

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ARMONK, NEW YORK

Author: Lila Horn, Jayne Karlin

Title of Project: *Deconstructing the AP scoring process through the use of student exemplars and rubrics*

Year: 2013-2014

School/Grade: BHHS/11-12

SUMMARY OF *INVESTIGATORS OF PRACTICE* ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Context:

We teach a range of classes in the visual arts department at Byram Hills High School. This year we focused specifically on our three AP Photography classes with students in the 11th and 12th grade. The focus of our study was based upon the following rationale: Students in the AP level must submit a three-part portfolio in May for potential college credit which is based on their overall combined score ranging from 1-5. The AP scoring rubrics for each of the three sections of the AP 2-D design portfolio are approximately six pages long and elaborate. This year we focused on one section of the AP portfolio; the Concentration Section, and consolidated the lengthy rubric into a more student friendly 1-page document (see [Appendix A](#).) We also linked images from past Byram Hills High School student portfolios in PowerPoint format to correspond to scores ranging from 2-5 (see [Appendix B](#)). We wanted our students to have a better understanding of the scoring process used by the College Board.

Action Plan:

Our original research questions were: How do we organize a collection of student work into groupings that best articulate the language in the AP rubrics? What will we learn by pairing visual exemplars to the AP rubrics to aid student understanding of the AP scoring process? We learned that in order to answer these two questions we first needed to simplify the AP rubrics. Therefore a sub-question became: How do we simplify the AP rubrics for better student understanding? We chose this topic because we felt that our students didn't have a deep enough understanding of how their work would be graded by the AP evaluators. The lengthy rubric was often times overlooked by the students who found it difficult to interpret. Our action research was based on redesigning the existing AP 2-D Design Concentration rubric and combining this with exemplars

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ARMONK, NEW YORK

that would be reflective of the relevant language.

In doing our research we utilized the AP College Board website as well as other HS school websites that had exemplars based upon the AP portfolio.

http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/exam/exam_information/2134.html

The following HS website was helpful to us as it has student concentration examples with the AP scores: <https://sites.google.com/site/nphsphotography/ap-portfolio-student-samples>

Results:

In order to deconstruct the AP scoring process to help our students better understand and apply it to their own portfolio development, we realized that we needed to do the following:

1. Create a simplified, student friendly rubric adapted from the original College Board AP 2-D Design rubric
2. Create a PowerPoint of student exemplars from past Byram Hill student work previously scored by the College Board that students could use to practice scoring based on the modified rubric.
3. Create a PowerPoint of exemplars (See [Appendix C](#)) from portfolios posted on the College Board website with scores as well as rationals for those scores
4. Create a scoring document (see [Appendix D](#)) to be used by our students when viewing the exemplars of previous student work. Within this document students could assign a score ranging from 1-5 to each individual concentration or theme shown, and rationalize their scores by giving evidence based on language used in the modified AP 2-D Design rubric. This exercise mimics the scoring process used by actual AP graders as they assign scores to sections of the AP portfolio.

The grading process in item 4 above was completed by three sections of AP Photography students and compiled for results. Examples of student rationale are given below:

“I think this portfolio deserves a 3 because decision making is sporadic and demonstrates little sense of investigation. It is also repetitive and does not show growth. There is also no “voice” to show the purpose of the theme.”

“I would give him a 3 because the concentration is evident, but not original or engaging. Some of the design principles are quality work. I don’t see growth through the photographs and the work is of moderate quality”

“I’d give this portfolio a 4 because I think the theme is coherent and the images are in generally printed very well. Overall the work demonstrates integration of ideas, technical competence, and there is evidence of student voice.”

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ARMONK, NEW YORK

We learned that through the use of the condensed rubric our students were able to more easily use the vocabulary in the rubric when giving rationale to their scores. In collecting our data we also learned that the change to the format of the existing rubrics enabled students to become more engaged as they used it as a tool to evaluate their own work.

As we analyzed the results we found that out of the Eight Byram Hills High School portfolios that were graded by the students, three matched the grades given by the College Board by the majority of students with three falling below and two above. This was an interesting observation given the fact that we do not always agree with the scores from the College Board. Although this data was useful, it was not the purpose behind our research. The results of this research achieved their goal in that the students were able to use the adapted rubric to better understand the scoring used by College Board.

Implications:

We concluded that the remodeling of the existing lengthy AP College Board rubric was very helpful for our students. Instead of shuffling through six pages they could access using only one page and be able to understand the way the categories were separated between the scores of 1-5. This simplification enabled them to quickly assess previous student work, as well as apply it to their own work. The power points we created gave students a better understanding of the idea of a concentration in art (a theme which shows growth and discovery), and how to better refine their own work.

The simplification of the rubric was done only for the concentration section of the 2D design portfolio. Because of the success of this research we feel that we need to revise the rubrics for the other 2 sections of the 2D portfolio, as well as for the Drawing and Painting portfolio.

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ARMONK, NEW YORK

Appendix A
Modified Rubric

AP® STUDIO ART - SCORING GUIDELINES
© 2013 The College Board - www.collegeboard.org

2-D Design CONCENTRATION - Section II
A concentration is defined as "a body of work unified by an underlying idea that has visual coherence." In scoring concentrations, there are four major areas of concern: Coherence & development or both - Is the work presented actually a concentration? Quality of the conceptual representation - Is there evidence of thinking and of focus? Degree of development & investigation that is evident in the work - including the amount of work or number of pieces represented Quality of the work in both concept and technique

CONCENTRATION	6 - EXCELLENT	5 - STRONG	4 - GOOD	3 - MODERATE	2 - WEAK	1 - POOR
A. Integration of topic	Concentration & work are unmistakably & coherently integrated	Concentration successfully integrated with most of the work	Concentration & work are closely related	The connection between concentration & work is evident, but erratic	A sense of concentration, but integration is inadequately considered	Very little evidence of concentration or not enough work
B. Decision Making through Investigation	Compelling evidence of informed decision making & discovery	Evidence of thoughtful decision making and discovery in many works	Some clear decision making & discovery are evident	Decision making is sporadic, work demonstrates little sense of investigation or discovery	Decision making is lacking, work appears inadequately thought out & insufficiently explored	There is little or no evidence of decision making or investigation
C. Originality & Innovative Thinking	Clearly demonstrates an original vision & innovative ideas & risk taking	The work generally demonstrates original & innovative ideas	Some originality, & the work shows some innovative thinking	Idea is presented, some original ideas or attempts at innovation with materials & techniques seem to be emerging	Idea is presented, but ideas in the work are unoriginal or rely mostly on appropriation	Idea may be presented, but the work comprises little or simplistic solutions that are poorly executed
D. Evocative Theme	Evocative, engaging theme is sustained through most of the work	Evocative, engaging theme is clearly present in much of the work	Clear theme that engages the viewer with some of the work is discernible	Potentially engaging theme is somewhat discernible, but is inadequately considered	Potentially engaging theme is present but is largely unsuccessful	A theme that could engage the viewer with the work is absent
E. 2-D Design Principles	The work shows a thorough understanding & effective application of 2-D design principles	The work shows understanding & effective application of design principles; there may be some less successful pieces	The work is inconsistent in quality, but overall the understanding & application of design principles is good	Some development is evident, but a moderate understanding & superficial application of design principles	Concentration is evident, but the work shows a weak understanding or random application of design principles	Work shows very little or no understanding of design principles & their application
F. Growth & Transformation	The work conveys a sense of transformation & most works demonstrate a distinct measure of success	The work generally exhibits transformation & many works demonstrate a measure of success	Apparent transformation is noticeable but the scope of the work is limited or repetitive	Some transformation is discernible but the scope of the work is narrow & repetitive or both	The work is mostly repetitive; only a few pieces suggest growth or show slight signs of transformation	Overall, the work shows no indication of growth or transformation
G. Technical Competence	In general, the work is technically excellent; materials are used effectively to express ideas	The work is technically strong; materials are used well to express ideas	The work demonstrates good technical competence & use of materials; technical aspects & articulation of ideas do not always work together	Though uneven, the work demonstrates emerging technical competence & some knowledgeable use of materials	Overall, the work demonstrates marginal technical competence & awkward use of materials	The work shows very little technical competence; it is naive & lacks skill
H. Student "Voice"	Any apparent appropriation of published or photographic sources clearly provides a visual reference that is transformed in the service of a larger, personal vision in which the student's "voice" is prominent	Any apparent appropriation of published or photographic sources or the work of other artists shows a strong sense of the student's "voice" & individual transformation of the images	With the apparent appropriation of published or photographic sources or the work of other artists, the student's "voice" is discernible; the images have been manipulated to express the student's individual ideas	If published or photographic sources or the work of other artists are appropriated, the works appear to be nearly direct reproductions; even if slightly modified, the student's "voice" & the individual transformation of the images are minimal	The works appear to be direct copies of published or photographic sources or the work of other artists; there is little discernible student "voice" or individual transformation	The works are obviously direct copies of published or photographic sources or the work of other artists; there is no discernible student "voice" or individual transformation
I. Overall Accomplishment & Quality	Accomplishment among the works may vary but overall, the work reaches a level of excellent quality	There may be varying levels of accomplishment among the works, but overall, the work is of strong quality	There may be uneven levels of accomplishment among the works for the concentration, but overall the work is of good quality	There may be an emerging level of accomplishment among the works for the concentration, & overall the work is of moderate quality	Little evidence of accomplishment is demonstrated; overall the work is of weak quality	Overall, the works for the concentration lack accomplishment and are of poor quality

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ARMONK, NEW YORK

Appendix B
Student Work Samples

[Link to presentation of student work samples.](#)

Appendix C
College Board Exemplars

[See link to presentation on college board exemplars.](#)

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ARMONK, NEW YORK

Appendix D
Concentration Scoring Worksheet

Name: _____

AP Photography - Concentration Scoring

Study the Concentrations from past student AP portfolios. What do you think the overall score was for each Concentration? Back up your overall score with evidence using the rubric above (don't describe each category just the category that jumps out at you or is most appropriate to the work):

Concentration:	Score?	Evidence:
"Line"	4	I think that this portfolio deserves a 4 or maybe a 5. Although I circled many 6's, I also circled lower scores. I think that 2-D design principles are used with all of the images, line obviously and color, as well as contrast, etc. So for category "E" I circled a 6. But in category "F" I circled a 3 because I don't think that all the pieces work well together. I don't think that I would have included the image of the window for example. Also in category "A" I circled 4 because although the concentration and the work are closely related I wouldn't say that it is unmistakable for all of the photos. For example I don't think that the tree picture is really about line, it is more about landscape and in that picture the subject is so far away and the others are more like close-ups.
"Portraiture"		
"Hands and Feet"		
"Food"		
"Subject Interaction with Photographer"		
"Shape"		
"Still Life Photography"		
"Portraiture"		
"Nature"		