



**Assessment of Art Criticism Competency Needs of Students in  
the Art and Design Department of Guangxi University  
of Foreign Languages**

**การประเมินความต้องการจำเป็นด้านสมรรถนะการวิจารณ์งานศิลปะ  
ในภาควิชาศิลปะและการออกแบบ มหาวิทยาลัยภาษาต่างประเทศ กวางสี**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this article was to explore the views of students from the Art Design Department of Guangxi University of Foreign Languages on art criticism theory. Art criticism is one of the four fundamental disciplines of discipline-based art education. It refers to a systematic and organized approach to studying artworks through viewing and discussing art, involving the description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment of artworks. Through the studio practice of classroom art criticism activities, teachers in the design department organize students to interpret and evaluate their own art works, integrating art criticism theory with studio practice. This study uses 140 first-year graphic design students from GUFL as the experimental sample and employs Feldman's art criticism model to conduct critical analysis of artworks. The collected experimental data is analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistical techniques. Scores are considered in the form of average scores and frequencies to determine students' performance in critical thinking skills. The Pearson correlation coefficient is used to calculate the correlation between students' studio practice and their scores in art critical thinking ability. Through brainstorming, questionnaires, and in-class tests, the current level of art criticism ability of 140 students is investigated. The research result found that: By explaining the importance of art criticism ability, students become aware of its significance, and a questionnaire is used to survey

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the expectations of 140 students regarding art criticism ability. By analyzing the current level and expectations of students' art criticism ability, the gap between them is identified. The findings of this study suggest that articulating the significance of art criticism competencies enables students to comprehensively recognize their importance. Furthermore, an analysis of the current status and contextual conditions of art criticism skills facilitates the derivation of informed conclusions. This approach provides a systematic framework for assessing students' needs, thereby enabling the development of effective models or strategies for art evaluation within art and design education programs.

**Keywords:** Art Criticism Competency, Needs Assessment, Guangxi University of Foreign Languages

### บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจมุมมองของนักศึกษา ภาควิชาการออกแบบศิลปะ มหาวิทยาลัยภาษาต่างประเทศกวังสี (GUFL) ตามทฤษฎีวิจักษณ์ศิลปะ ซึ่งการวิจารณ์ศิลปะเป็นหนึ่งในสาขาวิชาพื้นฐานการศึกษาศิลปะ และมีแนวทางการจัดการศึกษาผลงานศิลปะอย่างเป็นระบบผ่านวิธีการชม การอภิปราย การอธิบาย การวิเคราะห์ การตีความ และการตัดสินผลงานศิลปะจากการลงมือปฏิบัติการวิจารณ์ในห้องเรียน อาจารย์จัดให้นักศึกษาตีความและประเมินผลงานศิลปะของตนเองโดยบูรณาการทฤษฎีการวิจารณ์ศิลปะร่วมกับการปฏิบัติในห้องเรียน กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัย คือ นักศึกษาสาขาวิชาการออกแบบศิลปะ ชั้นปีที่ 1 ของมหาวิทยาลัยภาษาต่างประเทศกวังสี จำนวน 140 คน โดยใช้แบบจำลองการวิจารณ์ศิลปะของ Feldman ในการวิเคราะห์เชิงวิจารณ์ผลงานศิลปะ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล คือ การระดมความคิดเห็น แบบสอบถาม การทดสอบในชั้นเรียน วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา ค่าเฉลี่ย ความถี่ และค่าสัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์เพียร์สัน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า จากการอธิบายเกี่ยวกับความสำคัญของความสามารถในการวิจารณ์ศิลปะ ทำให้นักศึกษาตระหนักถึงความสำคัญของสมรรถนะการวิจารณ์ศิลปะ และจากผลการวิเคราะห์สภาพปัจจุบันและสภาพที่พึงประสงค์ต่อความสามารถในการวิจารณ์ศิลปะ ทำให้สามารถประเมินความต้องการจำเป็น (Needs Assessment) ของนักศึกษาได้อย่างเป็นระบบ โดยข้อมูลที่ได้สามารถนำไปใช้เป็นแนวทางในการกำหนดรูปแบบหรือกลยุทธ์ในการพัฒนาสมรรถนะด้านการวิจารณ์ศิลปะให้กับนักศึกษาในภาควิชาศิลปะและการออกแบบได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

**คำสำคัญ:** สมรรถนะการวิจารณ์งานศิลปะ, การประเมินความต้องการจำเป็น, มหาวิทยาลัยภาษาต่างประเทศ กวางสี



## 1. Introduction

According to Noor and Samsudin (2016), Art criticism is one of the four foundational disciplines of Discipline-based Art Education (DBAE). Art criticism is an essential component of the curriculum, although its application is sometimes undermined by students and teachers (Eshun & Adu-Agyem, 2010). Design students often lack formal training in art criticism, including the appropriate attitudes, analytical approaches, and use of disciplinary language when evaluating creative work. However, students frequently lack exposure to formal guidance regarding the practices recommended by Estioko, Forrest, and Amos (2006).

According to Elkins (2001), "there are also no established guidelines for classroom criticism". Furthermore, it is essential to elaborate on the absence of a structured model for art criticism in educational settings, lacking both historical context and systematic instruction. It is crucial for critics to address these gaps to facilitate effective critique within the studio environment. Therefore, it is important for students to truly understand criticism and have the right perspective, mind-set and attitude towards criticism to avoid misunderstandings and confusion between students and teachers in the classroom. This emphasizes the need to foster deeper understanding and promote critical awareness in the classroom. Thus, open formal discussions and the exchange of ideas to help enrich each other, rather than demoralizing students and disappointing teachers dealing with criticism in the classroom (Graham, 2003).

Art criticism theory is an important professional activity often used by teachers in the design department, and it is one of the basic theories for students in the design department to learn the design course.

In a previous student survey of graphic design students at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), 92% of respondents ranked studio criticism as a "very important" part of their art/design education curriculum (the remaining 8% rated it as "important") (Estioko, Forrest, & Amos, 2006).

According to Boachie in a survey of the design department of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), the majority of students, about 80 percent, do not understand the lecturers, but cannot



go out and ask questions because they have difficulty getting further explanations and do not have the courage to ask questions and contribute (Boachie, 2015).

In current art education practice, "artistic knowledge" encompasses students' ability to address art-making challenges through both studio practice and critical knowledge. Proficient art students must demonstrate mastery and integration of these dual components-not only excelling in creating art but also articulating or writing about it effectively.

## **2. Objectives of the Research**

This study aims to investigate the current situations and desirable level of students' art criticism ability of students in GUFL Art Design Department.

## **3. Research Methodology**

This experimental study follows a standard format for one-shot case studies: statement of purpose, rationale for selected research design, sample, instruments, variables, and data analysis/interpretation (Creswell, 2011).

The study employed a sample of 140 ( $n = 140$ ) first-year students majoring in graphic design. A purposive sampling technique was used for participant selection (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). A one-shot case study design exposed this group to an intervention to assess treatment effects. As the research remains exploratory in nature, this sample was treated as a single case rather than a representative population for generalizing findings.

The methodology involved two primary activities organized through systematic data collection procedures. With assistance from two faculty instructors, the researcher successfully monitored and collected students' critical reviews of their studio work, following planned protocols. Student productions and written evaluations were assessed by five evaluators to mitigate potential grading bias.

A quantitative design was implemented to facilitate data interpretation. Descriptive statistics using frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores were calculated to determine student performance levels and



compare mean differences across influential factors. Pearson correlation coefficients identified simple predictive relationships between potential dimensions of art criticism and studio practice outcomes, with significance level set at  $\alpha = .05$ .

Following Subramaniam's (2016) adaptation of Bartel's framework, artwork was assessed using a 16-level scoring system aligned with four stages of art criticism: Description, Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment.

#### 4. Research Results

The findings of this research was divided into table 1-4 as follows:

**Table 1:** Survey result of Ability to describe works of art

X1	Current		Desirable		T-star	P-value (2-tailed)	PNI Modified
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
X1-1	1.86	.525	4.54	.542	-42.03	0.000	0.59
X1-2	1.70	.630	4.56	.552	-40.40	0.000	0.627
X1-3	1.53	.730	4.46	.580	-37.18	0.000	0.656
X1-4	1.66	.768	4.45	.527	-35.45	0.000	0.626

X1: Ability to describe works of art.

X1-1: Find important points in the works of art.

X1-2: The observation of works of art is objective.

X1-3: Describe the elements used in the artwork.

X1-4: Describe the theme of the artwork.

**Table 2:** Survey result of Ability to analyze works of art

X2	Current		Desirable		T-star	P-value (2-tailed)	PNI Modified
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
X2-1	1.88	.666	4.31	.624	-31.47	0.000	0.563
X2-2	1.54	.670	4.41	.610	-37.47	0.000	0.651
X2-3	1.56	.732	4.49	.530	-38.35	0.000	0.652
X2-4	1.39	.716	4.44	.553	-39.92	0.000	0.687

X2: Ability to analyze works of art



X2-1: Analyze how the work is constructed or planned.

X2-2: Find connections between elements in art work.

X2-3: Analyze key points in the work (specific setting, characters).

X2-4: Analyze the relationship between theme and character.

**Table 3:** Survey result of Ability to interpret works of art

X3	Current		Desirable		T-star	P-value (2-tailed)	PNI Modified
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
X3-1	1.49	.730	4.47	.555	-38.45	0.000	0.667
X3-2	1.51	.737	4.53	.593	-37.80	0.000	0.667
X3-3	1.44	.631	4.46	.593	-41.26	0.000	0.677
X3-4	1.22	.598	4.43	.577	-45.73	0.000	0.725

X3: Ability to interpret works of art

X3-1: Can feel the expressiveness of the work.

X3-2: Words can be used to describe the quality of the work (tragedy, ugliness, comedy).

X3-3: Recall similar experiences or resonances.

X3-4: The relationship and connection between this work and other works.

**Table 4:** Survey result of Ability to judge works of art

X4	Current		Desirable		T-star	P-value (2-tailed)	PNI Modified
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
X4-1	1.35	.675	4.40	.573	-40.72	0.000	0.693
X4-2	1.24	.587	4.56	.527	-49.85	0.000	0.728
X4-3	1.28	.634	4.44	.579	-43.59	0.000	0.712
X4-4	1.26	.603	4.50	.530	-47.79	0.000	0.72

X4: Ability to judge works of art

X4-1: State your opinion about the work.

X4-2: Judge success or failure by the details.

X4-3: Make a list of your own criteria to judge the work.

X4-4: Judge the originality of the work.



Table1 to table 4 shows the results of the gap analysis.

The survey results revealed an overall mean score of 1.5719 for art criticism competence among GUFL Art and Design students. At this stage, without systematic training in art criticism, students' competence scores ( $M = 1.5719$ ) fall within the "Very Low" level. This indicates that the majority of students lack foundational knowledge and skills in art criticism.

Among the survey items, two questions yielded slightly higher mean scores:

X1-1: Find important points in the works of art. ( $M = 1.86$ )

X2-1: Analyze how the work is constructed or planned. ( $M = 1.88$ )

These scores exceed the overall mean ( $M = 1.5719$ ) and fall within the "Low" level (1.81–2.60), suggesting that students performed relatively better on these specific aspects of art criticism compared to other items in the questionnaire.

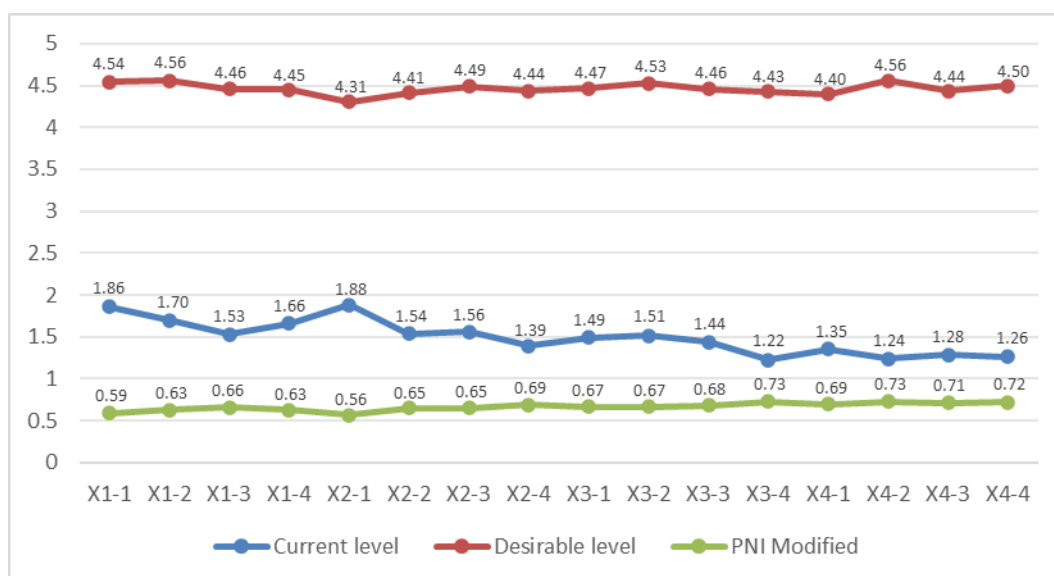
The survey results for students' desired level of art criticism competence yielded an overall mean score of 4.4656, indicating a "Very High" level of expectation. After receiving classroom instruction on art criticism, students recognized the importance of developing these skills. Among the items, the highest desired scores were:

X1-2: The observation of works of art is objective. ( $M = 4.56$ )

X4-2: Judge success or failure by the details. ( $M = 4.56$ )

In contrast, the lowest desired score was for X2-1: "Analyze the composition, light-dark relationships, and planning of this artwork." ( $M = 4.31$ ).

In this study, the PNI Modified was used to determine the extent of GUFL Art and Design students' needs in art criticism competence and to measure the gap between their current and ideal abilities. This analysis provides valuable insights for both expert and novice instructors, enabling them to design and refine teaching programs to address students' specific needs effectively.



**Figure 1:** Needs assessment from art criticism ability

As shown in Figure 1 and Tables 1-4, the Gap value PNI Modified is calculated based on the expected and current artistic criticism abilities of students from the GUFL Art Design Department.

Furthermore, within the framework of artistic criticism theory, the relationship between the views of expert teachers on enhancing the artistic criticism abilities of young teachers and students is statistically significant. Expert teachers should have the foresight and ability to motivate young teachers and students to jointly cultivate the sense of demand for artistic criticism abilities, and specify clear career or progress paths for them, including the ability to describe art works, analyze art works, interpret art works, and judge art works.

When expert teachers train young teachers, they should consider the support of this research in the field of art and determine how students can acquire or modify their art work analysis skills in the workshop courses when working with young teachers.

This study provides specific insights into how expert teachers can enhance the artistic criticism abilities of young teachers and students to communicate their research and the process of managing art work analysis. The two experimental classes of young teachers and students discussed the





issues of artistic criticism and provided examples to illustrate how the students improved their skills in analyzing art works.

The final design department students' current situation and expected gap is calculated based on the PNI Modified calculation results. Through the teaching models and experiments designed by expert teachers and young teachers to improve the gap value of the design department students, expert teachers have rich teaching experience and industry knowledge in artistic criticism theory, guiding the curriculum design of young teachers and students, ensuring that the teaching content is closely combined with industry needs. Provide personalized feedback to help young teachers and design department students break through the bottleneck of learning artistic criticism theory.

## 5. Discussion of Research Results

The research findings indicate that the current art criticism ability of students is generally at a low level ( $M = 1.5719$ ), which is consistent with the discovery of Eshun and Adu-Agyem (2010) that the application of art criticism in the curriculum is often overlooked by both students and teachers. This highlights the necessity of strengthening art criticism education.

However, students have high expectations for their art criticism ability ( $M = 4.4656$ ), which is consistent with the survey results of Estioko et al. (2006) at California State University, Sacramento, where 92% of students consider studio criticism as an "extremely important" course component. This indicates that students generally recognize the importance of art criticism ability.

The PNI Modified method adopted in this study effectively quantifies the demand gap of students in various aspects of art criticism ability. The results show that students have the most urgent needs in "judging the originality of works" (PNI Modified = 0.72) and "judging the success of works through details" (PNI Modified = 0.728). This quantitative analysis method provides precise guidance for educators and helps to formulate targeted teaching strategies.

One important finding of this study is that expert teachers play a key role in improving the art criticism ability of young teachers and students.



This is consistent with Graham's (2003) view that open formal discussions and exchanges help to enrich the classroom criticism experience. The study suggests achieving this goal through specific methods such as the cognitive apprenticeship theory model and problem analysis workshops.

However, this study also has some limitations. For example, the sample is limited to 140 students from one university, which may affect the universality of the results. Future research can consider expanding the sample size or conducting longitudinal studies to track the development of students' art criticism ability.

Nevertheless, this study provides valuable insights for art design education.

## **6. Suggestion**

### **6.1 Suggestions for implementation**

1. Establish a systematic curriculum framework for cultivating artistic criticism skills. Based on the gap between the current situation of students as revealed by research and their expectations, design targeted course modules, including training in aspects such as description, analysis, interpretation and judgment of artistic works, and gradually enhance students' artistic criticism skills in a step-by-step manner.

2. Adopt diversified teaching methods and assessment approaches. Combine project-based learning, problem analysis workshops and other methods to increase students' practical opportunities; at the same time, apply various assessment methods such as peer evaluation and expert review to comprehensively assess students' artistic criticism performance.

### **6.2 Suggestions for future research**

1. Conduct longitudinal tracking research to examine the influence of the cultivation model of art criticism ability on students' long-term development. A sample of some students can be selected to track the changes in their art criticism ability during their school years and within a certain period after graduation, and evaluate the sustainability of the teaching effect.



2. Expand the research scope and compare the current situation of art criticism abilities among students from different institutions and different majors. This can help identify more common problems and best practices, and provide a more comprehensive reference for the overall improvement of art criticism education.

## 7. Knowledge Received

The demand assessment of the art criticism ability in the Art Design Department of Guangxi University of Foreign Languages indicates that the expectations of the students in this department for the art criticism ability are at a very high level. Participants can list their own standards to X4-3 Make a list of your own criteria to judge the work. (PNI Modified =.712), X4-4 Judge the originality of the work. (PNI Modified =.72), X3-4 The relationship and connection between this work and other works. (PNI Modified =.725), X4-2 Judge success or failure by the details. (PNI Modified =.728), etc. In addition, under the framework of art criticism theory, the relationship between the views of expert teachers on improving the art criticism ability of young teachers and students and the statistical significance is significant. Expert teachers should have the foresight and ability to motivate young teachers and students to cultivate the demand for art criticism ability together, and specify clear career or progress paths for them, including the ability to describe art works, analyze art works, interpret art works, and judge art works.

This study provides specific insights on how expert teachers can improve the art criticism ability of young teachers and students to communicate their research and manage the process of analyzing art works. The two experimental classes of young teachers and students discussed the issues of art criticism and provided examples to illustrate how students improved their skills in analyzing art works by analyzing the results of art works (Subramaniam & Hanafi, 2016).

Based on the final design department students' current situation and the difference from expectations calculated by PNI Modified results, the gap between the expert teachers and young teachers in the teaching models and experiments to improve the Gap value of design department students is



set. Expert teachers have rich teaching experience and industry knowledge in art criticism theory, guiding the curriculum design of young teachers and students, ensuring that the teaching content is closely combined with industry needs. Young teachers are usually more familiar with new technologies and innovative teaching methods, and the age gap with students is not large, making it easy to integrate into students. Modern teaching tools such as network-assisted design tools are introduced (Al Mandalawi, 2024). Project-based learning and competition-driven models are implemented to stimulate students' motivation to learn art criticism theory.

Through specific models such as the cognitive apprenticeship theory model and problem analysis workshop, customized learning resources are provided according to the learning progress and needs of design department students. The effectiveness of the teaching model is verified through teaching experiments and continuously optimized: setting control groups and experimental groups, using traditional teaching methods and the new designed teaching model respectively. The teaching effect is evaluated by indicators such as work quality, course grades, and student feedback. Regularly analyze experimental data and adjust teaching strategies to further narrow the Gap value.

In conclusion, this study can effectively improve the performance of design department students, narrow the Gap value between the current situation and expectations, and ultimately achieve the educational goal of improving the art criticism ability of design department students.

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