appreciation
Fall 2010

	Artistic analysis	Art in context
Proficient	10%	10%
Sufficient	55%	35%
Deficient	35%	55%

In Fall 2011 the LA&S council assessed 30 History of Architecture essays, with each artifact assessed by 2 scorers. Scores for Aesthetic Analysis and Art in Context were almost identical. The work could not be assessed for the third criterion, composition/performance.

Table 4
Aesthetic Appreciation
Fall 2011

Aesthetic Expression in the Arts	% Proficient	% Sufficient	% Deficient	% No Response
Aesthetic analysis	15%	58%	27%	2%
Work in context	13%	62%	25%	0%
Composition/Performance	0%	0%	0%	100%

The Spring 2012 assessment was conducted on 10 World Literature Art Museum assignments, each assessed by two scorers (Table 5). While aesthetic analysis received more deficient scores, there was no clear difference between aesthetic analysis and art in context in terms of the overall scores. As with the Fall 2011 assessment, no scoring could be conducted for the criterion composition/performance.

Table 5
Aesthetic Appreciation
Spring 2012

Aesthetic Expression in the Arts	% Proficient	% Sufficient	% Deficient	% No Response
Aesthetic analysis	45%	25%	30%	0%
Work in context	45%	40%	15%	0%
Composition/Performance	0%	0%	0%	100%

The Fall 2012 assessment was conducted on 14 Asian Cinema analyses, each scored by two assessors (Table 6). Scores were higher for Art in context than for Aesthetic analysis. Once again no scores could be given for composition/performance.

Table 6
Aesthetic Appreciation
Fall 2012

Aesthetic Expression in the Arts	% Proficient	% Sufficient	% Deficient	% No Response
Aesthetic analysis	36%	39%	25%	0%
Work in context	50%	36%	14%	0%
Composition/Performance	0%	0%	0%	100%