

Examiners' Report

Summer 2010

Principal Learning

Creative and Media Level 3 Controlled Assessments

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Level 3 Principal Learning in Creative and Media

Introduction

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

The work review at moderation 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 the range of creative and media forms.

It was good to see the ways in which both teachers and learners are now engaging with the level of evidence required to achieve the qualification. There is clear evidence that many teachers are using innovative and creative teaching techniques. This enables the learner to produce work that is creative, experimental and reflective of professional practice across the creative and media sectors.

General comments

The range of work seen, demonstrated the creative teaching and learning that is now 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 appropriate assignments at this level. In order to achieve at the highest level learners must be provided with appropriate support and guidance. It is also important that learners know what is expected of them when working 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, being provided with a project for commission where there is no commission brief or even a commissioner. This then leads to a lack of focus on providing appropriate commission work for a client or feedback from the client. 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 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 innovative material 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. Centres

must check the specification clearly to ensure that appropriate files sizes and types are used.

There was evidence of growing understanding of the work required for Unit 6 Investigation. 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 career.

There was some evidence of centres linking work across two or more units. The size and structure of each unit suggest that they are delivered as standalone assessment opportunities. Similarly, evidence for assessment must be discrete for each unit. Evidence for assessment must not be provided in a folder or sketchbook that covers more than one unit.

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 an 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.

It may be appropriate for the teacher to consider looking at Learning Outcome 4 as a starting point for developing an assignment. The choice of capture project can lead the work across the first three learning outcomes.

Some of the 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. Where the learner had chosen an appropriate investigation this then led to planning, experimentation and product of an appropriate 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 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 set by the teacher. 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 often limited evidence of discussion on cultural, economic, political or social factors that might have influenced their own 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

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 provides an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their understanding, knowledge and skills across a range of creative and 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 portfolios concentrated on the materials or products produced by practitioners rather than how the materials or products were produced. The learning outcome also requires learners to study how practitioners develop their practice and process over time. It is clear that creative and media practitioners 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 a performance based 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 performance based model is very supportive and a positive model for this type of activity. However, each learner must have evidence of their own involvement in every aspect of the unit. As a result, some performance models, where publicity and marketing is given to one learner and or a smaller group of learners within a team, meant that not all learners had participated in every aspect of the 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 within 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 manages a venue this aspect becomes an important integral part of the activity

As identified 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 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.

Unit 3 Interaction

It would appear from the evidence presented for moderation that many centres had not fully considered the implications of work for the unit. Learners must research into local groups and identify local cultural diversity. In many cases it appeared that the teacher had used existing links developed through other qualifications 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 many 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, maintaining strong contacts with the partner groups.

In some instances the learners had been provided with an interactive partner thus limiting their research into potential partners. Some of the given partners were based 'in-house' and this in turn led to a lack of outside influences and feedback from the interactive 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 a budget for some of their activities and had worked to the budget.

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 photographic evidence and feedback from the interactive partner demonstrated the depth of interaction work that had taken place. Working with a group of disadvantaged young people gave the learners a real opportunity to use their creative and media skills to good effect.

For Learning Outcome 5 there was a tendency to produce an historical survey of the chosen media or practice. The links between this and the learners' own practice was 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. In other cases the centre invented a client and this led to a lack of communication and interface with the client.

This unit should not be linked with work for other units in this qualification. It was seen in a number of cases that the learner produced similar or identical material to satisfy the criteria for more than one unit. The commission brief must be related to this unit in order to provide learners with an appropriate opportunity to meet the highest marks.

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 the commission products often 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 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. There were instances where technically flawed video material was presented as evidence of a commission outcome that demonstrated little understanding of the level of achievement required for this qualification.

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

There were some effective project evaluations by learners measured 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

For this unit, as with Unit 6, learners must provide a word count at the end of each section. Often learners did not provide the required word count and in these cases this made the examination of this unit difficult.

Learners must be encouraged to provide an illustrative file of materials at the end of each section. The document should then be transferred to a disk. In some cases the illustrative files were sent to the examiners as hard copy.

The work seen was often descriptive and therefore limited in evaluative comment. Where some discussion of a number of factors was evident this pulled the work into the second mark band where 'discussion' of the evidence was rewarded. Some learners appeared to have included evaluations made at the end of their work on selected units, but again these often only gave an account of progress through the project brief. It is important that unit progress reports are reviewed and reconsidered in the light of the objectives for this unit. The learner must be given appropriate support and time to reflect on and summarise these accounts and present a response based on the factors that they need to address so that a more evaluative response can be made.

There were some examples of very effective and interesting evaluative work, where learners had explained their decision making, creative development and preparation for their future careers succinctly and concisely.

Learners must be given clear guidance on how to evaluate their work in close relation to the factors described in each section to achieve the higher mark bands. For section A, learners will need to discuss these factors, showing consideration of choices, for the middle mark band to be achieved; to explain (clearly and concisely) how this discussion directed their thinking and decision making for the highest mark band to be achieved.

In section B the focus should be on the strengths and weaknesses and how an evaluation of these will give an insight into their creative thinking and decision making as they progress throughout the programme. In many cases the work on the consideration of the processes, techniques and materials was given in Section B, when such work belongs in Section A.

The evidence for Section C was often limited in research work on opportunities for progression beyond a rather narrow range. Research into job opportunities, and an analysis of the requirements of various job roles was limited in most cases, which, given how such research could have a bearing on decision making for higher education pathways, needs much more encouragement and support by centres.

In some cases the work for Sections B and C was very limited in content, with some word counts being very low in comparison to Section A. This sometimes limited the mark potential for the unit and indicated that more consideration needed to be given to the allocation of the time allowed so that evidence for this unit can be generated more fully and effectively.

Unit 6 Investigation

The work presented for this external unit did not always use the external assessment template available on the Edexcel website. Learners must provide a word count at the end of their critical response. Often learners did not provide a word count and this made the examination of this unit difficult.

Learners must be encouraged to provide an illustrative appendix of materials to support their investigations into a creative and media practitioner that works or has worked across two or more disciplines.

The work seen was variable sometimes being poorly constructed and provided little evidence of critical methodology being applied. In other work the learner had clearly identified an appropriate practitioner and had undertaken extensive research.

Some 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 look 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 many cases the research work was often limited to three or four 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. A learner might start their investigations at an early stage in the qualification. They could continue with their research and investigations as they progress through the internally assessed units. This might allow them to reflect on the practitioners work and how it has influenced their own creative journey.

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 given clear guidance on appropriate practitioners and the nature of the critical response required to achieve the highest marks.

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. Learners should read widely about their chosen practitioner and then reference this in their response. The learner must be able to effectively reference where they found the information and what they think about what others have said about the practitioner.

Learners must be able to analyse and discuss the work of the practitioner and also demonstrate how the practitioner might have influenced them.

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. This will then lead on to a critical response that integrates their research using critical methodology.

Recommendations

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.

The second year of the qualification has clearly demonstrated that there is a real potential for learners to investigate, interact and produce creative and media products in an innovative and exciting way.

Grade Boundaries

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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