

Examiners' Report June 2009

Principal Learning

Creative and Media
Level 3

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June 2009

Publications Code DP021619

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Principal Learning Creative and Media

Level 3 Introduction

This is an opportunity to report on the moderation of the Advanced Diploma in Creative and Media at the end of the first year of the qualification. This report concentrates on the quality of assessed learner work and the techniques employed by teachers to provide an opportunity for learners to achieve the qualification.

The June 2009 moderation series was undertaken using a small sample of learner work. As this qualification requires a two year cycle for completion it was clear that only partial coverage of the qualification would be seen in the first year.

The work review at moderation consisted of a range of learner work across all of the units with the exception of Unit 5 Evaluation. There were some excellent examples of innovative approaches to the delivery and assessment of this qualification. There was some clear learner engagement with creative across a range of creative and media forms.

General comments

The range of work seen demonstrated the creative learning that is taking place in centres. However, there were some serious issues of over marking learner work. There must be sufficient evidence in the learner's process portfolio to demonstrate their achievement in the appropriate mark band. Teachers are reminded to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to justify the marks awarded for a particular learning outcome.

Learners must engage in the process across a whole unit of work rather than taking snapshots of assessment activities that have no clear focus. For instance, using a presentation on Method Acting for LO1 in Unit 1 Capture and then producing a portfolio of photographic work from a local park. In this instance there is no clear focus across all the learning outcomes and the resulting work is inconsistent and unfocused.

There were some good examples of learners showing their work in Unit 2 Show and again some good examples of learners interacting with a local charity for Unit 3 Interaction. There were examples of commission work in Unit 4 Commission that demonstrated the learner's ability to manage a commission.

The use of ICT was evident in work from centres that used web based process portfolios although it was sometimes difficult to open the individual learners folders and even more difficult to access some of the video or audio files.

There was little evidence for achievement in Unit 6 Investigation as only a small number of learners were entered for this unit. It is important to remember that this unit required the learner to undertake an in depth investigation into a practitioner that covers more than one discipline. Learners must be able to use critical methodology in their work and reflect on how practitioners work might influence their own work. It is not an opportunity to simply write an essay about an artist.

Level 3 Unit 1: Capture

The range of learner work reviewed in this unit was variable. Where teachers had provided a wide range of stimulus material the learners were able to focus on a form of capture and then follow this through to the completion of a capture product.

In one instance the learners appear to have been given existing essay titles that bore no resemblance to the capture topic. In this instance the learners were unable to focus on the capture theme and then experiment with and produce their own capture product. This resulted in a lack of on-going monitoring and historical evaluation documents.

Other learners were able to focus on a particular form of capture and then experiment with and produce relevant capture products. Some of the work was innovative and creative whilst some was acceptable but failed to meet the higher mark bands.

Learner's investigations into past and current practice of their chosen medium did not inform their own capture work. In many cases learners were using information from sources that had not been referenced.

Learners should be given an opportunity to experiment with ideas and techniques to enable them to grow and develop skills in capture techniques. Much of the experimental work seen was limited by the centres choice of projects and the prescription of providing the same project for all learners. This unit should provide an opportunity for learners to develop their individual skills in capturing work in an appropriate and exciting way.

Some capture projects were produced to a high standard, however some work was limited by the project briefs. This meant that some learners were unable to produce innovative and creative capture products.

The majority of learners simply evaluated their work rather than engaging with an on-going monitoring process. There was little discussion on cultural, economic, political or social factors that might have influenced their work. Learners need to understand that this is not an opportunity to review their work at the end of the unit. They should be monitoring their work and making changes as they progress through the unit and then reviewing their work at the end. Generally, there was a lack of critical discussion in the learners' work.

Level 3 Unit 2: Show

This unit provided an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their understanding, knowledge and skills across a range of media forms. This might be a performance or an exhibition that allows the learner to contribute to, publicise and run a show and then gather responses to the show.

The focus for learning outcome 1 needs to be on the principles of showing creative and media work. A number of the portfolios seen concentrated on the content produced by practitioners rather than how the content was produced. The learning outcome also requires learners to study how practitioners develop their practice and process over time. It is clear for example that artists, composers, film directors and choreographers develop their approach by exploring practices and refining or re-defining them.

A requirement of mark band 3 is that 'well chosen supporting evidence' is provided in order for the marks to be awarded. This is developed through 'extensive and well-focussed research'. The moderating team saw little evidence of this occurring, although it was not totally missing.

In most of the learner work moderated, the 'Show' was created by a team of learners. It is absolutely critical that each learner clearly identifies his or her role in the team and that the centre corroborates this involvement with detailed comments about the individual learner's involvement. Too many learners wrote about their involvement using the plural 'we'. The individual learner voice is critical in this (and other) units.

Centres need to be clear that all learners need to be involved in each learning outcome. A number of centres supported an event management approach to this unit, where smaller teams within the one large diploma cohort, take on separate responsibilities for each 'section' of the 'Show'. In itself, the event management model is very supportive and a positive model for this type of activity. However, each learner must have evidence of their own involvement in this aspect of the unit. As a result, some event management models, where publicity and marketing is given to one learner and or a smaller group of learners within an overall event management team, meant that not all learners had participated in this aspect of the unit.

Inevitably if an event management model has been used by a centre, again what has been indicated above for LO3, could also apply to LO4. The learning Outcome requires learners to be actively engaged in two very important activities; the management of resources and risk assessment. All learners must show evidence of their own involvement in both. Learners must be able to experience and document risk assessment procedures with the scope of the 'Show' in order to obtain appropriate marks. There was some evidence in a small number of learners work seen where risk assessment was evident. Where a 'Show' takes place in a venue away from a school / college or in collaboration with a partner that may own a venue, this aspect becomes an integral part of the activity

As suggested in learning outcome 2, the importance of audience feedback is critical to learning outcome 5. The collection of data, its analysis, conclusions drawn from and the comparison of different responses to the 'Show' will support a learner's ability to achieve a higher mark.

By encouraging formative feedback through a 'production log, production journal or a production blog' (where both words and images are captured) the process of recording the 'Show' for the purpose of assessment of the unit, could become integral to the process of creating the 'Show'; critical reflection and development operating within the learner's own realm of experience.

Centres must ensure that all work presented for moderation has been identified as the learner's own work.

Teachers must ensure that the mark awarded for Mark Grid B (in this unit only) reflects the learner's ability to set up and run a show. Teachers must provide clear evidence of the learner's ability through comprehensive observation records, witness statements and learners logs.

Level 3 Unit 3: Interaction

It would appear from the evidence presented for moderation that many centres had not planned the project work for the unit so that learners would have opportunities to meet the assessment criteria. In many cases it appeared that 'stock' assignments had been used with minimal amendment to take account of the very different nature of the Creative and Media qualification and the requirements of the unit specifications. There was in some cases limited understanding of or application of the terminology in the specification that provides information through which centres might interpret the unit and gain some information about the kinds of evidence that are expected.

In the best practice seen activities had been designed so that the unit criteria were fully addressed. These projects began with the idea of interaction and encouraged learners to work in imaginative and, in some cases, independent ways that were responsive to the needs and characteristics of their chosen partners. In these cases learners had the opportunity of working with a range of partners and had developed productive relationships and had maintained strong contacts with the partner groups.

The evidence for learning outcome 3 was not always fully documented although in the best work learners seemed to be aware of the financial and legal constraints that influence interaction work. There were instances of learners who had produced costings for some of their activities and had worked to budgets.

The work produced for many projects used appropriate media and creative techniques. In some cases these were of a sophisticated nature and resulted from applied experimentation and exploration of alternative approaches to the project brief. The documentation of the processes involved in the project work was reliable and consistent. In one instance the resulting video promotional material clearly demonstrated the learner's interaction with the client.

For learning outcome 5 there was a tendency to produce an historical survey of the chosen media or practice but the links between this and the learners' own practice were not well established and in poor projects the links were tenuous or non-existent.

Level 3 Unit 4: Commission

In some instances centres defined the commission work that the learners would undertake. This restricted the learner's ability to fully interact with the client and manage the project independently.

There was in the best work for this unit a clear sense of intention and objectives accompanied by purposeful and realistic planning. Other projects, notably often those that lacked a clearly defined and resolved brief, failed to realise an appropriate level of focus and direction. This resulted in mere collections of source material that did not inform the project work or stimulate alternative ideas.

Some centres had provided learners with a survey of audience types as background information although these had rarely impacted on the design process or the finished outcome of the projects. The links between the target audience and the technologies used to produce the outcomes were sometimes hinted at but not fully explored.

The work produced for these projects used appropriate media and creative techniques. In some cases these were of a sophisticated nature and resulted from applied experimentation and exploration of alternative approaches to the client brief. In weaker work presented by some centres there was limited evidence of skill or understanding of processes and techniques at an appropriate level. The lack of visual language skills and technical competence had adversely affected learners' ability to pursue project ideas to satisfactory conclusions. The documentation of the processes involved in the best project work was regular and consistent, weaker portfolios showed little understanding of design or media processes. There were instances where amateur snapshots were presented as evidence of photographic outcomes that showed little understanding of the level of achievement required at this level of qualification.

Where the learners had been given free rein to explore potential clients and research into their needs there was a real interaction happening. In one instance there was a real sense of the learners taking on board the commission and producing an effective music event. However, as seen in other work across the qualification, there was insufficient identification of individual's contribution to the whole commission process.

There was some effective project work evaluations by learners against the original briefs and in best practice feedback had been obtained from clients and others. Alternative ideas and approaches were discussed and there was critical analysis and evaluation of both the project process and final outcomes. Weaker portfolios tended to simply describe what had been done in carrying out the project work and contained no suggestions for future development or refinement of the work.

Level 3 Unit 5: Evaluation

No work submitted in the moderation series

Level 3 Unit 6: Investigation

The work that was presented used the correct external assessment template although learners did not always provide a word count.

The work seen was generally poorly constructed and provided little evidence of critical methodology being applied. Learners appeared to have been given a set of essay questions that did not match the requirements of the unit. Learners must be able to explore the work of a practitioner who crosses creative and media disciplines. The learner should choose someone who interests them and who may have influenced their own work. The learner must be given appropriate time to conduct their investigations and create a research log of their own research activities.

The learner must be able to provide evidence of a sustained investigation into an appropriate practitioner providing evidence of their research. They must be able to:

- Identify the sources or materials looked at
- State when and where they were found
- State where they were found and, where relevant, how one source led to or connected with another
- Summarise very briefly what was learnt from them

In this moderation series the research work was limited to one or two days of research with little or no identification of sources or how these had been useful in the investigations. Learners must provide clear evidence of their research trail with correct referencing.

The use of simple essay titles that make no mention of the cross disciplinary approach required provide little or no support for learners.

Learners must be aware of the link between being able to understand and apply critical methodology to their own critical responses to the chosen practitioner.

Teachers might consider providing a menu of appropriate practitioners for their learners. They could then suggest particular routes that learners might take in their own investigations whilst considering the critical methodology used by other.

It is expected that every learner will produce a research log that demonstrates the depth and intensity of their research.

Teachers need to consider the process driven nature of this qualification. Learners need to provide evidence of the process rather than simply producing a product. There needs to be evidence throughout the process portfolio of the learner reflecting on and monitoring their work in order to refine their own work. Retrospective evaluation will not provide sufficient evidence to meet learning outcome 5.

In order to achieve the highest marks the teacher must provide learners with assignment briefs that are written to address Mark Band 3. This allows all learners access to the highest marks.

Teachers must ensure that all the elements of each learning outcome are delivered and assessed. It is important for each learner to demonstrate coverage of all the learning outcomes in their work.

Teachers must provide an explanation of the language used in the mark bands. For example, 'critically discuss' should involve the learner in analysis, comparison and contrasting when comparing their work to professional practice.

Teachers must make use of observation records to compliment their assessment of issues such as management of projects, management of health and safety procedures and substantial and innovative contributions to production of materials.

Teachers should provide feedback on assessment to learners that allow them to action plan for success. This feedback should be firmly linked to the assessment focus in each learning outcome.

Teachers and learners should use the most efficient techniques and methods for presenting evidence for assessment. A range of assessment tools can be used to encourage and motivate learners. As seen in some of the samples moderated in this series the learners were able to experiment, at an early stage in their development, with a wide range of techniques and methods. The use of web logs motivated the learners to keep comprehensive records of their skill development and a personal record of their achievement.

Research plans for planning and production should be clearly identified and sources of information recorded accurately by learners. Un-annotated downloads from the internet do not provide evidence of learners ability to undertake research. Learners should keep comprehensive records of their research activities using appropriate logging techniques to demonstrate the depth and validity of their research work.

Planning for production documentation must clearly indicate the work undertaken by a learner. The use of photocopied team production documentation does not provide evidence of the learner's contribution to the planning process. Learners must clearly annotate the evidence that they have produced. Planning documentation should be relevant to the work related nature of the qualification. Teachers must ensure that documentation follows creative and media industry practices.

Assessed work presented for moderation must comply with the evidence requirements as laid down in the 'What You Need to Learn' and the Marking Grids.

Consortium leaders and teachers should consider the wider use of technology in the delivery and assessment of the Diploma. This may be contentious as many local education authorities do not allow learners access to technology such as YouTube and Facebook. However, there should be an opportunity for Diploma learners to be granted access to technology that they can use to improve the quality of their research and production work and their communication skills.

This has been an interesting opportunity to review a range of work produced by learners. The first year has clearly demonstrated that there is a real potential for learners to investigate, interact and produce media products in an innovative and exciting way.

Statistics

Level 3 Unit 1 Capture

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	54	48	42	36	30	24
Points Score	21	18	15	12	9	6	3

Level 3 Unit 2 Show

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	53	47	41	35	30	25
Points Score	21	18	15	12	9	6	3

Level 3 Unit 3 Interaction

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	53	47	41	35	29	24
Points Score	21	18	15	12	9	6	3

Level 3 Unit 4 Commission

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	53	47	41	35	29	24
Points Score	21	18	15	12	9	6	3

Level 3 Unit 5 Evaluation

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	54	48	42	36	30	24
Points Score	21	18	15	12	9	6	3

Level 3 Unit 6 Investigation

	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	54	48	42	36	30	24
Points Score	21	18	15	12	9	6	3

Notes

Centres are reminded that this is the first summer examination for this new specification and that boundaries may change in the following series

Maximum Mark (raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme or mark grids.

Raw boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a learner to qualify for a given grade.

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Order Code DP021619 June 2009

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