

# Visual Arts Consortium Foundations Program AY 15-16 Assessment Report

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## SUMMARY

The Foundations program was developed as an interdisciplinary program that would expose Art, Design, Fashion, and Photography majors to a variety of foundational concepts and skills and to aid students in choosing and switching majors within their first year. Foundations consolidated and reduced the number of credit hours for students across the departments and renewed focus on interdisciplinary collaboration among departments, as encouraged by the College's Strategic Plan.

Making 1 and 2 were developed to facilitate student experimentation with concepts and process. Introduction to Visual Culture focuses on visual literacy and critical thinking. Foundations Skills Courses utilize 5-week sessions to introduce students to a variety of fields and practices. The Foundations program delivered 4,534 credits to 895 unique students in AY15-16.

During AY 15-16, 11 total assessments were completed across seven Foundations courses. Assessment methods included student evaluations and panel reviews of student work. This report summarizes the assessment results and recommendations for six of the assessments, including Making 1 and 2, Introduction to Visual Culture, Color Theory, and Illustrator.

Student evaluations were generally positive, with select exceptions. In relation to individual courses, assessments suggest the following:

*Making 1:* Class sizes and approaches to team teaching should be reconsidered. Students need more explanation of the purposes of the course.

*Making 2:* A significant number of students fell below expectations in several criteria. In addition to considering how the assignment is approached in class, attention is needed to revise collection process and assessment criteria, in addition to including a type of self-reflection document for students.

*Intro to Visual Culture:* Average scores met expectations, yet a significant number of students fell below expectations in certain categories. The purposes of the course might be better explained and reinforced for students.

*Skills Courses:* Color Theory students met or exceeded expectations. Illustrator scores fell below expectations. Grading rubric and assessment process for Illustrator should be reviewed for more clear criteria.

While panel assessments of student work demonstrate that students' abilities and understanding of the materials are, for the majority, meeting or exceeding expectations, and student evaluations express interest in and appreciation for Foundations, recommendations include re-evaluating class sizes and team-teaching in Making 1 and 2. Additionally, faculty would benefit from more support in assessment definitions, methods, and resources for archiving data.

## ASSESSMENT

### Making 1

#### *Assessment: Student Evaluations*

Prominent responses from the student evaluations are a). the class size is too big and b). there remains some skepticism regarding the purpose of the class.

#### *Moving Forward*

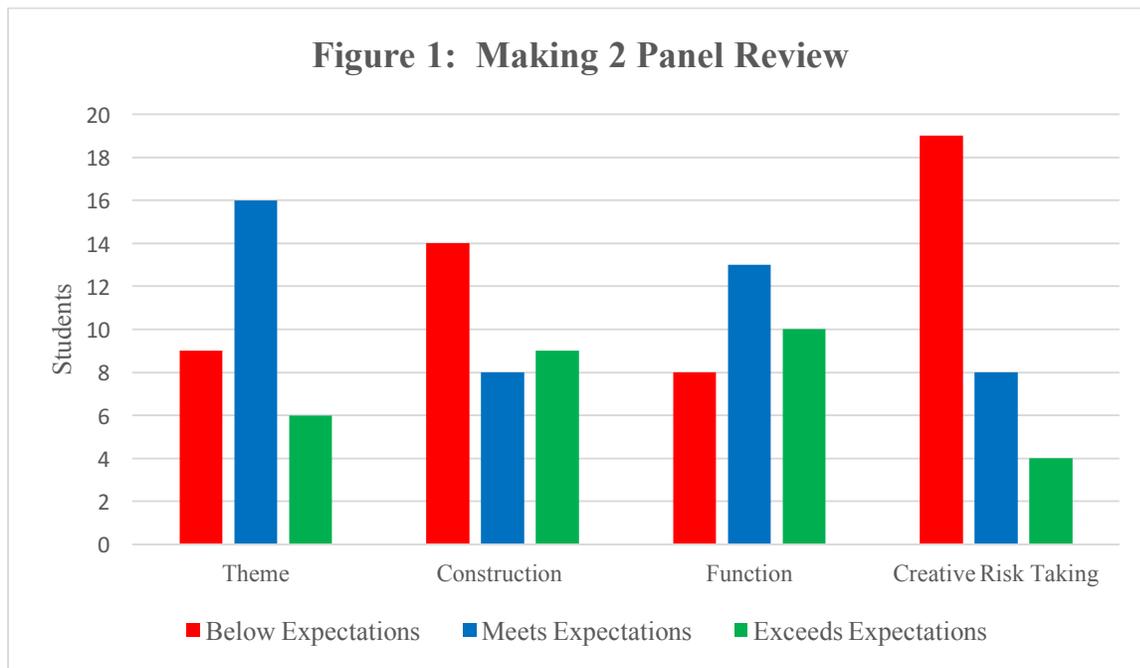
1). Determine the best ways for faculty to explain the course to students and educate faculty in building in ways to reinforce for students why they're taking Making 1 and 2.

2). Examine class sizes, and consider the possibility of splitting the cohort so that students are working with a single instructor.

### Making 2

#### *Assessment: Panel Review (Spring 2016)*

The garment projects (capstone assignment) of 31 randomly-selected students were evaluated by participating faculty members from 4 departments in 9 groups. Faculty created a rubric based on four criteria: Theme, Construction, Function, and Creative Risk Taking. See Figure 1 (below) for results. See Appendix A for full data.



Assessing faculty were impressed with the overall quality and diversity of the projects. However, a significant number of students were below expectations in three of the four criteria, especially Construction and Creative Risk Taking.

### *Moving Forward*

- 1). Assessing faculty explained that they need process materials and specific details of individual garments for a more detailed and thoughtful assessment.
- 2). Since research is a primary focus of the curriculum, more documentation of research around the “problem” or theme (i.e. constraint) is needed for assessment.
- 3). More self-reflective student writing: intent-based writing, a portfolio document, or a video reflection in a "reality television" style camera chat.
- 4). Assessment criteria needs to be reviewed, particularly the ability to judge “Creative Risk Taking.”

### **Introduction to Visual Culture**

#### *Assessment 1: Student Evaluations*

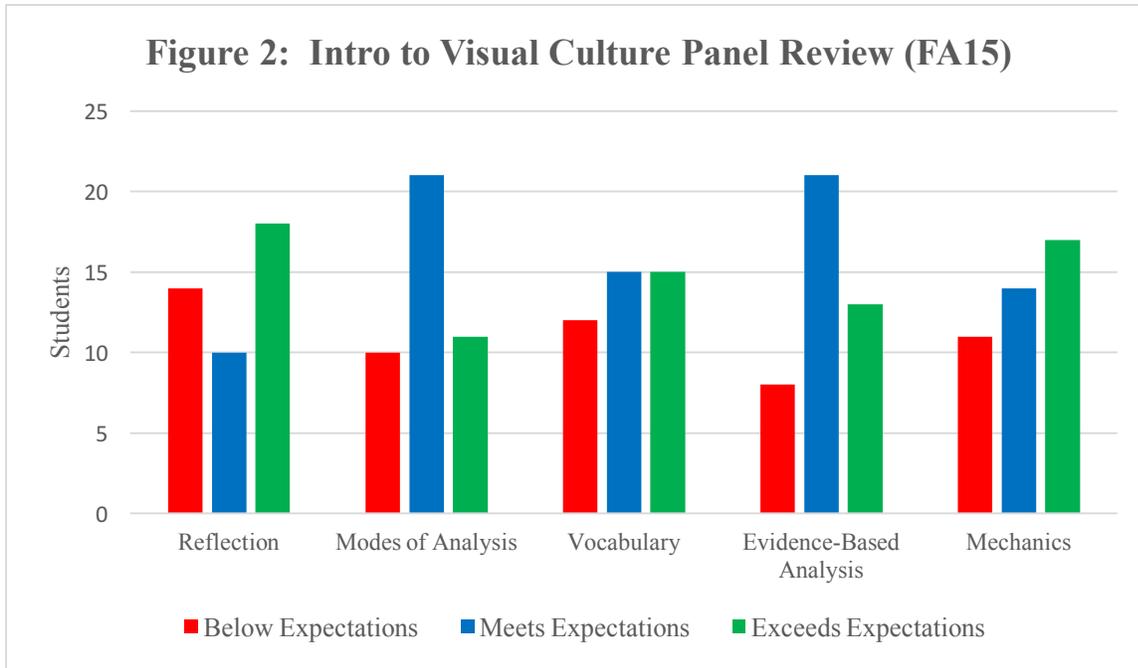
Overall, Intro to Visual Culture continues to be a well-received course. The numbers for the first evaluative section “Student Motivation & Interest, The Course,” however, are below college average across the board. “The Instructor” received generally better responses.

Evaluations suggest that students a). liked exposure to a global understanding of visual culture b). enjoyed field trips, and c). understand the importance of analytical skills.

Criticisms include a). late night sections suffer from lower student evaluations b). the number of assignments c). a lack of updates with deadlines and d). students who do not understand the significance of the Collections Project and its connection to the course.

#### *Assessment 2: Panel Review (Fall 2015)*

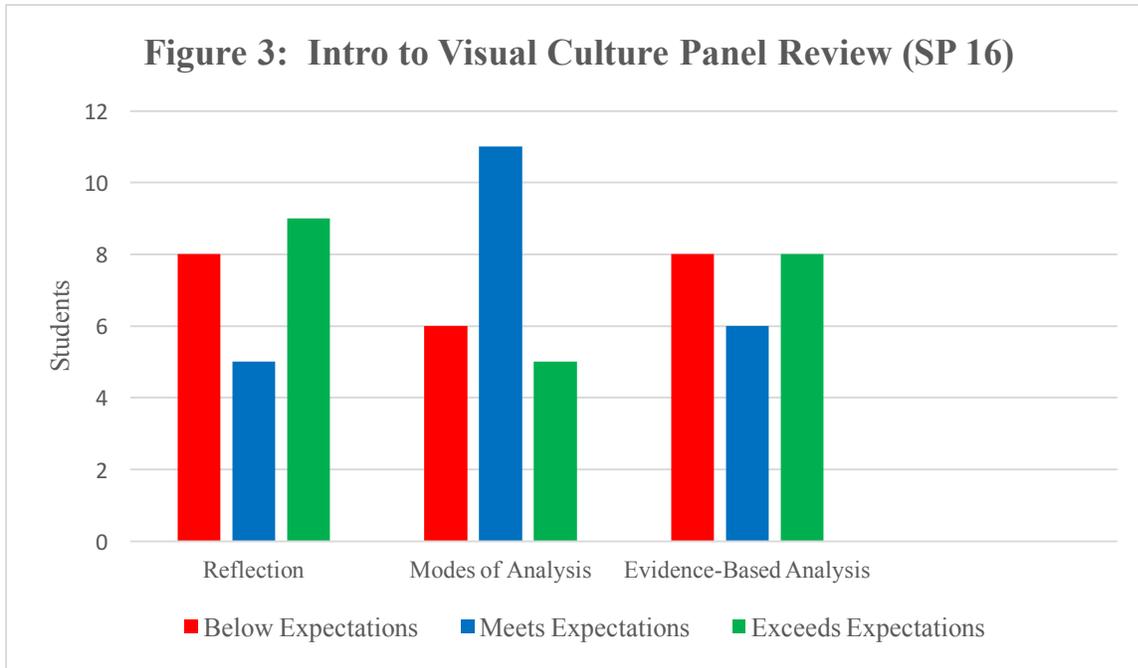
The final phase of a semester long project (Collections Project Part IV-Final Synthesis) of 42 randomly selected students from across all 14 sections of Intro to Visual Culture was assessed by 9 faculty and staff members, working in pairs. The team had created a rubric of five criteria for the project: Conscious Reflection; Connection Among Modes of Analysis; Use of Vocabulary, Evidence-Based Analysis; and Mechanics, Source, Use, and Identification. See Figure 2 (below) for results. See Appendix B for full data.



Team members were impressed with the overall quality and diversity of the projects. Students demonstrated their ability to think critically about objects, spaces, and images. They were confident in their formal and contextual analyses. Many learned and adopted key interpretive strategies and vocabulary terms specific to visual culture. They also self-reported a deeper awareness of visual culture around them. However, there seemed to be an inordinate number of students who were “Below Expectations,” specifically for “Reflection,” “Vocabulary,” and “Mechanics.”

*Assessment 3: Panel Project Review (Spring 2016)*

The final phase of a semester long project (Collections Project Part IV-Final Synthesis) of 22 randomly selected students was assessed by 8 faculty, working in groups. For issues of time and practicality, the team revised the FA15 assessment rubric to three criteria. See Figure 3 (below) for results. See Appendix C for full data.



Though team members were impressed with the overall projects, the number of “Below Expectations” ratings, especially for “Evidence-Based Analysis,” is notable. This criterion is especially noteworthy given the focus of the course, which involves building sustained analysis.

#### *Moving Forward*

- 1). Late night sections should utilize alternative spaces such as Chicago Public Library for field trips.
- 2). Intro to Visual Culture faculty members should clarify and remind students of the connections between different compartments of the course.
- 3). The syllabus, course page, and other platforms should clearly indicate the deadlines for assignments. Students should not be assigned too many projects at once.
- 4). More class time should be allotted for clarification and application of project goals.
- 5). Based on a new set of assessment criteria, Intro to Visual Culture course learning objectives, lesson plans, and Collections Project Instructions need to be adjusted.

#### **Foundations Skills Courses**

##### *Assessment 1: Student Evaluations*

In general, Skills Courses course evaluations were positive.

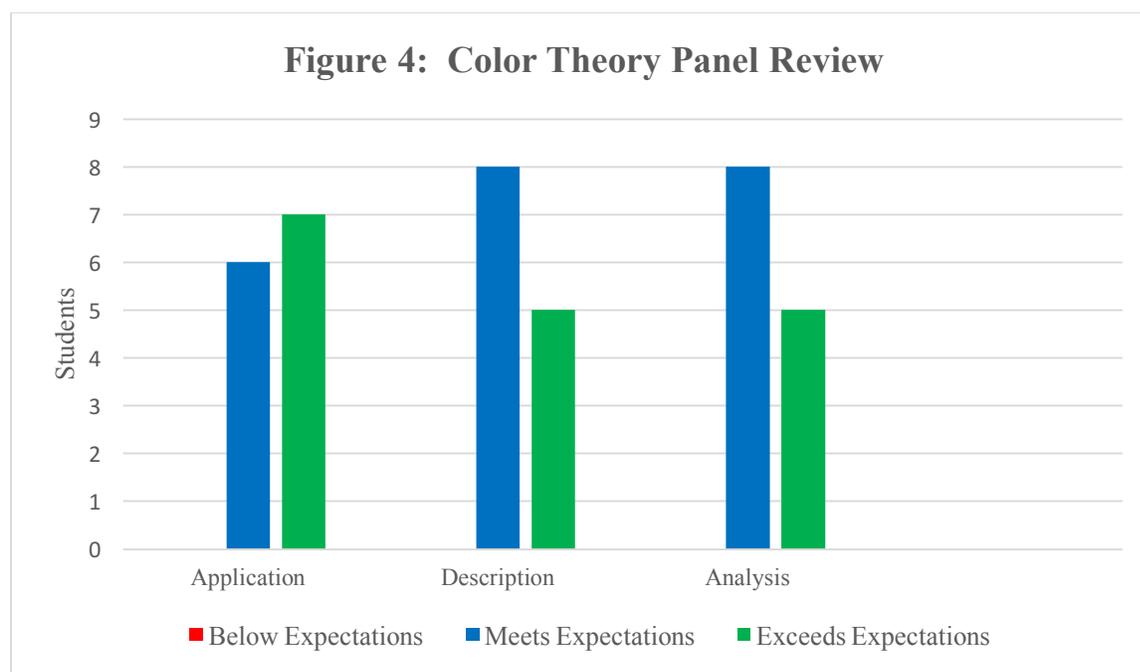
Recurring criticisms included a). not enough time to learn a skill in a 5-week course b). too much packed into five weeks, and c). too much time spent on critiques

### *Moving Forward for all Skills Courses*

1). Continue to hold meetings, teaching commons, and assessments where Skills Course faculty are involved, which creates community and reinforces protocol surrounding the courses.

### *Assessment 2: Color Theory Panel Review (Spring 2016)*

13 randomly selected samples of the Bezold Effect of Color Theory project from the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 sections were assessed by roughly 15 faculty members, working in groups of three and four. The three criteria included 1). Application: Hue, Saturation, and Tonal Quality of the Bezold Effect 2). Description: Description of the Bezold Effect, Noting the Impact of One Color on Another and 3). Analysis: Complementary Colors and Their Spatial Impact. See Figure 4 (below) for results. See Appendix D for full assessment data.



### *Assessment 2: Color Theory Recommendations*

1). Course learning objectives need to be further honed, considering means of assessment, and need to be better integrated with program goals.

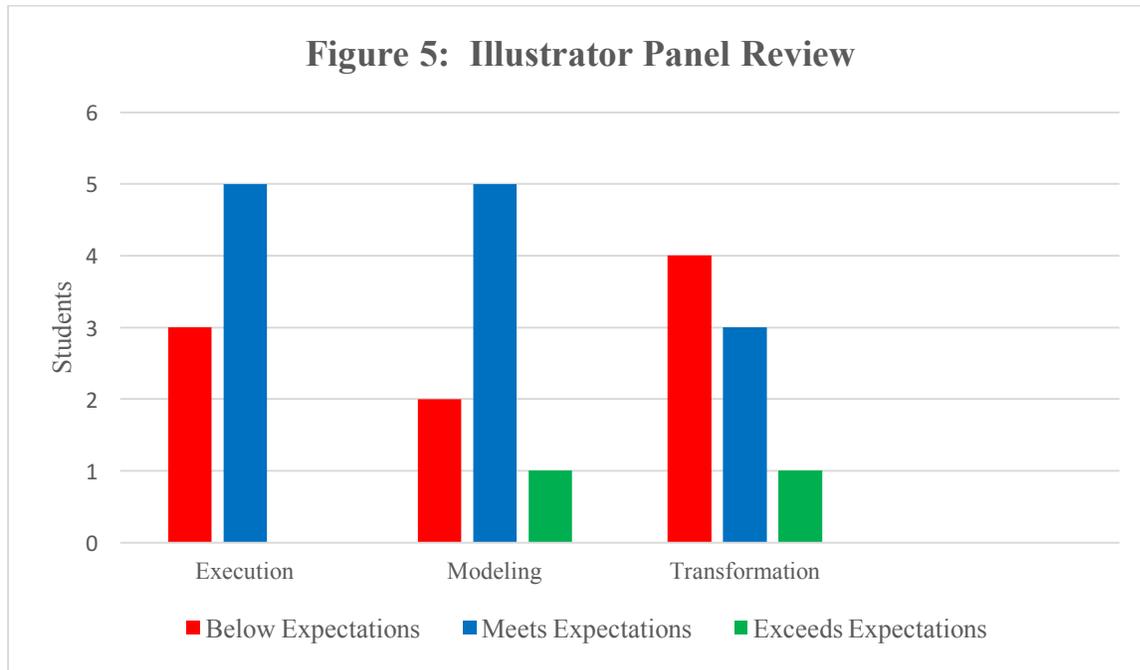
2). Based on this new set of criteria, the grading rubric will be modified.

### *Assessment 3: Illustrator Panel Review (Spring 2016)<sup>1</sup>*

8 randomly selected student samples of Project 1 (reproduce a part or product using pen tool and gradients) were evaluated by faculty members, working in groups of five, who created a rubric of three criteria. Criteria included: 1). Execution: Student Built Form and Shape Through

<sup>1</sup> The coordinators write that they “were a little rushed to establish criteria and as a result, perhaps the assessment was a bit skewed. The last criterion, Transformation, may have been more of a bonus than something that was expected from most student work from this 5-week course.” Sarah Faust and Amy Mooney, “22-1970 Illustrator Assessment Report-Spring 2016,” in *Final Report AY 2015-16 Visual Arts Consortium Foundations Program*: 72.

Differing Line Quality 2). Modeling: Student Built Form and Shape Through Varying Tonal Quality and 3). Transformation: Student Altered the Original Photograph to Best Demonstrate the Illustrator. See Figure 5 (below) for results. See Appendix E for full assessment data.



*Assessment 3: Recommendations*

- 1). The learning objectives for the course need to be further honed and aligned with the program outcomes.
- 2). Students must somehow be more motivated to submit all of their work on Moodle and to submit complete work, in this case, including the steps to show process.
- 3). Consider requiring the students to also submit a photograph of the object with their work, as they did with the self-portraits.
- 4). Assessment criteria should be revised as the SP16 criteria (above) was not as helpful as it could be.

## MOVING FORWARD

1. Regarding assessment strategies, the following should be considered
  - a. Utilizing larger sample sizes (at least 20 students) for greater accuracy.
  - b. Assessment rubrics should be revised to include a wider scale than 1, 2, and 3. Adopting a scale that goes from 1 to 5 could provide more instructive data.
  - c. Using CAM, Moodle, or another venue to archive assessment data could help to streamline the process and provide templates and guides for those new to assessment.
2. The faculty-to-student ratio for the Making courses should be reconsidered. The team-teaching aspect may need further consideration as the success of the teams varied widely.
3. Too often, students perceived that the curriculum had little to do with their chosen major, particularly Graphic Design and Fashion Studies. The purposes of Foundations in relation to students' academic and professional careers need to be consistently taught and reinforced in each course (through syllabi, lessons, assignments, and instruction) so that students understand the larger goals and how specific assignments are intended to guide their development.

Assigning (either in or out-of-class) reflective writing or other reflective documents could help to a). provide another means of assessment and b). encourage students to articulate how the work they're doing seeks to meet the goals of the program.

## Appendix A: Making 2 Panel Review Data

### Theme

Exceeds Expectations	5 students (16%)
Between Exceeds and Meets	1 student (3%)
Meets Expectations	16 students (52%)
Below Expectations	9 students (29%)

Average: 1.89

### Construction. Average

Exceeds Expectations	7 students (24%)
Between Exceeds and Meets	2 students (7%)
Meets Expectations	8 students (28%)
Between Meets and Below	3 students (3%)
Below Expectations	11 students (38%)

Average: 1.88

### Function

Exceeds Expectations	8 students (26%)
Between Exceeds and Meets	2 students (6%)
Meets Expectations	13 students (42%)
Below Expectations	8 students (26%)

Average: 2.03

### Creative Risk Taking

Exceeds Expectations	2 students (6%)
Between Exceeds and Meets	2 students (6%)
Meets Expectations	8 students (26%)
Between Meets and Below	1 student (3%)
Below Expectations	18 students (58%)

Average: 1.48

Average Student Rating of all Four Criteria: 1.82

## Appendix B: Intro to Visual Culture Panel Review (FA15) Data

### Fall 15

#### Conscious Reflection (Reflectiveness)

Exceeds Expectations	18 students (43%)
Meets Expectations	10 students (24%)
Below Expectations	14 students (33%)

Average: 2.1

#### Connection Among Modes of Analysis (Formal, Contextual, and Interpretative)

Exceeds Expectations	11 students (26%)
Meets Expectations	21 students (50%)
Below Expectations	10 students (24%)

Average: 2.0

#### Use of Vocabulary (Accurate, Purposeful, Demonstrates Comprehension)

Exceeds Expectations	15 students (36%)
Meets Expectations	15 students (36%)
Below Expectations	12 students (28%)

Average: 2.1

#### Evidence-Based Analysis (Accurate Summaries of Others, Ideas, Evidence of Argument, Emerging Line of Inquiry)

Exceeds Expectations	13 students (31%)
Meets Expectations	21 students (50%)
Below Expectations	8 students (19%)

Average: 2.1

#### Mechanics, Source Use, and Identification

Exceeds Expectations	17 students (41%)
Meets Expectations	14 students (33%)
Below Expectations	11 students (26%)

Average: 2.1

Average Student Rating of All Five Criteria: 2.1

**Spring 16**

## Conscious Reflection

Exceeds Expectations	9 students (41%)
Meets Expectations	5 students (23%)
Below Expectations	8 students (36%)

Average: 2.05

## Connections Among Modes of Analysis

Exceeds Expectations	5 students (23%)
Meets Expectations	11 students (50%)
Below Expectations	6 students (27%)

Average: 1.96

## Evidence-Based Analysis

Exceeds Expectations	8 students (36%)
Meets Expectations	6 students (27%)
Below Expectations	8 students (36%)

Average: 1.96

Average Student Rating in of All Three Criteria: 1.99

### Appendix C: Color Theory Panel Review Data

Application: Hue, Saturation, and Tonal Quality of the Bezold Effect.

Exceeds Expectations	7 students (54%)
Meets Expectations	6 students (46%)
Below Expectations	0 students

Average: 2.53

Description: Description of the Bezold Effect, Noting the Impact of One Color on Another.

Exceeds Expectation	5 students (38%)
Meets Expectations	8 students (62%)
Below Expectations	0 students

Average: 2.38

Analysis: Complementary Colors and Their Spatial Impact

Exceeds Expectations	5 students (38%)
Meets Expectations	8 students (62%)
Below Expectations	0 students

Average: 2.83

Student Average of All Three Criteria: 2.58

## Appendix D: Illustrator Panel Review Data

Execution: Student Built Form and Shape Through Differing Line Quality

Exceeds Expectations	0 students
Meets Expectations	5 students (63%)
Below Expectations	3 students (37%)

Average: 1.6

Modeling: Student Built Form and Shape Through Varying Tonal Quality

Exceeds Expectations	1 student (12%)
Meets Expectations	5 students (63%)
Below Expectations	2 students (25%)

Average: 2.0

Transformation: Student Altered the Original Photograph to Best Demonstrate the Illustrator Tool.

Exceeds Expectations	1 student (12%)
Meets Expectations	3 students (38%)
Below Expectations	4 students (50%)

Average: 1.6

Student Average of All Three Criteria: 1.73