

Unit 86: Extending Specialist Techniques

Unit code:	D/502/4986
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to develop learners' skills and understanding in responding to a theme using research and planning skills, and select appropriate materials and making techniques, to produce and present a body of work.

● Unit introduction

Practitioners in the field of art, craft and design approach themes supported by informative research and innovative treatments of the subject, and by using materials, processes and techniques with a high level of practical skill. These skills are developed and refined through a cycle of application, review and refinement. Over time, these skills form the personal language of the artist, craftsperson or designer and become synonymous with the content of their work. This personal language makes their work distinctive.

Learners have the opportunity to develop ideas through responding to a theme and/or set brief and can use this unit as a vehicle for developing personal visual language in their chosen field. Learners will be able to extend their current skills level through focusing on specific making and production methods. This consolidation and extension of skills is a vital part of any practitioner's work. It provides the basis for work to become more sophisticated. However, as production skills alone do not lead to individual work with a personal identity, the selection of sources for inspiration and the quality of research from which ideas are generated, developed and interpreted are of equal importance in this unit.

As learners experience the cycle of proposal, production and review, they will develop an understanding of their own capabilities and visual awareness. They will be better informed about areas to target for improvement and will be able to take practical steps to achieve these improvements. They will also understand that new works can evolve from existing works and relate this understanding to practitioners who produce personal works related to a theme. By completing this unit, learners should be able to identify the characteristics of their own working practices and begin to develop a personal language in art, craft and design.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to generate ideas in response to a theme in a specialist field
- 2 Be able to use specialist techniques
- 3 Be able to produce finished outcomes using specialist techniques
- 4 Understand work produced with specialist techniques.

Unit content

1 Be able to generate ideas in response to a theme in a specialist field

Respond to a theme: clarify eg requirements, set theme, brief, materials, working practices, resources, facilities; identify eg tasks, client needs, resources, constraints; context eg audience needs; issues eg professional, ethical, legal; sources eg research, primary, secondary sources, professional practitioners; select eg explore, ideas, visual elements; modify eg justify, refine ideas, development

Specialist field: material focus eg print, paint, plaster, textiles, metals, glass, clay; related technologies; materials; techniques; combined materials; recycled materials; mixed media; complementary materials eg metal, paper, glass, printmaking

2 Be able to use specialist techniques

Selecting specialist materials and techniques: eg forming, shaping, constructing, finishing; resources; facilities; tools eg hand, machine; records eg notes; exploratory works

Health and safety: Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, elimination of risk to self and others; understand risk assessments and risks with specific tasks; follow COSHH guidance on materials and workshop practice; safe use of tools, machinery and equipment

3 Be able to produce finished outcomes using specialist techniques

Planning: eg scheduling, time management; sourcing materials; work; preparing material; making eg templates, patterns, measurements, calculations, costing

Finished outcomes: finished artefacts; practical skills; theme; design intentions

4 Understand work produced using specialist techniques

Discuss: eg examine, compare, review, refine, work in progress, modifications, justifications; record eg sketchbook, notes, journal, ideas sheets, photographs, processes, stages, finished work, technical data, reports, drawings, samples

Review: qualities eg aesthetic, technical, fitness for purpose, stages, problem solving, creative process; finished body of work eg visual qualities, tactile qualities, design, product, strengths, weaknesses, relevance; summative evaluation eg written, oral presentation, group critique, tutorials; present work eg peers, tutors, clients, customers, viewers

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 produce research in response to a theme	M1 develop diverse ideas from considered research	D1 integrate research findings into original ideas
P2 develop ideas in response to a theme [CT, RL]		
P3 use specialist techniques safely	M2 use materials and techniques selected from trials and records purposefully	D2 use materials and techniques skilfully and independently
P4 produce finished outcomes using specialist techniques [SM]	M3 produce individual outcomes	D3 produce innovative and effective outcomes
P5 discuss work produced using specialist techniques. [RL]	M4 explain selections for design intention.	D4 confirm how technical understanding informed creative decisions.

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
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Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Delivery will consist mainly of discussions, tutorials and practical and theoretical guidance from tutors. Learners should have access to appropriate materials and workshop facilities equipped with tools and machinery in order to produce and complete outcomes. Learners will also need to have access to Library and IT resources for research and to studios for drawing and design work.

This unit should be taught with specialist *Unit 85: Exploring Specialist Techniques* so that learners have the opportunity to apply their understanding of and skills in specialist materials and techniques to designing and producing finished outcomes. For assessment purposes, the units have been designed in order to separate exploration from design development and production processes. As this is an artificial separation, ideally, the two units should be taught either in sequence or through an integrated programme. This unit can also be used as preparatory experience for *Unit 6: Application, Exploration and Realisation in Art and Design*, when learners develop a personal proposal.

It is recommended that a broad theme is set, such as 'Inside-Outside', which is open to many interpretations and approaches, to provide a springboard for personal research and development of ideas towards, finished artefacts, and for an individual identity to begin to emerge. Learners should be taught the importance of reviewing the progress of their work at different stages and to select materials, techniques and finishes from their earlier explorations in relation to aesthetic and practical considerations.

Learning outcome 1 involves learners identifying associations with the set theme and providing source material in response to this. They should provide primary sources, such as objects and own photographs, from which to produce visual studies from observation. These could be supplemented by studies from secondary sources. Use of as broad a range of materials and approaches as possible should be encouraged and facilitated by tutors in order for learners to extract visual qualities which will emerge as important to them. It would be particularly beneficial if further developmental works are produced from the initial observation studies, using processes not directly related to the specialist field, to enable learners to think broadly at this stage and produce unexpected results. If the research is weak, everything following from this will be weak too; therefore sufficient supervised time should be allocated for this component. It is important that ideas evolve from the research as this will allow a personal language to emerge, rather than derivative responses. Tutors will need to help learners identify the context for their work and steer them to appropriate information sources.

The ideas generation stage of reflection and creative thinking will require most tutor support through discussion and suggestions, before ideas are consolidated. Tutors should give learners the opportunity to consider how practitioners have approached themes. Tutors can direct learners to examples from different practitioners who have addressed the same or similar themes, such as design utilising contrasting textures, or to consider context for works, such as function. Learners should record their responses to the theme in clear formats.

Learning outcome 2 involves learners developing their responses into practical work. Tutors should encourage learners to refer to their investigations about materials and techniques, evaluate them and select the most appropriate. Tutors may need to provide further demonstrations and/or practical workshops that consolidate or extend learners' current knowledge of techniques. Materials and techniques will need to be prepared appropriately and used safely. Tutors will need to guide learners to review their progress as they move through the unit. Ideas relating to working practices and choice of materials, techniques and processes should be evaluated and recorded by learners.

Learning outcome 3 involves learners in producing finished work using specialist materials and techniques. Learning outcomes 2 and 3 are interlinked. The work should demonstrate a level of making skills that enable successful completion of works. Learners may pursue new ideas, which often occur during the making process itself, or designs could be adjusted or modified. The requirement to produce more than one outcome, such as a small series of outcomes, would provide an opportunity for learners to pursue their theme more broadly and extend their practical skills further. Tutors should ensure that recording of all stages of the work and production processes takes place, for example in a reflective journal or workbook.

For learning outcome 4, learners should review and evaluate their ideas throughout the developing stages of their work as an ongoing activity. Pause for reflection should be timetabled into working sessions. Through individual discussions, tutors should involve learners in making decisions about the selection of source material, functional and aesthetic characteristics, technical qualities, fitness for purpose, visual qualities of outcome, strengths and weaknesses and relevance to the brief. Key questions such as 'Have the best materials and techniques been selected for the task?' should form part of learner evaluations. Learners will also need to take into account deadlines, times available in specialist areas and budgetary constraints. Learners should note thoughts about or evidence photographically alternative ideas and solutions, even if they cannot be pursued at the time. At the end, a group critique would give learners the opportunity to look back and articulate the whole journey of their work, how they responded to the theme visually and why they made the decisions they did. The group presentation is important because it will confirm the validity of individual responses and outcomes to a common theme.

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
<p>Introduction to unit and analysis of theme.</p> <p>Assignment 1: Inside-Outside</p> <p>Learners identify sources to use as visual research. Focus on selected formal elements as well as content, eg form, structure, shape, texture, colour, line.</p>
<p>Part 1: Set theme for personal response</p> <p>Visual research.</p> <p>From primary sources/real objects, learners produce a series of 2D and 3D visual studies from observation using a range of appropriate media and materials.</p> <p>Contextual research.</p>
<p>Design and produce two related but contrasting works.</p>
<p>Part 2: Set assignment from research</p> <p>Extend research into new approaches.</p> <p>Review progress of research with tutor and record.</p> <p>Take photographs of related subjects and collect secondary sources which make visual links with the theme, visual studies and formal elements.</p> <p>Produce supplementary visual studies from photographic references.</p> <p>Research and select examples of artists' works in the specialist field and of works, with similar visual elements, by artists working in other specialist fields and consider the links.</p> <p>Record all in sketchbook/journal, including contextual links.</p>

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Part 3: Production

Select from visual studies produced to translate into alternative/new processes, eg printmaking, reliefs, collages, 3D models.

Record techniques and processes used and review results.

Development of design ideas to fulfil brief.

Part 4: Assessment

Group crit/individual tutorials.

Review of unit and assessment.

Assessment

The emphasis in this unit is on developing and producing finished products and an individual creative identities beginning to emerge. It is, therefore, essential to generate evidence of the whole process from inception to realisation. Evidence can be assessed through observation, discussion, and feedback from group presentations. It is important that all back-up work is recognised as being as valuable to the project. This should be reflected in the presentation of initial project briefs, drawings, samples, any test pieces or prototypes, written records of ideas development and evaluation.

For the pass criteria learners will be expected to evidence ideas in response to a theme, select, prepare and use appropriate techniques and materials safely, with tutor support and supervision, to realise intentions.

For P1, learners must produce visual research in response to a given theme from sources assembled by individuals. The sources provided may be limited, with over-reliance on secondary material, and visual studies, although sufficient for the development of some ideas, will be executed at basic level using a narrow range of media, materials and approaches.

For P2 learners must develop ideas from research and be able to select an idea to take to completion. Evidence for assessment could include drawings, photographs, models, maquettes, notes and contextual examples and be organised in a folder, sketchbook or notebook. Learners will show some understanding of the theme or brief, with tutor input required to consolidate a full understanding. Selections made may be tutor led.

Tutor observations will be the basis for assessing P3 and P4. Learners should consult with tutors about the appropriate selection of materials and show they can prepare and use them correctly, complying with health and safety procedures. Evidence will overlap in that using techniques with specialist materials will result in finished work. Practical skills will be demonstrated in producing technically successful outcomes, using some control, although results may be uneven with little refinement or attention to detail and finish.

Evidence for P5 will take the form of a presentation, oral as part of a group critique/discussion or a written evaluation, to describe the progress of the work through all developing stages, including initial responses to the brief, research material, generation and selection of ideas and finished work. Evaluations will propose ideas for development that show some understanding of potential. How decisions were made will be described in simple terms, limited to technical considerations. Selection of contextual examples will be limited and the links obvious.

M1 requires learners to consider and provide several sources in response to a theme. Their visual recording will be purposeful, with awareness of formal elements. They will use various media when recording and extracting information. They will pursue diverse ideas, using relevant contextual examples as an aid to extending possibilities. From this range, they will make considered selections to develop individual responses and to refine the chosen idea before making.

M2 requires learners to show purposeful selection and preparation of materials and techniques from their exploratory records, with regard for their possibilities and limitations. They will use materials and techniques effectively for chosen intentions.

For M3, final outcomes will be produced competently with a sense of personal involvement, considering technical and visual matters from a range of possibilities. This may involve making changes and adjustments as necessary, persevering through problems and attempting to find solutions. There will be consistency across all finished works, with attention to detail and finish. How learners select and use materials and processes will impact on the quality of finished outcomes.

For M4, learners must identify what technical and visual decisions were considered for their selected sources and evolution of design ideas and factors that influenced these. They will identify successes and failures in relation to the intended design and finished work, using appropriate vocabulary. They will include examples of practitioners' works which links with their own and explain the connection.

For D1, learners must demonstrate a high level of visual enquiry by using a variety of approaches and processes for visual recording and generating ideas, from sources carefully selected for their potential. Visual elements will be extracted from research to pursue comprehensive investigations of the variations of ideas. Unexpected or accidental results, or lateral connections, will be utilised for their potential. Learners will use contextual examples as inspiration to pursue alternative solutions. Designs will be ambitious and challenging while taking constraints into account.

For D2, learners will make judgements about risks and anticipate problems and solutions when selecting materials, techniques or processes. Learners must use materials and techniques fluently, with sensitivity to their intrinsic properties and demonstrate dexterity and sustained control. They may use materials and techniques innovatively, based on technical understanding and skills gained through analysis of their explorations. They will recognise and pursue the potential from unexpected results.

For D3, learners will produce exciting outcomes. They may seek unusual links or connections through innovative use of materials or sophisticated designs.

For D4, learners will define how technical understanding and perceptive visual analysis informed their creative decisions at all stages. They will explain and justify their selection of sources, research, materials, techniques, production processes and their aesthetic decisions. Learners will use vocational language fluently. Evaluations will be informed by references to contextual links, which may be unexpected and not necessarily connected to the specialist field by materials or techniques but by other visual considerations.

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
P1, P2, M1, D1	<p>Assignment 1: Inside-Outside</p> <p>Part 1: Set theme for personal response</p> <p>Research theme, responding and interpreting in a personal way.</p> <p>Design and create two related products in response to the theme.</p> <p>Generate ideas.</p>	Artist/craftworker develops ideas and designs, interpreting the theme in a personal way.	<p>Presentation at group critique:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> visual and contextual research development of ideas selection and refinement of final designs records of research. <p>Tutor written feedback comments about quality and depth of research and ideas development, with suggestions for further development in future work.</p>
P3, P4, M2, D2	<p>Part 2: Set assignment from research</p> <p>Consolidation of design/s select, prepare and use materials and techniques.</p>	Artist/craftworker develops ideas into practical work.	<p>Tutor observations of practical work.</p> <p>Learner presentation at group critique with learners evidencing working methods in appropriate format.</p> <p>Tutor gives written feedback about how materials and techniques were used, including safe working practice and areas for improvement.</p>
P4, M3, D3	<p>Part 3: Production</p> <p>Production of finished outcomes.</p>	Artist/craftworker applies skills to finished products.	<p>Learner presentation of finished outcomes at group critique.</p> <p>Tutor gives written feedback about visual and technical strengths, successes and areas for improvement.</p>
P5, M4, D4	Part 4: Assessment	Artist/craftworker evaluates own and others' related work throughout the project and at the conclusion.	<p>At group critique learners describe their whole creative process and why they made their decisions.</p> <p>Written evaluation of outcomes.</p> <p>Tutor gives written feedback about the quality of evaluations and areas for improvement.</p>

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 Painting	Using Ideas to Explore, Develop and Produce Art and Design	Exploring Specialist Techniques
Explore 3D Design Crafts	Any 'Working with' Unit	Application, Exploration and Realisation 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
- DES5 Follow a design process
- DES7 Contribute to the production of prototypes, models, mock-ups, samples or test pieces
- DES9 Research, test and apply techniques for the design of products
- 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

The resources required will vary according to the specialisms chosen by learners.

Research resources include access, to technical resources, a library, a slide index, journals and IT facilities with internet access as well as specialist workshops for working with relevant materials, tools and equipment.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local practitioners whose work has a personal identity. An illustrated talk from a practitioner describing the evolution of their work would give learners an invaluable insight into the purpose of this unit. Visits to view exhibitions of a practitioner's body of work would, equally, inform learners about thematic approaches. Learners should visit final year degree shows at universities to view graduate work, as well as exhibitions of contemporary works at venues such as Origins and Collect; these would all provide opportunities to meet and discuss practitioners' works and ideas.

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 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

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Anderson S and Cohen D – *A Visual Language* (A&C Black, 2006) ISBN 978-0713667738

Baden Fuller K – *Contemporary Stained Glass Artists* (A&C Black, 2006) ISBN 978-0713654288

Barnard R, Daintry N and Twomey C – *Breaking the Mould New Approaches to Ceramics* (Black Dog Publishing, 2007) ISBN 978-1904772767

Cerny C and Seriff S (editors) – *Recycled, Re-seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap* (Harry N Abrams Inc, 1996) ISBN 978-0810926660

Clarke B and Clarke I – *New Directions in Jewellery* (Black Dog Publishing, 2006) ISBN 978-190477255

Craig B – *Collage Assembling Contemporary Art* (Black Dog Publishing, 2008) ISBN 978-1906155391

Genders C – *Pattern, Colour & Form* (A&C Black, 2009) ISBN 978-0713678093

Genders C – *Sources of Inspiration* (A&C Black, 2004) ISBN 978-0713670981

Ingledeew J – *Photography* (Portfolio Series) (Laurence King, 2005) ISBN 978-1856694322

Monem N – *Contemporary Textiles The Fabric of Fine Art* (Black Dog Publishing, 2008) ISBN 978-1906155292

Schwartz J – *Confrontational Ceramics* (A&C Black, 2008) ISBN 978-0713676556

Scott J – *Textile Perspectives in Mixed-media Sculpture* (The Crowood Press Ltd., 2003) ISBN 978-1861265784

Springall D – *Inspired to Stitch* (A&C Black, 2005) ISBN 978-0713669862

Walsh Macario J – *Graphic Design Essentials: Skills, Software and Creative Solutions* (Laurence King, 2009) ISBN 978-1856695992

Journals

Blueprint – Wilmington Media

Ceramic Review – Craft Potters Association

Crafts – Crafts Council

Creative Review – Centaur Communications Ltd

Design Week – Centaur Communications Ltd

International Textiles – ITBD Publications

New Design – DWB Associates

Selvedge – Selvedge Ltd

Websites

www.craftscouncil.org.uk

Crafts Council

www.yourcreativefuture.org/crafts

Creative Futures

www.design-council.org.uk

Design Council

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 ...
Creative thinkers	generating ideas from research and exploring possibilities connecting their own and others' ideas to move the work forward asking questions and consulting to extend their own thinking
Reflective learners	selecting ideas, materials and techniques from possibilities considering functional and aesthetic characteristics, technical qualities, fitness for purpose, visual qualities of outcome, strengths and weaknesses and relevance to the brief evaluating sources, ideas and progress of work communicating their learning
Self-managers	organising themselves by planning work, preparing materials and techniques to produce successful finished outcomes showing commitment and perseverance when problems arise being flexible when priorities change seeking advice and support when needed taking into account deadlines, time available in specialist areas and budgetary constraints.

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	planning and carrying out research analysing and evaluating information
Creative thinkers	using a variety of methods for extracting and generating ideas making connections which are unusual
Reflective learners	considering formal elements when making judgements about the selection of ideas.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	identifying and selecting relevant links from broad overarching sites
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	researching and selecting relevant information about the works of others such as images of work, technical information and development of ideas
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	storing potentially useful identified sources for future access
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarifying brief following procedures described and demonstrated discussing ideas and progress of work participating in a group critique, listening while others make presentations describing how decisions were made to a group contributing to discussion about own and others' works individually and at group critique
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading about selected artists' works and extracting relevant information about the development of their ideas and how they use materials and techniques in a way which is particular to them
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transcribing research information producing records of technical information from about specialist materials and techniques investigations annotating thoughts about ideas, possibilities, alternative decisions, formal elements, aesthetic qualities, function, processes producing written evaluation of what has been learned and how they responded to the theme visually and why they made their decisions.