

# futureforward

foundational ideas, curriculum and continuous improvement

volume 3, number 1 : november 2012

sponsored by integrative teaching international <http://integrativeteaching.org>



**Models**

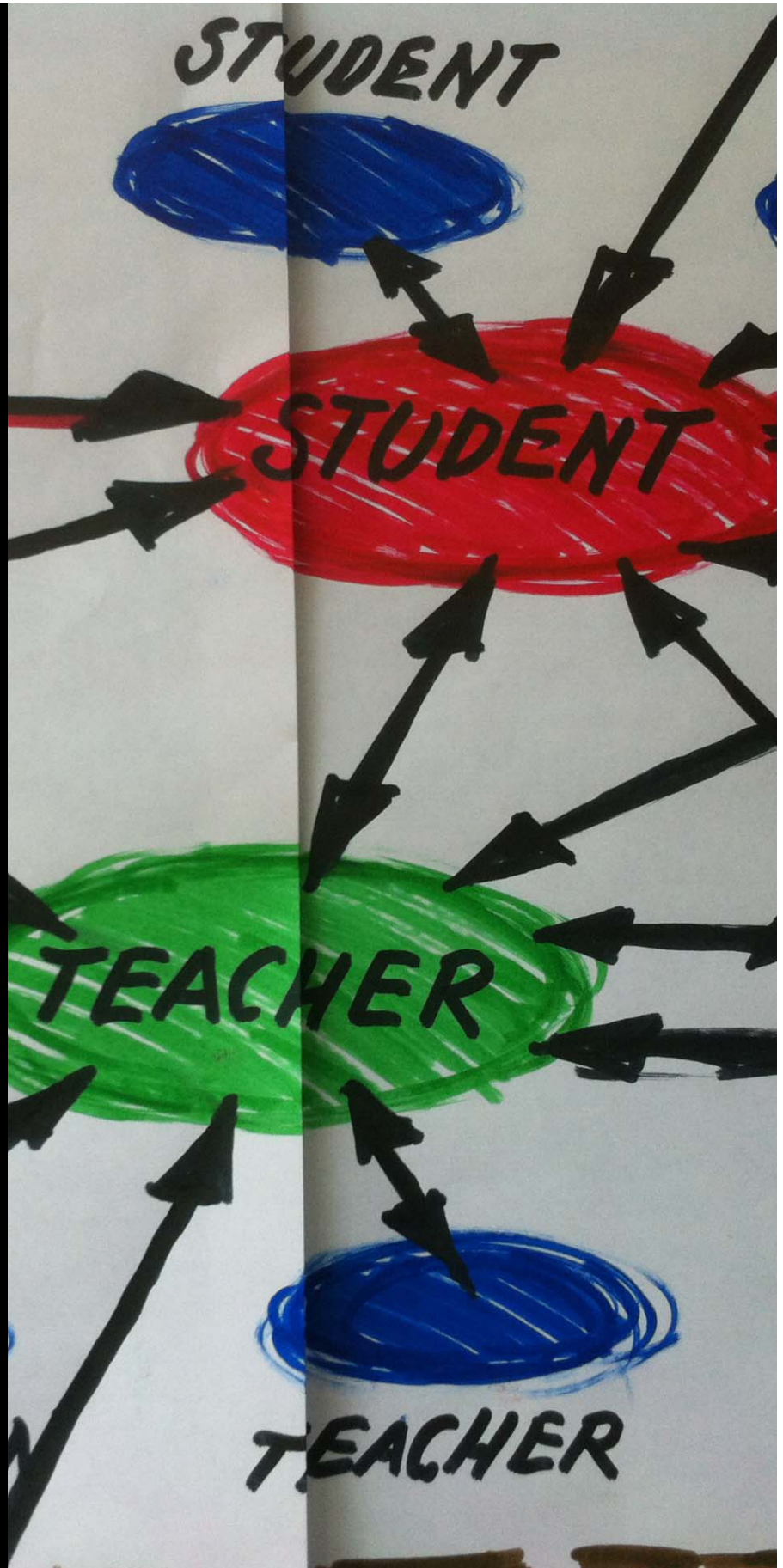
**Methods**

**Motivations**

**Practices**

**foundations now**

integrative  
teaching  
international  
higher education at a higher level



Integrative Teaching International (ITI) is an advocate for progressive educational models and policies that support an environment of integrative teaching experiences across disciplines. ITI's goal is to define trans-disciplinary partnerships required in higher education in a new millennium between knowledge, creativity, and learning. ITI's mission is to provide experienced educators with a forum for exploration, elaboration, and improvement of existing skills through new areas of collaboration and research.

ThinkTank a subsidiary program of Integrative Teaching International is to promote inquiry-based learning in an art+design multi-disciplinary setting through a series of workshops and conferences around the world catered to both emerging and experienced educators in secondary and higher education.

By linking educational theory to practice, ThinkTank identifies innovative new approaches to higher education. Integrative Teaching International evaluates ThinkTank outcomes and creates or modifies theories, policies and curricula for future ThinkTank sessions.

# futureforward

**FutureForward** is a publication of Integrative Teaching International (ITI) which sponsors a biennial conference, ThinkTank, in locations around the United States.

## **Integrative Teaching International Board**

President

Anthony Fontana, Bowling Green State University

Vice-President for Publications & Treasurer

Richard Siegesmund, Northern Illinois University

Vice-President for Communication

Chris Kienke, Savannah College of Art and Design

Vice-President for Education

Rae Goodwin, University of Kentucky

Vice-President for Outreach

Brent Thomas, Marshall University

Vice-President for Programming

Dean Adams, Montana State University

Vice-President for Development

Cynthia Hellyer-Heinz, Northern Illinois University

Vice-President for International Development

Jesse Payne, Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar

## **Editor**

Mathew Kelly

Assistant Professor and Departmental Chair  
Central College

## **Associate Editors**

Lucy Curzon, University of Alabama

Heidi Neff, Harford Community College

Clint Samples, University of West Georgia

## **ThinkTank 7 Facilitators**

Rae Goodwin, University of Kentucky

Cynthia Hellyer Heinz, Northern Illinois University

Peter Winant, George Mason University

Richard Siegesmund, Northern Illinois University

## **Design**

Adam Kallish, [www.tropecollaborative.com](http://www.tropecollaborative.com)

## **Comments and Correspondence**

All content in FutureForward is the property of Integrative Teaching International and the respective authors contained within this journal. If you would like to republish any content from FutureForward, please contact Dr. Richard Siegesmund at [rsiegesmund@niu.edu](mailto:rsiegesmund@niu.edu).

## **Creative Commons License**



FutureForward is licensed through Creative Commons as Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives. ITI allows download of FutureForward and share it with others as long as you mention ITI and link back to ITI's website, but you can't change FutureForward's content commercially.

0

Foreword  
Dean Adams

## Breakout Reports

0

Contemporary Learning Communities

Sample Assignments

- 0 | Eat, Drink, Draw
- 0 | Drawing Pen Pals
- 0 | Create an Environment of Reciprocity and Support in a Meeting

0

Connecting the Dots:  
Inside and Outside the Box

0

Integrative Teaching and Learning:  
Migrating from Today to Tomorrow


Sample Assignments


- 0 | Can I ask that? or Are you for realz?
- 0 | Applicability of sketching within integrative teaching & learning methodologies
- 0 | Breaking Boundaries
- 0 | Collaboration : Space/Body/Connectivity
- 0 | Teaching Time & Patience
- 0 | Teaching Time & Patience : Metamorphosis


# Foreward


## Dean Adams

# ThinkTank 7: Foundations Now considered the possibilities and scope of integrating ever changing models, methods, motivations, and practices of contemporary art and design in foundation level studio courses. Drawing from our diverse backgrounds as artists, designers, scholars, and educators, we examined ways to integrate a multiplicity of contemporary practices into foundations.

Questioning the ways curriculum development can be flexible and responsive to 21st century cultures, ThinkTank 7 explored emerging processes and materials in relationship to existing models and curriculum. In short, it considered how foundations now functions in relationship to the institution  a whole.

During ThinkTank7 fifty-six participants gathered at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to collaboratively consider how foundations now functions **in relation to an institution as a whole.**  objectives included:

- To explore ways of integrating emerging practices into existing foundation curricula
- To  develop effective connections among our missions, goals, learning outcomes, and assessments;
- To identify the essential features of a foundations curriculum that is responsive to a multicultural contemporary framework;
- To develop student studio research skills and facilitate the growth of critical thinking.
- To experiment with new teaching technologies, including work with social networks, virtual spaces, and online tools.

Four facilitated break-out groups diligently worked over two and a half days to consider a range of specific issues related to studio foundations. Their proceedings were documented  by scribes and culminated with a targeted presentation delivered to all of the participants of ThinkTank7. For this issue of FutureForward, the facilitators, in collaboration with and support from breakout group members, present the groups' findings to the reader.

In **Connecting the Dots: Inside and Outside the Box**, thirteen participants explored the complex reality of a typical foundations student's life. This group determined ways in which a student's experiences outside of the classroom may intersect with foundational art and design education. Acknowledging that many foundations programs have different needs and outcomes, they identified common ground shared by many art and design departments and how holistic curricula, with cross or co-curricular models, may function more effectively than traditional models of art education. In addition, this group stressed the important role of fostering, teaching, and modeling wellness as a strategy for ensuring student success in and beyond college.

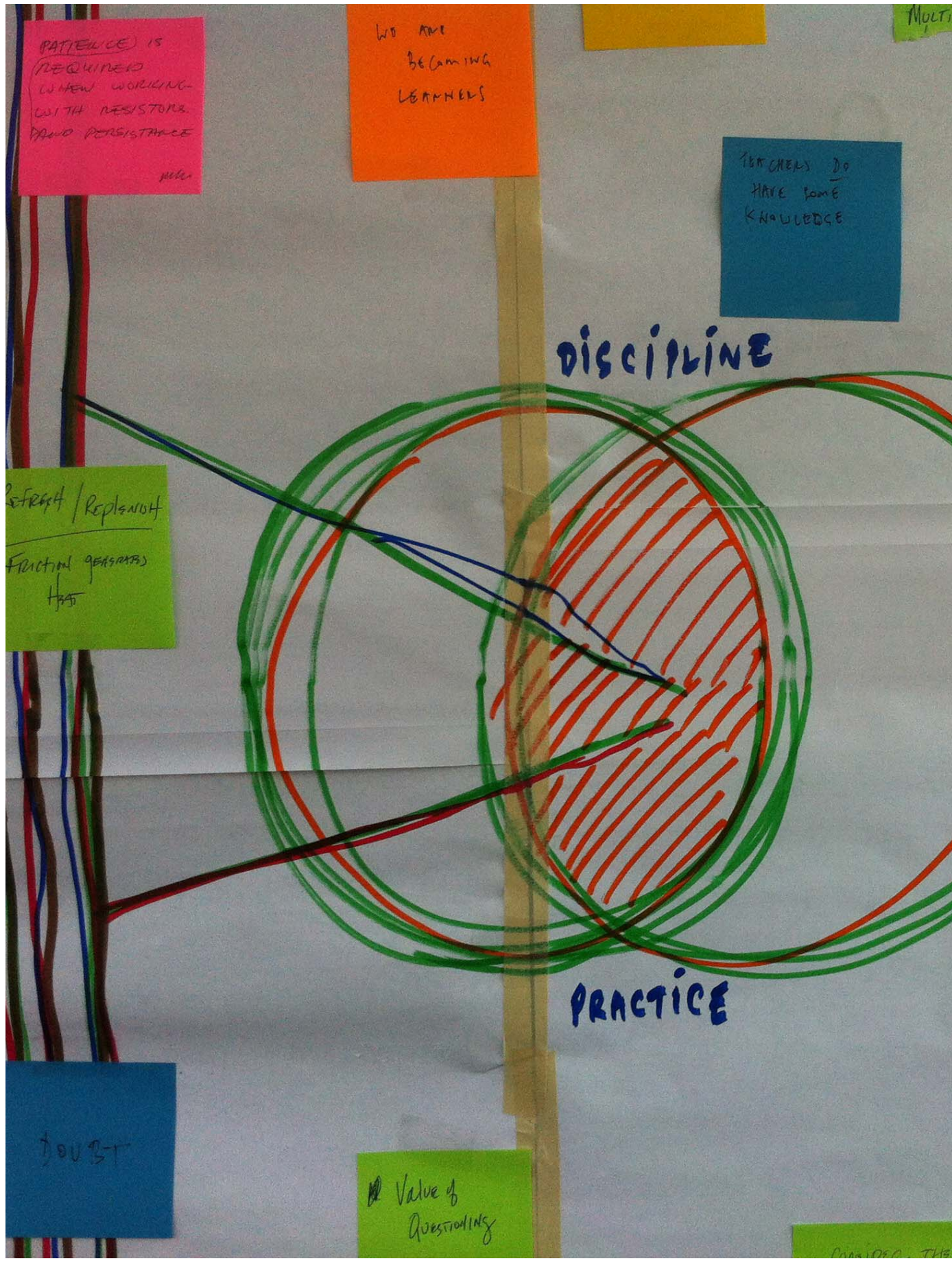
In **Manifestos and Manifestations: Intentional and Responsive Curriculum**, twelve artists and educators from diverse programs examined the concept of "failing forward" as a vehicle to foster risk taking, encourage divergent thinking, and to re-enforce the value of exploration in foundations education. This group identified methods for using positive characteristics of failure, connected to directed learning, to improve art and design curricula.

The **Integrative Teaching and Learning: Bridging Today and Tomorrow** breakout group probed concepts and practices conducive to shifting from an *answer-based* to *question-based* learning environment. Recognizing that many instructors intuitively use integrative teaching in their studio classroom, this group articulated a framework for a methodology for integrative teaching. Exploring the meanings of specific language used in the art and design education, this group carefully plotted a course to help faculty facilitate a learning environment which is non-prescriptive, responsive, and focused on process and questions rather than finished products and answers.

The **Contemporary Learning Communities** group explored the concepts and practices conducive to productive learning environments squarely placed in the 21st Century, including professional learning communities for instructors and administrators. They identified characteristics such as rigor, reciprocity and support, collaboration, and an environment where the instructor is a facilitator rather than one who holds all of the answers. This group determined many successful environments and methods to encourage productive learning and teaching environments.

The participants in ThinkTank 7 have delivered insightful and useful knowledge, practices, and models, which genuinely contribute to the ever-changing areas of foundations education.







Final Group Presentations  
ThinkTank7  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago



# Contemporary Learning Communities

Rae Goodwin, Facilitator  
University of Kentucky

Samantha Haring, Scribe  
Northern Illinois University

Kjellgren Alkire  
Northwestern College

Nick Briz  
School of the Art Institute Chicago

Amy S. Broderick  
Florida Atlantic University

Susan Marie Brundage  
Penn State Altoona

Chung-Fan Chang  
Jackson State University

Susan Fecho  
Barton College

Maureen Garvin  
Savannah College of Art and Design

Louise Kames  
Clarke University

Lily Kuonen  
Jacksonville University

Melanie Lowrance  
University of Central Missouri

Nate Page  
Woodbury University

Amy Schmierbach  
Fort Hays State University

Raymond Veon  
Atlanta Public Schools

A contemporary learning community is a model for ownership of and engagement in learning. It can be a rigorous, supportive, and responsive space that is characterized by pro-active initiatives, reciprocity and distributive leadership. A learning community is often described as *a group of people who share common values or beliefs that are actively engaged in learning together from each other*.<sup>1</sup> When translated into a student setting, they can be structured by a variety of approaches: courses that are grouped together, cohorts within larger courses, team-taught and residence-based programs.<sup>2</sup>

When translated into a faculty setting, learning communities can also be structured by a variety of approaches: group discussion-based meetings, meetings with committee chairs as facilitators, departments with rotating leadership positions, the organization of faculty retreats and meetings held in a neutral space. This structure promotes learning in and beyond the classroom and in and beyond the faculty meeting. A contemporary learning community is a place of empathy, respect, and trust, where students, faculty, and administrators alike can converse in a variety of ways that promote collaboration, reduce hierarchies, and move their work and knowledge base forward.

Some benefits of student-based learning communities are a deeper understanding of the curriculum, higher level of engagement in the classroom, and active learning – with peers and faculty – all of which often lead to higher rates of student retention, better student learning outcomes and a more successful acclimation to college life.<sup>3</sup> For faculty, the benefits of student learning communities are *shared responsibility for students' success, powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice and increased meaning and understanding of their course content*.<sup>4</sup>

While learning communities are often thought of as groups of and for students there is a growing awareness of the need for professional learning communities (PLC) specifically for faculty and administrators. A brief de-

scription of some of the most commonly cited benefits of PLCs is as follows: shared values and vision, collaborative culture, focus on examining outcomes to improve student learning, supportive and shared leadership and shared personal practice.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Rigor in Contemporary Learning Communities**

A focused intellectual rigor is an essential component in a highly effective learning community. This type of environment results from the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of community members. This is to say, when acting as a community, group members empower one another, encourage one another to do their best, and to work toward their highest standards, sharing a common extrinsic goal. When a community focuses on empathy, respect, and trust, an open-mindedness to receive criticism will exist because, intrinsically, people are motivated to achieve a higher standard for the sake of maintaining community, and thus well-intentioned criticism will increase because the individuals involved are working toward common or extrinsic goals. In order to build this type of community, honesty and respect are paramount.

While perceptions about learning communities suggest that they are more about building relationships or for supporting faculty and student retention than for academic or research accomplishments, there is substantial evidence that demonstrates the fact that learning communities can also result in improved outcomes (both student learning outcomes and departmental/research goals), and depth of

learning and engagement, and provide a transformative experience.<sup>6</sup> Improved outcomes are achieved through rigorous academic engagement, both for faculty and students. The same intensity of rigor present in a traditional classroom or in a traditional managerial structure can be present in a learning community. Strategies for promoting rigor include: accountability of each individual to the mission of the group, a focused commitment to collaboration<sup>7</sup>, ongoing feedback and assessment of learning outcomes or departmental goals<sup>8</sup>, clear and timely communication, and peer-to-peer evaluation. The learning community is a profound way to achieve a high level of student and faculty engagement, ownership of the course or meeting content, and learning in and beyond the class- or conference room.

### Reciprocity and Support in Contemporary Learning Communities

Communities of reciprocity and support encourage good will, trust, and generosity. Defining attributes of these communities include responsibility and commitment to the group, a common understanding of goals and values, an established common language, a flattened hierarchy, a cultivated consensus, and a respect for the variety and diversity among community members and for different points of view. Learning communities such as these are supported through collaboration, sharing, patience, nourishment, mentorship, advocacy, intensity and effective leadership through facilitation.

#### *(a) Structures of Reciprocity and Support in Student-Centered Communities*

In this type of educational setting, the instructor acts as a facilitator or guide for student learning. By respecting and empowering students, the instructor relinquishes some of the hierarchical structures previously inherent to education. Investigative-based assignments open up all parties involved to explore the subject matter in unexpected directions. When an instructor remains open to the possibilities of new approaches arising at any point in a project or discussion, students increase their involvement and ownership while participating more fully in the process. Curriculum is maintained through the generous, guiding force of the instructor and a greater range of knowledge arises from an exchange between all parties. In the context of the studio classroom, there are several mechanisms that faculty can put in place to support cooperation:

- beginning-of-class or mid-class rituals (reading poetry or quiet reflection)
- different students lead different parts of the course, project or class

- daily or weekly peer-to-peer critiques with specific objectives
- student led class critiques during class time or online
- sharing files, presentations, or links using tools like Google docs, Delicious and wikis
- sharing information about professional or exhibition opportunities through a listserv
- sharing career or personal stories to open dialogue between instructor and student
- web-based shared spaces, including blogs and Facebook groups
- participating in one another's out-of-class activities (whether art-based or not)
- acknowledging one another's accomplishments

Collaboration is another avenue towards developing cooperation in a studio classroom. Formulating collaborative studio assignments that require everyone's participation, including the instructor's, can nurture dynamic exchange in the classroom. This sense of community expands outside of the physical classroom when mechanisms for students to engage using social networks are established. Some examples include: exquisite-corpse sketchbook assignments and internet-based interactions (like blogs, Google+, Facebook, etc.) where students can ask questions, post work in progress and give one another feedback. For an instructor to cultivate a community of reciprocity in the classroom, the key factors include openness, sharing, and mutual respect while at the same time maintaining high expectations for conduct, craftsmanship, and individual responsibility among all of the course participants.

#### *(b) Structures of Reciprocity and Support in Administrator- and Faculty-Centered Communities*

In faculty-to-faculty settings, learning communities can be created and sustained in myriad ways. Exchanging information, however, lies at the foundation of each group. For example, archiving and sharing resources and teaching materials, including projects and image databases, can create reciprocity, while collecting and distributing information (about professional opportunities, including exhibitions, internships, and residencies) through a departmental listserv facilitates community building.

Indeed, even simple steps can be taken, like a brown-bag lunch series in which faculty present their research, thus binding the group together through supportive scholarly exchange. More complicated efforts could include a faculty exhibit of collaboratively produced works or classroom visits and pedagogical discussions to promote exchange.

A focused intellectual rigor is an essential component in a highly effective learning community . . . This is to say, when acting as a community, group members empower one another, encourage one another to do their best, and to work toward their highest standards, sharing a common extrinsic goal.

Informal teaching reviews or feedback on style and technique may also encourage and support faculty communities.

In administrator-to-faculty settings, contemporary learning communities are built through clear and responsive communication. In the establishment of overarching and clear goals for the committee, department or school, administrators must respect and cooperate with faculty. Simply providing an agenda for each faculty meeting where particular goals are clearly stated and distributing the agenda with enough time for faculty to respond and contribute is a simple gesture of respect.

Indeed, the sense that individual voices are critical to the success of the entire group must be nurtured through a respectful mentoring and modeling process. A clear record of meetings also creates a sense of transparency, which naturally opens communication. Administrators must prepare to listen and respond to faculty-directed initiatives and faculty must prepare to be pro-active and engaged in all aspects of their department or school.

Some other ideas to build a community of reciprocity and support in settings where faculty and administrators interact are:

- **Build consensus toward the group's goals with collaboration**
  - establish a common language
  - identify common values and goals
  - identify common ideas/approaches leading to the goals

- summarize the content and inclusion of all points of view (patience, empathy, and advocacy)

- **Rotate responsibilities within the group to promote accountability and empathy**

- develop leadership through natural mentoring and rotating leadership roles to increase empathy/understanding of the whole
- establish clear roles and the value of each member's role in the group (creating ownership and acknowledging contributions)
- allow for blurring/crossover of roles (empower others, acknowledge vulnerability, and learn from failure)

Sustainability, open and honest dialogue, generosity and willingly shared information contributes to building and maintaining a professional learning community of reciprocity and support.

### **Environmental Factors in Contemporary Learning Community**

Environments influence community dynamics, affecting everything from a person's state of mind to his or her fluidity of thought and sense of him or herself in relation to a group. In order to create a rigorous learning community grounded in reciprocity and support students, faculty, and administrators need to consider the dynamics of three types of environments: physical space, psychological space, and public space. Each type of space or environment plays a significant role in a group's ability to successfully move toward a common goal or mission.

### **Student-Centered Environments**

The physical space of the studio classroom offers opportunities to change community dynamics. Studio furniture can be moved to vary groupings of students. Having student worktables face one another instead of the "front" of the room orients activity to peers rather than to the instructor. This encourages students to ask the person across from them or beside them for advice. Additionally, mutuality is fostered by encouraging students to take care of the space, by not isolating themselves with individual headphones, and by offering the opportunity to participate in decision-making (such as bringing objects to class for a still life arrangement or the thematic content of the project itself).

Changing the class locale can also mix up group chemistry; people respond to one another and to ideas differently when the working environment changes.

Assignments offering opportunities to work outdoors, such as the university greenhouse or in public spaces on or off campus can provide a more social atmosphere as well as pique the interest of other students, faculty, and administrators. Ventures beyond campus to galleries or museums also offer an opportunity to change social dynamics and encourage a different kind of conversation. Faculty might even offer *coffee hours* instead of office hours to create a different and more casual and welcoming atmosphere for student engagement.

Studio classes might meet and collaborate with creative writing or science classes in their facilities. Drawing students could serve as individual tutors to biology students learning to record observed specimens in lab notebooks. Introductory digital imaging students might offer their design and technology skills by serving as art directors for upper division science or business class presentations. These varied examples of collaboration offer ample opportunity to create an engaged community atmosphere.

Studio environments generate psychological space as well as physical space. Altering repetitive instructional patterns can provoke change. Varying the pace of a class can encourage creativity and risk-taking. Students grow accustomed to the faculty introduction or demo followed by multiple workdays. A non-predictable pacing, where assignments can shift from quick pace to slow pace to quick pace, can increase productivity and creativity.

Some sessions might begin with meditation or a written reflection. Mid-assignment peer critiques or activities offer opportunity for exchange and growth and build peer support. Studio pace can fluctuate with short as well as long assignments and graded versus non-graded assignments. Changing the stakes offers greater opportunity for students and faculty to take risks and be vulnerable in experimentation. Class projects that include personal story telling or self-identification exercises help create a climate for risk and collaboration. A psychological environment focused on rigor, reciprocity and support will manifest a motivated learning community.

Engagement in public space can increase a sense of both civic and class community. By offering class activities, service learning opportunities, or exhibitions beyond the department and campus boundaries, instructors promote connections to the larger world, which can in turn increase student empathy. Students might partner with local schools or non-profit organizations to create murals that demonstrate an awareness of the greater community, special events such as pop-up

gallery openings with work made in the larger community, service learning opportunities such as engaging in pen pal drawing dialogs, or serving as creative directors for group projects or public sculpture.

Exhibitions of student work contribute to student pride and affirmation as well as create a public presence and dialog. Potential exhibition venues include: formal gallery spaces, local community health or correctional centers, coffee shops, churches, empty store fronts and web-based formats.

### Faculty Centered Environments

The spaces where faculty and administrators interact are critical to building a healthy learning community. The same amount of attention that is paid to student-centered spaces must be paid to faculty-centered spaces in order for a fully engaged community to be developed. A thoughtful and responsive leader (either an administrator or a faculty member) will analyze existing dynamics in these spaces and work with others to make changes when needed in order to elevate the entire community.

The physical environments, where faculty interact with other faculty and with administrators, deserve examination. Buildings, student populations, courses, and materials can define physical connections between these groups. Holding meetings in a variety of different spaces can shift patterns in the ways community members think and behave. Depending on the size and/or nature of the meeting, they can be held at someone's home, a coffee shop, a conference room with a round table, a classroom with tables set up in small groups, a local community center, a gallery space, or another non-conventional setting.

Psychological environments can be affected by simple empowering methods, such as: faculty control of teaching schedules, shared calendars, flexibility in office hours (on or off campus, etc.), and, importantly, the display of gratitude toward an administrator who has made a positive impact on the community. The public acknowledgement of a job well done is a motivating factor toward future success and empowers every individual in the group.

Another critical aspect of the psychological environment is flexible responsiveness. Because each peer or employee has different needs and motivations for success, a peer or leader who takes the time to decipher or share these needs will be a more powerfully engaged member of the community. When this occurs, trust is built, creativity flourishes, and solutions can be



calculated between faculty members and administrators to offer aid and advocacy.

Additionally, meetings can include, for example, an offer of food and/or drink or the recognition of a significant life event therein increasing a sense of mutual respect and trust. Community building exercises, like faculty retreats can transform conversation styles, which in turn will transform and increase the opportunities for success in a given community.

Faculty often work in public spaces through their research and teaching. By engaging in a diverse range of local, national and international projects, and sharing these accomplishments with the greater community of students, faculty, and administrators, the bar for success is raised, morale is improved, and motivation increased. Collaboration on research projects with a public presence or with another institution can also increase a sense of community. Holding a meeting or volunteering at a local arts venue broadens the reach of the faculty into the public realm. As faculty and administrators stretch and extend their spaces, they must consider what efforts lead to sustainable change and how these efforts may compound over time to build a stronger learning environment overall.

### **Change Through Conservation in Contemporary Learning Communities**

Every group, be it a class or a department, can create different and dynamic models of interaction, engagement, and productivity for their versions of learning communities. Yet effective change must originate with a process of conservation. This kind of conservation identifies and protects the most essential or indispensable aspects of the community. As a community decides to expand, the elements identified as expendable are naturally dispensed with and compelling change takes place.

Change can seem, and indeed be, destabilizing and chaotic. Yet approaching it with an attitude of conservation builds consensus and unity, while guiding individual and collective action. In undertaking this process, it is critical for the community's stakeholders to work together to identify its core strengths, the meaningful traditions, and the valuable content that are indispensable for growth and success. Projects and actions can then be identified that will nurture, sustain, and expand these essential elements. Taking these steps helps members of the community to build the consensus necessary for effective collaboration. It is easier for the community's stakeholders and constituents to embrace the idea of change, to undertake the steps necessary



to achieve it, and to let go of inessential elements if these actions are taken in the context of a larger awareness that this *letting go* is making room for the expansion of what is most important. Change as conservation ensures that new additions are substantive and consistent with existing and desired values.

A contemporary learning community is a group of invested people working toward a common goal. In its spaces of interaction, all individuals are mentored to cultivate a sense of empathy, respect, and trust. In this context, individuals are motivated to rigorously challenge themselves and others in order to make improvements for the benefit of the group. As a contemporary learning community moves toward a common goal, change in the spirit of conservation will occur and thus create thoughtful, respectful, and responsive projects and initiatives.

Footnotes

1. Wikipedia entry on Learning Communities
2. Learning Communities and Student Success in Post secondary Education  
*Derek V. Price with research Malisa Lee*  
[www.mdrc.org/publications/418/full.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/publications/418/full.pdf)
3. Why Learning Communities, Why Now  
*K. Patricia Cross*  
[www.nhcuc.org/pdfs/CrossLC.pdf](http://www.nhcuc.org/pdfs/CrossLC.pdf)
4. Professional Learning Communities: What Are They and Why Are They Important?  
*Dr. Shirley M. Hord, Senior Research Associate, School Restructuring Program. Issues ... about Change is published twice a year by Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.*  
[www.seidl.org/change/issues/issues61/outcomes.html](http://www.seidl.org/change/issues/issues61/outcomes.html)
5. Elements that Define a PLC?  
The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement  
*Learning Point Associates*  
[www.centerforsri.org/plc/elements.html](http://www.centerforsri.org/plc/elements.html) *Professional Learning Communities*
6. Learning Communities and Student Success in Post secondary Education  
*Derek V. Price; with research support by Malissa Lee*  
[www.mdrc.org/publications/418/full.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/publications/418/full.pdf)
7. Characteristics of a PLC – collaborative culture  
[www.centerforsri.org/plc/elements.html](http://www.centerforsri.org/plc/elements.html)
8. Learning Communities: Key Elements for Sustainability  
*Barbara Leigh Smith*  
[www.facultyfocus.com/articles/learning-communities/learning-communities-key-elements-for-sustainability/](http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/learning-communities/learning-communities-key-elements-for-sustainability/)

Resources

- Johnson, Stephen  
*Where Good Ideas Come From*  
New York: Riverhead, 2010
- Hooks, Bell   
*Teaching Critical Thinking, Practical Wisdom*  
New York: Routledge, 2009
- Hooks, Bell   
*Teaching Community, A Pedagogy of Hope*  
New York: Routledge, 2003
- Foundational Ideas, Curriculum and Continuous Improvement  
*Future Forward, Volume 2, Issue 1*  
Integrative Teaching International. March 2012



# 01 Contemporary Learning Communities Assignment

## Eat, Drink, Draw

### Problem

Build community within the classroom through a shared meal and subsequent documentation via drawing

### Objectives/Assessment Targets

- to establish a sense of community within the first few weeks of class
- to encourage discussion and connections
- to use drawing as a tool for documenting experiences

### Materials

Potluck food brought by the class (meal type is dependent on the time of day the class meets), 18" x 24" drawing paper (one sheet per student), vine charcoal, chamois, kneaded eraser

### Strategy

Set up a table with chairs in the center of the room. Have students bring in a potluck meal to celebrate surviving their first week of college. Set aside the first 30 – 40 minutes of class for eating together and sharing their best and worst experiences of the week. Leave the remnants of the meal on the table and have students set up their easels around it. Encourage them to think about conveying that sense of community through their compositions.

### Key Questions

- How does the act of drawing serve as documentation of an event or emotion?
- How does a sense of community help facilitate the transition process for students into a college environment?
- How does a shared experience affect the reading or understanding of a drawing?

### Critique Strategy

Conduct a lightning round critique halfway through the drawing session. Have the students name three aspects of each drawing that require attention. At the end of the session, have the students discuss their experience and reflect on other ways for drawing to be used as a form of documentation in their daily lives. Homework could include having the students use their visual journals to document their commutes, their bathrooms, their bookshelves, etc.

### Timetable

30 – 40 minute shared meal  
60 – 90 minute drawing  
15 – 30 minute discussion

### Assignment Author

Samantha Haring, Northern Illinois University (NIU), sam.haring@gmail.com. Samantha Haring is a painter and drawing instructor at NIU. She has shown in galleries in Chicago and the Midwest and has organized and curated silent auctions for non-profits including UNICEF, the Japanese Red Cross, as well as the UIC chapter of Engineers Without Borders. www.samharing.com

### Problem

Students will pair with another individual (who is unknown to them) and participate in drawing exchanges. Options include people from another course section, from a different course altogether or a different department, or from a separate community entity.

### Objectives/Assessment Targets

Through a series of 6 drawing exchanges, students will build dialogue, communicate content and expression, explore a greater sense of community, engage a specific audience relationship, and cultivate a broader understanding and application of drawing to encourage positive change in student behavior and outlook.

This exchange will take place repeatedly over the course of a semester. Thus, students should be able to identify not only a progression of ideas through the series, but also identify successes and failures (and be allowed the time to investigate these concepts fully). The project will conclude with an exhibition displaying the paired drawing exchanges.

### Materials

Drawing Paper (no larger than 18 x 24"), and assorted selection of drawing materials

### Strategy

1. Identify a community partner and their goals to familiarize students with their audience.
2. Present project, timeline, and objectives to students.
3. Discuss historical references to build concept ideas and encourage research. References may include: mail and book art, illustration and storytelling, (Mapping Correspondence: Mail Art in the 21st Century at the Center for Book Arts in NY); work by artists such as Ray Johnson, On Kawara, Buzz Spector, Anna Banana, and Marilyn R. Rosenberg; and the expanding platforms for communication involving social networking and digital presence.
4. Identify the process for the drawing exchange. Students will be assigned a partner, they will create drawings for that partner over the course of the semester, there will be specific deadlines for the drawings to be exchanged, and they will receive drawings in response. This builds a continuing dialogue of images throughout the length of the exchange.
5. Specific prompts may be given for the drawings, but allow for creative flexibility.

### Key Questions

1. What do you wish to communicate through your drawn images?
2. What visual methods will you employ to both create and respond to your drawing exchanges?
3. Group Discussion: How has this exchange affected your attitude toward collaboration and community? What were the successes and failures of this exchange and how did you react to them and or alter your approach? In what ways did a "specific audience" affect your method and form of image development and content?

(continued)

## 02 Contemporary Learning Communities Assignment Drawing Pen Pals (continued)

### Critique Strategy

In process, peer-to-peer discussions focus on ideas and address issues of communication. One-on-one instructors to student discussions address the development of content and concept. A concluding group discussion/critique on the entire project is necessary to evaluate the objectives.

### Timetable

1. One day for project discussion, timetable, examples, and historical references.
2. One semester of exchange.
3. Process for exchange: Students produce 5-6 drawings while community partners simultaneously produce drawings. The instructor should collect student drawings periodically throughout the semester, deliver them to community partners, and collect partner drawings. Deliver these drawings to students so they may “respond” to them with their next drawing. Continue process for the remainder of the exchange.

### Assignment Author

Lily Kuonen, Assistant Professor of Foundations at Jacksonville University, FL, attended Think-Tank7 as an emerging educator fellow. She creates PLAYNTINGS, engaging painting with another form and action. Her upcoming work includes panels at SECAC 2012 and FATE 2013, as well as contributing as a director and facilitator for a college-wide collaborative performance installation in downtown Jacksonville for Spring 2013. lilykuonen@gmail.com, www.lilykuonen.com

## Contemporary Learning Communities Assignment

### Create an Environment of Reciprocity and Support in a Meeting

#### Focus or Agenda Item

Increase communication during meetings, to develop more effective use of time with improved results. Meeting facilitators articulate how participants can be part of a "solution" that leads to new conditions, new instructional strategies, and a more effective learning environment.

#### Strategy

Since the individual environment we work within and under structures us, it is important to be conscious of built-in hierarchy. In order to develop and implement means to learn about others' concerns, various questions are proposed to foster dialogue at the beginning of meetings. Meet in a comfortable environment with readily available refreshments. The replies from the faculty are heard during the meeting and are responded to and/or implemented in a timely and appropriate manner.

#### Key Questions

Questions given in advance of meeting

- If you have a magic wand that could alter three work issues, what would you change (pace, physical environment, psychological space, external dynamic, etc.)? 1
- Why is it important to make these changes?
- What discipline based article, quote or new book can you share?

#### Timetable

Ten minutes at the beginning of the meeting

#### Note to Emerging Administrators

Flattening hierarchy does not mean the elimination of a centralized leader. Administrators and leaders need to shift to from dictating and announcing to managing and learning, as they become the head learner. Open communication is necessary, so ask questions and listen for the answers.

#### Note to Emerging Faculty

Seek to understand a problem before reacting and never lose faith in group conscience. This is your opportunity to speak and be heard, use it wisely.

#### Source

Clark, Don

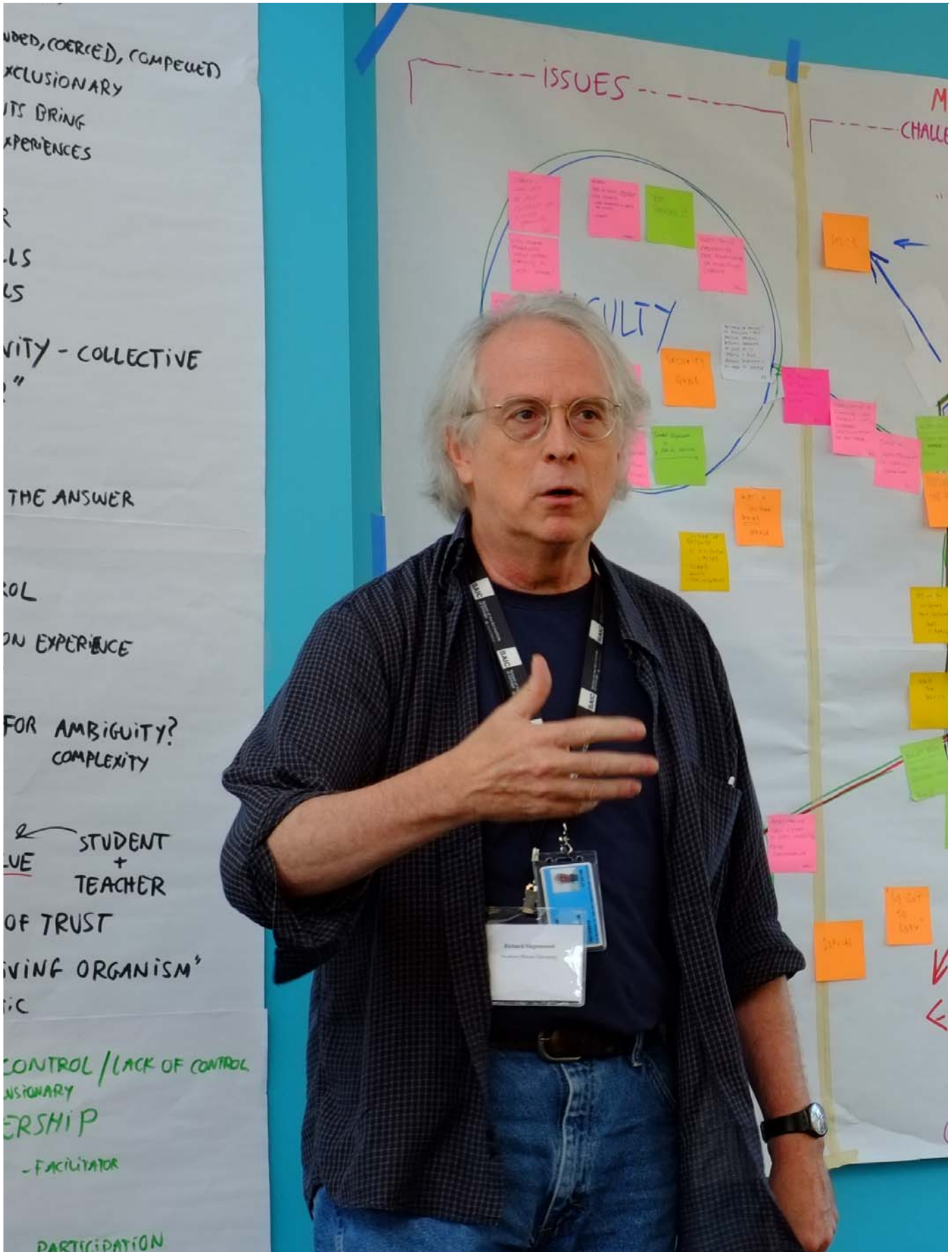
*Icebreakers, Warm-up, Review, and Motivator Activities.*

A Big Dog, Little Dog and Knowledge Jump Production, 1998. Web. 26 June 2012.

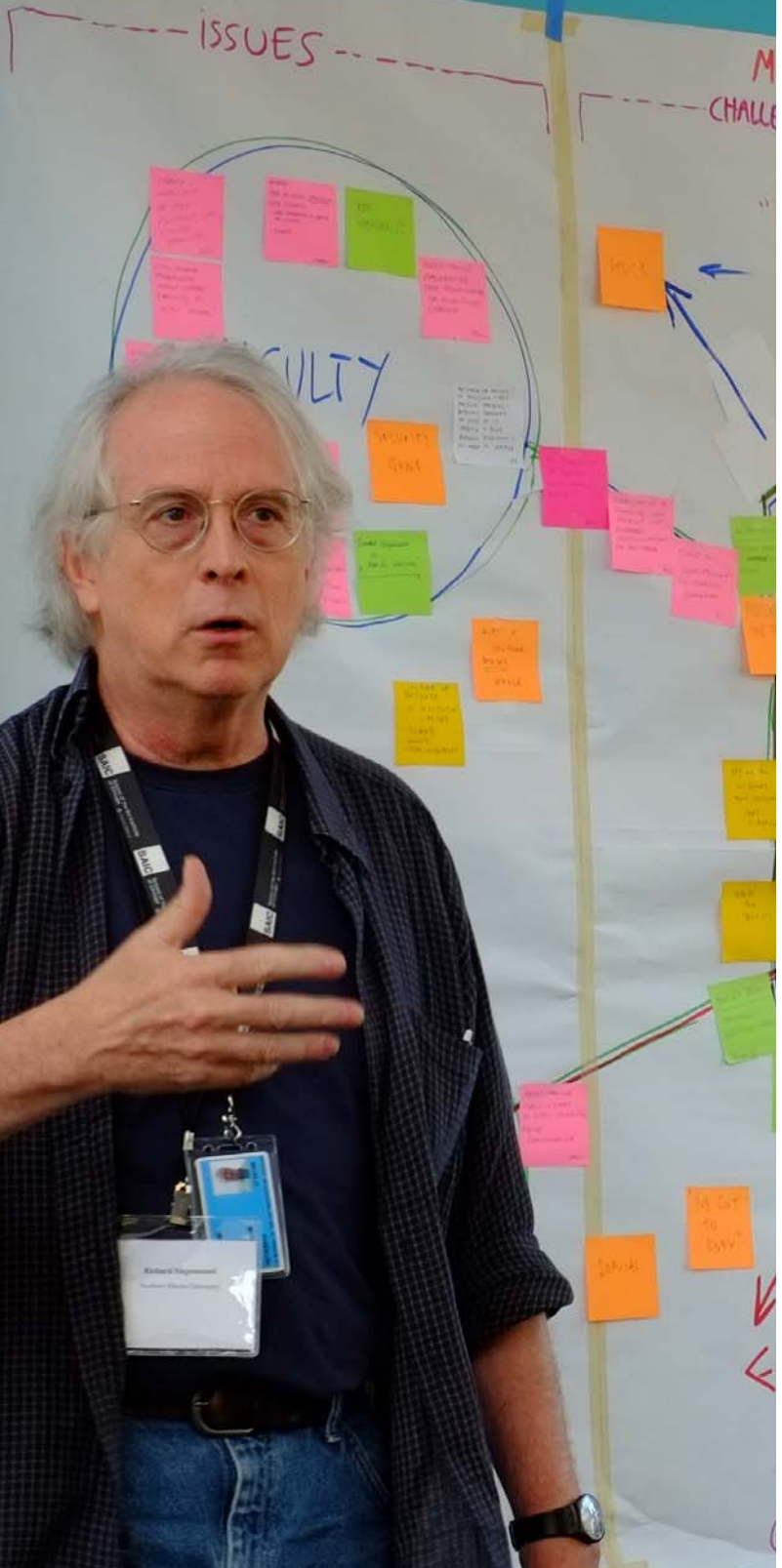
[www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/icebreak.html](http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/icebreak.html)

#### Assignment Author

Professor Susan Fecho is Chair of the Art and Design Department at Barton College. Her lifelong devotion to art includes over thirty years of teaching and working with art students in the United States and abroad. Fecho, a designer, illustrator and printmaker, has published and exhibited regionally, nationally and internationally.



uded, coerced, compelled)  
EXCLUSIONARY  
ITS BRING  
EXPERIENCES  
R  
LS  
LS  
VITY - COLLECTIVE  
"  
THE ANSWER  
ROL  
ON EXPERIENCE  
FOR AMBIGUITY?  
COMPLEXITY  
STUDENT  
+  
TEACHER  
OF TRUST  
IVING ORGANISM'  
ic  
CONTROL / LACK OF CONTROL  
VISIONARY  
ERSHIP  
- FACILITATOR  
PARTICIPATION







# Connecting the Dots: Inside and Outside the Box

---

Peter Winant, Facilitator  
George Mason University

Catherine Behrent  
Maryland Institute College of Art

Blaine Bradford, Scribe  
Northern Illinois University

Linda Brown  
Suffolk University

Joelle Dietrick  
Independent Artist

Dennis Farber  
Maryland Art Institute

Chris Kienke  
Savannah College of Art and Design

Doug Post  
Woodbury University

Alison Ruttan  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Mark Schatz  
Kent State University

Kim Sloan  
Pratt Institute

Amy Vogel  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Art and Design Foundations educators live and work in an interconnected world where foundations programs are layered, fluid and within which students, faculty and administrators exist in a shifting framework of past, present and future that is experienced collectively and individually. This paper is an attempt to identify, categorize, and organize, critical connections in the vast networks that characterize the relationships between foundations programs and the institutions and broader cultures they operate within. Connectivity is a big picture idea with myriad applications, the specifics of which will certainly vary from program to program among colleges and universities.

Foundations education represents a particular time and place in a student's education and development, and it is not an isolated one. The transition from home to independence, from high school to college presents its own challenges, both in and outside the classroom. Therefore, a primary connection must be made between the entirety of a student's life experience and the integration of the experience of their education. As educators and administrators, we must first acknowledge and respect that each student arrives with a foundation of knowledge, valuable personal experiences, and a passion that directed them to pursue art and design in the first place.

The initial task is to help students find connections to the dots of their past, and their present. Ideally, we begin this process by drawing out and identifying their prior knowledge then build upon it through progressive and specific educational experiences. The educational journey of the student is then built on strong, clear connections established early, and reinforced through reiterative experiences throughout their development, successfully linking the various stages of a student's journey. Connecting a student from where they've been to who they are is just one of a complex set of mutually supportive, iterative interconnections that connect the

relationship between the life of the imagination, the creative mind, productive citizenship and academic rigor.

#### **Finding Common Ground**

While each Foundation program will form its own value driven conclusions about the connections to be made between student experience, curriculum, community and broader aspirations, the following are identified as commonly expressed goals tied to reaching desirable student learning outcomes for foundation and core curriculum as well as advanced studies.

The list includes, but is in no way limited :

- Embedding continuing awareness of citizenship and its role in art/design by recognition of the role of life skills and wellness within a total curricular structure and out of the classroom/studio
- Development of applied critical thinking skills, through process, analysis and critique, with an objective to improve one's work, confidence and involvement within the community and the culture at large

- Understand the inherent value of iterative process- part of which is patience and the ability to suspend judgment through comparative experiences as well as critique.
- Develop analogical thinking skills, to recognize and understand metaphorical potential in visual constructs
- Develop transferable skills and concepts between disciplines to carry ideas into form.
- Develop rhetorical skills and make the connection between writing, oral communication and image making
- Develop an understanding and application of appropriate level of craft skills
- Develop a healthy, consistent curiosity and the ability to challenge one's preconceptions
- Develop a tolerance for the discomfort of challenge and struggle
- Engage in learning experiences that focus on cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, being aware and mindful of one's thinking process.
- Achieve a degree of self-realization that will contribute to the development of a responsive individual voice and the tools to give it expression, through learning opportunities that link a wide range of experiences concurrent with and provided by the Foundation year. Self-realization will allow for an informed decision about one's future, one's major and beyond.
- Link one's experiences outside the classroom to those within the studio.
- Learn to synthesize meaningful personal experience, materials, process and cultural environment into coherent, whole visual communications
- Instill a fundamental ability to identify and discern differences in what is observable as part of critical analysis
- Learn tolerance, empathy, compassion and respect for diverse ideas, voices and modes of working
- Create opportunities for exposure to a wide range of historically significant precedents in art & design and contemporaneous uses in order to provide context for the practice of making and crafting

Much of the above list is geared toward a refinement or expansion of what is practiced in many Foundations programs. The first goal of embodying a more holistic approach, including support for life skills and wellness will likely require more training for faculty, greater administrative and institutional support including student services, and stronger vertical and horizontal integra-

tion with institutional and broader community cultures. As a note, gaining institutional support for foundations programs to integrate life skills and wellness into curricular practice may be tied to the potential financial benefit of higher retention rates, and attractiveness of the programs to potential students and greater student success within the institution and beyond.

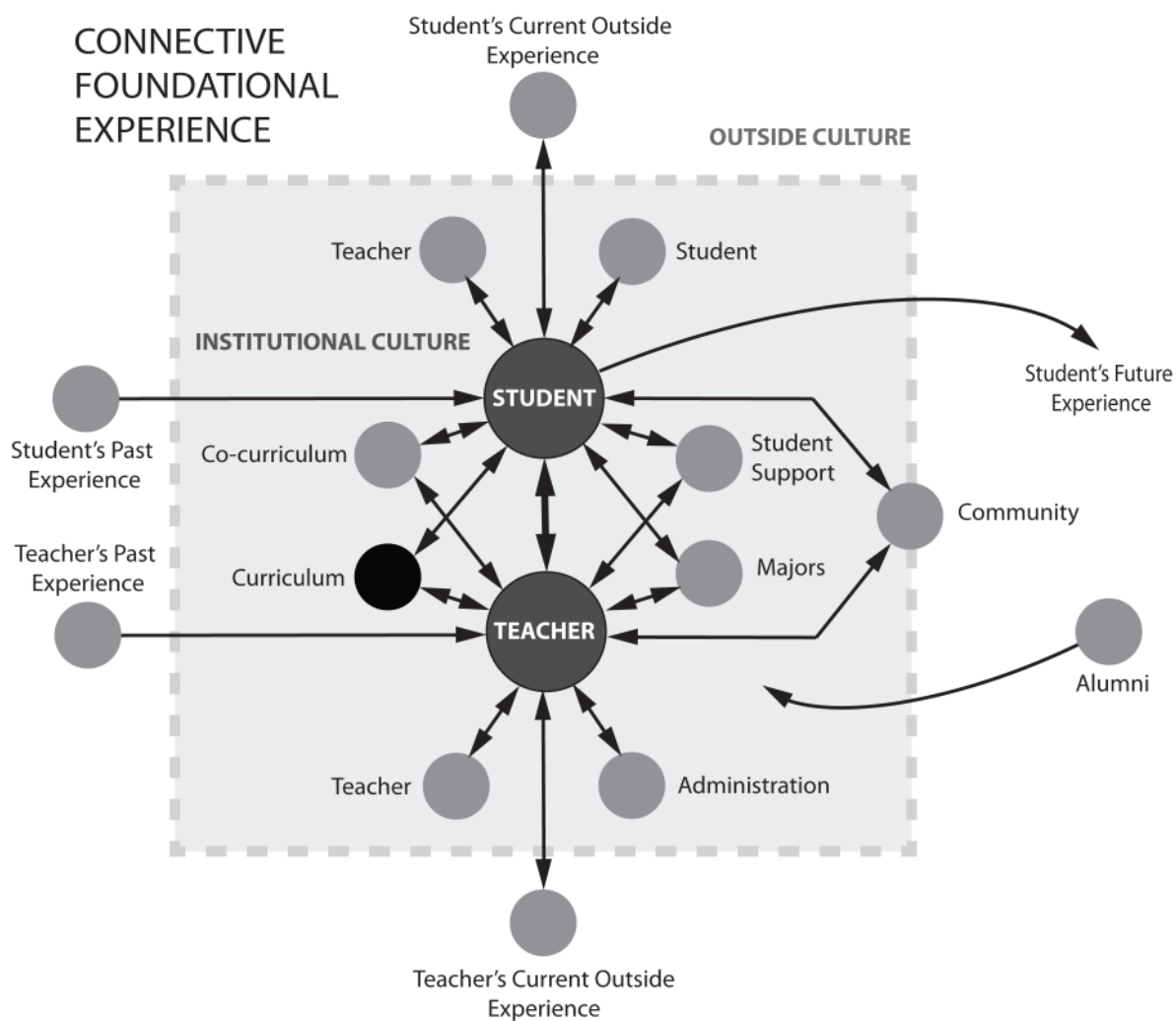
### Building a Picture

Connecting the dots in and outside of the box, calls attention to the need for Foundations programs to be aware of, organize, and attend to their priorities in curricular and co-curricular programs. In this context, students' art and design foundation experiences, include not only the development of a student's specific art and design skills, but the holistic make-up of the individual, acknowledging their cultural exposure, developmental stage, life experience, prior education, as well as how they are positioning themselves toward their future.

A diagram of the multiple connections inherent in Foundation is illustrated below. The "box" represents as an institutional structure and culture separated from surrounding culture by a permeable membrane, within which all of the dots and their complex connections may reside. Connectivity is illustrated in the context of support and sustainability of the development of a myriad network: technical skill sets, life skills, career pathways, of an institution, as learning outcome, as learning to learn through collaboration, and as power/empowerment.

The diagram shows a system of dots within an institutional box. These dots are identified as consistently present in an integrated educational timeline, from home and high school, to the first year of college, through Foundations, into upper levels of professionally directed study, and the career options that await after graduation. It is a snapshot of the Foundations year and experience. And, while centered on the student-teacher relationship, the diagram describes a much wider network of relationships that inform and impact foundations programs. As such, it raises significant questions:

- How does a Foundation program generate sustainable connections through the transition between entry and exit of stages of the education process: high school to college, the foundations year, lower to upper division experiences, graduation from University to the community?
- What are the gaps that need better connection in faculty-to-faculty relationships, and in administration to faculty relationships to support and enhance student experience?



As the diagram above suggests, knowledge and experience can take many forms.

- As a landscape of delineated yet porous territories (dots) within and around an institution (box) and broader culture, are there new educational opportunities that may be developed to foster multi-directional pathways of individual and collective actions and experiences?

Connections for student and teacher outside the box:

- Past experience
- Economic circumstances
- Medical history
- Mental health history
- Culture and community
- Family experience
- Students to their future
- Teachers' practice outside the classroom
- Curricular connections to previous education
- Curricular connections to future education

The following checklist identifies some of the connections the diagram begins to illustrate. We will add more bullet points in our imaginations, and we will begin to see the rhizome-like web of relationships Foundations now can become. Many in this list are, of course, already in place, in varying forms and degrees at most schools. The checklist may be helpful in assessing this, and perhaps seeing where one might need to build, reconfigure or strengthen connections:

Connections inside the box:

- Student – faculty
- Faculty - faculty
- Student - student
- Faculty - administration
- Student - administration
- Foundation - upper departments
- Student - curriculum
- Faculty - curriculum
- Administration - curriculum
- Student – co-curricular
- Student – student support services
- Faculty – student support services
- Faculty - curricular
- Administration - co-curricular
- Curricular - co-curricular

### Another Big Picture

Now that we have identified a web of connectivity, it is important to suggest some of the reasons why it is imperative that the connections be addressed. We cannot know or even productively speculate on the changes in the nature and processes of the workplace that our students will encounter. If we look hard at the present, we can however, identify certain strategies to maximize student success in our current environment.

The S.N.A.P.P. study (Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, <http://snaap.indiana.edu/>), based at Indiana University, offers a picture of graduates from art programs. The study poses a challenge to institutions, art and design programs, and Foundations educators. It indicates an increased need for a recognition and response by Foundations educators that their role is deeply interwoven with the whole life of students. The study suggests that holistic foundations programs may serve their students in ways that better prepare them for futures that will likely require highly agile intellects and ability to work in highly interactive, cross-disciplinary fashion. By virtue of its findings, the study also underscores the need to engage in the rarely discussed, but immanent ethical dimension of our roles as educators through art practice, and how a focus on life-skills, wellness and connections to life experiences matters.

S.N.A.P.P. is an extraordinary undertaking to track the careers of students who majored in visual art, design and the performing arts. It finds that 75% of graduates have been self-employed at some time, and that 19% go on to work as designers, and 10% list “fine artist” as their occupation. Their median incomes are \$45,000 and \$35,000 respectively. An additional 25% have made careers in Arts Education, and earn a median

income of \$45,000. What of the others who are not pursuing careers in the arts, yet received degrees in them? What of the students who came to arts classes to fulfill General Education requirements? Foundations educators should also note, that while 75% of graduates cite “artistic” skills as critical to their professional life, skills such as critical thinking, creativity, listening and revising, teamwork, broad knowledge, research, writing and speaking are recognized by 94 to 99% of the over 33,000 respondents as critical.

Therefore, it seems critical that recognizing, addressing and including the wider web of connectivity into our curriculums and administrative structures is necessary. Clearly, we do not have a single model of our incoming student, for how they will respond and develop with the context of our foundations and extended educational environment, or what the conditions will be when they enter the broad landscape of their larger culture. However, many programs are responding to the challenge of today, and the foreseeable future by integrating new strategies into their curriculum and larger educational frameworks.

### The Role of Life Skills and Wellness in Foundations Education

Shortly after being hired as the Dean of Yale’s School of Art, Robert Storr explained that it’s not enough for young artists to have talent and the drive to work. Instead it is necessary to know how to pace oneself, to know which opportunities are positive opportunities and which are traps, and how to take risks and gamble with your talent. Artists can best make those decisions and leave a lasting cultural legacy if they make those decisions from healthy bodies and minds.

An important discussion among contemporary educators is, “our students enter our college programs lacking effective life skills,” and how such a lack conditions students’ receptivity to learning, and leads them by default, to a misdirected value of the acquisition of technical skills. The development of specific technical skills as a vehicle for “connecting the dots” is an assumed value often ascribed differently by students who see them as an end, and teachers who see them as a means. While no one disputes the necessity of acquisition of technical skill, it is important to convey a bigger, integrated picture of foundations education to students and its role in their future.

The role of life skills and wellness, in conjunction with the development of “artistic” skills in a student’s Foundations education, is a growing topic and must be addressed and applied from the shared perspective of extensive administrators’ and faculty experience. When we speak of a student’s art and design foundation experiences, we are considering the development of a student’s specific art and

The role of life skills and wellness, in conjunction with the development of *artistic* skills in a student's Foundations education, is a growing topic and must be addressed and applied from the shared perspective of extensive administrators' and faculty experience . . . A de-emphasis on the integration of wellness . . . may contribute to reduced expectations, failure, expulsion and other situations that can seriously jeopardize or compromise a student's future.

design skills as integrated into a holistic make-up, linked to mutually evolving life skills, which are in turn linked to personal and collective wellness. A de-emphasis on the integration of wellness, life skills and studio practice may contribute to reduced expectations, failure, expulsion and other situations that can seriously jeopardize or compromise a student's future.

How might a focus on wellness unite a student's educational experience? How do we connect student wellness to the curriculum, and to the resources of the larger institution? What are the ethical and legal implications for faculty?

First year programs need to recognize their role in how a newly independent student adapts to their new freedoms and handles the myriad challenges their new environment presents. Foundation programs need to be responsible to educate their students about life skills and wellness. Because foundations programs begin the process of students coming to consciousness as artists and designers, we must provide the necessary tools for freshmen to succeed both in Foundations and as they progress through college and beyond. This includes not only study and studio habits, but also life skills and strategies for sustaining personal well-being.

Life skills of course include wellness, which at its basic level is self-management. Self-management skills include time management, study and social skills, getting enough sleep and physical activity, stress release strategies, and alcohol, drug, depression and suicide education. All are integral to students reaching their educational and life goals. Without faculty training and awareness, and access to support services for mental and physical health, students will be ill equipped to reach their potential. Wellness practices that help sustain a successful college experience can also sustain a career.

This may seem like a tall order for an already busy faculty, and without institutional and departmental support, would push us beyond our comfort levels, existing training and ethical mandate. For Foundations programs to embody such a consideration, it will require:

- Ongoing awareness training for faculty
- Build greater administrative and institutional support for student services
- Establish, or strengthen stronger vertical and horizontal integration within institutional and broader community cultures.
- Expansion and integration of the scope of resources, bringing life skills and wellness education into the classroom as workshops

This is not to suggest teachers assume parental roles. It should be made eminently clear, faculty are not health professionals, nor should they be put in the position of acting as their proxy. However, faculty eyes and ears, and those of the freshman cohort can act as a positive force in a first year program. Faculty and students are often the first to recognize red flags when they present themselves, reflecting potentially destructive behavior in one of their students or peers. The educational community must be a responsive one, constructed specifically with the best interests of its students in mind. It is not enough to expect a student at risk to self declare and/or seek the relevant services available to them; a vigilant faculty and peer community can act proactively to minimize someone slipping through the cracks, or worse.

Stress is not unique to students. Adjuncts teaching at multiple schools cobbling together finances and teaching experience, faculty seeking tenure, or in the current culture of assessment, publishing, sustaining a practice, committee work, health, relationships, family and a social life all can push faculty to their limits. The health and well

being of faculty should also be of critical concern to administrations. Faculty teaching effectiveness will benefit by access to professionally directed workshops about strategies for stress management, health, yoga and mindfulness, as well as facilities that support physical health. Many universities and colleges offer free faculty access to these programs and athletic facilities, but faculty awareness of them is often assumed by administration.

Wellness can be incorporated into the first year experience if there is institutional support and thoughtfully integrated strategies from faculty and administration. Connecting different levels of support structures already in place in institutions, including counseling, student health, student activities and fitness centers into the studio classroom even once a semester can be a cultural shift that can mean the difference between success and failure, possibly life and death.

Kent State University has a foundational course, The First Year Experience, in which all freshmen are required to enroll, that helps with the transition from high school to college, including familiarizing student's with the array of services available and how to access them. In addition, Kent State, like many other schools, has in place the Early Alert system that is part of the First Year Experience Initiative. Early Alert is active from the second to tenth week of classes, making it as easy as possible for instructors to identify struggling students early, effectively dealing with problems before they become debilitating or destructive. The system tips administrators and counselors who may reach out to the student with specific services. It is designed to make it as easy as possible to combine curricular and co-curricular resources for supporting students by connecting instructors directly with a host of campus services. Once students have been exposed to information, reactive (follow up), and proactive measures are necessary to reinforce the importance of taking care of oneself. For most schools, access to STD information, women's and men's health brochures and prophylactics as students enter campus dorms will demonstrate that the college or university takes student health seriously. An aware and informed faculty can, respond appropriately to students as the needs present themselves.

The relationship between student and teacher is the nexus of where students become engaged and inspired. While the student and teacher share responsibility for the success of that relationship, obligation to that responsibility weighs greater with the teacher. In a program whose emphasis on life skills and wellness is growing, the example set by teachers also becomes increasingly important.

### Walking the Walk

A key aspect of the life-long learning process hinges on modeling. Much of modeling occurs in a student's family and peer structures, and social media, but the role of modeling in Foundations is relatively unexplored territory. One of the central elements that provides connective tissue between the role of faculty and student outcomes is modeling. Modeling can be looked at as a process of emulating social behavior and practices that are built upon expectations, norms, and beliefs through observation of others' approaches to research toward the making and assessment of their work. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Athena, in her guise as Mentor, was presented as the "wise and trusted counselor" for Odysseus and his son Telemachus. In this role, she provided wisdom, which guided Odysseus in his navigation of unknown territory, and instructed him on how to act and respond to various new and different situations.

In the life of a first year student, modeling and role modeling become key factors in navigating the odyssey of academia that he or she will face in order to succeed in their field of study. For better or for worse, faculty role modeling is inevitable. But in the guise of wise and trusted counselors, there are obvious cautions for all; we are all imperfect in an imperfect world. The following is predicated from that perspective.

A persistent, romantic misconception still held by many students entering colleges and universities is the image of the artist-as-tortured soul; that somehow being malnourished, sleep deprived, cigarette smoking and wine guzzling leads to making great art. In fact, many students with learning, behavioral and psychosocial problems do gravitate to art programs. Therefore, not only busting the myth of the suffering artist can be challenging, working with students for whom their personal challenges is not a matter of choice is an ongoing situation for foundations faculty. It is instrumental to get students to envision themselves as working, citizen artists in a functional, accessible world. Our job is to act authentically and respectfully, knowing they will learn from our examples, each other, and their "mentors" or "role models" who enter their academic sphere.

The "value" of an education in studio art has always been questioned, but the questions are particularly vocal when economic conditions are bad. Additionally what art actually teaches the non-art major or general education student, is under review. The S.N.A.P.P. study offers hope, through a significant body of evidence, that education in the arts has far reaching, and enduring value. With the current practices of art and design focusing on their social role of informing culture, we need to consider how that development can and will affect our students, and how we might



model ways in which they can take their art education into the working world. Of course art and design students can and need to get jobs outside of the art world, as the SNAPP study so clearly shows, but do they need to leave their art practice behind, and if they do what will they bring to those jobs? Our responsibility is to give them the tools and knowledge through their education in art and design with which to access the job market and sustain their career.

While school based services, such as job counseling and connecting students to internships are important, the co-curricular role of faculty plays just as significant a factor in how a student reflects on the integration of their educational experience with their later life experiences. The goal is to help guide the student to their own path and help them forge it. The synthesis of combining modeling and role modeling serves as a “gossamer thread” which links the conscious and subconscious associations needed to facilitate the actualization of a student as s/he develops into the learned student, the artist and citizen each wishes to become.

### Generating Connectivity

For a student to develop long-term educational, and life-long learning connectivity it is necessary to foster a culture within each art department where leadership, by example, is an interconnected means to fulfillment of long term, foundational educational objectives. The following list places this responsibility on students, teachers, administrators and the communities that surround them.

- Create collaborative projects and dialogue between disciplines that connect students to relevant experiences beyond the student's major.
- Foster an environment in which first year students teach each other through the dialogue between making and critique.
- Create collaborative strategies between administration and faculty to provide connections for students and faculty that support community involvement.
- Create alliances between first year students and upperclassmen to provide positive reinforcement beyond the first year experience
- Team teach with colleagues from other departmental majors and/or disciplines to illustrate how each can learn from and inform the other
- Make sure a robust program for visiting artists, designers and community innovators is funded by providing evidence of its effect in curriculum.

- Emphasize the importance of research and information literacy in the making of art, and specifically, design.
- Promote student and faculty visibility through exhibitions, publications, panels, conferences, outreach, business and civic collaborations
- Introduce students to the full array of student support services available and the importance of seeking out any necessary resource.

Many Foundations programs have reassessed their curriculum to reflect shifts of emphasis that re-prioritizes the tradition of principles and elements as material and technique and reassigns them to a synthesis of research and experience, which explores the language of materials, the meaningfulness inherent in process and the integration of educational structure into the structure of a broader community. In many art and design programs, the value of relevant life experience, past, present and future are being directly inserted into curricular opportunities to build a meaningful context within which enduring connections between material, methods and practice are made.

Effectively expanding connectivity beyond the conventional limits of the art and design classroom out into the culture at large is a measure of the effectiveness of education. As we have noted above, connections that we might make are those between students and faculty within and outside of the school community. Also, the specific integration of wellness into curriculum might be transmitted in novel, collaborative ways. What if we combine art and design skills with community involvement and issues of wellness? At the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) art and design skills were linked with community involvement and issues of wellness that serves as a positive example of out of the box thinking in Foundation pedagogy.

Dennis Farber and Catherine Behrent describe a project undertaken as a part of the Maryland Institute College of Art's foundations program that incorporated community interaction, negotiation, visual communication and an underlying theme of wellness as it directly related to an 18-24 year old student population.

*The Maryland Department of Highways wanted to use our art students to promote responsible drinking and driving. Together, we initiated 'Loss and Consequence: the Drunk Driving Project.' Involving 25 Foundations' Elements of Visual Thinking classes. We opened up a discussion about primarily alcohol, but also drug abuse with the intent to make art about it to facilitate an ongoing conversation. At the beginning of the spring semester, all freshmen were required, as part of their project research, to attend an evening of three speak-*

ers, Maryland's chief trauma doctor, a state trooper in charge of training officers administering alcohol tests, and a hip hop artist, who was a convicted, three time loser and alcoholic. The students' work could potentially be transferred to billboards, bus wrap-a-rounds, public service announcements, bus shelters and posters, and the Highway Department made funds available for ambitious projects beyond the financial means of any student or group of students. In addition, students could submit their work for a juried exhibition, but all freshmen students were required to be involved in the project and the discussions. After the project was completed, the National Highway Administration and the New York Department of highways came to Baltimore to see the exhibit and discuss the potential for them to use a similar strategy to move their initiatives forward.

Conducting effective, connective research is gaining recognition in foundations programs as a core skill, and one that addresses a significant question about meaningfulness, and the role of art and design today. This assignment and project makes multiple connections to generate student growth, awareness, and knowledge of the micro-demands of a studio environment, but connects it to a meaningful application outside that environment. Increased connectivity to a wide range of experience increases the potential for the relevance of foundation studies to the student. The more connections, the more relevant and meaningful the art work can be. The student perhaps feels the relationship to family, to their own past, experience of present relationships, and most importantly, to their own futures. When students understand why they are doing something, they are more likely to put their whole selves into the effort.

Many Foundations programs have begun an exploration of an expanded, integrative context for the essential components of education that is not exclusive to artists and designers. George Mason University has created a partnership with Provisions Library (<http://provisionslibrary.com/>), which is now housed in the resource center of the School of Art. Provisions is an organization whose focus is the intersections of art and social change, and houses an extensive library of books, journals and other materials that are organized around 30 "meridians" such as cultural identity, public space and commons, sexuality, and work and class as *spectrums of arenas where particularly valuable social change work is either underway or could be developed in the future*. Provisions is working to develop curriculum for foundations and core classes. Foundations faculty will work directly with Provisions to integrate research strategies into studio projects using thematic approaches that connect to meridian subjects. The initial theme is *change*, and

the head of Provisions is working individually with faculty to develop research, methodology and critique strategies for their projects.

### Connecting the Dots

John Maeda, President of Rhode Island School of Design, has suggested, *Effort is spent negotiating how to measure the outcome, rather than how to change it*, an examination of the relationship of the loci and the transition between cause and effect of educational process is of potential value to all partners in the process.

This article suggests that connection, context and meaning in today's learning process are dependent on a more integrated educational system than currently exists. It also suggests that the process of making connections demands thoughtful examination.

Doug Post, of Woodbury College relates a personal story.

*A tile salesman once told me that 'it is all in the transitions'. This simple statement was an 'aha' moment of analogous thinking for me. When two or more elements have a relationship with one another this contextual relationship has the potential to be beautiful or not, meaningful or not. Transitions connect often disparate elements and can make or break a contextual relationship.*

The story illustrates how Foundation studies is a transition from wherever a student has been and wherever they are going. Ideally Foundation studies make both experience and reflection richer by integrating them onto a meaningful context. The tile salesperson, was obviously talking about the nuances of countertop to wall, material to material. But, at times, stating the apparently obvious allows us to lift the lid, and dip into the familiar in an unfamiliar way. Foundations studies is an important transition from wherever a student has been to wherever they are going. That in itself is not unique, but coupled with the developmental stage of 18 – 20 year olds, or a veteran returning from Iraq, makes it a crucial time and experience.

Foundations education rightfully continues, but no longer simply addresses relationships of formal principles and elements, and connections that are isolated within studio environments. Current educational practice identifies and incorporates a larger web of relationships that extends beyond traditional structures. The extensions and their connections are far reaching internally and externally, with the educational institution at its core. The reach extends deeply inside the individuals involved in the teaching / learning process; the connection between wellness and life skills is one such relationship. And, there are important

connections to be made externally, as are demonstrated by the examples of Kent State, MICA, George Mason University, and even a tile salesman. We need to build administrative structures, schedules, curricula and assignments that foster and make these connections explicit, re-iterative, and are mutually supportive and reinforcing.

What is obvious, but presents great challenge, is the necessity to build a better, interconnected, balanced multi-leveled educational structure, within an expansive educational landscape, of which foundations programs have an aptly named, integral part.





# Integrative Teaching and Learning: Migrating from Today to Tomorrow

Richard Siegesmund, Facilitator  
Northern Illinois University

Jennifer Mills, Scribe  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Brad Birchett  
Virginia Commonwealth University

Shailla Christofferson  
Chicago State University

Bill Hill  
Jacksonville University

Mathew Kelly  
Central College, Iowa

Valerie Powell  
Sam Houston State University

Emmet Sandberg  
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Henry Dean  
Savannah College of Art and Design

Jefferson Pinder  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Thomas Albrecht  
State University of New York, New Paltz

Cameron Johnson  
Meredith College

Anne Hallam Jones  
Metropolitan State College of Denver

Marlene Lipinski  
Columbia College, Chicago

A classic, non-integrative, conception of teaching and learning holds that the instructor is the possessor of a specific discipline's knowledge. The task of the instructor is to pass this knowledge to the student. The instructor can evaluate his or her effectiveness by clearly stating at the beginning of instruction what knowledge and skills the students are expected to master. At the end of instruction, a performance examination or simple test allows students to demonstrate their mastery of these pre-calculated forms of knowledge and skill. Increasingly in higher education, administrators expect instructors in studio programs to provide evidence—reducible to quantitative measures—that supports this paradigm.

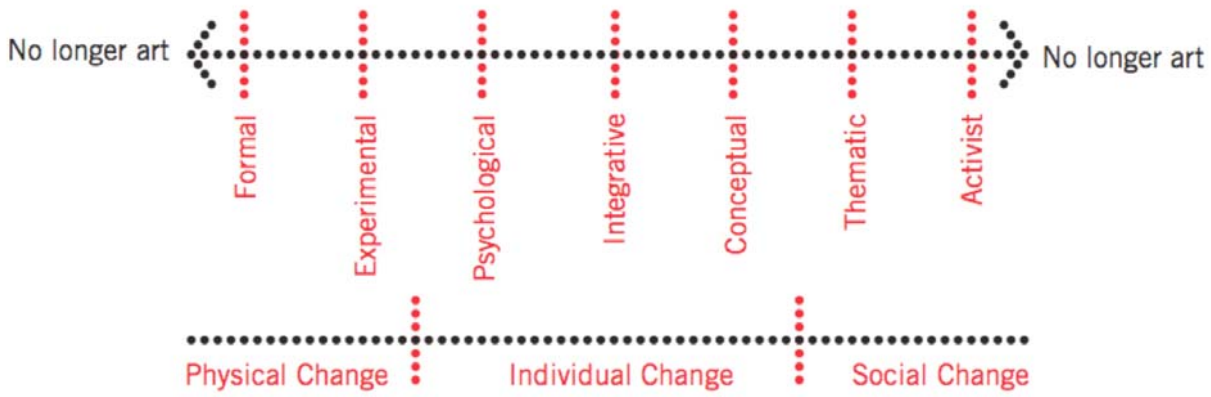
An integrated approach challenges this classic conception in four ways. First, one cannot assume the instructor pre-possesses the knowledge that will be required to complete the arc of instruction. In fact, at the beginning of instruction, the students may possess critical elements of knowledge. Therefore, integrative refers to the role of teacher and student as collaborators in constructing the educational environment. Second, instruction will engage a knowledge base that comes from multiple discipline areas.

Visual art and design do not stand alone as a realm of art for art's sake. For example, instructors can readily integrate disciplines such as engineering, physics, cognitive science, robotics, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and education into instruction. Third, one cannot pre-determine the outcomes of instruction before instruction begins. While there are strategies for engagement, nevertheless the knowledge produced by these open lines of inquiry cannot be fully articulated at the beginning of a lesson or the term. Process is key; products are unpredictable.

An integrated approach is open to the surprises that invariably arise in authentic learning. Finally, assessment in an integrated model cannot be based on the students

mirroring a form that the instructor held up to them as a benchmark. This is not gymnastics. Students should not be scored on how faithfully they created a mimetic copy of an ideal standard. Integrative teaching assumes that students invest and demonstrate how they make their work their own. Arguably, how students change the task and how they are changed in this process is the locus of the points in integrative teaching.

An integrative model of instruction is not incompatible with the demands for assessment data that administrators increasingly seek. However, instructors who embrace an integrative approach will probably need to educate their administrators to how the data they collect in their classrooms reflects the administrator's expectations. Individual innovation, resilience, the ability to redefine existing problems, as well as the ability to imagine new possibilities are evidence of successful integrative teaching. These represent critical learning outcomes for advanced study in art and design in the 21st century as well as critical life skills beyond formal schooling. If these are the outcomes we teach for, we can create assessment tools that show student growth in these areas. However, more importantly for our students, foundations courses provide the introduction to these skills that will guide them in their future development as artists and designers.



**Figure 1** In this model, methods of instruction range from teaching students in techniques that physically transform physical, inanimate, materials in the world (Formal, Experimental) to teaching students how to affect change in relational, social dynamics (Thematic, Activist). At the center is an integrative approach that values individual growth and transformation as the outcome of teaching. Fontana and Arrigo put forward a tool kit that an instructor might consider to achieve the balance of integrative teaching.

### A Methodology of Integrative Teaching

For many art instructors, integrative teaching is intuitive. Is there a way to unpack instinctive teaching in a way that current practitioners could help novice instructors master these skills? In *Manifestos and Manifestations, FutureForward, volume 1, issue 2*, Anthony Fontana and Michael Arrigo laid out a spectrum of methods for teaching strategies that apply to integrative teaching (Figure 1).

The ThinkTank<sup>7</sup>, Integrative Teaching and Learning breakout group went beyond this baseline, laid out by Fontana and Arrigo, to articulate a framework for a methodology for integrative teaching. A methodology is how methods unfold in time and space, much as a blueprint calls for the use of specific tools and techniques at specific times.

When planning how teaching and instruction play out over a term, we easily create artificial dualities or lull ourselves into a false security by not recognizing the complexity of the words and metaphors we use. It is easy to unconsciously associate values with words. Integrative is an example. The organization that hosts ThinkTank and that publishes FutureForward is Integrative Teaching International. Here, the word integrative appears to be a good thing; integrative teaching is desirable. However, when might integrative be bad?

Certainly, one can find examples today in academia of the word integrative used as camouflage for a desire to water down expertise and push faculty members to teach outside of their competency in a drive to economize. Integrative can disguise the commercialization of education. On the other hand, the term has positive associations

with pushing boundaries to reach 21st century learning skills. Therefore, the word integrative is complex. It is important that when members of ITI use this term, we not only need to understand its positive outcomes, but we also remain aware of the negative ways in which the word may be interpreted.

Just as we would want to question words that we assume to embody values we strive for, so too, we should question words and phrases that initially carry with them negative educational connotations. Resistance is such a word, but on closer inspection, it may represent an important educational element. Resistance may be desirable as it is critical to push both teacher and students to new forms of cooperative learning. Another phrase worth reexamining is Hitting the wall, a common negative way to describe an impenetrable barrier to continued growth, energy, or progress. This phrase seems to regularly emerge when instructors discuss the unfolding of teaching and learning.

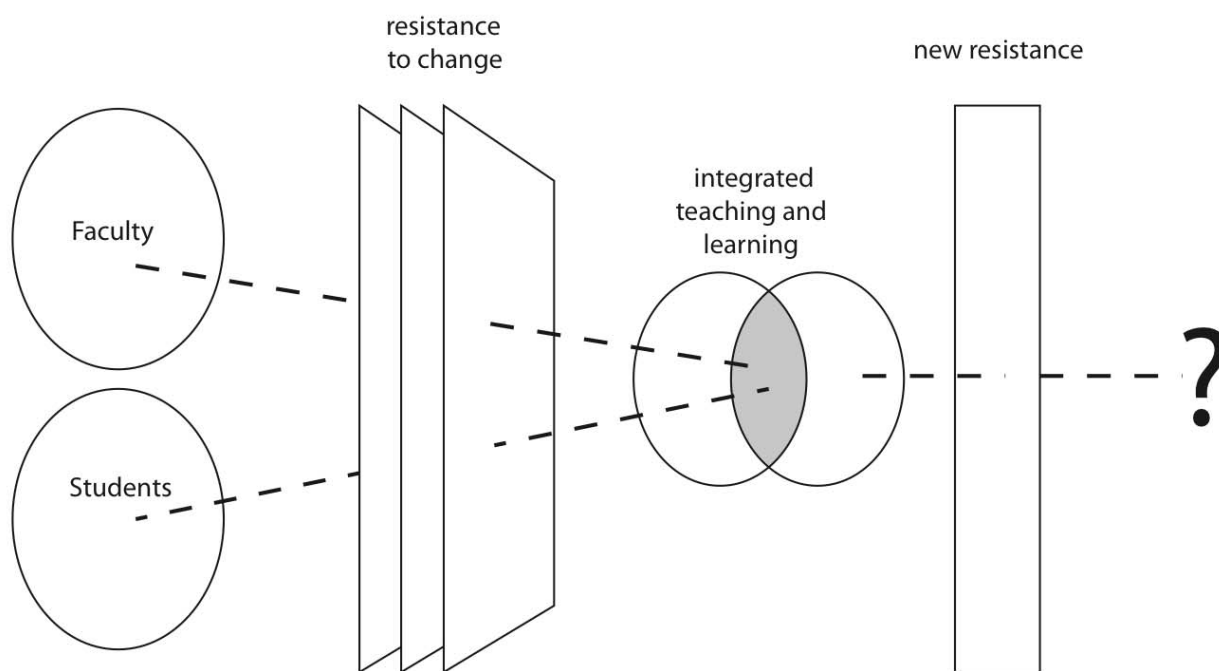
Yet, upon closer inspection, hitting the wall requires that one take a new approach, rethink the problem and adapt to changing conditions.

*Could it be a desirable outcome of integrative teaching?*

*Is integrative teaching even possible if at some point both instructor and students do not hit the wall?*

*In short, when an instructor plans a syllabus, an essential question to ask would be where in the course am I challenging myself to confront problems that I do not know the answer to?*





**Figure 2** Migration to Integrated Teaching and Learning

*Where have I deliberately risked hitting the wall? And if I do hit the wall, what strategies will I embody to my students for coping, adjusting, and moving forward?*

*We can most assuredly expect students to hit walls. Can we make moving around or through the walls a collaborative effort?*

Part of examining a word or a phrase requires a fine-grained consideration of what that word or phrase might mean. In this example, of hitting the wall, how might we think of a wall? A wall is a barrier that stops you, but a wall may have three additional meanings. It might also be a membrane allowing some things to pass through or a filter that traps impurities. It may also be a sponge that absorbs and does not release its contents unless squeezed.

All four kinds of walls disrupt, resist, and rechannel the flow of action with which they interact. The physical conditions of the environment also accelerate or diminish these four different interactions. For students, their environment is composed of an array of physical, emotional, cultural, habitational, or economic considerations. In these places of disruption, resistance, and rechanneling, cultures—in the biological sense—have opportunities to germinate and to grow. Such growth may represent new opportunities, or it could be parasitical.

### Teaching Migration

Migration is a word that in our view best summarizes the journey in time and space of both faculty and students in integrative teaching. Migration is a term that represents how both faculty and students need to move in tandem to a place of integrative engagement and characterizes the flow of action in Figure 2. In the figure, faculty and students begin as two separate spheres (with tensions and conflicts within each of these spheres before instruction begins). Both spheres contribute to teaching and learning. Both of these spheres are in motion. Each sphere encounters forms of resistance from interacting with the other, from interacting with their peers within their respective spheres, and from interacting with contextual influences—including the massive, incessant bombardment of information from the myriad sources that we encounter. Weaving and navigating through these fields of resistance leads to a new zone of integrative teaching and learning, marked in Figure 2 by the overlapping ovals in the middle of the figure.

This space of encounter is a dynamic integration of hard skills and soft skills: habits of discipline and habits of practice (see Figure 3). A non-contextual evaluation of objects based on historical formal elements of art and design is of little value in assessing how thoughtfully and full-heartedly a student has engaged with this zone of integrative learning. Assessment does not anticipate what

objects will look like—for if the engagement in the zone of integrative teaching and learning is authentic, then outcomes cannot help but be creative and new. Assessment centers on whether the student completed a process of migration in the task at hand and whether the student has the tools and self-reflective ability to re-enter the process of migration. Assessment is not just about what has happened, but it looks to tomorrow—for tomorrow the process will start again. Is the student ready? As an instructor, are you ready to push to a new encounter with new forms of resistance? Thus, there is a question mark at the right side of Figure 2.

The progression suggested in Figure 2 is a possibility, not a certainty. At any point, atrophy is possible. At any point, regression can occur. If a student successfully moves through this migration, it is wrong to assume that knowledge of how to repeat this journey transfers to the next task. This is a common mistake by upper level studio professors who claim that students did not learn anything in foundations. Just because students followed a migration of integrative learning once, does not mean that they are ready to repeat it completely on their own. The skills for meeting the challenges of navigating this course—a curriculum or a path to be run—need to be repeated over and over again. Therefore, it is critical that instructors in upper level studio courses have a sense of this curricu-

lum of migration so that they can model it as well in their teaching. Through repeated encounters (with instructors providing guidance by modeling the integrative learning behaviors), we aspire to help students be self-directed learners who know how to navigate and problem-solve.

Breakout session member Marlene Lipinski, Columbia College, Chicago reflects on the nature of resistance: Resistance is a natural force that often accompanies change. As educators seek more effective models and methodologies, they often encounter resistance. Students, faculty, administrators and society as stakeholders with vested interests in the outcomes can question the validity to the many forms that change-giving resistance can take. As educators migrate through these walls of resistance toward a new integrated teaching and learning model in education, they will need to be mindful that the process will lead to growth and acquisition of skills. Cameron Johnson, Meredith College, offers further insight into resistance:

*Resistance is often viewed as a negative obstacle that prevents progress, but in some instances, it can help to form a more collaborative approach. In either case, resistance is a vital component within the process of teaching and creating art.*

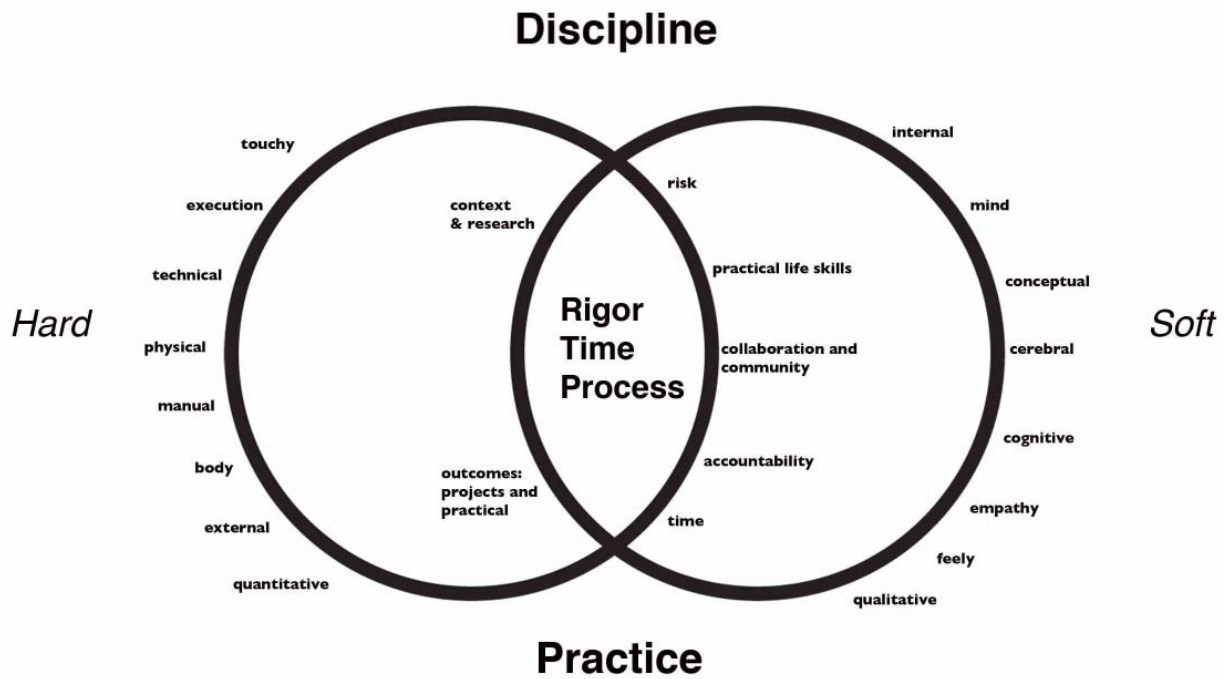


Figure 3 Integrative Teaching and Learning, Hard and Soft Skills or Discipline and Practice

In any situation resistance can be viewed as positive or negative; the perspective of the individual is what dictates the outcome. An example is a person who pushes on a door in order to exit but does not succeed. After several attempts and much frustration, the conclusion is made that the door must be broken. In that moment the person calms down and discovers a sign on the door reading “Pull.” This example illustrates that resistance is not the problem; it is our reaction to resistance.

As artists and educators, we are constantly searching for new and different ways to creatively express our ideas, which is a process of exploration, obstacles, and ultimately clarity. Learning to embrace the different forms of resistance as challenges will help to develop the ability to problem solve. It is through problem solving in which true integration will occur.

### **Migrating to Discipline and Practice**

The methodology of integrative teaching anticipates a path of migration (portrayed in Figure 2) that includes negotiations by both students and faculty with a variety of walls and barriers. Successfully navigating through these challenges leads to a Zone of Integrated Teaching and Learning, characterized by Discipline and Practice (Figure 3). In this place of possibility for personal transformation, it is common to focus on the hard skills that students need to master, such as technical, procedural, motor control skills that are necessary to achieve professional performance.

However, there are important soft skills that sometimes go unnoticed, such as empathy: the ability to emotionally connect to other human beings (and even one’s self), objects, ecological states, and social communities. Just in this one example—a single point in the interplay of spheres—neglecting the factor of empathy will impede transformational learning. Therefore, hard and soft skills, or habits of discipline and practice must come together to allow the student to demonstrate a rigorous engagement with process that evolves in a commitment of time.

In this reflection, Brad Thomas Birchett, Virginia Commonwealth University, addresses how this dichotomy of hard and soft skills needs to be reframed as a place of artistic rigor.

*By experiencing the many binary expressions and terms presented in the learning arena, the world begins to appear linear and opposite. This is contrary to the way art students are asked to create and process their ideas. An art student in higher learning has the charge of taking risks and seeing the world beyond our commodity driven end point, deconstructing the standard of “teaching to the test” or teaching to the finished artwork.*

*The idea of Hard and Soft skills implies the absence of all those skills that fall in-between. However, rather than thinking of this in-between as linear, it is better to think of these as orbital worlds that circle around, move outside, and intersect. In deconstructing Hard and Soft, and by turning the whole idea inside-out, the attention is redirected to the center of a new orb of ideas. Skills therefore begin in the center: between hard and soft, between touch and feel, between cerebral and physical, qualitative and quantitative.*

*A conceptual model of these skills that integrate across the spectrum begins with placing Discipline and Practice at either pole of the planetary visual, and with Rigor, Time, and Process becoming the revolving nucleus (see Figure 3). These five elements each have a mirrored identity as both skills and issues with incoming art students. Teaching these can be truly daunting; therefore the model becomes not teaching to the issues, but integrative teaching that incorporates the lessons that open doors to the skills, and in turn (and with much hope) a secondary effect of risk-taking without fear follows.*

*Educators also model in their pedagogical technique the same traits and skills that are requested of the student – a non-linear path of untethered creativity, more analogous to the three-dimensional orbital planetary body—constantly moving—than a two-dimensional straight ruler.*

*Two ideas now come to the forefront: teaching to the process, and de-emphasizing the importance of a finished product. Teaching to the process will in turn create an environment of critical dialogue surrounded by risk-taking, mindful creativity, and integrity in work (noun and verb). De-emphasizing the importance of the finished product will break down the linear approach that so many foundation students arrive with; and with luck this will enable them to appreciate their newfound engagement, struggle, rigor, and editing processes within their work. A re-creation begins as new ideas are formed.*

*Pragmatically, an art student will begin to work with intent, decrease the need for procrastination, and enjoy the process. This is where it begins: to emphasize the process the process itself must be assessed in the academic setting. Not that the outcome is left outside of the realm of importance, but that the outcome and process become equally important. An assessment is possible through myriad ways, but adding a documentation-of-process factor might be a good place to start. This can be as simple as establishing time intervals for students to pause in what they are doing, and document with writing, thumbnail drawings, photography and/or video imaging. If the students are working on a class assign-*

ment, then the documentation interval might be every twenty minutes.

If the project is long-term, then the documentation might be required daily. A visual progression within the assignment timeframe is also valuable here. Students can then submit the documentation as an important segment of their final portfolio. A more elaborate assessment would require students to reflect on what the documentation reveals about their working process. However it is done, assessing the process is the first goal you want to realize.

If the importance of a finished product is removed from the equation, then the possibility increases that student will become more open to risk-taking. Here, a different concept of time may become an important factor in art production. If the idea of time being non-linear is allowed into the discussion—or as Walter Benjamin (1999) suggested, a constellation of events beyond the narrative explanations found in history books—then the assessment process might also separate itself from attributes such as hard deadlines or finished work.

If each project were assessed according to rigor of process with an indefinite outcome, qualitatively the work would become more involved and rewarding. To do this the solution might be to replace the conclusive “final” with a more temporal idea – to assess the place the student has arrived in their work during the last critique of the project, knowing that a continuum of work may be justifiable. How the work has come together or how the process has informed the work at this point will define a sense of the work being complete, but not necessarily finished (as a gallery director might define it).

What direction might the student take to make the work more complete or even “finished,” if desired? Finality becomes open to possibilities as defined by the student at a later moment. Is a professional, finished artwork an important goal for a first year student? (Many works may be considered studies at this point, and others completed for a portfolio as the student chooses.) The finishing of a work may even become a final project for the course. Using the final critique as a place of final opportunity to discuss what one might do next versus a place of defined finality relinquishes the need for a linear process; but as the assessment at that time falls onto ideas of completeness, it may also create a desire for the student to reach that point on their own.

And if the work is also assessed during the process for risk-taking and creativity (versus finality) other skills may evolve such as time management, self-assessment, risk-taking, and a redefining of the original idea through

mindfulness and research. There is a greater chance to develop a love for learning and creating than the final right answer. This love of learning is central to the transformational outcomes of integrative teaching and learning.

Of course, this is a basic model for many richer possibilities of non-linear thinking. Other great “soft skill” ideas and important skill-factors play into this creative whirlwind such as integrity, empathy for the collective mind, liminal places, ambiguity, play, collaboration, and connectivity—only a sample of the many possibilities.

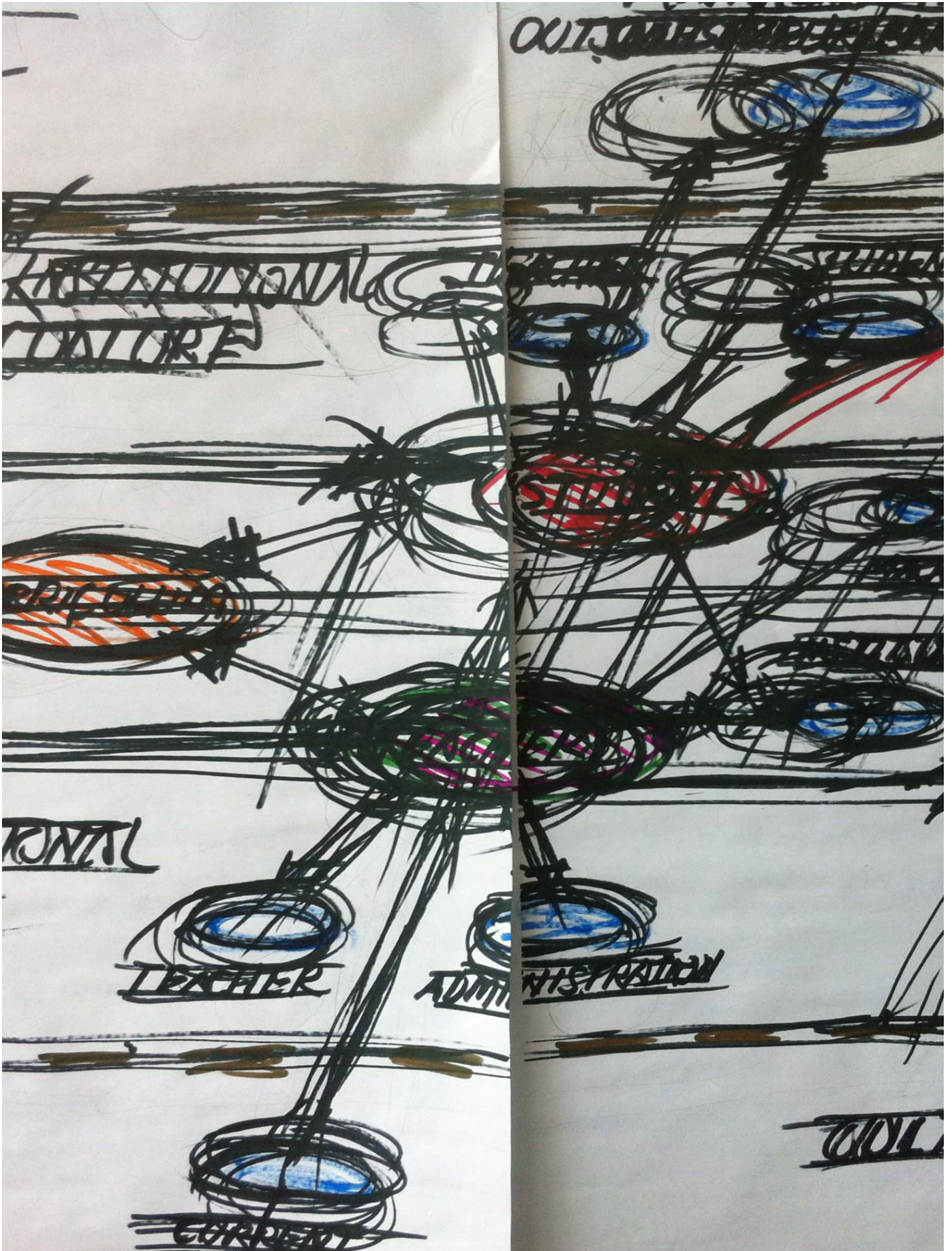


Walter Benjamin

*The Arcades Project*

Cambridge: Belknap Press  
of Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 462- 463





# 01 Integrative Teaching and Learning Assignment

## Can I ask that? or Are you for realz?

### Background

Learning how to speak to peers about art is a critical “soft skill” that leads to integrative learning outcomes of rigor, time, and process (see Figure 3). Critique is a forum for developing skills in empathic yet rigorous conversation. Students learn to listen and the significance of speaking in a way that they are heard.

### Problem

Overcoming the fear of being perceived as asking stupid questions or giving peer feedback that seems too harsh.

### Objectives/Assessment Targets

- To help students understand that there are no truly stupid questions if they are sincere, and that real feedback is necessary for growth.
- To give students an alternative to the usual open comment group critique which preferences social extroverts. This critique type can allow students who are more socially reserved an opportunity to shine.
- To allow all students enough time to reflect and develop good, meaningful questions and comments.
- To allow students advanced critique preparation time in order to respond to questions thoughtfully, rather than on the fly.

### Materials

Provide students with absolutely uniform pieces of paper to write their questions on. This means the same size, color and cut in order to make the questions as anonymous as possible. Sticky pads are great if they are available. Likewise, encourage questions and comments to be written in pencil or blue or black pen ink to help maintain the anonymity.

### Strategy

- At the end of the class period before the critique, ask the students to take 20 minutes to write candid questions and comments about other classmate’s projects.
- It can be helpful to place a requirement of at least one question per project, sometimes more depending on the size and overall character of the class.
- Have students place their written questions and comments either in an envelope or small container positioned beside the work being addressed.
- After all writing is complete; students will gather the comments about their work to read outside of class. The students will use these comments and questions to help them prepare their introductory critique presentations.

### Suggested Key Questions

- What is your absolute immediate, uncensored reaction to this piece?
- Is there something about your classmate’s work that really surprised you as being novel or innovative?
- What is the single most obvious weakness in this piece?
- What is your most necessary, honest suggestion for improvement?
- In your opinion, was your classmate truly invested in this work? How do you know?
- Concept/content: Can you determine what the student is trying to communicate and does the work effectively do that?
- How does this work fit in the world? Is there any connection, to anything? Does it matter?

(continued)

**Critique Strategy**

Conduct the open group critique per the usual. However, request students to incorporate some of their findings into the presentations of their work. They may comment on what they perceived to be the most surprising question, the most insightful, the one they will act on, the most enlightening, etc.

**Timetable**

20 minutes class time to write thoughts on sticky pads, plus additional time outside class to consider those comments and questions after they have been gathered.

**Note to Emerging Educators**



This critique strategy works best at the beginning of the semester, or whenever it seems that the overall class attitude is to play it safe with neutral or unsubstantiated comments. This strategy can later be developed into a role play, open group critique where students assume the roles of various types of viewers: curators, collectors, cynics, material specialist, faculty, family, local newspaper art editor, well known artists, etc.

**Assignment Author**

Shaila Christofferson, is Associate Professor at Chicago State University

## Integrative Teaching and Learning Reflection

### Applicability of sketching within integrative teaching & learning methodologies

*But what about drawing?* This is a frequently voiced concern when attempting to think of fresh approaches to the Foundations curriculum. Sometimes this objection is raised as a barrier to stop any discussion of possible change. How can one address the issue of drawing seriously without it becoming a wall that impedes progress to integrative teaching? In the following reflection, breakout group member  Henry Dean,  professor of Drawing at the Savannah College of Art and Design, reflects on this challenge of addressing both the discipline of drawing and the process of drawing in overcoming this common form of resistance to integrative teaching.

In her essay “The Social Turn,” Claire Bishop (2006) claims that artists no longer provide personal interpretations, but instead create platforms where stories are displayed, discerned and amplified. This has presaged calls for non-prescriptive forms of study within foundations art programs. Such approaches gel with forward movement sought by art educators.

The visual and applied arts are ideally suited to utilize non-prescriptive approaches, but where and how do time-honored subjects such as drawing fit the new model? As additions and changes are made in curriculum, does drawing remain at the “core”? If grounding in the fundamentals is minimized or marginalized, will students learn fewer ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ abilities?

As the transition is made toward non-prescriptive forms of study it is essential that instructors and programs not unintentionally create a situation where conversations about art and craft become equivocal. Aspiring artist-designers benefit when rigor is maintained. Cogency fortifies personal expression, informs critical thinking and precipitates growth. Students need structured platforms from which to advance their ideas or respond constructively to work of peers.

For drawing to maintain its place as a core subject it is necessary to reconsider both its role and place within education. Traditional, non-integrative curriculum often ‘bundle’ teaching of sketch abilities with more formal, layered, and complex attributes of drawing as an art. This approach can be confining and overwhelming to teachers and students alike.

Learning outcomes increase when sketch methodologies are emphasized within foundations courses since

they ground the process of art making. Rethinking the application of drawing in this way supports research, exploration and production of all forms of art and design, but avoids diminishing the possibilities of (or for) the discipline. Drawing becomes less prescriptive in that crafting finished ‘product’ is no longer the prime objective of the creative process.

In today’s schools of higher education, student ability, confidence and experience in all areas of art making vary considerably. In this circumstance the hallmark qualities of sketching (as a basic, economic and practical visual language), cannot be underestimated. Sketch ideation can be employed in diverse assignments, providing a platform for articulate, integrative conversations between students and instructors (on concept, content, media/mark, composition). Rubrics are grounded. Time-saving sketch methodologies applied in and outside the studio/classroom support active, critical thinking, collaboration and rigorous independent research.

A regular sketch-practice fosters immersive experience, while informing process and introducing students to lateral thinking, in sync with developing personal applications and craft abilities in the art of drawing.

Creating the *open stage* envisioned in Claire Bishop’s, *The Social Turn*<sup>1</sup> is not an easy thing. It does not obviate the challenge that educators’ provide grounded platforms from which all voices can be discerned and amplified. At the outset, reimagining foundations courses appears potentially to pit traditional against non-traditional approaches. *Quaestio quid juris* (The question is, what is the point of the law?). In other words, what do we want our students to learn?

Adopting non-binary, integrative methodologies promotes interactive learning, revealing potential in multiple expressions/ideas. Sketching (and the sketch) provide platforms for varied, multi-channeled experiences. Their use supports the important transition being made in art education from prescriptive toward integrative models of teaching and learning.



1. Bishop, C.

*The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents.* Artforum International, 44(6), 179-185, (2006)



### Background

Integrative teaching and learning asks students to learn to be researchers. Students are expected to examine, question, and put visual information together in new ways. Instructors do not know what students will produce; they guide students in a process of discovery. Below is the syllabus for a class, taught by Jefferson Pinder in the Contemporary Practices Program of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, that introduces students to open inquiry and structured visual arts research skills.

### Research Studio II

Is contemporary art a level playing field in which all artists have equal opportunity to show? Who gets to show in the premier art galleries and how are these selections made. Does race and gender matter in contemporary art?

This class will be a combination theory/studio lab that will explore invisible boundaries that dictate exhibition opportunities for women and artist of color in the Chicagoland area and abroad.

*Breaking Boundaries* will be an open platform for young artist to explore importance (or irrelevance) of gender and ethnicity in examining art. Even though dealing with differences can be a tough proposition, merely neglecting that they exist is supporting a power structure that favors the dominant culture.

In this course we will use art as way to learn more about people and the history of specific communities in this city. From the Chicago race riots in the early twentieth century, to the women's liberation movement in the seventies we will explore how artists and the systems that support them both debunk and support the cultural norms established in the society.

If art is a reflection of society, what does the Chicago exhibition scene tell us about our community?

### Course Outcomes

1. Students will learn about the Chicago art scene.
2. Students will research and discover who has the opportunities to exhibit in these venues and how they came about.

3. We will explore the history of race and gender politics in Chicago and how this manifests itself in the creation of art.
4. Students will create projects that deal with gender, class and ethnicity in a safe environment. Students will get the opportunity to meet and interact with artistic and community based 'gate-keepers' and to ask them tough questions about their efforts to be inclusive to all artists.

### Projects

#### 1. Mapping & Tours

Students will be working in groups to craft a presentation and a map that can communicate how the cultural history of a region can affect the creative process in a community. Later in the semester each group will lead the class on a walking tour of their respected area.

#### 2. Whiteness Project

The class will create a piece that wrestles with the term 'Whiteness'. Students will tackle misrepresentation and will be guided to create a video, sculpture or a painting that directly deals with this subject.

#### 3. Gate-Keeper Interview

By interviewing a 'Gate-Keeper' in the community, students will share with the class the importance of their leadership. They will take the time to research how the 'gate-keeper' works in the art scene. Students will write questions and work with their selected organizer to craft a dynamic conversation that will be documented on video.

#### 4. Collaborative Work Project

Students will select an artist or a creative community member to manifest a thoughtful work that wrestles with issues of race, gender or class. Students must take the lead on this collaboration but will actively work with someone outside of the college/university community to make a poignant and relevant statement.

#### 5. Final Project : Reconstructing Identity

Students will have a chance to re-create a well-known art piece that they consider to be lacking in some essential regard. They will first have to study the work and then must offer a smart re-creation.

## 04 Integrative Teaching and Learning Assignment Collaboration : Space/Body/Connectivity

### Background

Teaching for catalytic unexpected outcomes is facilitated by group work where all members of the team have to participate. This means that significant art-making time needs to happen in-class where the professor can monitor who is doing the work. Below, Anne Hallam Jones from Metropolitan State University of Denver provides a 3-D design project.

### Problem

Working in teams of 3-5, students create a single three-dimensional structure, which physically and visually connects each member of the group. Via lottery, each group draws a rule card, which determines the material, space and design direction with which they must work.

### Objectives

- To explore the structural and design potential of a single material
- To create a single structure that physically and visually engages multiple bodies and occupies predetermined amount of space
- To engage with the human form, the space surrounding the body, and to consider issues of community and/or personal space.

- To demonstrate an understanding of three-dimensional form/composition through application of the design elements and principles
- To work collaboratively

### Materials

Rule cards\*, pliers, scissors, tape measure, glue, tape, staples, and the assigned material.

### Ruler Cards, Example 1

1. Problem to solve: Create a single three-dimensional structure, which physically and visually connects each member of the team
2. Area to fill: 4' x 4'
3. Material to utilize: Cardboard (plus one adhesive)
4. Principle of Design to employ: Balance (radial, symmetry, or asymmetry)

(continued)



#### Ruler Cards, Example 2

1. Problem to solve: Create a single three-dimensional structure, which physically and visually connects each member of the team
2. Dimensions to maintain: 8' x 2'
3. Material to utilize: Used Copy Paper (plus one adhesive)
4. Principle of Design to employ: Directional Force (vertical, horizontal, radial, diagonal...)

#### Timetable

30-45 minutes at the end of class:

The challenge is introduced, teams are selected, and the lottery takes place. Teams are given 5-10 minutes to discuss the gathering of materials and delegation of responsibilities.

Next class period:

1.5-2 hours: Students work on their construction. They are to use the materials gathered between classes and are not given the opportunity to gather more.


30-45 minutes: Each team is given 5-10 minutes to perform/demonstrate/discuss their construction.

#### Notes

Encourage the gathering of free, recyclable and/ or biodegradable materials (newspaper, used copy paper, cardboard boxes, wood coffee stirrers, paper or plastic drinking cups, plastic sheeting). Students just use only the amount of material gathered, as this promotes a higher level of material manipulation. Using tape and a tape measure, each group marks their assigned dimensions on the floor. The exercise is followed by a short presentation, critique and discussion of sculpture, performance art, fashion, theater, dance and community arts.


## 05 Integrative Teaching and Learning Syllabus Teaching Time & Patience

### Background

Teachers often exhort their students to be patient. Here,  Thomas Albrecht, Assistant Professor, SUNY New Paltz, makes patience, once again a critical *soft skill* of integrative learning, a teaching objective.

Rule 4: Consider everything an experiment.

Rule 6: Follow the leader. Nothing is a mistake.

 There is no win and no fail. There is only make.

Rule 7: The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch onto things. You can fool the fans—but not the players.

*From the 10 Rules for Students and Teachers from John Cage*

Patience is a virtue in the classroom. The element of time in pedagogy is critical for considering the development and delivery of curriculum during the first year of visual arts education. Teaching patience—a skill that often is categorized as “soft” if it is considered at all—is inherently important for its relationship with issues of self-discipline, rigor, and work ethic.

The significant question is: Can any of these “skills” be taught? If Foundation educators regularly speak of such issues in national forums, are there specific models for teaching that foster such skills that are consistently mentioned by educators as significant?

Time is spoken of regularly in my drawing courses at the first year level. It is spoken of in terms of how the body and mind work in tandem, or not. The topic is addressed in the classroom in discussions of the speed at which the hand moves and the mind tracks, considering issues of observation, editing, and criticality.

Time and patience are reinforced in outside class assignments that focus specifically on research and process that lead to the development of work. One such assignment that I regularly use during Drawing I is Metamorphosis, a project that begins collaboratively in small groups and takes students through a series of research steps that eventually lead them to the production of an individual drawing at the end of the assignment. A major component of Metamorphosis is the production of a research binder that focuses each student group on the importance of documenting research, and points them to recognize that information gathering is a significant aspect of developing informed work. The project emphasizes collaborative process leading to the production of individual work, a literal metamorphosis of ideas involving multiple forms of material exploration, production methods, editing, and critical response. three-dimensional form/composition through application of the design elements and principles.

## Integrative Teaching and Learning Assignment

### Teaching Time & Patience : Metamorphosis

#### Objective

- To inform your skills of observing and depicting three-dimensional, illusionistic space.
- To consider the advantages and challenges of collaborative work.
- To establish research models for conceptual development and its resolution in finished work.

#### Materials

Stonehenge paper; charcoal; other materials as determined by group (see below)

#### Critical Analysis

You and a group of your peers will consider a given text by author Franz Kafka. When reviewing the text, consider what the author does with language to establish a mood or setting for the narrative. Your group must work together to find environments on campus or in the surrounding area that relate to the piece of writing based on your group's analysis and subsequent interpretation of the text. The sites may be either interior or exterior. Consider the psychological aspects of Kafka's writing, and review with your group what sites might work to interpret the major themes of the text.

#### Reconnaissance

You and your group will travel together to find sites that might be useful in the development of your project. You should all take notes, using written text, drawings and digital images to document several possible locations. When a final site is selected, your group must stake out an area that you will document – yes, here you need to “frame” as well! – by making quick drawings as “notes.” Digital images of specific areas of the site must also be taken, as well as a comprehensive image of the location(s) from the north, south, east and west.

All of the research will be assembled in a report submitted to the instructor at the completion of the project, including all notes, measurements, drawings and photographs collected by the group. The documentation will be submitted in chronological order of the project's development, and the group must provide, at minimum, a two-page, typed analy-

sis of the original text and the subsequent decision-making regarding selection of the final site, creation of the model, and choices made while photographing. All such documentation needs to be submitted in a binder with all group members clearly identified on an interior cover page.

#### Building

Your group will construct a 3D model utilizing the information gathered from surveying and documenting a specific site. You may use any materials for this. The model may be highly detailed and “realistic”, or your group may decide to abstract elements for particular effect. You must secure your model on a sturdy base, and you must paint any and all surfaces utilizing a grey scale (i.e. white to black). Great care should be given to making the model, as it will be part of your group grade; craft here is important.

#### Recording

When the model is complete, your group must document the model by taking digital images of it; class time will be used to facilitate this. The consideration of lighting is significant; as different lighting situations will establish different readings of the environment your group has created. Multiple images must be taken from varied perspectives, keeping in mind the group's interpretation of the text. The images will be printed out on good quality paper and will be organized and presented on museum board when the project is submitted. Individuals from the group will select at least one image each from those produced and use it for visual reference in the construction of a drawing.

#### Resolution

You will individually make a drawing using as a reference at least one of the digital images detailing the model produced by your group. Your drawing should emphasize tonal variation to establish mood and spatial depth. The drawing should also focus on establishing a response to the original narrative you considered within your group. Care should be given to establishing a clear sense of environment, considering the ways in which Kafka constructs an environment via language for you to imagine and enter into as a reader.

## Integrative Teaching and Learning Assignment

### Teaching Time & Patience : Metamorphosis (continued)

#### Grading

Group grading will be based on your group's ability to critically interpret the original text and respond accordingly by initially collecting information, and subsequently building a model and documenting it via digital images. Craft and presentation standards must be adhered to. Documentation of your research at each stage of development is critical.



Individual grading will be based on your ability to create a believable, illusionistic depiction of three-dimensional space, with particular emphasis on the overall structure of the drawing based on tonal relationships. The drawing should also communicate a particular atmosphere relative to the space depicted, and great care should be given to the expressive quality of line, mark and value utilized in the drawing. An engaging composition and vantage point is expected.



#### Rubric for assessment of discipline and practice

To move to a more robust system of outcomes assessment, that more authentically aligns with the artistic learning goals essential to maintaining creative artistic practice, assessment must need to tackle addressing complex outcomes such as rigor. Here, Emmet Sandberg, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, offers suggestions on making rigor an explicit outcome of instruction.

Address rigor as a learning outcome in the syllabus and as a criteria for extended written examination that occur over the grading period. Rigor must be balanced:

- Rigor of teaching and learning practiced by all— instructor and students.
- Rigor must be modeled. What do the students see as rigor in our practice?
- Rigor must be clearly understood—examined, discussed, and reinforced. Important aspects of pedagogical rigor (rigor applied to teaching):
- Identify each student's "currency"; meet them where they are at, accept what each has to offer.
- Assist them in cultivating currency (explore value, types, and responsible use.)
- Integrate reasonable level of accommodation into curriculum (accept much currency.)

#### Potential Assessment structure

Final Grade will be an average of 4 components :

• Engagement:	28 x @ 3.5 points +2=	100
• Visual Journal:	5 x @ 20 points=	100
• Activities:	6 x @ 16 points +4=	100
• Projects:	5 x @ 20 points=	100
• Total Points	=	400

Each class period is worth 3.5 points. At the close of each session, a brief assessment will be filed in your Visual Journal. Assessments will reflect on session activity and determine next action. Content may affect Engagement point accumulation.

Your Visual Journal will be used for a variety of purposes:

- A means to explore/solve formal problems
- A forum for experimentation and self-instruction
- To monitor your method of work
- To record verbal and visual exploration of thoughts and ideas
- A means of self-exploration, cultivation of creativity, and documentation of experience.

#### Activities

Activities will be explorations in preparation for Projects and will emphasize the examination of Process. They will consist of in-class exercises, Visual Journal entries, and completed components that may serve as prototypes for Projects. Activities should reflect exploration of unknown concepts and unfamiliar skills. Risk may result in failure; failure will be rewarded.

#### Projects

Projects will synthesize knowledge discovered and cultivated through Attendance, Visual Journal, and Activities. Projects are substantial components worth the most points. Projects will be completed and critiqued/discussed in class.



# Integrative what?

# ThinkTank who?

---

Combining various readings in innovative leadership with our unique perspectives as artists and designers, we develop strategies and new approaches to teaching and learning at the college level.

Will you join us?

---

<http://integrativeteaching.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Integrative-Teaching-International>

---

ISBN 978-0-615-40243-7



9 780615 402437 >

For More Information  
Antony Fontana  
President  
Integrative Teaching International  
Bowling Green State University  
[anthonymfontana@gmail.com](mailto:anthonymfontana@gmail.com)