

# Examiners' Report

January 2010

Principal Learning

## Creative and Media Level 3 Controlled Assessments

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January 2010

Publications Code DP022717

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## Level 3 Principal Learning in Creative and Media

This report gives feedback on the moderation and examination of the Level 3 Advanced Diploma units for the January 2010 series, the second year of the qualification. The 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 internally assessed work reviewed during moderation exercise consisted of a range of learner work across all of the units. There were some excellent examples of innovative and creative approaches to the delivery and assessment of this qualification. There was some clear learner engagement with the creative process across a range of creative and media forms.

The sample of work moderated this series was small. As this qualification requires a two year cycle for completion it was clear that only partial coverage of the qualification would be seen at this point.

### Introduction

The range of work seen demonstrated the creative learning that is taking place in centres. However, there were some 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 must only award marks when the learner has produced sufficient evidence to warrant these marks.

Learners must be working at Level 3 and the range of activities provided by the teacher must address this level. There was some evidence of lack of rigour in providing learners with assignments at Level 3.

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, learners being given an interactive partner that allows for little or no research into a range of potential partners. Where an interactive partner has been given to a group of learners this results in a lack of research activity and the potential for lack of individual feedback from the partner. There is also a lack of focus on providing the partner with appropriate individual support and advice

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 organisation 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. When this occurs it may be the case that the work is returned to the centre. Centres should check carefully that any work sent for moderation can be accessed easily.

There was limited evidence of 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 a performer, musician or artist that has only limited depth of experience or work in their chosen disciplines.

Similarly, the work for Unit 5 Evaluation should demonstrate the learners understanding of the work they have produced in two projects and their intentions for further study or a career in the creative and media sector.

## 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.

The moderation team felt that many learners were restricted by the options provided by their teachers. Learners should be given an opportunity to experiment with ideas and techniques to enable them to 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 set by the teacher. This meant that some learners were unable to produce innovative and creative capture products.

There was, in some instances, a reliance on group activities rather than an individual response to the unit. Where this occurred it was evident that learners had similar production documentation for their capture product. If group work is used then each learner must have clear evidence of their own work for the planning and production work.

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 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

Teachers must ensure that learners are provided with appropriate resources and materials in order to investigate, experiment with and produce appropriate media products.



## 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 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 only limited evidence of this happening, although it was not totally missing

In most of the learner work moderated, the 'Show' was created by a team of learners. It is essential 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' rather than 'I'. The individual learner voice is critical in this and other units. Some centres were generous in the awarding of marks for this unit.

Inevitably if a performance approach has been adopted by a centre there must be clear recognition of the role of each learner in the performance. There must be a clear indication by the teacher as to the identity of each learner especially if the assessment depends on a performance role. 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 of risk assessment being undertaken, however, in many cases this was a risk assessment form that had been prepared by the teacher and not fully completed by the learner. 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' supports 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 learners 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 using the Mark B assessment record.



### Unit 3: Interaction

It would appear from the evidence presented for moderation that many centres had not planned effectively for the project work for the unit. Learners must have an opportunity to identify and research a range of potential partners. In some 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.

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.

This unit requires the learner to be interactive with the partner, demonstrating sensitivity to and understanding of the needs of the partner. This needs to be evidenced by minutes of meetings, emails between the partner and the learner or letters written by the learner and the partner.

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

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.



## 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 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 learner's 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.

Where the learners had been given free reign 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 event that required the learners to organise a 1940's Tea Dance.

Where learners had been provided with a client and then also provided with the materials to produce their commission work there was little evidence of learner motivation. Where the learner had worked individually with a client and been given the tools to produce their own commission work the learner produced appropriate responses.

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.



## Unit 5: Evaluation

There was limited work presented for examination of this unit and the work that was presented did not always use the correct external assessment template. Generally, the work seen in Sections A and B did show evidence of the learners writing about the work they had undertaken for two projects. The evidence of evaluative comment was limited therefore the consideration given to the factors that influenced work lacked discussion.

The work for Section C demonstrated a range of evidence from vague statements of intent to quite detailed descriptions of courses in higher education and identification of potential progression routes. Some learners discussed visits, particularly in the stronger responses. There was limited evidence of research into job specifications, qualifications and skills required to work in particular job roles. There was little evidence of the recording of discussions with other people to support decision making on progression.

Often, learners failed to identify how other creative and media practitioners influenced them in their own work. They also failed to identify whether or not the process, techniques and media used were appropriate and effective. Learners must keep effective records that allow them to focus on the ways in which their work was affected by the needs of an audience. They must be able to comment in an effective way on the strengths and weaknesses of their work, the problems they encountered and how they overcame them and the changes they would make, if they could.

The learner's evaluative record should demonstrate their effective communication with external parties, reflections on primary research, notes and records and a personal progression plan.

Learners must be able to understand how to evaluate their own development over time using feedback and other sources. This will relate to their intentions for progression.

Learners must be able to demonstrate their understanding of appropriate progression routes, undertake visits to relevant organisations and institutions, discuss their plans with other people and be able to develop a personal progression plan.



## Unit 6: Investigation

There was limited work presented for examination of this unit. The work that was presented did not always use the correct external assessment template and many learners failed to provide a word count.

The work seen was generally poorly constructed and provided little evidence of critical methodology being applied. Learners once again 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 works across 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.

Where learners had fully engaged with the requirements of this unit they were able to produce effective research logs, use a wide range of research activities and produce a critical review using appropriate critical methodology.

Where learners had used a practitioner with a limited range of work available for review, they failed to provide an effective review of their work. Many learners choose a practitioner from the film, television or acting professions where their coverage of two disciplines is limited. Minor celebrities may not have a range of work across two disciplines and learners may find it difficult to research fully into their work.

Learners who chose practitioners such as Andy Warhol or David Hockney were able to find relevant research materials and a range of information from both primary and secondary sources.

The learners must produce a research log that demonstrates the research trail they have used. The log should be chronological, identify each source in such a way that someone else could find it, indicate how they found it, when and where they found it and briefly summarise what they have learnt.

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

The research work was sometimes 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 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.



## Summary

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. Unannotated 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 cover' and the Marking Grids.

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.



## 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

**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.

**Please note:** *Principal Learning qualifications are new qualifications, and grade boundaries for Controlled Assessment units should not be considered as stable. These grade boundaries may differ from series to series.*

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Order Code DP022717 January 2010

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