

Tell *Your* Story:

Communication Skills for the Artist

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts trains students for professional careers in the performing, visual, and moving image arts. An important skill for the professional artist is the ability to tell the story behind their work and the passion that drives them to pursue it. Artists are often called upon to do this clearly and succinctly in a variety of situations, in written and verbal form. Developing this skill requires practice and deep personal reflection and critique. The process of critiquing their own work and the work of others in a meaningful way helps them improve their work and clarify their focus and intent. Consequently, they are better able to explain to others the motivation behind their artistic choices and how their work sets them apart from their peers.

We are currently lacking a unified approach to developing this set of communication skills for our students. It is clear that this is an important skill we desire for our students as evidenced by the requirement that all applicants to UNCSEA write an artistic statement. We also have evidence that these skills are being taught in various ways in each of our departments. However, currently there is no formal consensus on the learning outcomes and no institution-level assessment data to show how effectively our students are acquiring these skills. We intend to focus our Quality Enhancement Plan on this issue.

Student Learning Outcomes for the QEP

Students will be able to:

1. Communicate clearly their passion for a professional career.
2. Effectively critique their own work.
3. Effectively critique the work of others.

Each of our arts schools and our Division of Liberal Arts will identify opportunities in their curriculum where these learning outcomes can be taught and assessed. It is our goal to develop a unified assessment plan for these learning outcomes that can be utilized by faculty in classrooms and studios across campus. This assessment data will then be used to help faculty identify areas in which their students need further instruction. We will also use this assessment data to help us identify institutional initiatives aimed at further developing these essential skills.

More information can be found at <http://www.uncsa.edu/qep>. The QEP Director, Jason Romney, is an Associate Professor in the School of Design and Production. He can be reached by phone at (336) 734-2937 and by email at romneyj@uncsa.edu.