

More Than a Pretty Picture: Using the Mazza Museum to Create Critical Thinking

This portion of the round table will offer perspective on ways to incorporate the Mazza Museum collection and staff support into classrooms to create compelling assignments focused on critical thinking. We hope you enjoy our brief view into how the Mazza works for us and how it could work for your classroom as well.

ENGL 202: Students script a critical visual analysis of a single object on display. Dr. Bates will compare the differing outcomes when students shifted from an online video as a final project to multiple in-person presentations as part of the 2014 Symposium for Scholarship and Creativity.

Document Design and ENGL 272: Introduction to Technical Communication

Students explore rhetorical decision making in various aspects of creating a Public Service Announcement campaign on a topic of their selection. Document design of the PSA (video, audio, or a poster/flyer/pamphlet sequence) is one part of this semester long process. Students learn about basic design principles: contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity (C.R.A.P.) and how the decision to maintain or break these design constraints can change the message of their PSA. Students come to the Mazza Museum collection and look for demonstrations of these principles and ways that the illustrators make decisions between the original and final published art. Exploring how these small changes make a difference in the message in the final product helps students understand the importance of clear document design.

In addition students get to practice citation of the original art illustrations. This requires them to learn how to think beyond the normal types of documents cited for academic work. This skill is important as they begin to work in environments with more diverse sources of reference materials.

Lessons learned when developing activity:

- 1) Students will wander around looking at everything – which is great, but can defeat the purpose of the assignment. *To counter this I assign a specific selection for one of the questions but allow students to pick anything for the second.*
- 2) Citation of an unusual object is **difficult** for students to figure out, they are rarely required to do so before this course. *To counter this students are required to put down the information needed as part of the brainstorming worksheet and then we have a day for revision of the citations in class before the final project is due.*
- 3) Students really enjoy getting to go to the Mazza Museum. Many of them state they went on a campus tour before coming to UF, however they rarely get a chance to go again unless it is part of a class. *Because the exhibits change every June...I really encourage them to come back once a year and see all of the new art!*

Mazza in YOUR Class: Terry Olthouse, Education Coordinator for the Mazza Museum, will lead a brief activity that allows audience members to participate in a short activity in which they will review the collection on display, brainstorm assignment ideas, and share results.

Interdisciplinary Outreach in English Courses

This portion of the round table shares three perspectives on teaching writing in interdisciplinary contexts. We hope you enjoy our brief view into how each of us works to make explicit connections between the principles and concepts in English Studies and the principles and concepts in other areas of study a part of our instructional practices.

Flash Classes with Different Majors

Dr. Bates conducts flash classes connecting different majors such as animal science, pre-veterinary emphasis, pharmacy, and equine studies to literature.

Writing and Literature for Physical and Occupational Therapy Students

Dr. Diederich offers a writing and literature class designed for undergraduate students interested in continuing studies in physical and occupational therapy, a course designed and revised in collaboration with faculty in these disciplines.

Interdisciplinary and ENGL 282: Introduction to Writing for the Sciences

The diverse student population for this course creates an environment conducive to exploring what skills are basic to strong communication in scientific fields and what tasks are more discipline specific, requiring more specialized research and training. Approaching this course my goals are to encourage students to cultivate an understanding that communication is not only written and to understand the rhetorically driven nature of communicating with patients, co-workers, and other stakeholders relevant to the future career track they are pursuing.

Using the genres of assignments from previous iterations of the course I created a course sequence that allows students to practice writing skills for both general and specialist audiences, each related to acquainting students with discipline related skills to allow them to build on during upper division (discipline-specific) courses.

Assignment Title	Task	Interdisciplinary Target Skills
Summary Poster	Summarize single peer-reviewed article	Emphasizes poster presentation (design and oral) skills
Informational Text	Create brochure, newsletter, or popular magazine science article using three peer-reviewed articles	Requires students to translate specialized vocabulary into general audience level; also incorporates awareness of different genres of scientific writing beyond that of research
Critique	Critique structure and content delivery of three peer-review articles	Acquaints students with IMRaD structure of research; encourages critical analysis, not simply accepting results because the information is published
Proposal/Feasibility Report	As a group, identify and issue, create a possible solution, use pilot research to determine if solution is possible – provide progress report mid-project individually	Previews constraints of primary research (IRB and protection of human subjects), acquaints students with collaboration, familiarizes students with extended research/reporting process