

# ARTS CORE ASSESSMENT REPORT

OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT

JANUARY, 2019

## Introduction

The Core student learning objectives identify the educational priorities for all undergraduates in Santa Clara University's Core Curriculum. Assessment of student learning is ongoing in the Core—we seek to understand in what areas of the learning objectives students are challenged or excel, and how the Core can offer better support for faculty teaching in these areas.

This assessment report summarizes the process and findings from an assessment of the three learning objectives for the Arts core requirement. The intent behind this requirement, is articulated in the following way according to the approved Core document (2007):

The education of the whole person requires that students encounter and explore artistic ways of knowing humanity and the world. Creating and interpreting aesthetic forms symbolic of deep human feeling encourage students to consider how knowledge and understanding grow in ways other than discursive reasoning. Following Suzanne Langer, “deep human feeling” is not equivalent to one or another emotion, like sadness or joy. Rather it is the subjective aspect of human experience, the inward life of human persons that, though potent, is often only vaguely known until creatively expressed. From the beginning of the Jesuit educational enterprise, study of the arts has been employed to cultivate humanity, encourage growth in virtue, and school the body in the ways of verbal and physical eloquence.

This course in the arts (visual art, creative writing, dance, music, theatre) provides students with the opportunity to create and interpret art. Moving beyond the usual secondary school emphasis on making an artistic product, this course sets more ambitious goals. Students will gain an understanding of how the analysis and critique of the arts can inform and inspire one's own creative practice, and vice-versa. Students will also grasp how the aspects of one form of artistic expression and communication can contribute to the store of human knowledge and the individual's self-knowledge.

### Core Learning Goals Addressed in the Arts Requirement

- *Arts and Humanities*: The production, interpretation, and social influence of the fine and performing arts, history, languages, literatures, philosophy, and religion
- *Collaboration*: The capacity to collaborate intellectually and creatively with diverse people
- *Communication*: Interacting effectively with different audiences, especially through writing, speech, and a second language
- *Complexity*: An approach to understanding the world that appreciates ambiguity and nuance as well as clarity and precision

## The Assessment Process

In 2017-18, the Office of Assessment, working together with the Arts Faculty Core Committee (FCC), asked faculty teaching Arts core courses to assist with the assessment of student work related to the three Arts learning objectives. Student work was collected from a random sample of students from

27 of the 32 Arts courses taught by distinct faculty during winter quarter, 2018. All three learning objectives for the Arts Core requirement were assessed.

- 1.1 Learn and apply basic artistic techniques and aesthetic principles to create works of art
- 1.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how artistic creation enables the expression of ideals, challenges, and desires
- 1.3 Reflect on and analyze works of art and the creative process individually and collaboratively

A rubric was developed by the Office of Assessment and the Arts FCC to score student work (see Appendix). Student learning for each objective was scored on a four-point proficiency scale. Faculty teaching the courses provided scores for the students for LO 1.1 since they were in the best position to evaluate how well students had learned and applied artistic techniques and aesthetic principles to create works of art. Faculty also identified the assignments that would provide the clearest evidence for student learning for the other two learning objectives and provided student work for their sample of students. The Office of Assessment obtained work for 105 students, and redacted student and faculty identifiers from this material prior to scoring.

Faculty teaching in the Arts core area and members of the Arts FCC were invited to score the student work in the summer of 2018. Three faculty and one staff member participated in the scoring. After a norming session, sample scoring, and a discussion, the scorers independently reviewed and rated all materials.

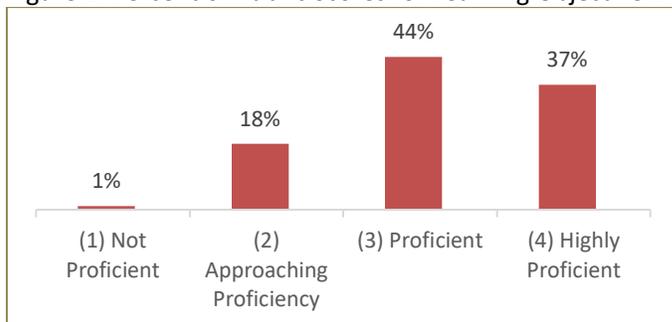
### What We Learned

The scores given for work for each learning objective were tabulated and converted into percentages.

#### **LO 1.1 Students will learn and apply basic artistic techniques and aesthetic principles to create works of art.**

Student achievement of this learning objective was high. Using the rubric, faculty judged most students (81%) as proficient or highly proficient (see Figure 1). An additional 19% of the students' work was judged as approaching proficiency, and 1% was rated as not proficient.

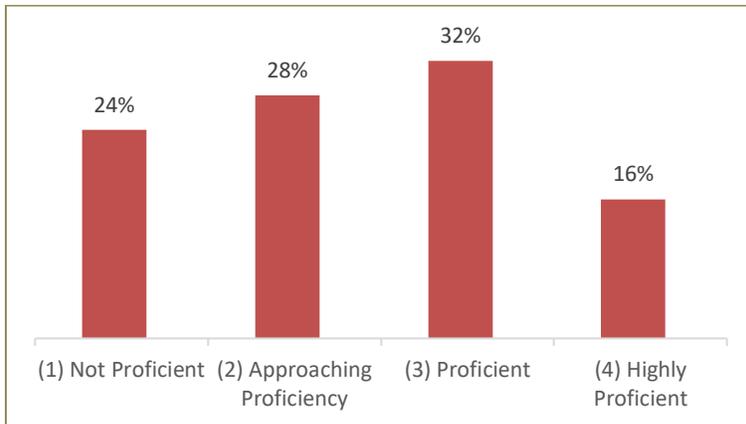
Figure 1. Percent of Rubric Scores for Learning Objective 1.1



**LO 1.2 Students will demonstrate an understanding of how artistic creation enables the expression of ideals, challenges, and desires.**

The second learning objective asks that students demonstrate a clear understanding of the relationship of artistic creation to human ideals, challenges, and desires – a type of learning that emphasizes critical and humanistic thinking. Nearly half (48%) of the student work was rated as proficient or highly proficient, 28% of the work as approaching proficiency, and 24% of the work was evaluated as not proficient by the rubric standards.

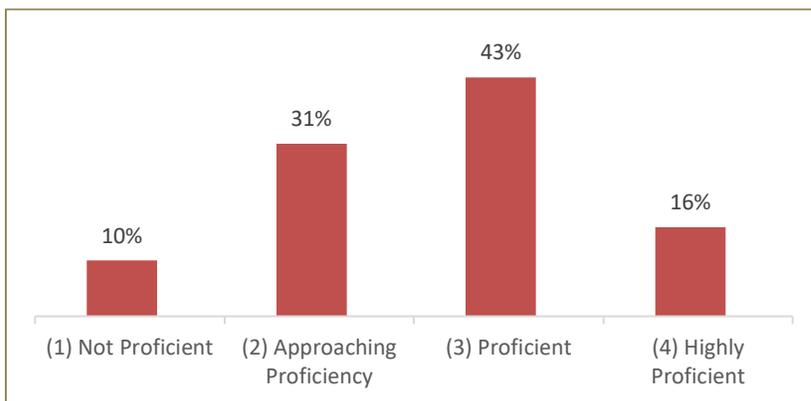
Figure 2. Percent of Rubric Scores for Learning Objective 1.2



**LO 1.3 Students will reflect on and analyze works of art and the creative process individually and collaboratively.**

LO 1.3 requires critical reflection and analysis about art and the creative process on one’s own and with others. Over half (59%) of the students’ work was scored as proficient or highly proficient following the rubric, with another 31% judged as approaching proficiency, and 10% as not proficient.

Figure 3. Percent of Rubric Scores for Learning Objective 1.3



**Conclusions**

Faculty evaluations of student work on the first learning objective (LO 1.1) offers strong support that students are successfully learning and applying basic artistic techniques and aesthetic principles to create works of art.

The rubric scores for the other two learning objectives (understanding of how artistic creation enables the expression of ideals, challenges, and desire (1.2); and reflecting on and analyzing works of art and the creative process individually and collaboratively (1.3)) were not as high overall.

To earn proficiency on 1.2, students needed to demonstrate or express a clear understanding of the connections between the creative process and production of art, and the relevance of art to the larger human experience. Faculty scorers noted that student work that approached or did not meet proficiency was more limited in *analysis* (more descriptive than analytic) or underdeveloped. For example, a faculty scorer made a note next to one student's work for LO 1.2 that it was "Almost all summary and description, no analysis." This may explain why nearly one-fourth of the students' work was rated as "not proficient." Proficiency for 1.3 required that the student's reflections and analysis of works of art be clear and well-developed, and make some relevant connections to specific elements or principles of art and/or its creation. Again, when students received scores for "approaching proficiency" or "not proficient," scorers observed that their responses were too general and lacked specificity in reflection and analysis.

### **Recommendations**

Since the Arts core requirement goes beyond simply the creation of art to include a critical analysis and reflection on the creative process and how this connects with the human experience, faculty teaching these courses are encouraged to share how they have developed meaningful assignments to engage students in these analytic activities as a way of deepening their learning experience in the arts.

Many instructors teaching in the Arts Core use class discussion as a way to address LO 1.2 and LO 1.3. However, beyond discussion, the FCC asks that faculty also develop assignment(s) in which students can engage in critical reflection about art in a way that produces a tangible record for the faculty and others. Faculty may find it helpful to create and share assignments within or across artistic disciplines that complement the applied learning of the courses, especially given the variety of courses that meet the Arts Core requirements (some courses are two-units, others are four units; some involve participation in large groups such as ensembles or orchestras, while others are taught as stand-alone courses). Certain assignments may work better in some contexts than others. The Office of Assessment is available to assist faculty in the design of prompts that engage students, promote student learning, and serve well for the purposes of assessment.

**Acknowledgments:** The Office of Assessment thanks the Arts FCC, the faculty teaching Core Arts courses who participated in the assessment, the faculty members who offered to serve as scorers for the student work, and our student assistant, Kyla Inouye, who contributes ongoing support to the assessment process.

**Arts Core Assessment Rubric**  
(revised June 29, 2018)

Objective	Highly proficient - 4	Proficient - 3	Approaching proficiency - 2	Not proficient - 1	Score
1.1 Learn and apply basic artistic techniques and aesthetic principles to create works of art	Demonstrates a sophisticated or nuanced understanding of artistic techniques and aesthetic principles in the creation of works of art with considerable technical competence	Demonstrates a basic understanding and an ability to apply techniques and aesthetic principles in the creation of works of art with good technical competence.	Demonstrates some understanding and an ability to apply techniques and aesthetic principles in the creation of works of art, but understanding and/or technical competence of basic techniques is clearly still developing.	Exhibits very little or no understanding, nor the ability to apply basic artistic techniques and aesthetic principles used to create works of art.	
1.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how artistic creation enables the expression of human ideals, challenges, and desires.	Demonstrates or expresses thoughtful insights about the connections between the creative process and production of art, and the relevance of art to the larger human experience.	Demonstrates or expresses a clear understanding of the connections between the creative process and production of art, and the relevance of art to the larger human experience.	Demonstrates or expresses awareness of a link between the creative process and production of art, and the relevance of art to the larger human experience, but does not develop or exemplify this clearly or concretely.	Does not demonstrate an understanding that the creative process and production of art are linked to the larger human experience.	
1.3 Reflect on and analyze works of art and <u>the creative process*</u> , individually and collaboratively. * what goes into the making of the art	Analysis is insightful and well-articulated, and makes meaningful reference to elements or principles of art and/or its creation.	Analysis is clear and well-developed, and makes some relevant connections to specific elements or principles of art and/or its creation.	Analysis is underdeveloped or partial (may be descriptive rather than analytical), and may make limited reference to specific elements or principles of art and/or its creation.	Analysis is minimal and/or unclear. Few, if any, examples from the work are used to support any statements.	