

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

IGCSE

Art and Design (4310, 4311, 4312, 4313)

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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the IGCSE Art and Design 4310 - 4313 to help and support centres in future submissions. This is the second year the qualification has been running and numbers have increased significantly for the May 2007 series. It may be helpful to remind centres that candidates can also take the examination in November of the same year. This is an option some centres may wish to consider.

The IGCSE specification aims to provide all centres with the framework to develop and devise courses for Art and Design across all four specifications: Fine Art, Textiles, Photography and Graphic Design. A key feature is the specification allows teachers the freedom to approach the Assessment Objectives in the way which best suits them and their students.

All societies are increasingly dependent upon the use of highly sophisticated visual communication and the need to develop visual literacy skills has become paramount. With submissions for this years IGCSE from many parts of the world including Bermuda, China, Cyprus, England, Greece, India, Kenya, Libya, Mexico, Sri-Lanka, and the United Arab Emirates. Art and design is truly an international language and this specification is primarily concerned with the development of a visual language, emphasising the skills rooted in the senses of sight, touch, feeling and intellect

'It took me four years to paint like Raphael but a lifetime to paint like a child.' Pablo Picasso

Assessment of Coursework in Centres Prior to External Moderation

As there were many new centres submitting coursework this year it might be helpful to look again in detail at the requirements.

It is important for centres to use and be familiar with the coursework assessment criteria on the Candidate Assessment Sheet prior to marking work in the centre. In the May series the majority of centres clearly understood assessment procedures for coursework however there was a small number of centres who need to become much more familiar with this procedure which is clearly stated in the specification.

- All four assessment objectives should be met.
- All are equally weighted and have no priority.
- The final mark awarded should be a 'holistic' assessment out of 100.
- The grid should be used in conjunction with the grade descriptions given in the specification.
- A candidate's response may not satisfy every one of the assessment criteria for a particular mark band to receive a mark within that band.
- The coursework could meet the descriptor from a higher or lower mark band on some criteria.
- The 'best fit' approach should be used to determine the mark band which corresponds most closely to the overall quality of the candidate's response.
- Once the coursework has been allocated to a mark band the final mark should be refined to a specific mark. Then recorded on the sheet.

This year a number of centres who submitted coursework for moderation were over generous in their marking. In other centres the marking was more accurate. It would help centres if when using the marking grid they also used the grade descriptions given on page 18 and 19 of the specification.

It is important that marks awarded are based only on what is presented, and that teacher examiners are not influenced by other factors such as the candidate's previous achievement, or the teacher's perception of the candidate's potential or industriousness.

If there is more than one teacher of coursework in the centre, there should be internal standardisation of marking standards prior to sending work for moderation.

The Assessment Objectives

The assessment objectives should be seen as inter-related activities not stand alone components. When structuring teaching and learning activities in the production of the coursework and in the preparatory six week period for the examination, this should be borne in mind.

Coursework

However centres structure their courses they should ensure that the chosen themes or genres are sufficiently flexible to allow candidates to make a personal and informed response. Themes and genres which are insufficiently broad result in submissions from centres in which candidates submissions are very similar.

A number of centres need to place greater emphasis on working from first hand experience would help candidates both to evidence assessment objectives and to develop creative awardable work which reflects the spirit of the specification.

It was disappointing to see a number of candidates, with signs of creative potential, at the lower end of the mark range, because they had failed to submit evidence for a particular assessment objective. In the majority of centres courses had been constructed to ensure that all assessment objectives were covered across the mark range

Many centres offered their students a variety of approaches to materials and media resulting in some very exciting outcomes.

Submitting Coursework and Examination for Assessment

The format for submitting coursework and examination are made clear in the specification. Once again this year a number of centres allowed candidates when submitting coursework and examination preparatory studies to overlap some centres even put work on the back of the research sheets. *This practice must not take place as it may adversely affect the candidate's final grade. Candidates must be limited to three sheets of A2 supporting studies with no overlapping.*

Reviewing, Refining and Modifying Research for Coursework and Practical Examination.

With the help of the centre it is important that candidates review, refine and modify their submission for presentation. Choosing the work which best illustrates their ability at covering all assessment objectives.

The following points below illustrate the strengths and weaknesses in the May 2007 submissions. It is hoped these points will help centres improve the overall standard of their candidates ability to review, refine and modify ideas as they progresses.

Strengths

- Appropriate and ongoing annotation.
- Recording using an exciting range of media
- Work which reflects an understanding of the purpose of visual research.
- Appropriate contextual links in the visual form or including short written analysis.
- Sequential development of ideas using appropriate materials.
- Taking photographs of work in progress.
- Evidence of an understanding of the formal elements.
- Experimenting with media

Weaknesses

- Some centres presented research where there was too much emphasis on writing.
- They produced unedited 'downloads' from the internet.
- There was an over-reliance on secondary images.
- Research was superficial, incomplete or disorganised.
- Copying with no purpose.
- No sequential journey.
- Little visual analysis.
- Research where the intentions were not clear.
- One or more of the AO's was missing.

By improving the quality of research it is hoped that candidate's final personal response will be ambitious and imaginative.

Practical Examination and Preparatory Studies

Those candidates who performed of their best were generally from centres that had provided a well structured beginning to the examination. It was clear however that some centres had given very little support to candidates in helping them 'un-pick' the exam paper.

Centres are reminded that the candidate response to the examination should be supported by a taught six week period prior to the ten hour examination.

Centre's should download and print the paper as soon as it is posted on the Edexcel website to enable them to prepare teaching and learning resources to support their candidates in the six week period.

Preparatory Period

The six week preparatory period prior to the exam is a taught period where art staff can help and advise students about their work. It is helpful if as work progresses students can then chose their best idea collecting more reference material to help in their exam. Students should avoid having a trial run at this stage, as work can often become stale and dull if it is just repeated again in the exam. Unfortunately once again this year centres allowed candidates to do this. It also means that students remain excited about their work during the ten hour examination.

Ten Hour Examination

The theme of 'Sensation' for the May series produced a diverse response by candidates and clearly inspired many of them. Surfaces appreciated by sight and touch allowed candidates to use a wide variety of materials and opportunities for mark making and experimenting with materials. A taste sensation proved very popular with many candidates referring to the work of Wayne Thiebaud as inspiration. Research and final outcomes of observational studies of food were outstanding. Real and imagined fear saw candidates producing some stunning imaginative responses. Speed and movement really pushed candidates skill at creating these feelings visually. Contrasting sensations of hot and cold was a challenging concept and probably the least popular. Creating a sensation saw many wide and different interpretations. In general it was a pleasure and privilege to see the quality of work produced by candidates for their examination. It was clear that the quality of teaching and learning in some centres was outstanding. These centres are to be commended for their enthusiasm, imagination and endeavour to provide candidates with the platform to give their best in the examination

Summary

Good teaching, well structured courses and appropriate resourcing ensure that candidates perform to their full potential in the examination and coursework. There was much evidence of this in the May series. Disappointingly however there were some centres submitting work who had little understanding of the requirements of the specification. To move forward these centres must become much more familiar with the IGCSE specification.

Centres Wishing to Move Their Candidates Forward and Improve Their Performance Must Address the Following Issues.

- Centres must develop a course structure for both coursework and examination underpinned by the assessment objectives.
- Good teaching and learning stem from an emphasis on recording visually from first hand experience.
- With the help of the centre it is important that candidates review and refine their submission for presentation choosing the work which best illustrates their ability covering all assessment objectives.
- Internal assessment of coursework needs to be approached with impartial detachment to ensure accuracy.

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