



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**ART AND DESIGN
GCSE**

SUMMER 2019

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Annual Statistical Report

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ART & DESIGN

GCSE

Summer 2019

INTRODUCTION

General Comments

This report reflects the main findings of the moderation team who visited centres during June 2019. Many centres exhibited candidates' submissions which were highly personal, engaging and expressive, drawing upon contemporary concerns to give original shape and direction to their studies. The most common issues which were creatively explored related to mental health, environment and gender. Moderators also encountered an excellent range of appropriate themes for study, 'sinister toys' was but one of them. The most popular questions addressed for the ESA were: 'Playing with Colour', 'Wonders of Nature', 'Architecture', 'Close Observation', 'Conflict' and 'Skeleton'.

Assessment Objective 1

Within AO1, there was considerable evidence to suggest that students at all levels were engaging with relevant artists and through sustained scrutiny were able to reveal their very substantial level of understanding. There was equally clear evidence of the generation of ideas from contextual sources. Nonetheless, moderators reported that critical analysis would have benefitted from a more rigorous focus and, on occasions, the study of contextual sources tended to limit rather than enhance the candidates' own creative opportunities.

Assessment Objective 2

Within AO2, there was comprehensive evidence of the tremendous breadth of experimentation within the candidates' submissions and a clear improvement in the control and skilful handling of this wide range of materials, techniques and processes. It was apparent that traditional practices were interacting with digital processes, producing exciting collaborations. Attention, however, still needs to be focused on the selection, development and refinement of students' ideas.

Assessment Objective 3

Within AO3, moderators commented upon an improvement in the overall quality and range of recording methods in many centres, pointing perhaps to a more effective foundation period of study, where skills and processes can be thoroughly embedded and then extended throughout the remainder of the course. The benefit of visits to local galleries, museums and areas of interest was again reinforced, providing the opportunity for students to engage, select and absorb at their own pace, making the creative process more meaningful to each student. (It is also acknowledged that this experience is becoming increasingly difficult to provide in current circumstances.) In some centres there remained evidence of the use of a preponderance of second-hand sources, which most often led to a less imaginative and more predictable passage of study.

Assessment Objective 4

Outcomes in so many centres were indeed exciting, ambitious and highly personal, invariably the culmination of sustained and coherent development. There was strong evidence of the candidates' assured command, understanding and exploitation of the formal elements to achieve their conclusions. Within AO4, considerable attention had also been paid to establishing the most appropriate and engaging forms of presentation that were consistent with the candidates' ideas and intentions. On a significant number of occasions, moderators commented that outcomes didn't fully realise the creative potential within the preparatory work.

Core concepts emerging from moderators' responses:

1. The critical importance of the organisation of the course to provide opportunities for students to uncover and realise their potential.
2. The essential value in ensuring that students' responses are their own and that they show clear personal intention and direction.
3. The process of reflection, review and refinement, integral to the creative process, is a core activity, essential in improving the quality of the students' work.
4. The assessment objectives reflect sound creative practice and their fulfilment provides students with a route to highly personal, imaginative work at all levels of ability.



St. Gabriel's School - Photography

Core concepts unpacked

1. Organisation of the course

Portfolio

Well-structured programmes of study facilitated the development of students' strengths and encouraged them to grow in confidence, providing a secure foundation for success.

A popular format for the organization of the Portfolio component included an initial Foundation period in Year 10, which supported the acquisition of an essential range of skills and techniques, knowledge and understanding, which enabled students to work to their strengths and interests in their major unit of study.

There was an appropriate balance between teacher-directed study in the Foundation period, and subsequent independent student directed investigations. This format afforded the development of more confident, independent and personal lines of enquiry as students' work matured and also assured the exploration of all of the assessment objectives in considerable depth, (which in many cases proved an effective 'rehearsal for the ESA component).

Invariably, a well-structured Portfolio component, where progression and engagement were evident, assured greater success in the ESA component.

Externally Set Assignment

Within the **ESA** component, the equal distribution of marks for each of the Assessment Objectives, does not necessitate an equal distribution of time.

Where an appreciably larger period of time had been allocated for AO2 Creative making, the experimentation, development and refinement of ideas was clear to see and outcomes were coherent and substantial.

Moderators reported that in some centres, students had doggedly sought out a formidable number of contextual sources, and then embarked upon several personal responses to their often-copious research, with very little time remaining to establish their own ideas and move them forward. In such cases, it was almost inevitable that the final outcomes would be disappointing.



Woodrush High School – Art Craft and Design

2. Personal response, clear intention and direction

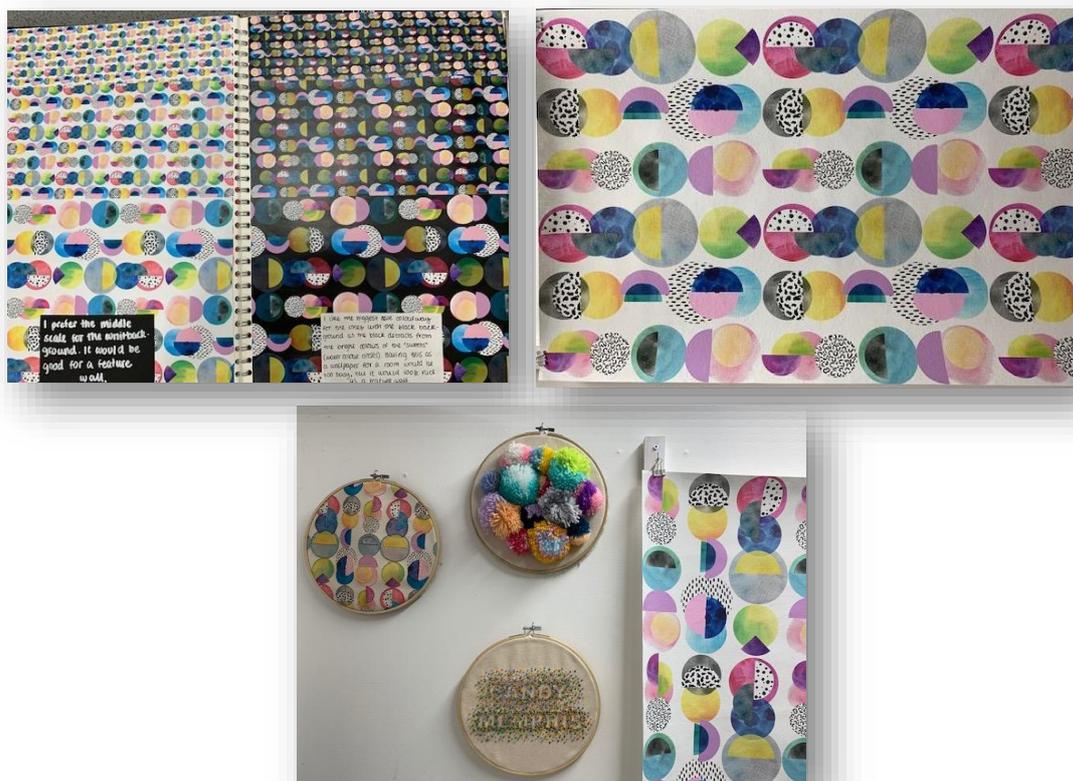
Throughout both components, a high degree of personal engagement was evident and this was reflected in the diversity and creative use of media and the students' thoroughly imaginative and expressive responses. Clear, constructive and flexible planning invariably encouraged students to feel confident in pursuing their own initiatives and expression.

There were, however, rare occasions, when courses were too formulaic or prescriptive, perhaps employing identical starting points, contextual sources and/or materials and techniques. As a consequence, the student voice was not heard.

On occasions, several contextual sources had been investigated and the students had completed responses 'in the style of' specific art, craft or design works. In such cases, it is important to ensure that the artists' work informs that of the student and helps to foster 'new' understanding. There were occasions, where the works studied, determined, or often restricted the student's own work, making it very difficult to establish personal ideas and intentions.

Moderators made the following observations this year:

- *A 'wide ranging initial research is key to establishing a personal approach'*
- *'It is much harder to develop a personal response if relying entirely on secondary sources.'*
- *'Where a lack of personal direction was evident, experimentation consequently lacked direction or purpose'*
- *'Making demands of students and endeavouring to create an environment that fosters personal initiative provides everything that students require from their centres in order to achieve success outcomes.'*



The Grange School, Cheshire – Textile Design

3. Reflection, review and refinement

Moderators reported that:

- *'Candidates had clearly understood the value of reflecting on their work in order to clarify their intentions; which gave direction to their studies, whilst strengthening the development of their work as it progressed.'*
- *'The strongest centres had built in time for reflection and refinement so the candidates could produce personal and sophisticated outcomes.'*

There are many opportunities to reflect upon the progression of the work and this process is especially pertinent whenever the nature of the activity changes. Examples found, in this respect were:

- 'A summary of techniques' - diagnostic evaluation of a range of explorative techniques conducted during the foundation period.
- 'Where am I now?' – active questioning and reflection upon research helps to determine a clear direction.
- 'Combine and refine' – a combination of purposeful drawing and annotation to investigate, test out and distinguish new design possibilities

On many occasions, drawing and annotation, in conjunction with the creative statement, generated deeper and more focused reflection.

Drawing – fit for purpose

In relation to this requirement, Moderators reported an encouraging use of drawing/sketches to review ideas; with Candidates 'thinking on paper' in order to visualise, evaluate and refine ideas.

The purpose of this strengthened emphasis on drawing in the new specification is to establish the importance of drawing across all disciplines as 'a means of communication' or recording which is 'fit for purpose'. In all areas, drawing can quickly convey ideas and, as a reflective tool, explore potential; it effectively illuminates thought processes.

Annotation

The quality of annotation varied greatly across centres. In many it was thorough, reflective and well-integrated, sitting alongside contextual references and practical investigations in sketchbooks. In other centres annotation was brief, perfunctory; and unfortunately lacked insight or depth.

As it states in the specification:

*'Students may use annotation or more extended forms of writing to show how they have met any **one**, or **any combination**, of the assessment objectives. In AO1, it is expected that written work will demonstrate critical and contextual understanding. In AO2, for example, written commentary may be used to consider the relationships between practical working methods and outcomes, as well as demonstrating ongoing critical review. In AO3, students may use written notes, in conjunction with drawing, as a means of recording observations and demonstrating critical reflection and insight into their investigations. In AO4, for example, students may use annotation to add meaning to their work and to evaluate their working processes.'*

Various devices had been employed to assist in the annotation of work, including key word charts, art dictionaries and writing frameworks.

Moderators feedback cited the following example of good practice in this regard:

- *'Different colours were used for different types of annotation, breaking it down into contextual information, process and technique and personal response. This colour coding system was highly effective and provided clarity.'*

A word of caution however; annotation is a means to an end. It is the process of reflection, and the subsequent recording of it, that is of most benefit to the student. The quality of the comments is paramount (**not the quantity**). Moderators have noted submissions where, de rigueur, almost every image or study has been accompanied by a lengthy paragraph of prose, where the points made are often repetitive, self-evident and shed little light on the student's thinking. Time could be better spent. Annotation should be pertinent and succinct; its value lies with the student in articulating and clarifying their thoughts and reflections as their study progresses.

Creative Statements

Moderators' reports this year verify that generally the Creative statement has become an organic document that grows and changes as the candidate reflects on their progress.

Creative Statements again varied in quality. As a point of guidance here it is worth reinforcing that the intention is that the Creative Statement is tackled periodically over the duration of the particular component, as the student's work progresses, (perhaps written initially in rough, within or at the back of the sketchbook.) In this way it has meaning for the student in clarifying their thoughts and summarising their reflections at various points within the project. A Creative Statement that has been completed at the end of the component serves only as an unwelcome chore, (although it does aid the moderator in quickly identifying the purpose and direction of the work).

Generally, the statements completed for the ESA were stronger than those for the Portfolio. For the former, the period of time is shorter, the work is more homogenous, and this has therefore generated statements with greater clarity and purpose. Once again, succinct and significant moments in the project are preferred rather than a full description of the journey.



Bacon's College – 3D Design

4. Fulfilling the Assessment Objectives

AO1 - Contextual Understanding

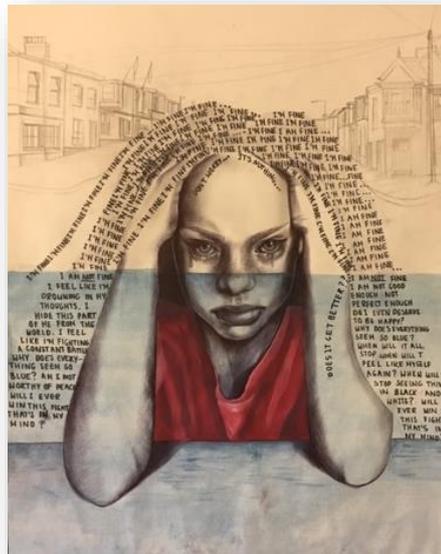
Moderators encountered wide extremes in this assessment objective:

- In the strongest submissions, students' comments were substantial, incisive and perceptive, often accompanied by visual means of making their understanding apparent. The best examples demonstrated a pleasing degree of rigour and insightful analysis of contextual sources, followed by evidence of the students applying what they have learnt in ways which truly informed the development of their own ideas. Various systems were in evidence to scaffold the student's learning. (Rod Taylor's Content, Form, Process and Mood was popular; comparing and contrasting works of art, craft or design with others.)
- A large majority of students were able to articulate their findings fairly well through description and interpretation, but only to a lesser extent through analysis. The use of the formal elements often represented an appropriate starting point from which to 'dissect' a source and generate a personal response.
- When analysing a contextual source, students identified key points, which then formed the basis of their personal response. This link clearly revealed the level of their understanding.
- Many students replicated a 'part' of a contextual source (rather than the whole) to illustrate their understanding and they often accompanied this study with relevant annotation and directional bullet points.

Areas for development:

The study of contextual sources should inform rather than determine the student's own work. Moderators reported that this year in some centres:

- Candidates' responses were at times too close to sources, to the extent of pastiche.
- Sometimes, Candidates' responses to contextual sources appeared to restrict the emergence and development of their own ideas.
- On occasions, Candidates commented on their ability to achieve a likeness to the contextual study rather than their understanding of it.
- Greater rigour in critical analysis was sometimes required to reveal understanding and, in such cases, candidates might have benefited from examining fewer sources in greater depth and by different means.
- Sources often took the shape of artists found on social media that had very little depth or contextual worth; and downloaded or copied text was evident; which was of very little value.



Woodrush High School – Art Craft and Design

AO2 Creative Making

This all-encompassing objective was indeed a strength in many centres. Creative making was often enhanced via a combination of digital and traditional processes and a wealth of materials and techniques was evident throughout the titles, with a broad creative digital experience also apparent via use of apps and a variety of software programmes.

Where centres had encouraged risk taking and creative play with materials and ideas, exciting and innovative passages of work emerged, and annotation, documenting reflection and selection, was integral to the process.

In most centres the process of moving from initial ideas through exploration, experimentation and development towards a final outcome was apparent. The refinement of ideas, however, was much less in evidence. Although, where centres had allocated sufficient time for reflection and modification, the outcomes were invariably mature and sophisticated.

In some successful examples there was evidence of the cross fertilisation of ideas within candidates' submission and reference was invariably made 'back into' sketchbooks for influence and ideas, providing greater coherence.

Areas for development:

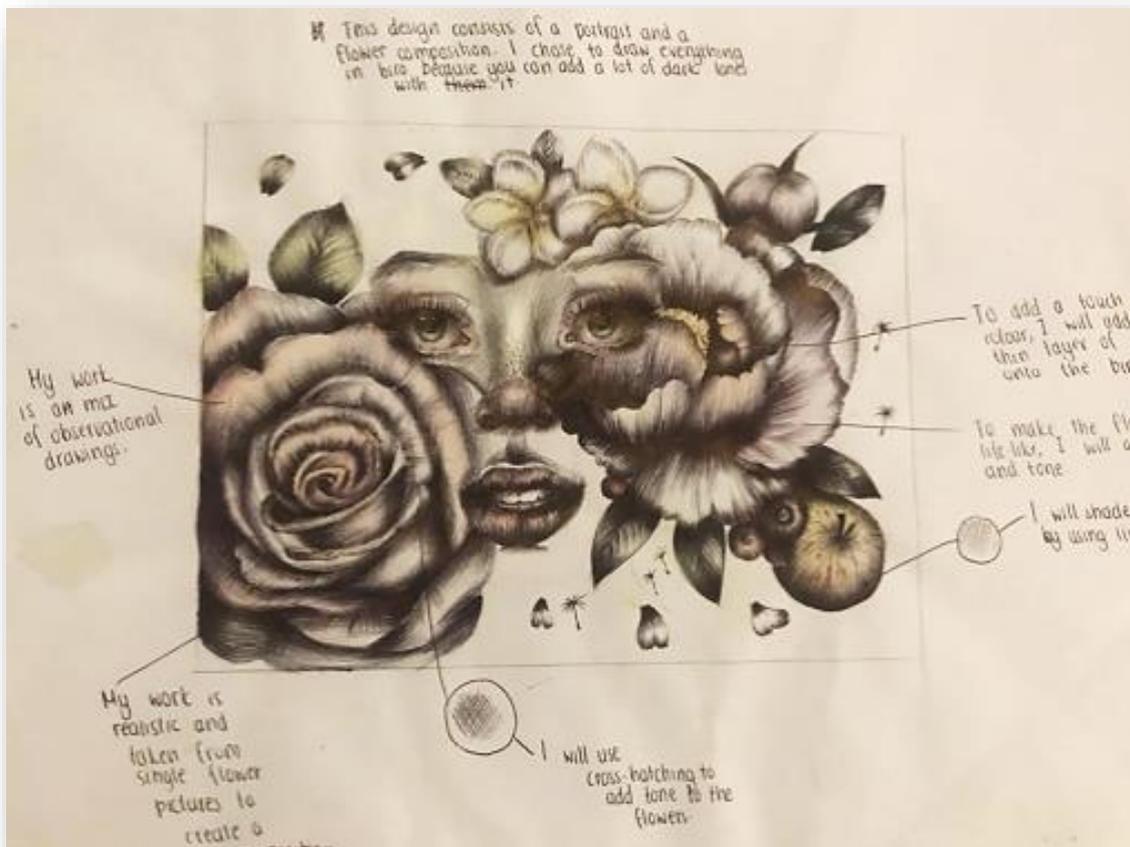
Moderators identified a number of situations where opportunities for stronger AO2 study had not been taken.

- Where, for example, several designs had been established, one design had been selected for a final outcome, and regrettably no further development or refinement ensued.
- On occasions, creative activity was insignificant and bore little or no relationship to the final outcome. In a similar vein, there were occasions where quite extensive creative activity had taken place but had been abandoned in the production of a quite different outcome.

Moderators also commented that, on occasions, the creative potential evident within students' investigative studies was not realised in their outcomes. In such cases it was observed that candidates might have been awarded more marks had they:

- focused fully upon and engaged with their main idea earlier in the creative process;
- selected ideas with sufficient time and emphasis being placed upon the mastery of the materials, techniques and processes required to realise intentions – working to their strengths;
- devoted adequate time to design development;
- experimented purposefully, with discrimination and focus so that alternatives produced showed noticeable improvement or progress;
- utilised the early part of the course as a diagnostic tool.

The importance of this assessment objective cannot be over-stated, (AO2 inevitably supports AO4.) Neither should the time allocated to it be under-estimated - the process of moving from initial idea to final outcome is rarely *smooth or rapid!*



Woodrush High School – Art, Craft and Design

AO3 Reflective recording

The value of responding to first hand sources has been established for some time and it is encouraging to report that a large majority of centres shared this aim. This fundamental activity is invariably the driving force for independent, personal discovery.

Recordings from sources have been predominantly in pencil, but increasingly a greater variety of media and processes are being explored. These are often the prelude to more exciting departures. Digital technologies and their associated software have also widened students' experiences.

Moderators reported increasing use of thumbnails and quick sketches, which effectively articulated ideas; and evidence of strong engagement where candidates had visited galleries or events in person. In the Photography title, there were also positive comments regarding increasingly strong planning of photo shoots and critical commentaries on a selection of images from contact sheets.

Areas for development:

- At times, recording content (typically pencil studies and photographs) was overly repetitive in nature. 'Repetition', though easy, brings less reward than true 'exploration'
- Often, attempts to explore the formal elements in relation to sources were lacking and important opportunities to gain deeper understanding through such activities were missed.
- Frequently, the direction of light, angle of view and compositional elements were not considered.
- Recording was, at times, hardly relevant to the progression of work, and in some case appeared to be produced as a separate entity to satisfy the assessment objective.
- In some submissions an over-reliance on secondary sources weakened AO3 evidence.
- There was a general consensus, with particular reference to the ESA, that candidates should establish a wider range of ideas before embarking upon exploration and experimentation of materials and processes.



Woodrush High School – Art, Craft and Design

AO4 Personal presentation

As a general rule, the quality of the final outcomes was very closely dependent upon the quality of work produced for the other three objectives. In a strong submissions, the assessment objectives are mutually supportive and in the execution of these objectives the 'whole' certainly can be greater than the sum of its 'parts.' Moderators reported seeing thoroughly engaging and coherent submissions, and intriguing progressions of ideas, culminating in imaginative and sophisticated outcomes.

Where a submission and final outcome might not have fulfilled a student's potential, the reasons could have been many and various, but the most frequent comments from moderators related to the following aspects:

- Over-ambitious ideas without the necessary planning and organisation.
- A shortage of time; not necessarily for the outcome itself, but for the development studies leading to the outcome.
- Final outcomes showing little relationship to design development.
- Failure to establish personal ideas and direction, often as a result of too close a resemblance / an over-reliance on the works of artists, craftspeople or designers.
- Over-dependence on secondary sources, which had limited creative options.
- Submissions lacking coherence, with outcomes consisting of an amalgamation of only very loosely connected 'parts.'



The King's School – Fine Art

Summary

Moderators have commented upon seeing highly accomplished work across all areas of specialism and within a variety of centre contexts. Students have created outstanding portfolios, often of considerable quality and rigour, which have reflected most positively upon the guidance provided within individual centres and a specification which enables students to flourish.

Key points for further development

- Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that the selection, development and refinement of their ideas is an explicit, significant and substantial part of their creative journey.
- Candidates should assure rigour in their analysis of contextual sources.
- Candidates should endeavour to make use of primary, as opposed to secondary sources in order to elicit personal and original responses.
- Candidates should aim to complete coherent, well integrated submissions which address all four assessment objectives equally.
- Centres are strongly advised to become fully conversant with national standards in relation to internal marking; our CPD events, Assessment Videos on Lightbox, and the wealth of Exemplar Materials and resources on the Eduqas website should help to facilitate this.

Finally, it remains for me to express my gratitude to centres for their significant part in the success of this series. Moderators have reported very few difficulties with administrative matters and exhibitions of sampled work have been organized effectively to aid the moderation. As always, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to encounter your students' work: which is a true reflection of teachers' considerable and greatly appreciated efforts!

My best wishes for a successful and fulfilling new academic year.

David



Woodchurch High school – Graphic Communication



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