

Unit 75: Drawing from Observation

Unit code:	T/502/5514
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

In this unit learners will develop the skills associated with drawing from observation and explore a variety of recording media.

● Unit introduction

Artists and designers use drawing from observation to develop skills in recording, to extend personal visual language and as a way of exploring subject matter and ideas. Within the wide spectrum of activities that exist under the 'umbrella' of art, craft and design, there is a consistent requirement for practitioners to be able to record from subject matter. Artists may decide to base their output on this activity; designers may use these skills to broaden their visual vocabulary on and use the drawing skills developed in the process to enhance the presentation of ideas to clients. Drawing from observation can be used as a vehicle for enquiry and investigation, and can encourage fluid and tactile thinking. Artists such as David Hockney and Henri Matisse have used drawing from observation as an integral way of working and developing their personal visual language.

In this unit learners will have opportunities to develop drawing skills related directly to observational work. These will include different techniques for developing compositions, attaining accuracy, exploring personal ideas and training the eye. Observing directly requires a focused attitude to using the eye to probe the form of the subject. Learners will undertake a series of activities to support this, and expand the range of potential subject matter for analysis.

Drawing can also be used as a vehicle for self-expression, and learners may develop personal work that extends observation through a series of developmental stages. This may open up opportunities for future work using drawing-based media, or provide ideas that can be translated into other media.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to use observation techniques
- 2 Be able to use drawing techniques and media
- 3 Be able to produce finished work based on observational drawing
- 4 Understand the use of observational drawing.

Unit content

1 Be able to use observation techniques

Observation techniques: eg measuring, using scales, constructing, comparing sizes, short pose figure drawing, long pose figure drawing, drawing without looking at the page, recording texture, vanishing points, perspective, aerial perspective, composition, viewfinders

2 Be able to use drawing techniques and media

Drawing techniques: eg line, tone, shading, blending, stippling, mark-making; composition, construction lines, boxing up, centre lines, tonal graduation, colour graduation, mixed media

Media: eg pencil, pen, inks, paint, charcoal, pastel, mixed media, digital

Drawings: eg sketches, preliminary studies, sustained studies, short poses, life model, portrait studies, still life, studio set ups, interiors, landscapes, urban environment, architectural studies

3 Be able to produce finished work based on observational drawing

Finished work: fully observed eg life drawing, portraits, environments, interiors, functional objects, machinery, still life, landscapes, townscapes, architectural, anatomical; partially observed eg preparatory study, underdrawing, working drawing, revisiting, visualisation, for other work

4 Understand the use of observational drawing

Use of observational drawing: own work eg evaluate, analyse, review, techniques, successes, difficulties, solutions, revisions, preliminary studies, development; record eg annotation, plans, conclusions, work journal; present eg findings, presentation, group critique; others' work: eg purpose, techniques, processes, preliminary studies for larger works, investigation; formal elements eg form, texture, surface, contrast, colour; subject matter eg architecture, the figure, environment, abstract

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.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 use observational techniques [CT]	M1 demonstrate effective use of observation techniques consistently	D1 independently demonstrate informed use of observation techniques
P2 use drawing techniques and media [CT, CT]	M2 use diverse drawing techniques and media purposefully and effectively	D2 use diverse drawing techniques and media imaginatively with fluent technical control
P3 produce finished work based on observational drawing [SM]	M3 produce a coherent set of finished work that demonstrates consistent and effective observational drawing	D3 produce a comprehensive set of finished work that demonstrates perceptive and innovative observation
P4 review observational drawing. [IE, RL]	M4 analyse observational drawing purposefully.	D4 independently evaluate observational drawing.

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.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
------------	--	---	--

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Delivery of this unit focuses on developing of techniques used in observational drawing. This is an approach to recording visual information that is important across all disciplines in art, craft and design. Learners should have the opportunity to explore drawing from observation in a variety of scenarios including life drawing, studio set ups and environments. Drawing techniques and use of media will also feature in the delivery.

Tutors delivering this unit should provide opportunities for learners to review the observational drawings of others, in order to learn about techniques and provide a basis for applying and exploring their own ideas. Assignment 1 in the *Outline learning plan* may be used as an introduction to the unit and would relate specifically to learning outcome 4. Learners should gather information on artists that have used observational drawing as an integral part of their working practice, and consider the techniques and media they have used. Tutors can define the scope of different approaches by showing learners a broad range of examples, from observation used as a way of extending personal expression to examples where total accuracy, not expression, is the aim.

Learning outcome 1 can be delivered through Assignment 2 in the *Outline learning plan*, where tutors demonstrate specific techniques in relation to studio set ups and controlled subjects. Use of the life model in this case would provide opportunities for tutors to explain how observation techniques are applied in observing the proportions of the figure, using a blend of handouts and practical demonstrations that show techniques such as using plum lines, measuring and scaling. Tutors should steer away from teaching this learning outcome as a series of purely technical exercises. There are opportunities for tutors to encourage learners to work in more fluid, intuitive ways, provided that they are still developing observational skills. Some learners may become bogged down using techniques such as measuring over a long period of time, so tutors should also explore other approaches. With the figure, these could include learners observing the figure closely for five or so minutes without drawing, the figure retiring and learners working from their memory of the observation to draw the figure. Other approaches could involve drawing without looking at the page or producing drawings that follow a slowly moving figure. Alternatively, learners may work from a series of objects, involving an analysis of the composite parts and forms that make up the pieces. In this way, learners may be able to use observational drawing techniques to probe the complexities of form in a variety of functional objects.

Learning outcome 2 and learning outcome 3 are linked, in that learners should apply and develop the ideas and techniques seen and experienced in Assignment 2. The third assignment in the *Outline learning plan* is an opportunity for learners to work in a more concentrated way, exploring the techniques alongside specific materials and drawing media. Learners need to produce a related series of substantial drawings developing their earlier explorations and experiences. The work may be a set of drawings, based on studies of a building or the human figure, where a series of short studies of details, lighting effects, different angles and experiments with composition are developed into a more resolved work. In some cases this development will involve learners acquiring a higher level of skill and understanding when applying techniques. This may provide scope for drawing-based work that is more personal and allows individual interpretation to be applied to the subjects. The unit concludes with learners evaluating their use of observational drawing techniques. A group critique and exhibition would allow learners to present their 'journey' through the unit. Notes and reviews written up in work journals and sketchbooks should be used to support the evaluation.

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.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Group introduction to unit and structure of the programme.
Assignment 1: Observation Techniques Used by Others Group-based read through of assignment and description of techniques to be reviewed. Presentation on drawing styles, looking at the work of others. Learners to make notes and compile information in work journals, learners continue research in own time.
Assignment 2: Using Drawing Techniques Group-based read through of assignment. Series of tutor demonstrations followed by learner practise, all based on studio set ups/sessions with life figure to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• measuring (the principles)• construction lines – how to draw/use• comparing sizes and points/alternative ways to measure• set exercises – short and long drawings• drawing without looking at the page• learner evaluation of results.
Assignment 3: Developing Drawing Techniques Experimenting and testing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• controlling and exploiting line• tonal values and applying tone• using colour – recognition/application• mark-making/mixed media• short group critique. Assessment – interim grade.
Assignment 4: Producing Finished Drawings Group read through of assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify subject/themes – group or individual• ensure required subjects/themes are sourced• produce drawings independently• evaluate drawings at group critique and assessment.

Assessment

Assessment will feature practical work produced in studio sessions, notes from tutor presentations and demonstrations, and evidence of learner review and evaluation of their own drawing and that of others. Regular group critiques can be used as a way of highlighting good working practice using strong examples of learner work. Pass level work will engage with the tasks and show control over the drawing techniques studied and applied. Work for P1 will apply a basic level of skill in using observational techniques. For P2, learners will be able to use the drawing techniques covered in Assignments 2 and 3 in a basic manner, without attaining the degree of effectiveness or fluency of the higher grades. Methods used for observing will be understood but not applied or developed consistently or independently. For P3, learners will apply their knowledge of drawing techniques and observation to produce a competent set of drawings that will be resolved but not particularly effective. There may be inconsistencies in their approach to applying drawing techniques. When working to P4, learners will show an ability to review work in line with their practical efforts, drawing some comparisons with the work of others, for example learners will be able to recognise drawing techniques used by others. This review will lack the sense of purpose and effective insight evidenced in the higher grades.

Merit level work will show consistent effectiveness and understanding in applying observational drawing techniques across the portfolio of work. For M1, learners will combine their use of observational and drawing techniques to produce a set of drawings that are consistently effective. For M2, learners will be able to use these drawing techniques and media with a stronger sense of purpose than work at pass level. For M3, drawing techniques will be applied effectively in tandem with a consistent approach to observation. For M4, learner analysis of their own and others' drawings will be informed and purposeful. Understanding gained in comparing drawing techniques used by others may be carried through to learners' own practical work. The level of insight in the evaluation will be purposeful.

Distinction level work will demonstrate independence, perceptive understanding and fluent technical control across the portfolio of work. Work produced for D1 will evidence an informed approach to observing detail in the chosen subject matter. Work for D2 will combine drawing techniques and media imaginatively to produce sophisticated outcomes. For D3, finished drawings will be fully realised and show innovation in the use of media and techniques. There will be stronger sense of individual purpose in this level of work than in the lower grades. Evaluations produced for D4 will show a high level of perception, with links between observation, drawing techniques and media explained clearly. Conclusions on work produced will again represent a high level of perception.

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.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P4, M4, D4	Assignment 1: Observation Techniques Used by Others	An illustrator is developing their portfolio by broadening their range of drawing styles. They are researching drawing styles and techniques used by others to gather information. This will inform their development.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work journals, containing notes independent research work, sketches completed review of working practices of artists.
P1, M1, D1 P2, M2, D2	Assignment 2: Using Drawing Techniques	An artist is exploring different drawing techniques and establishing those that relate most closely to their intentions.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work journals/sketchbooks containing notes from tutor demonstrations drawings including preliminary work, short poses and exercises review of working practices.
P1, M1, D1 P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3	Assignment 3: Developing Drawing Techniques	A designer is exploring the role drawing can play in their work, notably the design process. They are experimenting with different techniques and evaluating the results.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work journals/sketchbooks containing notes preliminary work exploration of drawing media tutor observation of studio practice practical work review of working practices.
P1, M1, D1 P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3 P4, M4, D4	Assignment 4: Producing Finished Drawings	An artist is developing work based on a self-generated brief towards exhibiting work at a group-based show on the theme of drawing.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work journals/sketchbooks containing notes tutor observation of studio practice finished practical work presentation and final review of working practices.

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:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Explore Drawing	2D Visual Communication	Visual Recording in Art and Design

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
- 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
- DES12 Make a presentation
- DES18 Interpret the design brief and follow the design process
- DES21 Articulate, present and debate ideas in a creative environment
- DES28 Developing your own design offer
- DES32 Apply concepts and theories of creativity and innovation to your own design work
- DES36 Develop and extend your design skills and practices

Essential resources

Learners will require access to a drawing studio where they can explore different drawing approaches. If available, a life room would provide an ideal setting for delivering the exercise elements of this unit. Alternatively, a general studio may be used, provided learners have enough room to be able to step back from their drawings and consider them fully. Props for still life work and general drawing resources are also essential. Learners may require larger work areas and boards if they are developing drawings that are large scale and experimental. An area for display and group critiques would also be an advantage.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Local artist or artists groups may be able to come in to the centre and support this unit. Alternatively, exhibitions where artists may provide drawing-based workshops may be useful, notably if these artists are exploring alternative approaches to observing and recording. Live or client projects may be used providing the client is requesting work in drawing formats, and learners can explore observational drawing techniques such as architectural or interiors-based projects.

Links with employers are essential to 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 Links – 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.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Beverly Hale R – *Drawing Lessons from the Great Masters* (Watson-Guptill, 1989) ISBN 978-0823014019

Cole R – *Perspective for Artists* (Dover Publications Inc, 1976) ISBN 978-0486224879

Harrison H – *The Encyclopedia of Drawing Techniques* (Headline, 2004) ISBN 978-1844480197

Muybridge E – *The Human Figure in Motion* (Dover, 2000) ISBN 978-0486202044

New J – *Drawing from Life: The Journal as Art* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2005) ISBN 9781568984452

Raynes J – *The Complete Guide to Perspective* (F & W Publications, 2008) ISBN 978-1906388164

Simpson I – *Drawing, Seeing and Observation* (A&C Black, 2003) ISBN 978-0713668780

Websites

www.artlex.com/ArtLex/d/drawing.html	Contextual links associated with drawing
www.dmoz.org/Arts/Visual_Arts/Drawing	Open directory on links related to drawing
www.gpsdrawing.com/info.html	Drawings made by Jeremy Wood using GPS
www.thebigdraw.org.uk/home/index.aspx	Campaign for Drawing website

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.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	researching ideas and information about artists and drawing recording information about drawing techniques
Creative thinkers	exploring different approaches to combining drawing media and techniques applying techniques in practical drawing sessions
Reflective learners	recognising links between techniques and artists' treatment of subjects evaluating own working practices and final outcomes evaluating others, working practices and final outcomes
Self-managers	managing time to complete finished drawings.

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.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	considering the reasons artists use specific drawing techniques collating research materials
Creative thinkers	reviewing ideas about drawing and refining these ideas through practical application
Reflective learners	making links between own work and that of others.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Find and select information	
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	sourcing information from websites and electronic publications about drawing techniques and individual artists
English	
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	sourcing and reading information drawing and artists reading and absorbing information about drawing techniques relating to media and materials to be used
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	gathering and recording relevant technical information about drawing media, materials and techniques compiling information from reviews.