Art and Science offer distinct but complementary approaches to knowledge. Artistic approaches tend to be synthetic, and can lead to insights about function and the holistic integration of parts. Scientific approaches tend to be analytic, and bring logically precise methods allowing for a systematic understanding of phenomena. When combined they can bring a deeper and more integrated understanding of complex subjects. In higher education most students must choose to study either art or science. In most universities today, it is rare for artistic and scientific approaches to both occur within a single course. In this study, we introduced artistic assignments in social science courses and measured their value and impact on student learning, as assessed by the students themselves.

### Artistic Video Interview Project
In an Adult Development course, students were asked to produce a video interview of someone over age 50, reflecting on the themes in their lives. Videos were required to have music, photos and other creative elements. Instruction was provided in basic technical skills of lighting, framing and audio. Final videos were graded in part on these elements, but primarily on interview quality and effort. Many students interviewed parents or grandparents, but some chose teachers, friends, neighbors, and a few strangers or casual acquaintances.

### Group Skits of Historic Characters
In a History and Systems of Psychology course, students created skits of historic characters interacting in a creative context that conveyed their seminal ideas, as well as personality. Skits were lengthy – 20-30 minutes long, and were followed by each student individually describing their character and his or her main ideas and why they portrayed them the way they did. An annotated bibliography of the sources used to develop their characters and dialogue was also required.

### Instructional Drawing in a Psychology and Art course
In this study, Betty Edwards’ now classic book Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, 4th ed. was used for three quarters in a course entitled Psychology and the Arts. Students read each chapter and worked through all of the exercises in the book, either as in-class activities or homework. The second hour of the two hour classes was devoted to this content. A supply pack of basic drawing tools was available for purchase, pre-assembled by the University Bookstore in Tacoma. The pre- and post-instruction self portraits (shown here) were a part of the learning process. Student sketchbooks were graded for effort and completion, not for artistic quality or skill level.

### Results
- 25 of 28 students surveyed found the video project valuable to their learning.
- Enhanced learning of the principles of adult development by applying them to the life stories they viewed.
- Valuable video production skills learned as a byproduct.
- Students forged closer relationships to the people they interviewed.
- Students felt enriched by the examples of adult development they viewed.
- Five of the 28 students thought too much time was used viewing videos, and would have preferred more lecture time.

### Results
- Over 78% of students found the drawing assignment to be the most beneficial part of the course to their learning.
- Students reported the “hands-on” work of drawing in the course challenging but rewarding, and the word “refreshing” was often used.
- Students directly experienced the shift from left to right-hemisphere functioning through the transition from lecture to drawing.
- Students appreciated that the artistic merits of their drawing were not assessed, only the effort applied and completion of their sketchbooks.
- Only one student in 80 reported not finding the drawing part of the course beneficial.

### Conclusions
It is clear that artistic assignments are beneficial to student learning in the social sciences in a number of ways. First and foremost, they provide an alternative modality for understanding and integrating course content. Second, they offer students a “refreshing” contrast to the lectures and discussion that characterize much of university class time. And third, they provide another layer of learning, often quite new and challenging, bringing a more well rounded skill-set to students. The one caveat we discovered in piloting these techniques was that the evaluation and grading of artistic assignments in non-art classes must be carefully delineated to students, and should be focused on student effort rather than artistic merit in order to be fair and encouraging to students.

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