Application

2017
Learning Outcomes Assessment Award of Distinction

Assessment Award of Distinction

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Academic Programs
Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
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Academic unit:
Floral Design and Marketing - Ohio State ATI

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Floral Design and Marketing - AAS

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Title

Using Assessment Data to Improve Floral Design Proficiency Through Enhanced Practicum Experiences in the Ohio State ATI Flower Shop

Collaborators

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Summary

The process of developing an assessment plan and reporting assessment data for the Floral Design and Marketing Associate of Applied Science program has illuminated opportunities to link courses through mutual goals and objectives. Over the past five years of the assessment process, though data has consistently demonstrated that students are achieving desired learning outcomes, data reporting has provided an opportunity to reflect on what and how we are assessing the development of our students, particularly in the area of artistic skill development. As a result, the laboratory activities centered on flower arranging have been reviewed and revised with considerable fine-tuning to strengthen floral design skill development beyond basic levels of proficiency. As a result, we have been able to make deeper connections of design concepts with hands-on skill development and provide enriched experiences in the development of artistic creativity.

Situation

The Floral Design and Marketing Associate of Applied Science program prepares students to enter the floral industry as designers and managers. Among the broad knowledge and skill development required to meet this goal, proficiency at designing arrangements for a multitude of routine customer flower needs is a core requirement. This is the focus of the introductory floral design course, Commercial Floral Design. In this course, the fundamental principles of artistic design are introduced. These principles become the basis for assessment of the flower arrangements designed during weekly hands-on labs in this and all advanced floral design courses in the program. The development of the assessment plan for the Floral

Situation (continued)

Design and Marketing program provided an opportunity to consider methods of achieving and enhancing core floral design skills. Though assessment measures have indicated from the beginning that students are achieving significantly above the minimum acceptable criteria in floral design skill development, assessment discussions among the faculty and staff who teach the hands-on floral design courses revealed the need to increase speed and independent creative thought among students.

Outcome

A flower shop simulation lab is used as an assessment measure at the end of the introductory Commercial Floral Design course to determine the students' ability to create prescribed arrangements within a limited timeframe at an acceptable industry quality standard. The results of this assessment have guided changes and additions to the courses that follow, particularly learning activities that build speed and improve design finesse. A series of three floral design practicum courses are utilized to give students enhanced hands-on floral design experiences in a campus flower shop setting. These practicums have been aligned with the core courses that precede them to provide enhanced levels of skill development. The first practicum, taken the semester following the foundational course in Commercial Floral Design, provides students with weekly design practice in the campus flower shop under the direction of advanced student mentors. The second practicum, during which there are no peer mentors, is taken following completion of a flower shop internship. The focus of this practicum is holiday and special event design. The third practicum focuses on flower shop management and places students in roles as mentors to beginning students.

Impact

The flower shop simulation assessment activity provides indicators of strengths and weaknesses of common floral design styles for which students must become proficient. The results of this assessment have been used to identify areas of emphasis for the practicum courses. Proficiency modules have been added to the practicum courses to address common areas of weakness through repeated practice until mastery is achieved. Modules include practice in skills such as bow-making, corsage-making, centerpiece design, and designing for specified price points. Practicum offers the flexibility to adjust the areas of emphasis each semester as guided by the results of the simulation assessment. Initial feedback from employers of interns mirrors our own observations and supporting assessment data which indicate the repeated practice through proficiency modules has enhanced student achievement. Another addition to the practicum experience is the use of weekly standing orders designed by students for campus offices in order to advance skills in custom designing arrangements for interior settings. To address the need for creative development, weekly themes have been introduced to the standing order assignments which challenge students to be innovative with designated color schemes, feature flowers, decorative accessories and the like. We have also increased the number of required weekly design assignments in the practicum courses in order to address the need for speed development. Comparing assessment data from this year to years past, we may have pushed this aspect too far. As we move forward, we will continue to use assessment data to determine the right balance between assignments that inspire productivity and creativity.

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Impact Statement