

Talking Teaching and Learning

A multi-disciplinary group engaging in focused examination and enhancement of our teaching practice since 1994.

TTL History and Background (a sample)

	Original	Metaphor Group	Community Building Group
Stimulus	Fenstermacher's (1994) practical argument	"When I am teaching at my best, I am like" Drawn from Palmer (1996) and Bullough and Gitlin (1995).	The development of a community of shared knowledge and practice. Authentic learning, assessment / practice, etc.
Meeting Format	Read and discussed journal articles identified by members as useful as useful or members' text, such as "My Best Teaching Experience" or "Learning is ...". Inquiry based on adapted practical argument.	Each member identified and wrote about their metaphor. Meetings were spent exploring a member's metaphor and what it might mean for their teaching.	Over two years the group read and discussed pivotal scholarly articles such as: "Ersatz Learning (1992), "But I Have to Have an 'A'" (1995), and "From Teaching to Learning" (1995).
Known Outcomes	Two presentations and one publication	Three presentations and two publications	Three presentations and two publications
Members	COLLEGE OF EDUCATION: Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Psychology, Teaching; COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS: Art, Communication Studies, English; COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES: Computer Science, Math Education, Pure Math; COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES: Family and Consumer Sciences, Psychology; Student Services.		

2008 – 2009 TTL Focus

A process described by Paul Savory, Amy Nelson Burnett, and Amy Goodburn (2007) in *Inquiry Into the College Classroom*.

Reflect on course history and background.

Identify an issue to investigate and define an inquiry hypothesis.

Develop an investigative plan; seek institutional approval (if necessary).

Implement the plan, incorporating it into classroom practice.

Interpret data and evaluate findings.

Reflect on and incorporate the experience in future planning.

Bill Koch *An Inquiry in English*

THE QUESTION "Can the vocabulary of the Principles of Reader Expectations improve students' descriptive powers in understanding why a sentence seems unclear or clear?"

THE ISSUE Students arrive at college with a set of assumptions about the nature of verbal language that hinders their willingness to develop college level verbal competencies. For instance, they are unaware of the set of expectations that they bring to a text they are about to read as to what makes the text clear or not.

I have been developing exercises that I need to test out to see if they help students become more aware of their unconscious habits of reading, thinking and expression. I want them to understand how a sentence has a structure apart from the words embedded in it and that this insight can help them at several levels of reading and writing.

THE COURSE I am using this Inquiry in the College Writing and Research class, a course that introduces students to the kind of writing and research expected at the college level.

THE PLAN I will give students a list of eight statements that they are to identify as clear or unclear, and then they are to explain why it is clear or unclear to them.

I will then distribute to them what I call the "Principles of Reader Expectations," which is based on Joseph Williams's (2009) *Ten Principles of Writing Clearly*. After several weeks of gaining experience with the PRE, I will return the same list of statements and they will attempt to explain again why a sentence is clear or unclear.

I hypothesize that the vocabulary of the PRE will make them more conscious of the nature of clear and unclear writing and they will be able to articulate these conditions.

Erica Duffy *An Inquiry in Art*

THE QUESTION "Do improved critical reflection and assessment (critique) skills correlate with improved student artwork?"

THE ISSUE The ability of students to think critically about their own artwork and creative process will aid them in identifying specific issues within the work and in resolving these issues effectively. However, developing these critical thinking skills can be a challenge at all levels of teaching art studio. Some students view the assessment of art as entirely subjective and lack the knowledge or skills to apply a critical framework to their own work or the work of others.

It is important to have an understanding of the level to which students learn to think critically in 3D Concepts. The investigation of this issue will help me to determine how well my current projects and activities meet this goal.

THE COURSE Three-Dimensional Concepts is a foundation-level course for first year students in the Department of Art which lays the groundwork for future learning in art classes by focusing on the basic principles of art and design, design process, and the ability to think critically about their own work and the work of others.

THE PLAN Each student will write a critical self-reflection of each artwork they create in the course prior to in-class group feedback. Critical reflection and assessment (critique) skills will be measured by the use of specific visual vocabulary evidenced in these written self-reflections. I will look at both the quantity and quality of the use of specific language. Quality will be evidenced by the successful and meaningful application of specific language in the appropriate context as it relates to the student artwork.

This information will then be compared to the grades students receive on individual projects (three-dimensional works of art), to determine if there is any correlation between critical reflection and assessment skills and the quality of student artwork.