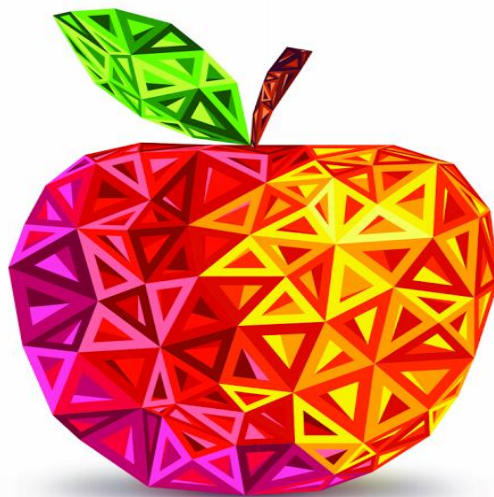Examiners' Report/
Lead Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Art & Design

Unit 7: Developing & Realising Creative
Intentions (31833H)

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A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade (Distinction, Merit and Pass). The grade awarded for each unit contributes proportionately to the overall qualification grade and each unit should always be viewed in the context of its impact on the whole qualification.

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When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

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Unit 7: Developing & realising Creative Intentions (31833H)

Grade	Unclassified	Near Pass	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	8	16	28	40

Introduction

This was the second year that this external assessment was made available for delivery as part of the BTEC Art and Design Level 3 National Diploma and National Extended Diploma qualifications which commenced first teaching in September 2016.

The external assessment gives learners the opportunity to develop and realise their own art and design idea in response to a theme set by Pearson. Learners are expected to produce an art and design piece that exemplifies the skills and knowledge that they have gained throughout the qualification. The external assessment for this unit is designed as a synoptic assessment, meaning that it allows learners to draw upon prior learning, and skills development, from units across the qualification.

The unit is delivered over 120 guided learning hours (GLH) of which the external assessment comprises up to 45 hours (up to 40 hours of informal supervision and 5 hours under supervised conditions). During the teaching time allocated for the unit learners should develop and refine the skills needed to complete the assessment objectives.

- Demonstrate an ability to generate ideas in response to a stimulus.
- Apply understanding of contextual influences and trends to own work and practice.
- Explore materials, techniques and processes to communicate creative intentions.
- Demonstrate an ability to develop work and ideas by reviewing and refining throughout the creative process.
- Be able to plan and realise creative intentions.
- Demonstrate ability to present work which demonstrates development and realisation of final outcome, showing an understanding of professional practice.

For the external assessment learners submit a proposal, documentation of the development and realisation process through a digital portfolio, and a written commentary. The submitted proposal, portfolio and commentary should be presented to a professional standard and should evidence the achievement of the assessment objectives.

General administration of the unit was positive with the majority of centres submitting all work by the published deadline and all required paperwork including, centre register, authentication forms and learner record sheets. It is important that centres take the time to read the administrative guidance for this unit and submit all required paperwork to avoid a delay in the work being assessed. This report is written to highlight findings from submissions this year. Although the size of the cohort taking this unit was relatively small, valuable insight into the unit can be gleaned and used to support future delivery.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

This year the theme for the external assessment was 'Amalgamation'. It was clear from the range of responses that the theme was accessible by all learners who took the external assessment.

As to be expected, the work presented for marking, was varied both in quality and presentation. Many learners used the contextual links and information, contained within the set task brief as a starting point to inform their research.

Learners at the higher mark range were able to use these starting points to branch out and discover independently, contextual links to inform and support their research and ideas development. The resulting work was often individual and creative, with learners making strong connections throughout the creative process from ideas generation, to development and realisation of a final art and design outcome. At the higher mark bands learners evidenced, through the documentation of ideas and material experimentation, the development and refinement of final outcomes.

Some learners did discover additional contextual links from the set task brief but failed to use these effectively, to stimulate ideas, tending to abandon some exciting ideas early, in favour of safer, less creative options. Evidence of the practical development of work and the refinement of outcomes was often partially documented and in some cases this hindered learners abilities to achieve higher marks.

At the lower mark levels, the links to contextual sources to inform ideas was poorly described through written submission and documentation of practical development. Learners in lower mark bands appeared to be working through a list of artists to research without ever making any significant connections to the wider theme or their own contextual references. Final outcomes in lower mark bands tended to be brief, with final ideas being produced which were very close in concept and appearance to sources of contextual research. Little documentation of development and refinement of ideas and outcomes was evident, with practical work often taking the form of pastiche without any real connection with the theme evidenced by the learner.

Task

The external assessment is split into 5 individual activities, which are designed to elicit and allow learners to produce evidence of the assessment objectives.

- Activity 1: an annotated log of the research and initial ideas in response to the theme.
- Activity 2: a proposal explaining the planned response to the theme.
- Activity 3: a piece of art and design in response to the theme.
- Activity 4: a digital portfolio of between 16–20 pages that documents the development and realisation process.
- Activity 5: a written commentary to accompany each page of the digital portfolio.

Of the five activities undertaken by learners three pieces of evidence are submitted to the awarding organisation for marking.

- a proposal explaining the planned response to the theme (Activity 2).
- a digital portfolio of between 16–20 pages (Activity 4).
- a written commentary to accompany each page of the digital portfolio (Activity 5).

The evidence submitted is assessed against the assessment objectives using the published mark scheme. Learners are allocated marks based on their responses.

The assessment objectives are applied holistically, meaning that all evidence submitted is used to support the generation of marks for assessment. This report will focus on the activities submitted for assessment and their relationship to the assessment objectives and assessment criteria.

Note: to support centres, learner work has been used within the commentary to illustrate achievement of assessment objectives. However, it should be noted that these examples provide a snapshot of the learners achievement against a particular assessment objective and may not be indicative of a learners overall performance.

AO1: Demonstrate an ability to generate ideas in response to a stimulus

At the higher mark bands the ability to generate responses to the theme of 'Amalgamation' was often connected to the learners' individual concerns with reference to wider contextual factors that went beyond research into relevant creative practitioners. This would include reference to articulated personal and political concerns such as mental health, relationships and the environment, but also included references to emerging trends in music, fashion, technology and youth culture. The evolution of these starting points was well documented through experimental and playful material practice that obviously influenced ideas generation and outcomes. The evidence for this demonstration could be found easily within the written proposal which was insightful, articulate and grammatically correct, but was also evident through the digital portfolio and written commentary. An extract of learner work is included below:

"I will be using the theme of Mental Health. This is the aspect that will represent amalgamation within my artistic piece. This is because mental health causes a person to experience different emotions, characters, personalities and experiences, but all amalgamates into one person. I want to develop a set of canvases displaying different emotions. I will be focussing on this concept because it is personal to me, whilst also develops something relevant to the set brief. The work I produce will also be art with a reference point to my personal experience with mental health, and so in turn will raise awareness for my chosen theme."
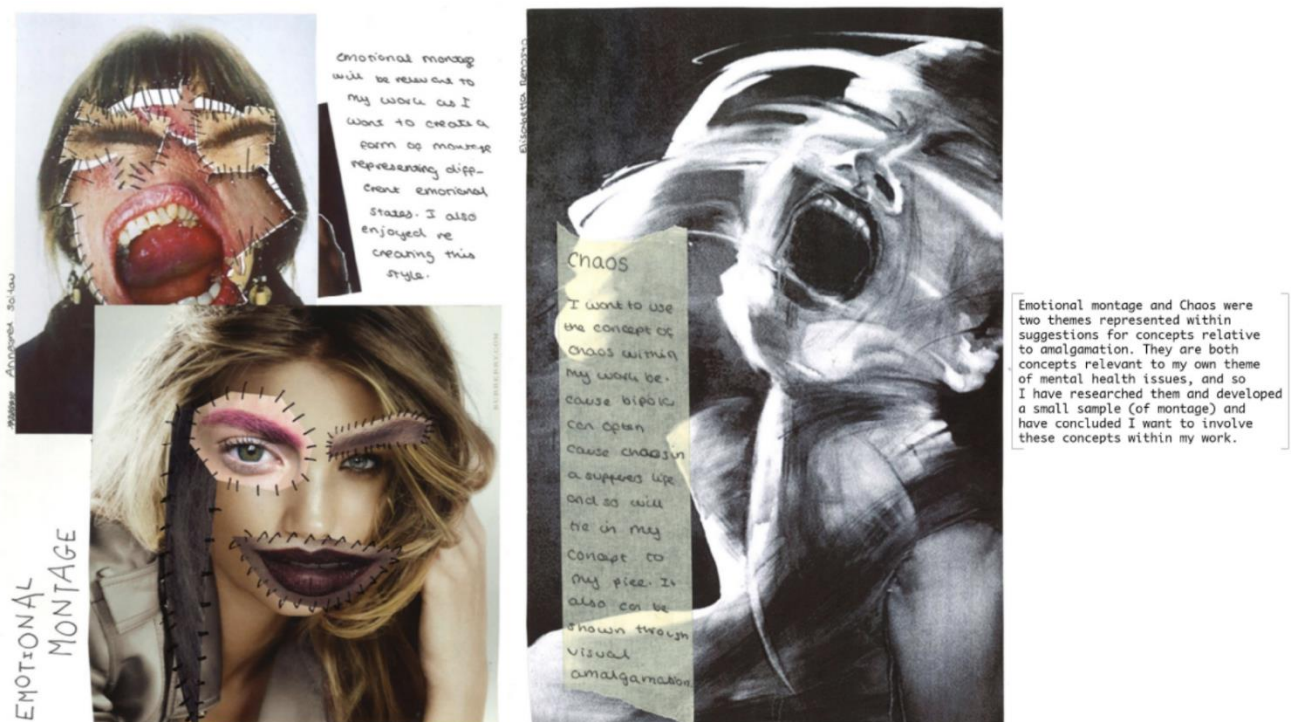
Of the learner documented above the ideas are confidently explained in the proposal with personal links being cited as the focus for making connections between the theme and mental health. There are relevant selections of source material which informs practical exploration to

generate ideas in terms of collage and mixed media experiments documented within the portfolio.

At the lower mark bands learners struggled to articulate ideas beyond a basic level often mimicking work that was presented in the set task brief without forming insightful connections to wider concerns. Material experimentation rarely went beyond pastiche with little evidence of how this process had supported the development of final outcomes. Text within the proposal and written commentary was mainly descriptive with little development or evolution of initial ideas.

Pages 7&8

"My initial ideas for the theme Amalgamation were; merging fictional and nonfictional (cartoon and realistic), combine artists work and to incorporate colour and monochrome colour. However, after I looked further into these ideas I decided on the idea to merge artists work incorporating the idea of colour and monochrome colour."

The proposal generated by this learner demonstrated a basic description of ideas in relation to the theme - the amalgamation of the fictional and non-fictional to create a piece of work and the use of contrasting formal elements. However, the ideas are superficial and tentatively expressed.

AO2: Apply an understanding of contextual influences and trends to own work and practice

At the higher mark bands, evidence for this assessment objective provided real insight into the concerns of the learner. Evidence for this assessment objective was often most perceptive when applied to learners' wider cultural and political concerns. The research went beyond a representation of image and text, to support the evolution of outcomes, and this was evident through the proposal, digital portfolio and written commentary.

Mushpit

Over five years (nine issues), Mushpit could be considered as London's most loved satirical feminist/ fashion/ political magazine. Born as a small zine in a Dalston flat share it found its legs being sold on the dance floor of The Albi (a basement bar in Dalston). Each issue typically takes the theme of a specific crisis Bertie Brandes and Charlotte Roberts are experiencing. Brandes and Roberts make the magazine... "The Sell Out" and "The Confused" issues are examples of this. Issue 09 - almost double the content as previous issues - was steered by the post-Brexit climate.

The zine has grown and is now a fully finished glossy printed magazine, even still on a shoestring budget due to their strict no ads policy and also being London based (even breathing in London is extortionate). The covers have been lensed by Tyrone Lebon (issue 06) and Alice Neale (issue 07). It is easy to give thanks to Mushpit on the surface, after spending some quality time between the covers it is obvious that the winsomeness lies in its details. Its target audience is aimed towards a generation of a short attention span, late teens, twenties. Its content is packed with quizzes, "adverts", untravelled fashion shoots and lonely hearts classifieds pages. For any impatient page turners, Mushpit demands that your attention is well-spent with them. Described as "Thought-provoking, humorous, and eye-opening/eye-rolling... With heaps of genius" it offers the way that if we don't laugh then we're screwed.

I can instantly pick out a common trend that I am noticing everywhere at the moment within people of my age group and interests, gothic type. I am seeing this in instagram bios, artwork, zines, even printed on items of clothing like sweaters and t shirts. I like how personal this magazine feels, it has an effect on me and makes me feel involved and relatable. This is because of techniques used that we would not usually consider when studying photography or art subjects, but everyone uses in everyday life. Pictures/ selfies (even screenshots) taken on phones, documenting simple things in everyday life. This could create a debate if it is art, and I would argue it is. It is a form of photography and design that is documentation based. A realistic subject but there is still lots of concepts throughout. Creativity is still shown by exaggerating or altering narratives such as the page '24 HOURS IN THE LIFE OF GFOTY.' I would like the magazine I create to have similarities to mushpit, but to find and display my own style of working with my own content. I also take inspiration from the different techniques used and artists within this magazine, it is packed with a variety of incentives.
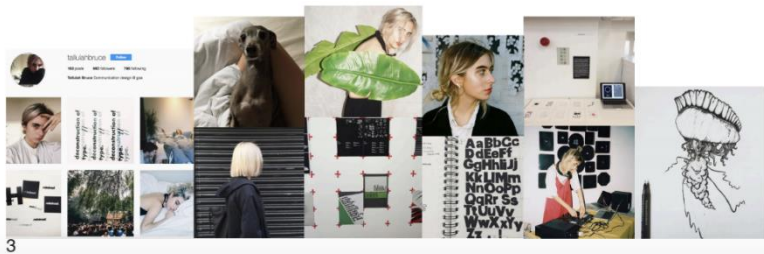
Friends and trends

Tallulah Bruce; "Recently my work has evolved into something more conceptual as the projects I work on are extremely open to interpretation but I must always put my work into context. Prior to the last 6 months, most of my work was digital looking at mostly layout and visuals but recently I have been exploring like the actual physical form of things and how the meaning of something can be changed by which way you look at it and I find that really interesting. So I'd say visually at the moment my work is very developed and sequential in a sense that you can see the steps I have taken towards the final. In addition to that my work is a lot more experimental now, and I'm constantly thinking of original ways to present my work rather than just submitting a sketchbook or pinning up work on a wall. For example my most recent project I submitted my sketchbook made out of the paper that is used in bibles, so throughout the sketchbook you can see through the pages and you can see the progression of my ideas and research. I could definitely branch out on is colour as I mainly stick with primary black and white colours and it definitely makes my work in danger of looking too similar."

Even though Tallulah now lives three hours away by train, we still follow each-other on different networks. I use instagram and pinterest most. When looking at friends work I can see what's trending regarding layout, type, colour and notice similarities and differences on how we work/ what we create. Not just regarding work but also on a personal level seeing what friends are eating, wearing, listening to can interest me and trigger me into trying something. I think its really progressive to share your own work and look at others just as much. For me this could be considered just as useful as 'artist research,' if not more. It is much more personal and detailed. When I look at artists online I usually just analyse finished outcomes (perfect work) and just assume or try to figure out how they could have got there. I often post stages of my work, my friends do this too, and document the journey of a project. I see images of their work in progress, sketchbooks, notes and ideas, and I can see evolution. Different people have different minds and people will have a different percpection and interpretation on things and seeing others work can open your mind to alternatives. Seeing imperfections in others work can give reassurance and confidence that this is necessary when practicing and creating. Of course it also gives us confidence to receive compliments about our work, and it is nice to motivate others. When studying or working in specialised area's, work is what we want to see on our news feed.

3

"Even though Tallulah now lives three hours away by train, we still follow each-other on different networks. I use Instagram and Pinterest most. When looking at friends work I can see what's trending regarding layout, type, colour and notice similarities and differences on how we work/ what we create. Not just regarding work but also on a personal level seeing what friends are eating, wearing, listening to can interest me and trigger me into trying something. I think its really progressive to share your own work and look at others just as much. For me this could be considered just as useful as 'artist research,' if not more. It is much more personal and detailed."

For this response, the learner demonstrated a focused and comprehensive exploration of contextual sources drawing inspiration from a diverse selection of sources such as publications, events, music and artists. This understanding is demonstrated through the learners own work and practice and is used to fully inform ideas.

For learners with lower levels of achievement against this assessment objective contextual references were limited to artists and designers given in the set task brief. With learners rarely exploring additional contextual sources to support the development of ideas and outcomes.

For some learners in lower mark bands contextual references provided limited inspiration and support for the generation of ideas, or the realisation of outcomes. Conversely, for other learners who also failed to achieve higher marks in this assessment objective they were overly influenced by (predominately) artist research which led to derivative outcomes. In both cases learners were unable to demonstrate the link between contextual research and the development of personal responses to the theme.

"I kept my first ideas in my mind as I looked at a list of artists and designers looking for things that I found appalling to look at but also looking for images that were powerful or delicate. I wanted some strong ideas so by focusing on elements from artists that I liked I was able to look for the similar but opposite things in the next artist I looked at."

In this response, the learner developed a fashion related outcome and, although there are links established between artist research and their initial ideas, the commentary, explanation and visual demonstration does not demonstrate understanding of contextual sources beyond a basic level. The lack of a range of fashion references compound this issue.

AO3: Explore materials, techniques and processes to communicate creative intentions

Achievement of the higher mark bands of AO3: explore, materials, techniques and processes supported the evolution and refinement of ideas and outcomes. The exploration was focused and lead to a depth of understanding which was demonstrated through the portfolio and written commentary.

"Glitch photography is created by manipulating and corrupting an images digital code to create a distorted image. The resulting images are polluted with a disarray of colours and lines. To create these I opened the images code and rearranged, deleted and edited the text.

These technique works well with my chosen subject as the glitching and missing code can represent the eradication of the natural places featured in the photograph. The process is unpredictable, with images often becoming too corrupted and unopenable. However, this unpredictability can be related to the unpredictable long-term effects of pollution on nature."

Here, the learner had been able to demonstrate a comprehensive and fluent exploration of materials, techniques and processes which were relevant to creative intentions but also inform and support the generation of ideas and outcomes, for example the use of glitch photography and its relation the learner's creative intentions.

Lower attaining learners were not able to demonstrate exploration of materials techniques and processes beyond a basic level. With little visual or written documentation to support higher achievement, some learners also struggled to make links to their creative intentions and the materials, techniques and processes they explored.

"As I looked into more detail of tule and how it went on the stand I tried I pinned it in many different ways by gathering my own primary research I then started top see how I would show this from the mannequin onto the human body."

Here there is a basic exploration of materials, techniques and processes which although relevant to the creative intentions does not go beyond a basic application and exploration.

AO4: Demonstrate an ability to develop work and ideas by reviewing and refining throughout the creative process

Evidence for this assessment objective can be found through the written proposal, visual portfolio and written commentary. At the higher mark bands learners were able to document and review their development process, clearly describing their creative journey and articulating decisions they have made in relation to outcomes. Some learners addressed this assessment objective by including a midpoint evaluation or development review. Although this is not a specific requirement for learners in the assessment it did provide evidence of review and therefore support learners achievement of this assessment objective.

Page 15 and 16 compile the cyanotypes for my final outcome. I used photoshop to place Nestle and Tesco branding on my images and then inverted them to create negatives.I then placed the negatives onto paper coated with the Cyanotype emulsion and exposed for 15 minutes.

"Midpoint evaluation
My final outcome will concentrate specifically on the effect consumerism and pollution has on nature. I will do this by amalgamating the photographs subject with the physical matter of rubbish; creating labels using the cyanotype process which will then be wrapped around used tins, bottles and cardboard boxes. These labels will include logos and branding of unethical food companies. I will then place these in a cupboard and photograph to create a double page spread for national geographic.

I will use Tesco Everyday Value and Nestle cereal branding. I chose Nestle due to their involvement in several unethical practices. They own over 8,000 brands and are the worlds biggest producer of bottled water. This means their environmental impact is huge and they are often reported as one of the biggest contributors to plastic pollution."

Here the learner has demonstrated an exceptional ability to review processes and outcomes and to use that understanding to make perceptive choices in the development of work. This is demonstrated through the insightful commentary which accompanies the portfolio sheets and also in the visual evolution of the work.

Learners in the lower mark bands for this assessment objective provided little evidence of review and refinement of ideas and outcomes through the development process. Written commentary was descriptive and there was little explanation, documentation or evolution of experiments with materials, techniques and processes to final outcomes. In some submissions, work included in the portfolio was seemingly unconnected to final outcomes moving from pastiche of work by existing artists to seemingly unconnected final outcomes, with basic documentation and limited explanation of choices.


Development of final piece.

"I then collected images of recognisable and important characters to the film that would be easily recognised by everyone. I chose to collect the images in cartoon form as I wanted to experiment with cutting them out and a cartoon image was a more basic form of getting the shapes I needed of the characters."

In this response, there is little evidence of review to refine work and ideas. The selection of imagery has not been questioned or investigated and the use of materials, techniques and processes is not sufficiently explored to allow for effective review of choices. There is evidence of a basic dialogue in terms of documenting and describing process.

AO5: Be able to plan and realise creative intentions

At the higher mark bands for this assessment objective learners were able to demonstrate the ability to synthesise research, ideas and experiments into a coherent and creative outcome. Illustrating through submitted evidence the ability to carry out an effective creative process.
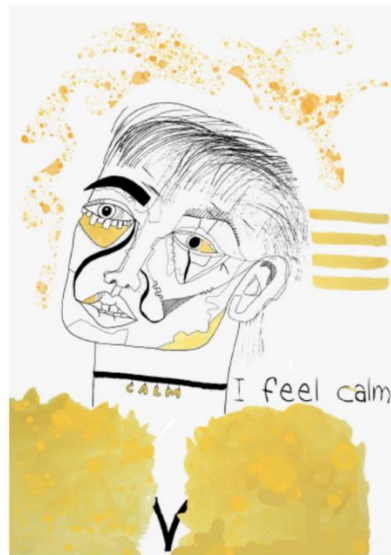
In this response, the learner presents work that demonstrates a thoughtful interpretation of the theme, with a confident ability to bring together technical and conceptual elements. The application of material, techniques and processes is effective in realising the learner's creative intentions.

Learners in lower mark bands were unable to demonstrate an evolution of ideas and outcomes through the proposal, digital portfolio and written commentary. Initial ideas and responses made basic connections to the theme. For example, collage was frequently used as a response to the theme without evidence of the technique adding or generating ideas to support the development of outcomes. Learners who were unable to achieve higher marks in this assessment objective were not able to evidence connections between the various activities required and how these supported the development of a final outcome.


In this response, the learner demonstrates a competent ability to realise the intentions outlined in their proposal, and their intentions are partially achieved. There is not, however, enough evidence of process or effective exploration of ideas to demonstrate higher achievement in this assessment objective.'

AO6: Demonstrate ability to present work which demonstrates development and realisation of final outcome, showing an understanding of professional practice

The assessment task asks for the digital portfolio to be presented as a pdf, however, not all learners submitted pdf portfolios for assessment. Learners were not penalised for this error, in this series. However, understanding the requirements of submission is a key area of professional practice and learners should understand how to export files to pdf as part of the teaching and learning for this unit.

For higher achieving learners there was a clarity to the proposal, digital portfolio and written commentary that demonstrated the development process and evolution of ideas to produce a final outcome. Learners were able to evidence connections between research and material outcomes to present a cogent and creative response to the theme. Higher attaining learners used effective presentation techniques and accomplished written communication to evidence the development process. Digital portfolios were well formatted with relevant information clearly displayed. Text did not dominate portfolio pages but was used to support images. Images documenting outcomes were clear and easy to read.
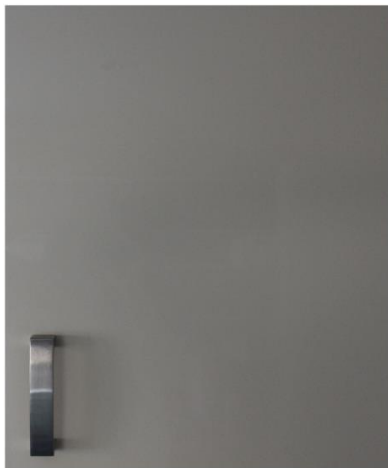

"This is a mock-up of how my work would be presented in a magazine. The images would be displayed on a pull-out double page spread, acting as though you were opening a cupboard door."

This is a mock-up of how my work would be presented in a magazine. The images would be displayed on a pull-out double page spread, acting as though you were opening a cupboard door. The

This learner has produced a sophisticated presentation which demonstrates the ability to develop work and ideas. A convincing and detailed creative journey has been documented and this enhanced the strengths and qualities of this work.

For learners who achieved lower marks against this assessment objective the presentation of the proposal, digital portfolio and written commentary failed to enhance the qualities of the work. The quality of information presented for assessment is a key area for this assessment objective and learners were disadvantaged by poor presentation of information on portfolio pages and poor documentation of outcomes and practical work. Although it is perfectly acceptable and appropriate that learners use images of sketchbook for their portfolio, more care should be taken on the formatting and placement of work on the page to support higher achievement.
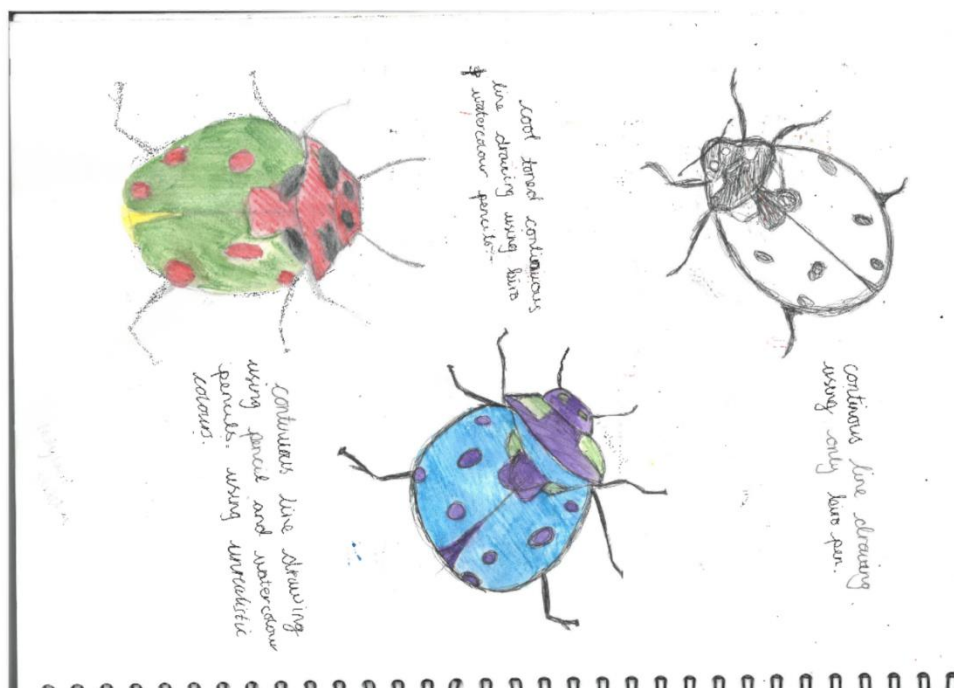
The limited nature of the work presented has affected achievement for this assessment objective. The learner has shown limited understanding of professional practice and they have not demonstrated that they can produce more than a basic development of work and ideas.

Summary

Recommendations for centres:

General

The set task brief is designed as a stimulus for learners to support the development of ideas. The stimulus material is not designed as a checklist for learners or a guide on how to approach the theme. The stimulus material provides an illustration of how the theme can be explored with links to relevant artists. Learners can also achieve higher marks by developing personal connections to the theme.

Demonstrate an ability to generate ideas in response to a stimulus

Learners need to illustrate the development of ideas through the digital portfolio and written commentary. Individual projects should evolve and allow learners to present their exploration, and document how ideas have developed.

Apply an understanding of contextual influences and trends to own work and practice

Achievement of this assessment criteria is not only demonstrated through research in to artists and designers. Higher achievement in this series was evident in learners who were also able to relate their practical work to their own particular interests and concerns. This could additionally be demonstrated through current trends (not necessarily related to a particular discipline) in music and cinema, as well as personal motivations, connected to the theme. The ability to illustrate wider cultural and personal references and relate these to the theme demonstrates the ability to synthesise information and could be used to justify choices. This approach will help learners to develop and demonstrate high order skills.

Explore materials, techniques and processes to communicate creative intentions

The relationship to creative intentions is a key part of this assessment objective and this is limited when demonstrated by weaker pastiche responses that have little relevance to final outcomes. Learners would be better advised to explore materials, techniques and processes related to their creative intentions rather than merely documenting a range of processes which do not inform the development of their ideas and outcomes. For example documenting different layout designs and fonts in graphic design or producing and documenting toiles and material samples in fashion.

Demonstrate an ability to develop work and ideas by reviewing and refining throughout the creative process
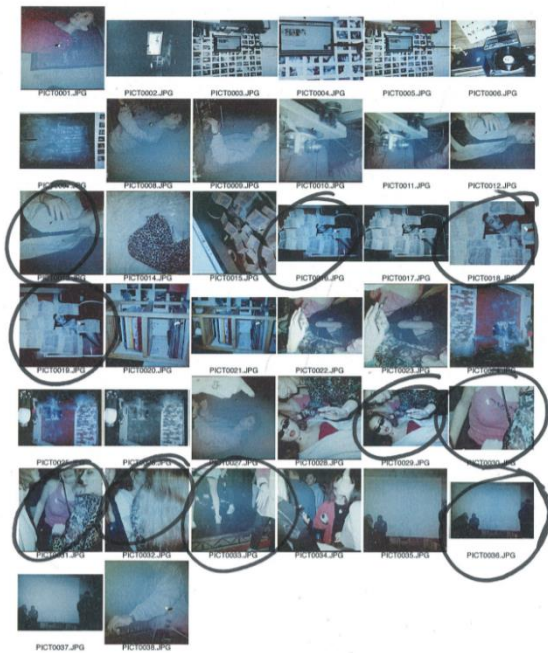
This assessment objective can be supported by reference to assessment objective 3 where learners would be advised to document practical experiments. This will allow learners to demonstrate the evolution of outcomes and can be used to justify choices. Evidence for the assessment objective can be achieved through written commentary but also illustrated through samples and experiments which are resolved into final outcomes.

An effective example of visual evidence of review and refine could be through the presentation of a contact sheet with images selected. Supported by written commentary in which choices are articulated this provides an effective demonstration of reviewing and refining work and ideas.

It may also benefit learners to include a brief, mid-development review or midpoint evaluation (although not a requirement of assessment) to help structure learners and support the production of evidence for this assessment criteria.

Be able to plan and realise creative intentions

More evidence is needed to document the development process to ensure higher achievement in this assessment objective. In this assessment series learners with little evidence of development from proposal to outcome were unable to demonstrate how their contextual research and material experiments connected to make a final outcome. Often for these learners demonstration was confined to pastiche with little evidence of the evolution of their ideas and outcome.

Demonstrate ability to present work which demonstrates development and realisation of final outcome, showing an understanding of professional practice

Centres are encouraged to ensure that learners are able to export portfolios to pdf formats as this is a requirement of submission and an illustration of professional behaviour.

Evidence from sketchbooks is relevant to the development process but in most cases more attention should be given to how sketchbook pages are photographed and presented on portfolio pages.

Lengthy written commentary should be avoided on portfolio pages as these pages represent an opportunity for learners to showcase practical skills. Font sizes should also be considered

so that written information does not needlessly dominate pages where visual information is key.

Using multiple images per page and images of different sizes to illustrate the relative importance of visual information can all help to demonstrate the development process.

Understanding how portfolio pages can be presented is a key skill which supports higher achievement of this assessment objective and should be taught as part of the unit. The ability to document work using photography is a key factor when presenting work to a professional standard. In this series there were examples of work that was poorly lit, out of focus, poorly framed and placed in busy environments which detract from the learners' work and did not do justice to the work presented. Although it is acknowledged that different institutions have different facilities and levels of expertise in this area, it is recommend that learners are taught to photograph work in daylight, on plain backgrounds and ensure that work is in focus. In most cases this would support attainment in this assessment objective.

Written commentary should be pertinent to the development process and offer further insight into the concerns of learners. Learners should try to justify decisions through the written commentary and try to articulate why decisions have been made.