

Finding Words for the Elusive. Analysis and Discussion of Assessment Criteria for Arts-based Assignments

Margareta Melin, Ewa Berg, Kajsa Lindskog,
Helena Malm, Gunnel Pettersson, Bjørn Wangen
Malmö University, Sweden

Abstract

Conceptions of the aesthetic are multifaceted, associated with taste, sensuality, and elusive beyond words. This was the starting-point for a two-year research-project Arts-based Assessments, which involves senior/lecturers from two departments, involved with visual arts, communication and media. Using Taguchi's (2013) concepts pedagogic documentation and active agents, Biggs' (2007) notion of knowledge creation through art, Biesta's (2013) arguments for a risky education, and Selander and Kress' (2010) concept didactic design, we analysed and problematized arts-based assessment-criteria used in modules with arts-based examinations.

The project concludes that multi-modal/arts-based forms of learning-activities enable multi-faceted knowledge-making beyond traditional reading-and-writing, whether in visual arts-subjects or in more academic media-subjects. This involves, however, risk-taking for both staff and students. In our more traditional university context, demands are made on assessments to be constructed

along alignments, which is far from traditional art-school studio-assessments. We argue, however, that it is not only possible, but also desirable assessing aesthetic qualities, also in “scientifically” constructed alignments. There are words for the elusive, and it is better to put words on paper than hiding evaluative notions in-between lines in a pretence objectivity.

But what are these words? After the Round-table-presentation of our research-results, participants are asked to discuss what words to use for aesthetic qualities in assessment criteria of visual arts examinations, using words brought from their own contexts. These should enable use in aligned constructions, but also in matrix-free assessment-models. Finally, we propose a discussion where words and forms of assessment are discussed, documented, and made available for all participants.

Keywords

Aesthetic, Assessment criteria, Arts-based Assessments, Constructive alignment, Pedagogic design.