

Summer 2009

CLA Final Report

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CLA PROJECT REPORT

COURSE INFORMATION: ART 230-Introduction to Ceramics

Instructor: S. Hernandez-Hinek, Associate Professor

The majority of students enrolled in this course are at the sophomore rising junior level. There is a small percentage of “non-traditional” students who are retired military or re-entry students. Also, there are two graduating seniors in this course.

Performance Task:

TASK: The task was to read the “scenario” related to the request by Alpo Corporation in support of NEA funding for the Arts. Students were asked to place themselves in the role of the role of a corporate President of a member agency, review and analyze supporting and non-supporting documents and answer the following two questions:

1. Alpo is asking all of its member agencies to have their members support President Obama’s stimulus package. In their letter, they present the case as for the American way of life. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan is the specific provision. Based on the evidence, what are the strengths and weaknesses of their case in light of current economic and social divisions? Why? What specific information in the evidence led you to this conclusion?
2. In this call for support, Alpo quotes Bill Ivey, former chair of the NEA, WHO STATES, “a healthy arts community is important, especially during hard times”, yet the Senate Appropriations Committee has not included art jobs funding in their version of the bill, why? Based on all the information and documents and any other factors you considered, what led you to your conclusion?

Documents:

1 NARRATIVE: scenario

2 Newspaper Article

3 Letter acknowledging the contribution of sponsorship and NEA grant support

4 Bar graph demonstrating government support levels from 1994 – 2008.

5 Bar graph demonstrating NEA appropriations from 1966 – 2008

6 Internet Article advocating elimination of support for the NEA

7 Document demonstrating economic impact of the nonprofits arts industry

8 Samples of visual artists work submitted for request to receive NEA grant awards

9 Article on the impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation

10 Letter from Oprah thanking Halle Barry for supporting an NEA project, BIG READ.

Our team selected diverse formats of information to allow for a variety of abilities and analysis. Additionally, in that the diversity of artistic backgrounds among our faculty group became evident in the variety of artistic disciplines that appear as subjects or material. There was a general opinion that our students would be more apt to respond and with intent if more visual and popular cultural anchors were integrated with the documents. A successful base response could be achieved with the student reading and comparing the bar document with the supporting letter pieces: example Letter from Oprah to Halle and the bar graph demonstrating government support levels 94- 2008. A more successful response would be inclusive of the discussion of relationships of politics such as the Internet Article advocating elimination of NEA support and two other documents. A most successful response would be inclusive of the debate of censorship raising questions of “American way of life”, etc.

Performance Task Administration:

Date of administration: Thursday, February 12, 2009; 9:00 – 10:50 a.m., Rosenthal 115. The final score on the assessment was not calculated as part of the final grade. However, any student who volunteered to participate in this exercise was awarded extra credit. As part of the introduction to this activity, the class discussed the value of critical thinking skills in their education and the role that it would play in the course of their art studies. Discussion led to long-range goals after they graduate from Fayetteville State University. It was a positive discussion. Out of 15 students, 11 students volunteered. Students were provided the material the night before to review the documents, but not the question sheet or scenario.

Student Performance:

I saw no particular strength in all the responses. The group responses came in about equal numbers as to the issues. As a reviewer and art instructor, polling art students, I was surprised by some of the responses. Sophomore level students were generally neutral on advocating for the NEA, perhaps they could not take the exercise seriously. There did seem to be a correlation between the older, more experienced student who easily identified the relationship between economic and political issues. Most students stayed clear of the censorship issues.

Recommendation and follow up:

Knowing that our students’ performance on the CLA will be part of our institutional assessment, I continued to vary my lesson plans to include more research skills and writing before they settle on a particular design. Recently I had the students interact in teams to mix classroom glazes, incorporating lessons on triple beam chemistry scales and calculators. Normally, the art making process is a singular mindset, by working in teams, analyzing, measuring, calculating, different problem solving skill were at play. There was refreshed energy amongst the majority of the students. Team building is valuable and I highly recommend that faculty explore ways to have students work in groups.