

1 of 2

*Links in Teaching*

# The Art of Curriculum Design

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◎ When teaching,  
everything you do is an aesthetic act.

– Carole Henry

- ⦿ “What do you teach?” I’m often asked.  
I do not answer by saying, “art”.

My answer: “Children.  
Art is the vehicle through which I teach them.”

– Debbie West

◎ “All of this work we do,  
writing and preparing our lesson plans.  
We aren’t preparing the plans –  
we are preparing ourselves,  
to be able to teach.”

– Nel Noddings

◎ “Is what you’re teaching worth knowing?”

- Pam Taylor

# “Begin with the End in Mind”

Wiggins and McTigh, *Understanding by Design*, 1999

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- What should learners have/know/be able to do/have experienced/have learned/have accomplished/(etc) by the end of their time with you?
  - You can think about this question at level of the full curriculum, entire course, unit of instruction, workshop, or single day, or hour lesson.
  - Asking this question first is a contrast to asking, “What actions will we take/what will we do during this time?”

# What do we call your answer? (it depends)

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- ...How concrete & specific is your answer?
  - “successfully create a silk screen” – An Objective
  - “understand that physical balance is often achieved by opposing forces rather than centered stillness” – A Goal
  - “see that their actions can have an effect in the world” – An Aim
  - Siegesmund and Eisner connection

# At the End - Assessment

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- (formative vs. summative)
- Assessment vs. Evaluation vs. Grading
  - Assessment is a description
  - Evaluation is a judgment
  - Grading is aligning your judgment with a predetermined scale

# Assessment = Description

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- Observable
- Process, Product, or Performance (outcomes)
- Very specific = Objective
- Consider objectives “closed-ended” but outcomes “open-ended”  
(Anderson & Milbrandt, *Art for Life*, 2005)
- In writing objectives, use specific action verbs  
(see Bloom’s Taxonomy Verb lists)

Assessment (that which is achieved by the end),  
is described in the Objectives.

Objectives, though, are narrow and specific and include no explanation of WHY these specific processes, products, or performances have value.

So, we move to another aspect of design

# Goals

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- Goals articulate the desired knowledge, learning, understanding, appreciation, or exploration.
- Goals explain what students should get out of accomplishing the objectives.

# Notes about Goals

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- Goals are not assessable.  
(But they align with the objectives, which are observable, and therefore assessable.)
- Often goals are not entirely achievable within the instructional framework.  
(Often you are hoping to initiate or contribute to an understanding that may take learners the rest of their lives to develop.)

# Example

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## ART 101 (HANDS-ON ART APPRECIATION FOR NON-MAJORS)

**GOALS:** By the end of the course, students should know (or understand):

- Art's specialized concepts and vocabulary
- The materials and techniques used in creating art
- Methods artists use for creating art
- Themes, subjects, concepts, and ideas about which art is created

# Example

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**OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the course, students should be able to (do):

- Apply knowledge of art vocabulary (about materials, visual concepts, and ideas) to viewing and interpreting works from diverse global art-making traditions and visual culture and to creating personal works
- Use a variety of art materials and techniques
- Use a variety of methods and problem-solving approaches to create original, personally meaningful works of art
- Utilize increased awareness of and sensitivity to visual issues in making and criticizing art.

Assessments are descriptions of what students will do by the end.

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Assessments are articulated in the Objectives.

Objectives align with Goals.

Goals explain what students should gain from completing the Objectives.

**What's the point?**  
(i.e. why does this learning matter?)

# What's the point?

(the rationale)

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## AIM

- ① Why have you put this learning experience together?
- ② Here is where you answer,  
*“Is what you are teaching worth knowing?”*

# What is the point?

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- ... with this instructional experience

example from my course:

- The point of this course is to make art accessible and more understandable to students with limited previous experience with visual art.

- *Why does this idea have value?*

# What is your intent?

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- ⦿ ... with teaching this content?
  - ⦿ ... with teaching this discipline?
  - ⦿ ... with teaching?
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- ⦿ Are we talking about art now?

thank you!

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