Unit 4: Communication through Art and Design

Unit code: D/502/4969
QCF Level 3: BTEC National
Credit value: 10
Guided learning hours: 60

Aim and purpose

This unit aims to develop the breadth and depth of learners’ knowledge, and understanding of and skills in communication through art and design. Learners will achieve this by studying how practitioners use primarily visual imagery to communicate ideas, messages and meaning, and then applying findings to their own ideas.

Unit introduction

The ability to communicate ideas in original and innovative ways is essential for all art, craft and design practitioners. Potential audiences and clients are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about the different forms of communication and there is a constant requirement for fresh, creative ideas to replace or revise familiar forms. In every vocational field of art craft and design, practitioners need to continuously review and update their knowledge, and understanding of and skills in using new and more effective methods of communicating ideas.

Learners will then apply this research to their own ideas, investigating and exploring the communication techniques they have studied.

The unit will enable learners to develop their understanding of how to communicate different meanings and messages, through the manipulation of formal elements in 2D, 3D or time-based media as a means of creating a range of imagery or artefacts for different purposes. The form that works of art and design take, and the media and techniques used to communicate meaning, will vary according to learners’ specialisms but it is expected that they will gain experience across disciplines.

Learners must appreciate the need to create informed and stimulating presentations of their intended to communicate ideas to different audiences. Learners will apply visual and non-visual skills in exploring a range of presentation techniques and methods.

This unit could be integrated with specialist unit assignments, as the knowledge, skills and understanding required underpin all other units in the qualification.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

1. Understand how media, materials and processes are used in others’ work to convey ideas and meaning
2. Be able to develop visual language
3. Know how art and design is used to communicate ideas and meaning
4. Be able to communicate by using the language of art and design
Unit content

1 Understand how media, materials and processes are used in others’ work to convey ideas and meaning

**Media:** eg photographic, painted, drawn, etched, interactive, graphical, fashion, woven, constructed, cast, time-based

**Materials:** eg paint, plaster, graphite, paper, wood, stone, digital, fibres, metal

**Techniques:** eg washes, scumbling, solarisation, focusing, composition, layering, cloning, sampling, carving, blocking out, cross-hatching, cutting, fastening, juxtaposing, contrasting, finishing, presenting

**Convey ideas and meaning:** eg a sense of mystery, atmosphere, style, attract, provoke, sustain interest, sell, create mood, harmony, unintended messages

**Others’ work:** historical; contemporary; traditional; non-traditional

2 Be able to develop visual language

**Visual language:** formal elements eg line, tone, texture, scale, colour, shape, form; expression; feeling; imagery eg symbols, impressions, compositions, pictures, visions, semiotics; visual ideas; illustrations; 2D visuals; 3D pieces; time-based pieces

**Methods, materials and media:** eg 2D media (mark-making, drawing, painting, photography, collage, printmaking, digital media), 3D media (object-making, use of materials, tools, equipment, processes and techniques, carving, modelling, constructing, fabricating, cutting, forming), time-based media (film, video, multi-media, interactive media), combined media (clothing, fashion, animation, performance)

3 Know how art and design is used to communicate ideas and meaning

**Art and design:** specialism eg painting, photography, typography, product design, sculpture, video, animation, pattern making, felting, embroidery, model making, printmaking, dyeing, illustration, game design

**Communicate:** appearance; presence eg formal elements, tactile, sound, movement, smell, spatial, interactive; context eg presentation, juxtaposition, framing, support, space, surroundings; forms eg signs, symbols, billboards, leaflets, paintings, sculptures, on screen, packaging, large scale, small scale, DVD

4 Be able to communicate by using the language of art and design

**Communicate an intended meaning:** message; information; expression; idea; feeling; intention eg set brief, self-identified brief

**Present:** eg display, exhibit, project, show, commentary

**Specified audience:** eg consumers, gallery visitors, fine art ‘audience’, readers, age range, class, cultural ‘sectors’, individuals, groups, special interests, needs or requirements, opinion formers, experts, public, private, commercial
Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment and grading criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 explain how media and materials are used in the work of others to convey ideas and meaning [IE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2 create own visual language by working with materials, media and processes [CT, RL]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3 describe ways in which visual language is used to communicate ideas and meaning [IE, RL]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4 communicate an intended meaning to a specified audience using the language of art and design. [CT, SM]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLTS:** This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>IE – independent enquirers</th>
<th>RL – reflective learners</th>
<th>SM – self-managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CT – creative thinkers</td>
<td>TW – team workers</td>
<td>EP – effective participators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit forms the basis for learners to develop their understanding of communication through art and design and underpins the whole qualification. It could be planned and integrated with other unit assignments. The focus for delivery is through practical approaches to primarily visual studies.

It is essential that learners adhere to health and safety regulations when using media, materials and processes across the specialist areas. Learners will need to undertake a range of activities to communicate meaning or information through the language of art and design. From their explorations, learners will develop focused work for communicating different ideas. Delivery for this unit will include initial activities that explore media, materials and technologies designed to develop specific skills relevant to learners’ specialist pathways. The form that work takes will vary according to the specialism but may include 2D, 3D or time-based media. Activities should be planned which develop learners’ art and design language skills through observation from primary sources, with a particular focus on mark-making techniques and experience of 3D and time-based materials. The interaction of the visual with other senses, particularly touch related to 3D design, textiles and clothing, and how sound relates to time-based media. These activities can be undertaken discretely, but briefs can provide opportunities for learners to integrate work across the learning outcomes, where possible. Briefs should be structured clearly with specific requirements for the ideas, meaning and messages or information intended for specified audiences where necessary. They said also be negotiated to allow for learner development on an individual basis. Opportunities might be planned to develop learners’ skills in communicating ideas to the public, including both commercial and private sectors.

The use of combinations of media and non-traditional materials should be encouraged to broaden learner experience, extend visual thinking and develop their creative and imaginative faculties. Integral to the development of visual skills, will be an ongoing evaluation of learners’ use of visual language. Learners will need to recognise strengths and weaknesses in the quality of their visual work, learn to compare the results of their experiments and assess the appropriateness of images in conveying their intended message or meaning. This can be through presentations and group critiques.

Visits to galleries, exhibitions, film reviews, plays, performance and live art, workshops, studios and advertising agencies could play an important role in designing assignments for this unit. Alternatively, bringing professional practitioners from art, design or media backgrounds in to talk about their work could help learners with the evidence needed for this unit.

For learning outcome 1, learners will need to analyse how others use visual language. This can be through tutors introducing a wide variety of examples and exposing learners to art galleries, museums, exhibitions, advertisements in print and on websites. Learners will need to consider how formal elements have been used to create effective visual language which evokes different audience responses.

For learning outcome 2, from the above research, learners will extend their use of media, materials and processes to generate and develop their own creative ideas. This will broaden their visual communication skills and provide the opportunity to focus on conveying appropriate messages for specific audiences.

For learning outcome 3, learners will need to investigate ways in which art and design is used to communicate ideas and meanings. Analysis of the work of artists, craft people and designers will form the basis of their research. This could include the visual communication methods of different cultures, contemporary culture and from wider historical sources. By making comparisons and identifying similarities and differences across practices, times and cultures, learners will gain an understanding of the diversity of communication forms in art and design. Ideally, learners should see examples of communication from all specialist pathways, but whatever is selected should be contextualised with in learners’ ongoing practical studies. Planned opportunities for viewing and discussing the work of others could be through a series of slide shows, CDs,
DVDs, film and video, visits to galleries, artists’ studios, and environmental exploration such as urban signs and symbols, billboards, advertising, leaflets and packaging. The purpose of learner research will be to evaluate how effectively an idea, a meaning, a message or a piece of information has been communicated to an audience and to enable them apply their knowledge and understanding to inform and inspire their developing studies. Learners might create interim presentations of how their studies have been influenced by others’ work, to tutors, peers or others in order to explore the effectiveness of their communication skills.

For learning outcome 4, learners will need to communicate an intended meaning to a specified audience using visual language. From the previous learning outcomes, more in-depth vocational briefs should emerge which could be given to, or negotiated with, learners to provide opportunities for extensive visual investigation. Learners should be encouraged to work with media, materials and techniques across a range of disciplines to communicate analytical, investigative or intuitive qualities based on expression and feeling.

The use of combinations of media and non-traditional materials should be encouraged to broaden learner experience, extend thinking and develop their creative and imaginative faculties. Integral to the development of communication skills, will be an ongoing evaluation of learners’ use of the language of art and design. Planned critical reviews, following practical activity, could be of learner presentations, group discussions or individual tutorials. Learners will need to recognise strengths and weaknesses in the quality of their work and learn to make comparisons between results of their experiments and assess the appropriateness of work in conveying their intended message or meaning.

**Outline learning plan**

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to unit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture/seminar relating to general art and design or specialisms: a variety of visual communication that has made an impact in different ways. Learners to discuss strength of visual messages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment 1: Experimental Media**

Learners to explore visual communication in their specialism:

- research and collect/record samples
- experiment with media to replicate parts of samples
- review and evaluate work

**Assignment 2: Compare and Contrast**

Learners to gather materials that they consider to be examples of strong visual communication:

- compare and contrasts examples
- present findings in an essay or onscreen presentation
topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

assignment 3: selling a specialism

brief requires learners to prepare materials to communicate information about their course to potential learners a postcard to college applicants to welcome them to the course and an illustration about the course for a poster. results must be predominantly visual

- brainstorm the brief
- develop ideas independently
- produce mock-ups
- review and refine ideas
- produce outcomes independently
- present outcomes

assessment

for p1, learners will undertake basic research, appropriate to the intentions of a given brief, that requires them to investigate how media, materials and processes are used in others’ work to convey ideas and meaning. work will mainly be supported by tutor guidance.

for p2, learners will work with materials, media and processes primarily linked to their subject specialism in developing their own visual language, following the direction of a given brief. work will be simply conceived and lack exploration.

for p3, learners will make direct comparisons showing how visual language is used to convey ideas and meaning in different ways. descriptions and comparisons will be direct and obvious.

for p4, learners will produce work which demonstrates use of visual language to communicate an intended meaning appropriately to a specified audience. the use of materials, media and processes will be appropriate to the intended outcome.

for m1, learners will demonstrate that they are developing their understanding of how the work of others uses visual language to convey meaning and messages through the considered selection of source material, learners both within and outside of their subject specialism. this will show links to their own work. learners will make direct and subtle comparisons of visual language (and the effects these achieve) will be made across a variety of others’ art and design work and their own practice. this will be through a variety of means. there will be indications of how contextual and practical research connects, and evidence will be presented in different ways including research notes, selected annotated imagery from different sources and detailed worksheets. other methods relevant to the subject specialism, for example refined maquettes, film clips with accompanying clearly annotated storyboards and planned audio visual presentations, will also be used.

for m2, learners will show their ability to plan, construct and comment on a broad range of methods, materials and media in extending their a communication skills in art and design. learners will propose ideas for final pieces which show clear indication of utilising their developing knowledge, skills and understanding to produce work that synthesises elements into specific pieces aimed at defined audiences. a range of methods will be used to record findings, research and practise throughout the assignment and to show explicit links to the practical work produced.

for d1, learners will work independently from negotiated briefs and show evidence of integrating their understanding, knowledge and skills in communication in art and design. they will consider sources that relate to their subject specialism as starting points to inform original practice in the development of persuasive communication, for a specific audience.
Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria covered</th>
<th>Assignment title</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Assessment method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1, P2</td>
<td>Assignment 1: Experimental Media</td>
<td>A fine artist developing a new set of work</td>
<td>Witness statement, self-evaluation, journal, sketchbook, portfolio of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1, P3, M1</td>
<td>Assignment 2: Compare and Contrast</td>
<td>A graphic designer making a pitch to a prospective client</td>
<td>Presentation, witness statement and self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1, P2, P3, P4, M1, M2, D1</td>
<td>Assignment 3: Selling a Specialism</td>
<td>A college lecturer promoting a new specialist art and design course</td>
<td>Presentation, witness statement, portfolio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Art and Design sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Art and Design suite:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explore Drawing</td>
<td>2D Visual Communication</td>
<td>Visual Recording in Art and Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore Artists’ and Designers’ Working to a Visual Arts Brief</td>
<td>3D Visual Communication</td>
<td>Ideas and Concepts in Art and Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Ideas to Explore, Develop and Produce Art and Design</td>
<td>Design Methods in Art and Design</td>
<td>Art and Design Specialist Contextual Investigation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Occupational Standards

This unit also provides development opportunities for some of the underpinning skills, knowledge and understanding of the following National Occupational Standards:

**CCSkills Sector Skills Council**

Design (revisions in draft form June 2009)
- DES1 Apply Research on the History and Theory of Design to Your Own Design Activities
- DES2 Apply Design Industry Knowledge to Inform Your Own Design Work Practice and Work
- DES3 Use Critical Thinking Techniques in Your Design Work
- DES4 Communicate the Importance of the Design Brief
- DES5 Follow a Design Process
- DES6 Work Effectively with Others in a Creative Environment
- DES7 Contribute to the Production of Prototypes, Models, Mock-ups, Samples or Test Pieces
- DES8 Explore the Use of Colour in a Creative Environment
- DES9 Research, Test and Apply Techniques for the Design of Products
- DES10 Create Visual Designs
- DES11 Provide Written Information in Relation to Your Design Work
- DES12 Make a Presentation

**Skillset Sector Skills Council**

Animation
- ANIM9 Visualise The Script
- ANIM11 Create 2D Assets For Production

Interactive Media and Computer Games
- IM9 Provide Creative and Strategic Direction for Interactive Media Projects

Design for the Moving Image
- DMI7 Create Models For Use In Productions
- DMI30 Create Physical Artwork For Graphic Designs For The Moving Image
- DMI31 Edit Graphic Sequences To Specification
- DMI34 Produce Graphic Elements On Electronic Media

Photo Imaging
- P6 Conceive and Take Photographs
- D5 Plan and Produce Edited Images
Skillfast-UK Sector Skills Council

Textiles and Material Design

- D3 Develop design responses for textiles and materials to meet agreed requirements
- D2 Develop and communicate design ideas for textiles and materials
- D4 Contribute to producing detailed designs for textiles and materials
- D9 Clarify textile and material design briefs and research information
- D15 Plan and contribute to the realisation of final textile and material design

Essential resources

This mandatory unit forms the basis for learners to develop their understanding of communication through art and design and underpins the whole qualification. It could be planned and integrated with other unit assignments. The focus for delivery is through practical approaches to primarily visual studies.

This is a mandatory unit across all specialist subject pathways. Essential resources include:

- **specialist workspaces**: eg studios, workshops, computer suites, video and film editing suites
- **materials, equipment and tools**: eg for 2D, 3D, time-based and associated materials, equipment and tools across all specialist areas
- **access to a learning centre**: eg for books, periodicals, journals, videos, CD ROMs, the internet

There must be sufficient access to audio-visual and digital resources to enable learners to be aware of the range of possible presentation methods appropriate to their ideas and audiences.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with practising artists, craftspeople and designers, to deliver assignments to learners or to provide work experience.

Links with employers are essential to the delivery of the programme in terms of work experience and future employment.

Vocational learning support resources include:

- Learning and Skills Network – www.vocationallearning.org.uk
- Business and finance advice:
  - local and regional Business Link – www.businesslink.gov.uk

Assignments should be vocationally relevant. Centres should consider the delivery of ‘live projects’ to support the vocational content of the unit and programme.

Creative & Cultural Skills (www.ccskills.org.uk), the sector skills council for arts, crafts and design, have launched the web portal Creative Choices (www.creative-choices.co.uk). This portal has a range of information about careers in the arts, crafts and design sector, including job descriptions.

Skillset, the sector skills council for creative media (www.skillset.org), provide details (www.skillset.org/careers) about careers advice and industry information, plus a regularly updated news and events page.

Skillfast-UK, the sector skills council for fashion and textiles (www.skillfast-uk.org), provide (www.skillfast-uk.org/justthejob) about careers advice and industry information, plus regularly updated news and events pages.
Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Journals
Visual Communication

Websites
www.designmuseum.org – website of the Design Museum, dedicated to contemporary design
Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>When learners are ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Independent enquirers| exploring how media and materials are used in the work of others to convey ideas and meaning  
                        | comparing and contrasting ways in which visual language is used to communicate ideas and meaning |
| Creative thinkers    | developing their own visual language by working with a range of methods, materials and media |
| Reflective learners  | developing their own visual language by working with a range of methods, materials and media |
| Team workers         | communicating with a group                                                            |
| Self-managers        | completing work on time                                                                |
| Effective participators| communicating with a group                                                              |

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>When learners are ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent enquirers</td>
<td>independently investigating visual communication when visiting galleries and museums to see the work of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative thinkers</td>
<td>pushing boundaries to develop new ways of communicating visually and adopting new technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective learners</td>
<td>reviewing and refining ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team workers</td>
<td>producing material for the benefit of others, such as marketing materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-managers</td>
<td>completing work on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective participators</td>
<td>producing material for the benefit of others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Functional Skills – Level 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>When learners are ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICT – Use ICT systems</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs</td>
<td>using ICT packages to obtain information about visual communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used</td>
<td>planning for the production of a final outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval</td>
<td>aware of obtaining information from secure internet sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troubleshoot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICT – Find and select information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task</td>
<td>researching visual communication ideas, methods and processes including web-based material and CDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose</td>
<td>exploring, extracting and assessing the relevance of information from websites and in relation to CDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICT – Develop, present and communicate information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including:</td>
<td>presenting information in a professional manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● text and tables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● images</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● numbers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● records</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring together information to suit content and purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists</td>
<td>communicating with tutor via email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>using VLE message boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts</td>
<td>discussing work of own and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions</td>
<td>reading and responding to research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively</td>
<td>annotating sketchbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>writing up formal evaluation of outcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>