

How to create an assignment so students can demonstrate Lifelong Learning skills.

An instructor contacted the Office of Assessment and expressed a concern regarding the student learning outcome **Lifelong Learning**. This instructor wanted to know what an assignment for Lifelong Learning would look like. I have generated this document to provide one example of such an assignment. The document is formatted in a step by step enumerated manner. The Office of Assessment would welcome feedback from instructors who attempted to follow these steps to create a Lifelong Learning assignment. Here goes...

1. Google the phrase “emerging issues in (*your discipline goes here*)”.

Choose an issue or trend germane to your discipline. As a means of demonstrating how this might work, I googled the phrase “Emerging issues in art”. I found an issue of NEA ARTS entitled *Challenges in the ARTS in the 21st Century*. The first article (attached) highlights interesting challenges surrounding conservation of ephemeral artwork. One could choose *conservation of ephemeral artwork* as the central issue in an assignment allowing students to demonstrate Lifelong Learning skills.

2. Instructors create an assignment around the issue requiring students to demonstrate the five skills (i.e. aspects) outlined in the AAC&U Lifelong Learning rubric.

Every instructor should have a copy of the Lifelong Learning rubric in their *LiveText Docs* folder. The five skills of a lifelong learner include curiosity, initiative, independence, transfer, and reflection. Instructors should create the assignment in LiveText, link the Lifelong Learning rubric to the assignment, and share the assignment with students. If you don’t know how to do this, read how at...

http://www.uapb.edu/sites/www/Uploads/Assessment/NewFolder/Instructor%20Assignment%20creation_02.pdf

The assignment might be...

- a. Read the article by Rebecca Gross entitled, *The idea or the physicality? The question of conserving ephemeral artworks*. Find at least four other sources of information on conservation of ephemeral artwork. Sources might include YouTube videos (<https://www.youtube.com>), Apple Podcasts (Apple podcast app for phone or PC), Google scholar (<https://scholar.google.com>), websites, art journals, or other conventional discipline-specific sources of information.
- b. Include, at the end of the assignment, a list of all sources and an evaluation of the relative utility of each source in helping you understand the major issues and challenges of conserving ephemeral artwork. [Curiosity]
- c. Create a glossary of new words or terms (with definitions) encountered during the exploration of the subject. [Initiative]
- d. After reading the Rebecca Gross article and reviewing other sources of information, describe the major characteristics of ephemeral artwork conservation and explain the unique challenges surrounding the subject. [Independence]

- e. Outline how knowledge you already possessed regarding art and art conservation helped your comprehension of new knowledge encountered in your independent examination of conservation of ephemeral artwork. [Transfer]
 - f. Describe how your understanding or perspective on art and art conservation changed because of your readings and reviews? [Reflection]
3. Have students upload their assignment as a word document to LiveText.
 4. Instructors would open both the student's uploaded word document and the Lifelong Learning rubric on their desktop after logging in to their account at www.livetext.com.
 5. Instructors would complete the assessment by selecting the level of accomplishment for each aspect (Curiosity, Initiative, Independence, Transfer, Reflection) of the Lifelong Learning rubric. Be sure to click the green *Submit Assessment* button on the right side of the screen when each assessment is complete.

This step by step procedure should allow assessment of Lifelong Learning skills and create rubric-based data for our institution's consideration. For extra help completing a rubric based assessment in LiveText select the link below...

http://www.uapb.edu/sites/www/Uploads/Assessment/NewFolder/Instructor%20Rubric%20based%20assessment%20of%20Submitted%20Assignment_02.pdf

the idea

OR THE PHYSICALITY?

THE QUESTION OF CONSERVING EPHEMERAL ARTWORKS

BY REBECCA GROSS



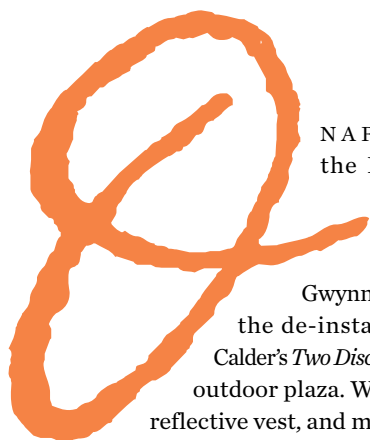
Ann Hamilton's *palimpsest*, 1989, at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City—the floors are beeswax, the walls pinned by aged newsprint, with a glass cabinet containing snails eating cabbage in the middle of the room.

PHOTO BY KATHRYN CLARK, COURTESY OF ANN HAMILTON STUDIO

Detail of Ann Hamilton's *palimpsest*.

PHOTO BY KATHRYN CLARK, COURTESY
OF ANN HAMILTON STUDIO





IN A RECENT MORNING AT the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, Chief Conservator

Gwynne Ryan was overseeing the de-installation of Alexander Calder's *Two Discs* (1965) in the museum's outdoor plaza. Wearing a hard hat and reflective vest, and monitoring a crane and crew of riggers, Ryan looked more like a construction foreman than a conservator. But considering other pieces have required her to learn how to preserve soap, chocolate, a floor made of beeswax, and to learn about the mating process of snails, perhaps a turn as a foreman is one of the less challenging roles Ryan has had to play. As Ryan put it, when it comes to conserving contemporary art, "You don't get bored."

In the past century or so, artists have increasingly moved beyond the canvas, exploring natural materials, industrial materials, and daily ephemera—none of which were necessarily designed with durability in mind. While this has expanded our collective notion of what art can be, it presents a continuous challenge for conservators, and calls into question what, exactly, should be preserved.

"Sometimes there are conceptual aspects or immaterial considerations that might supersede that of the material," said Ryan. For instance, what was the artistic intent? What is the artwork's life cycle? What is more appropriate: rehabilitation of a piece to preserve the original, or replication, so that its overall aesthetic and meaning can be better maintained?

To address these complexities, artist interviews have become increasingly popular within contemporary art conservation. Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Melva Bucksbaum Associate Director for Conservation and Research at the Whitney Museum of American Art, is a pioneer in artist documentation and began the Artist Documentation Program at Houston's Menil Collection in 1990. Described as "living wills" in a recent *New Yorker* article, these interviews allow conservators to document the process, approach, and intent behind the piece, and help them determine the most appropriate way to conserve the artwork moving forward. "It's really key to work with the artist and understand what one is preserving," she said. "Is it the idea or the physicality?"

Throughout the conservation process, every decision, action, and notable conversation is documented. This will hopefully prevent future conservators from having to guess what was original and what was the work of

▼
Alexander Calder's *Two Discs* at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC is one of the easier artworks with which the museum's chief conservator, Gwynne Ryan, has to deal.

PHOTO BY FLICKR USER
JOE LOONG



... to get and the
... where the
... hurt. I hear
... asks
... cold. I ...
... chair and led
... am. I was brought
... prison ...
... central federal police
... the city of
... I later learned
... who saw me
... to the farm ...

... a marriage of the rich
and the poor. She cooked, cleaned,
made our clothes and her own,
rarely had the money to pay for
a girl to help her and went
about a lot of the day with a
waist apron on, her blouse unbuttoned
and her hair down her back.
Patently genius was lacking in
her. For it was he who came home
in the evenings or at weekends from
places like Glasgow, Bournemouth
or Torquay.

... for granted that his
work "must come before anything
else. He was both a European
bourgeois in upbringing and a
man of the nineteenth century,
so my mother didn't have a
prayer. The conflict - and it
was acute - came from her deep
belief in what he wanted her to
do and resentment of his total
lack of understanding.

... chessee
that y
glared
all the
She wa
nurse
and d
what
fatigue
the la
in the
that a
bo

... must come
... from Teruel and
... microscope in the
... so that everyone
... the parasites,
... was useless; the
... still refused to
... any other vines.
... on Luis set the
... tearing out his
... aid; as a result
... a number of death
... never went out
... is new plants
... rifle.

I remember the battle, the
troops going into action. We
heard the General's pu-
liminary address before the
battle, urging the men "to
do or to die," and the prayer of
the chaplain, after which there
was a long silence, punctuated
with very faint noises - pre-
sumably the sounds of battle
- which emerged from out the
noise the gramophone itself was
making, at long intervals. Then at
last the General's address of
congratulations to the winning
battle - stenciled among one that
was all. I recollect being much
impressed by the truly delightful
way in which all the difficulties
... from the taking of such records
... to ...

I didn't have no education, but
I had the chance of one. I might
have been a woman of letters and
used my head instead of my hands,
but I had to do what was before
me to do. My uncle lived down
the road on the next farm and
they were real well off. One day
when I was calling there, I remem-
ber just as plain. I sat there
and uncle said he would pay
for my schooling if I would
come and live with them. I
looked at him and said, "Uncle,
I can't. I've got to stay with
my mother. She needs me." That
was all that was ever said about
it when I went out to work, no one ever
found fault with what I did. I
helped the ministers folks clean
house one spring, and we did
up the curtains. They looked sweet.

Now,
so scary
by, we
thought
we do
account
one day
of the m
or a rela
gone; u
In wait
ly to
place w

... hills
... about blue
... the merry
... the long
... here is us
... ride high
... on the rear
... with you
... out into
... where they
... You each
... paper but
... stream at
... work to
... really if
... that holds
... hope, why
... with that

We sat up very quietly, so as not
to disturb the old man, and he
did not notice that we were
listening ... When at last he was
silent, there was exaltation among
us, an exaltation which men
can experience only when they
have fallen as low as we had
fallen and then, through the
mystic power of a deathless
prayer, have awakened once
more to the world of the
spirit.

past was intensely alive.
Although my glimpses of the
inhabitants of these deeper
waters of the mind were rather
disquieting, suggesting creatures
whose way I did not know, I
found the act of writing curious-
ly calming, so that I gradually
came to use it whenever I was
over-burdened with worry.
... I seemed to have two quite
different selves, one which
answered when I thought de-
liberately, another which
answered when I let my
thought be automatic. I
decided to investigate further
the opinions of the automatic
one, to ask it questions and

His head
his eyes
I quickly
after
"amen" or
filled w
and a sh
was ho
was a f
as soo
finished
table, t
very larg
the que
I studie
the tabl
listening
a smi

and if anyone asks
... are I usually
... so good" or something
Today I thought it
... decided that I am
... badly off. Naturally
... things are
... that

After the midday meal
he resumed his planting.
I suppose I must have
been fairly insistent on
my questions for he answered
me for three years he had
been planting trees in this
wilderness. I had all the

She was not good at hiding
herself and usually followed
her sister; she'd hide in the
same place. I stopped
abruptly in front of the seats
and she came running toward

before
b. g
cloth
The n
Ond
wom

“As much as we want to try and keep everything in perfect condition as long as we can, ultimately chemistry takes over and physics happens.”

restorers, and why any changes were made. “There are huge records of what is done, and the thinking behind what is done,” said Mancusi-Ungaro. “With modern art, you have the responsibility of being the first hands on [to conserve a piece]. So you’re much more cautious with that.”

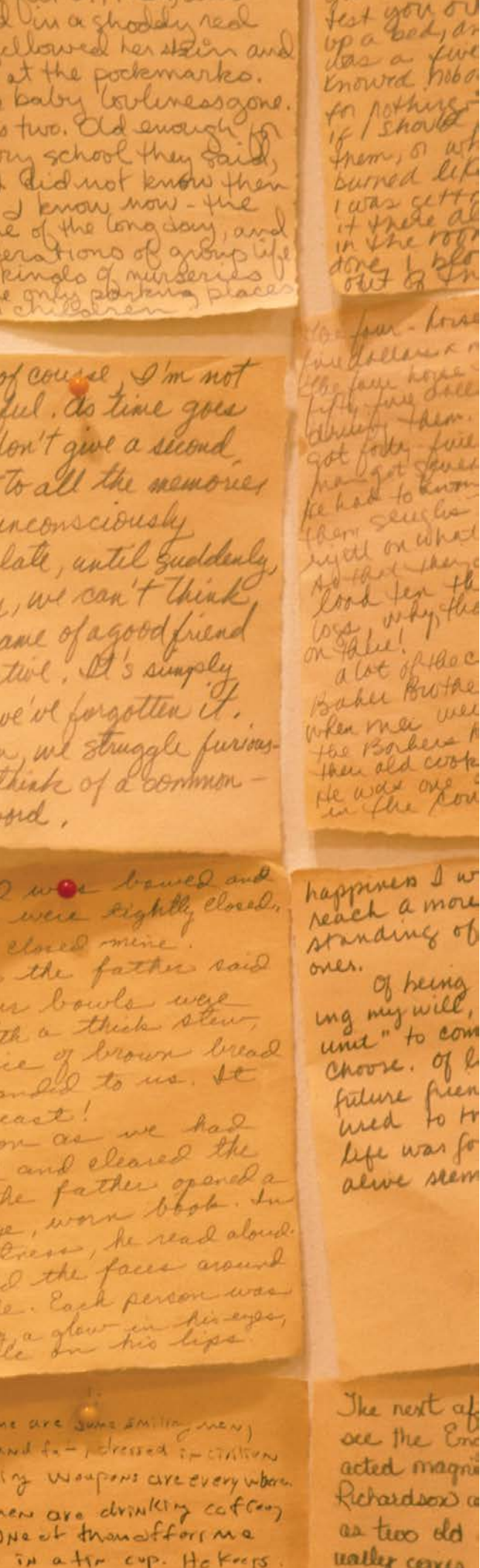
Rather than wait until a piece suffers damage, the work of conserving contemporary art begins at acquisition. The challenge, Ryan said, is to map out how to preserve a piece 50, 100, 500 years down the road when the artwork itself is still in its infancy. “Sometimes the artist is still making [a piece], and figuring out what it is they’re even making,” she said. “For us to be trying to understand what it is going to mean to own this, or what elements can degrade, what elements can be replaced—I find it fascinating. Even when an artwork is coming into the collection, it is still becoming.”

Sometimes, she said, conversations with an artist lead to an approach that “we absolutely never would have thought of on our own,” and might even be considered improper had it not been personally sanctioned by the artist. For instance, the Hirshhorn acquired in 2004 the room-sized installation *palimpsest* (1989) by Ann Hamilton, 1993 NEA Visual Arts Fellow and 2014 National Medal of Arts recipient. A meditation on the loss and preservation of memory, the work consists of floor tiles hand-cast from beeswax, and walls pinned with squares of aged newsprint scrawled with handwritten memories, which flutter in the breeze of an oscillating fan. In the center of the room is a vitrine full of snails munching on heads of cabbage.

“Almost all of the components are utilized in a way that is not going to help their preservation,” Ryan laughed. Nor were they necessarily meant to be preserved. In a recent interview, Hamilton noted that the newsprint was meant to disappear with time, and the snails, obviously, had a shelf life. “When a piece is saved, and it needs to be stabilized, what problems does the intention of ultimate disappearance come to have?” Hamilton mused. “How is work that’s about change and without firm edges considered within a museum collection? Those are things I’m still trying to figure out.”

◀ Some of the handwritten memories on the walls of the artwork *palimpsest* by Ann Hamilton.

PHOTO BY KATHRYN CLARK, COURTESY OF ANN HAMILTON STUDIO





▲
Sculptor Patrick Dougherty in one of his works.

PHOTO BY BRIANNA
BROUGH/CHAPEL HILL
MAGAZINE

After a series of conversations between Ryan and Hamilton, the Hirshhorn ultimately decided to host a multigenerational workshop for docents and teens where they wrote their own fragments of memories on newsprint squares. These will then be used to replace the original newsprint once it becomes too brittle or faded to display. It was an unconventional approach to conservation that both Hamilton and Ryan feel will keep the piece alive, rather than “freezing it in time and treating those elements as if they’re precious,” said Ryan.

It’s a sentiment artist Patrick Dougherty shares. Dougherty, who received an NEA Visual Arts Fellowship in 1990, constructs large-scale, architectural installations made entirely of found sticks, which look at once entirely fantastical and somewhat primitive. The works aren’t

designed with posterity in mind, and typically degrade within two or three years. For Dougherty, this impermanence “turns the attention of an artwork back to what I think it should be—not something that’s permanent or that you can buy and sell and gain a return on your investment. It refocuses on the ‘now’ experience of looking at a work and just being compelled by it.”

While it’s an idea that might trouble art historians, Dougherty isn’t concerned about the future. The associations that people have with sticks, which often stem from childhood or the natural world, are what make his sculptures resonate, and he isn’t certain the emotional impact would be the same—today or for future generations—if the same sculptures were made from different, more durable materials. Because his works are almost exclusively outdoors, and seen by thousands of intentional visitors and happenstance passersby, Dougherty reasons that the emotional impact of his work is compressed “into a few weeks” instead of what would take centuries in a museum.

Currently however, he does have two museum works on view, one at the North Carolina Museum of Art and the second at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC. The latter, titled *Shindig* and made of willow branches, was commissioned by the Renwick as part of its exhibition *WONDER*, which celebrated the museum’s reopening after a two-year renovation. Dougherty said the Renwick is choosing not to keep and conserve the piece long-term, partly due to concerns over beetle infestations and fire dangers. It’s an issue that illuminates not just the vulnerability of certain unconventional materials, but their potential effect on other pieces in a collection.

And yet, we live in an age where even ephemeral work will likely endure far longer than was once possible, at least in some form. “I think many of the materials that we see as being ‘unconventional’ probably have been art-making materials for a lot of people through the generations,” Ryan said. “We just don’t have it around to see.” But with camera photos, blogs, videos, and criticism all online, temporary work has been given seemingly infinite ways to live on. Since *WONDER* opened in November, the Renwick had been tagged approximately 60,000 times on Instagram, giving the nine larger-than-life works on display—Dougherty’s included—a way to survive digitally if not physically.

And perhaps one day that is how all artwork will survive. Despite the artist’s wishes, a conservator’s efforts, the documentation process, or a museum board’s concerns, “Things have a life,” said Ryan. “As much as we want to try and keep everything in perfect condition as long as we can, ultimately chemistry takes over and physics happens.”

Dougherty agrees. As he put it, “I’ve always thought that everybody does temporary work.” ▲