

Dan Reeve:

Hi. Welcome to another Applied Learning podcast. I'm your host, Dan Reeve.

Dan Reeve: We'll get it ... We'll unpack it as we go, but that gives us-

Nancy Yakimoski: The context.

Dan Reeve: That sort of general starting point.

Nancy Yakimoski: Yeah.

Dan Reeve: Okay. We're going to now delve into the eight ideas or principles of applied learning, and we'll sort of try to talk about that in light of the project. But just in general too, in terms of how it connects to you as an instructor and a teacher. Well, the first one is the idea of intention. How do you decide that an experience or an application is the best way to learn a particular concept? Because you mentioned you start with a concept theory or idea. How do you connect that theory? What's your goal or your idea, your intention when come and you start?

Nancy Yakimoski: Well, the idea behind the Art-Poem-Art Experiment was to involve students in a variety of ways. And with the art world, it's great if you have a BFA, if you come up with your master, your MFA. But really when you get out there... it like... they ask you like: "What kind of experience do you have?" BF..663 0 Td[()7a6" .9(n3. )o6.5()v-3(rn...

forward. Within the program, we do have a course that is like the professional practices course. Where this is where students learn all the nuts and bolts about being an artist outside of their art practice, like how to promote themselves, how to put together a portfolio, building a website, how do you put together a package to submit to a curator? This is sort of the long-term plans that we sort of work towards. Our program is about giving students the hands-on skills that they need to ... Well, they basically explore a variety of practice mediums, and then we give them these extra skills that puts them on the path for a professional career.

Dan Reeve: Okay. To do that, and we can talk in terms of the program and also in terms of the project, the Art-Poem-Art, there's a lot of preparation for you to set this up. I guess the first question is sort of, how do you know when you're ready to sort of make it fly?

Nancy Yakimoski: You never know when you're ready to make it fly. I think the best thing you can do is trust that your project is going to be successful. I think you just have to believe that it's going to be successful on some level. And that there's going to be hiccups, there's going to be detours, there's going to be like, "Oh my God, we should have thought of that. How come we didn't think of that?" I think the best thing you do is just, you have a great idea, you know it's going to benefit students in some way and even the mistakes or the hiccups are a learning moment, right? You never know when you're ready, but you jump in and you build a team, people that you trust, people that have experience that you need, and you work through it as a team.

If you're thinking about doing a lone wolf thing, I think that's where you run into trouble because you can't be an expert in everything. And I think when the idea of, and it's also my philosophy... it's like, learning is not this monastic activity, right? We learn together, we collaborate, you know your strengths and my strengths, or we help each other out. You just kind of jump in and you ask for help when you need it and you probably ... And don't be afraid to ask for help. Yeah. So-

Dan Reeve: Okay.

Nancy Yakimoski: [inaudible 00:08:39] It's like fearless. You just have to be fearless and jump out of the nest.

Dan Reeve: Okay. And how ... Then now you've kind of talked on also a little bit how this, particularly the Art-Poem-Art project, began was you saw it, or a version of it, with one of your students at an art gallery downtown? And you're like, "Good idea."

Nancy Yakimoski: Yeah, "We should do this."

Dan Reeve: There's a certain amount of, I want to say No-maj.



need to hire somebody to represent you, like a gallery, and then they usually take 60% of whatever they make. And I have not heard one artist that say, "Wow, I have a really great representation and I haven't been swindled or ..." Part of it is we have ... I think we're obligated to teach our program, like at the visual art students, about the real world out there. Once you leave the program, and you're an artist, and this is what you want to do in some way shape or form, these are the ways that you ... These are the ways to apply for a grant. These are the questions to ask people.

Nancy Yakimoski: This is ... When you have an art show, there are art fees to be paid to you and you need to make sure that they're being paid according to CARFAC rates. I mean, we are basically telling them ... Like giving them the inside scoop, which is just as important as learning the skills to make their artwork. It's like how to function as an artist out there or the next [crosstalk 00:13:39]-

Dan Reeve: So this is trade craft?

Nancy Yakimoski: Yeah. I mean, and sometimes our students go on to be art therapists, teachers, I mean, it's a whole gamut. But the idea that there are things that they need to be aware of besides learning how to make art.

Dan Reeve: Right. Okay. A reflection is usually a key part in any process, whether it's student reflection or your own reflection, and we're going to ask a number of questions now about your process of reflection both for yourself and for your students. And we may hit on these things a little later on as well. What reflective questions or practices do you have students consider once they've completed part or the whole of a particular applied learning process?

Nancy Yakimoski: Well, within our program we meet with our students at midterm as well as at the end of the semester. And they also come out to talk about their progress or about their experience within that particular course. We also have an interview that the first-years do at the end of their second semester, before they go into second year. And we also have an exit survey that our graduating students have. We're always sort of getting them to reflect on the courses, the deliverables, the facilities... And we have that sort of built in as part of our program. There is that reflection on what they're learning and how they're learning. And our students are filled ... Because there's so much one on one with our students, if something is not working for them, they're in our office talking to us.

It's good because it's like there is a trust built in a program that is a really kind of





video mode. They're going to have to do something called a durational



there's no questions, they understand the assignment, they do the hands-on, and then they have the homework. Where they have to go out and apply it. They have to go shoot their durational photograph, they have to edit it, they have to do all of that.

Nancy Yakimoski: And within that... it's like, okay, well then with the flipped classroom they'd have to do the research. It's like... I structure it so that it's an efficient use of their time. It's not go research durational photographs, because it's also kind of called time images, or time photography. What I do is I give them very detailed information sheets, probably more detail than they ... I think because I know one of the things that I have to reflect on and figure out is, I give lots of information, and I try to do it on the least amount of paper, but I think the design of lots of information is important. Because they see three or four pages of information and they're overwhelmed, right?

And especially I've got a student ... I'm teaching a student with autism and they're just right... he's like... "Aah." And deadlines. I've got students that have these different needs, so I have to figure out a way to actually take that same information and break it down into chunks, which may be a workbook, I'm not sure. That's kind of one of the things I have to reflect on. I just I chunk it up in terms of what's the end goal, and then have really detailed assignments that

Nancy Yakimoski: And it's like, and they ask those questions like: "Why are we learning this?" And I like that because it's like, "Okay, perfect." I've had to basically justify ... Learn how to justify what I'm doing. And I usually do that by just putting into context. Like with this durational photography, that's when I talk to them in class because I like ... I don't know, it's like that one on one because I love that. It's like: "well here's the whole course, we're talking about still photography and the decisive moment, we did an assignment on the constructed image, now we're doing something on durational, and then we're going to be doing video"

This is kind of the trajectory of the course and then this fits into ... This is how it fits into the course, but this is also how it fits into art practices. When you make a durational photograph, are you doing something same as Scott McFarland or Owen [Kid 00:29:21] or what's your purpose? It's about contextualizing it. And I think as soon as students realize that it's not this thing that they have to do for marks, and has no connection, they're in, right? I think that's the buy-in where they see it, in terms of the trajectory of the course as well as in the art world.

Dan Reeve: Okay. If you work with a community partner, does your preparation differ?...Like an art gallery-

Nancy Yakimoski: Yeah.

Dan Reeve: Or someone else?

Nancy Yakimoski: If I bring in ... If I get my art history students or visual culture students to go to an art gallery, it's usually emails like, "We're coming down." I don't have a lot of experience with working with outside partners. Yeah. Usually it's just kind of within the college. Yeah. And I mean, with... working within the college has its own set of, I won't say "challenges" but I mean it's like... how do you book a room? Who do you talk to if you want money? Right. Yeah, so different. So no to the community partners [crosstalk 00:30:37]-

Dan Reeve: Okay. And then that's ... Every instructor does different things. You can't do all things. Let's ... We're going to talk a little bit about monitoring now and there's a reflective piece to this. We recognize that sometimes an activity doesn't go as planned, sometimes that's for better and sometimes that's for worse. How do you assess your students' experience in light of... you've talked about learning outcomes, like you reverse engineer. So something doesn't go the way you'd hoped, you'd set up these learning outcomes. How do you ... What's your process on recognizing that and then assessing it?

Nancy Yakimoski: Right. Within my courses it is like... "Did the majority get it?" Because I mean, the first thing I always think of like... "Okay. What did I do wrong?" Right. Because I would like, "Oh, well if they're not learning or if it went sideways, there must be something that I did." Then it's like... "Okay, well did they have enough ..." Then I sort of go through my system. "Okay. Did they have enough time to prepare? Were the questions readable, where they ..." And I'll ask them,



Nancy Yakimoski: I thought it would go this way and it kind of went this way and ... I mean sometimes it goes this way and so it's like: "Oh that's an interesting ... That's interesting. So why did you guys go that way? Because I thought there were ..." And it's like-

Dan Reeve: 90 degrees askew from where you thought it would go.

Nancy Yakimoski: Yeah. Right. And I mean, I'm their parents' generation, so we're thinking way different. So...

Dan Reeve: Yes.

Nancy Yakimoski: Yeah.

Dan Reeve: What reset tools do you have if things are starting to go askew in a way that you don't like?

Nancy Yakimoski:

done the reading, some of them don't want to talk about. What I did like last semester was, I just asked a question about Facebook because ultimately it's about self-representation. What's something that they know that they could talk about that isn't really connected to what I'm talking about, but is? It's more like a contemporary equivalent. And then I'll kind of bring it back to, "Well, this is what's happening in 19th century, it's not so different from what we're doing today with just how we represent it." But I usually ask that kind of that odd ball question because it kind of brings them back, and it redirects them, because sometimes ... Yeah, it's just it's the way things are posed.

Nancy Yakimoski:

I think... because there's so many different kinds of learners and maybe, and in one single of the visual arts department or students that come through our program. But I mean, some of these kids were in art because they couldn't get math or ... And I think that was an easy way. It's like, "Oh, you're not good in the sciences, and you seem to be drawing and you are interested in art, so we'll just shoot you over there." We've got students that come with a wide variety of different skill sets, and sort of learning approaches. And so in terms of how the more hands-on and the more different ways that they have to engage with something, that one of those ways is going to sort of take. And each assignment ... The students are different, every class they come in.

They're on their game, they're not on their game, they've done the assignment, they've kind of done like... So, you have to sort of be kind of prepared for everything. But I think when you offer or you structure your courses in a way that they have to be responsible for it, they don't kind of sit there and take it in ... And it's funny how many students register for my courses, and then they learn that it's a flipped classroom approach, and that they basically have homework to do before they come to class, they're out, right? And right away you get those people that they can't deal with that. But if they have to read, and think, and answer questions, and tie it to their own art practice, and they get hands-on things, they walk away knowing. Because I mean it would be easy for them just to... Ultimately we could just record all our demos. Like here is how to use the DSLR camera, and have a YouTube clip and they sit there and they watch it for an hour.

But they can't stop and ask a question or they can't come up and say, like "look through the lens" And the way that we ... Like in my lens class right now, when Mike is showing them how to use a DSLR camera, he's got everything monitor. So he's actually ... And it's live feed, right? It's like, "Okay, if I switch this here, you can see it's a yellow cast because now this and this." It's on the spot learning and showing the 'whys' and the 'how comes' instead of just like, "Do it this way." And as soon as they understand, "Oh, I didn't... It's a tungsten light and I've got it set on daylight, no wonder it's like this weird cast." The more ways you can come at teaching besides book learning, and research that gives them a ... It's a more holistic way to teach.

And at least ... I mean, that's the way I learned, right? It's like I need to see it, I need to write it, I need to think about it, I need to apply it. And so when it comes inside that package of learning, where they're engaged and they have to be engaged, and then they have to apply it. And they know they have to apply so they better listen in the demo, then they walk away, I think, richer students. And I know when we talk to ...



Nancy Yakimoski: Yeah. Just you have to be kind of fearless. Which is easy to say after you've been teaching for a long time, but I wouldn't have been fearless in the first five years teaching here. Because it's like, "Well, what will the dean say?" But we've also had deans... so it's like, "Go for it. Like try what's the worst that can happen?" The culture at the college is such, within arts and science at least, it's like, "Try it."

Dan Reeve: Okay. Great. Well thank you very much for your ideas and t.712.4c 0.012T0.01510.0a 0 TdiDC -0.0