

Art Practical

2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Arts Learning Area



Government
of South Australia

SACE
Board of SA

ART PRACTICAL

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Teachers are advised to check with SACE coordinators at the beginning of the year to ensure that they receive the relevant section of the *Arts Learning Area Manual 2011*. The information is also available on the SACE website.

The SACE website includes a range of support materials and teachers are encouraged to direct students to the website so they can gain a better understanding of the subject requirements and the criteria against which they will be assessed.

While this report provides feedback on the 2010 course, teachers are encouraged to bring the relevant sections of this assessment report to the attention of their students undertaking the new subject in 2011.

Teachers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the new Subject Outline and performance standards and ensure that students have the information that will assist them in understanding task requirements, delivery, and assessment.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 1: PRACTICAL STUDIES

The most successful students presented evidence of a broad conceptual exploration of a theme or topic, which included extensive support materials. This gave them a wide range of options for exploring and documenting content, composition, and media. Their work displayed authenticity, freshness, significant personal engagement, and strong evidence of inquiry, learning, and resolution. In the 2011 subject outline, evidence of this kind of student learning will be an important focus of the Assessment Type 1: Folio.

In many class groups, the variety of works presented strongly reflected individual students' interests and pursuits. Teacher direction, influence, and involvement were restrained and appropriate. A high level of authentic skill development in the use of the chosen media was evident in both the developmental and final works. Experimentation and exploration of concepts and composition was commendable.

Refreshingly, students from many locations effectively used their local environment as a source of resources, reflection, and inspiration. Evidence of this was clearly documented in drawings, colour roughs, and developmental work, accompanied by personal, relevant notation.

Students who referred to works by a practitioner/s to help solve problems of content, composition or technique at various stages in their 'journey', generally produced more comprehensive developmental material and successful final works. This is an appropriate strategy, provided that students understand the difference between influence and plagiarism.

The more successful students developed and maintained a considered and rational approach to both practicals, demonstrating evidence of forward planning from the start of the year. The trend to develop a second major from a similar concept, or from

a stage in their first development process, appeared to be assisting students in dealing with time and work-load issues. This follows a professional practitioner's approach and improves the quality of resolution in the second practical. Teachers should however, be vigilant regarding 'double-dipping' by students submitting identical work or evidence for multiple assessment types.

Successful students displayed extensive image and authentic idea development, and provided clear evidence of conceptualisation and exploration through higher level thinking skills and practical application. The creating process was detailed and thoroughly documented, with strong links to the final piece/s. Students considered a range of options and ideas related to their personal interests, which resulted in an accurately recorded 'journey' and authentic work. Extensive composition development was a feature of these processes that led to higher levels of image resolution.

Where students have produced very extensive quantities of developmental material, this has led to a valid and rational decision by students to develop their second piece from this large body of work. In such situations, evidence of the beginning of the second piece should be clearly delineated at the point of resolution of the first piece. Cross-referencing between the ideas is a valid process and means that separate folios are not necessary.

Where teachers had been consistently involved in the monitoring of student progress through feedback, support, and negotiated directions, students had made realistic and rational decisions regarding size, media, content, and the complexity of the final works. This effectively prevented students from attempting projects well beyond their means. It also resulted in an increase in the number of smaller, quality works in a range of media.

Students who relied on the use of ideas borrowed from other artists, or derived from commercially-sourced images in particular, or the use of downloaded Internet images revealed a lack of personal involvement in, or response to, their own environment. In such cases, developmental work displayed insufficient conceptualisation, exploration, and problem-solving. These students were unable to provide enough evidence for assessment against the criteria *authenticity*, *conceptualisation and exploration*, and *resolution of ideas*.

Students who presented back-up featuring large collections of brochures, photocopied text and printed images, accompanied with little evidence of attempts to use this material in a manner appropriate to the development of their concepts and the assessment criteria, were not able to achieve at the highest level. Where commercial or personal photographs are used, the source should be acknowledged together with neighbouring or linked evidence of idea or media/technique exploration. 'Cut and paste' images can be useful in the generation of ideas and reflection on aesthetic considerations; however it is recommended that they be kept to an appropriate quantity. Reflective comments should be linked to the concept being explored and the aesthetic considerations of that concept.

In 2010 many students found a method of notation that was beneficial in the clarification of their ideas. It did not need to be exhaustive, overly extensive or in essay format. In the requirements of 2011 subject outline students are required to notate in detail their discoveries, and recognise visually interesting accidental outcomes and successes, thus providing strong evidence of learning during their journey.

Teachers need to be vigilant about their direct involvement in the production of student work, and similarly monitor the creation of the final pieces on a regular basis. Student ownership should be clearly evident throughout the back-up folio.

Many students are now using digital cameras in a creative manner. The better students' results reflected an in-depth exploration, and an understanding of technique, subject content, the role of light, and relationship of camera technique. In the cases where a large number of images were taken with full automatic or programmed modes, students demonstrated little conscious control, understanding, or creativity.

Photography as a medium is no different from other techniques and art media in this respect. Consequently, students should present, through their supporting materials, evidence of the entire creative process including: documenting the idea source, the content and concept development, understanding and awareness of aesthetics and technique, exposure, use of specialist photographic processes, and decisions regarding output processes and selection.

A number of applications such as Adobe Bridge allow students and teachers to access EXIF data (from the original file), which will provide valuable documentary evidence of the camera technique and decisions made by the student.

Students who choose to produce two diverse, unrelated practical pieces, should be monitored very closely. A regular cause for concern is where student ideas and concepts do not translate successfully into large works. These works can easily lose their freshness, quality, and sophistication. Teachers are again reminded of the need to monitor, communicate, and explain the relevant performance standards to students. There is no expectation that students need to produce massive works.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 2: PRACTICAL EXTENSION

Presenting identical material for both assessment components is not appropriate. The intent of this component is to provide students with further opportunities to develop skills which can be applied to the final practical works. In comparison, the developmental folios should concentrate on the source of the idea, options for its development, creative experimentation, concept problem-solving, and resolution. Both components should be two separate bodies of work and address the relevant performance standards.

In some cases, there was evidence of lost opportunities when processes and skills successfully developed as part of the practical extension were not further developed and transferred to the practical component; this indicated a lack of appreciation of the link that can exist between the two.

Successful practical extension folios demonstrated significant personal involvement and conscious attempts to explore techniques and the quality of media. However, there remained many examples of a 'class project' approach whereby all students completed identical exercises in a 'lock-step' fashion. In several of these situations, students demonstrated insufficient personal involvement and learning.

Where it is necessary for a teacher to lead a class, sufficient scope for personal interpretation should be incorporated into the directions that a teacher provides. Using the practical extension (or Visual Study in 2011) as a means of developing skills in the student's media of choice for his or her major practical piece is a

successful approach used by teachers and students. While teacher direction is essential, students should be permitted to personalise their decisions, eventual directions, and hence personal learning and reflection.

A successful approach used by some teachers is where students start the year with a proportion of this component as a structured block, and then use it as a springboard to branch out into the development of a practical concept. The completion of the extension is then continued throughout the year. The approach taken depends on the nature of the student cohort, the abilities of individual students, and their ideas.

This has proved to be an effective starting point and was of obvious benefit to students who, via a teacher-directed approach, developed a range of skills and techniques, explored the properties of a variety of media identified for later use in major practical pieces, and demonstrated growth in maturity and understanding.

The most successful students were focused and well-informed of the requirements for this component, and addressed the requirements for judging performance. They were clearly aware of the component weighting and its role. Less successful folios consisted of a series of unrelated drawings lacking in focus, direction, or purpose. Similarly, those folios consisting of multiple versions of the same subject or print, with minimal exploration, sensitivity and skills, did not provide sufficient opportunity for students to meet the assessment design criteria.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 3: INVESTIGATIVE STUDY

The term 'investigative study' (and visual study) implies personal and independent examination, inquiry, and learning which all exhibit a degree of depth. Documenting a range of resources can assist in substantiating this. A bibliography and list of acknowledgments is essential and should be submitted with a student's final presentation.

Where a whole class undertakes the same topic, students should be made aware that hard copy information is meant to be an initial resource and should not constitute the bulk of their research material. The teacher's role is to facilitate student research and exploration, enabling them to demonstrate initiative, self-directed learning, and personal reflection. In this situation, it is appropriate for the teacher to deconstruct the key requirements, and concentrate on providing opportunities and frameworks, and to model scaffolds for presentation construction.

The more successful students demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the topic through considerable research, reading, insightful comments, and evidence of extensive drafting prior to the final submission. Less successful students relied on reproducing text, and provided little evidence of personal involvement or engagement with the chosen topic.

Students who restricted their research often did not meet the specified criteria and so did not adequately address all of the key items for the topic. Their comments were shallow and reflected limited knowledge, understanding, and personal discovery. This type of student response contained superficial analysis which consisted largely of simple visual descriptions.

Art works should be described, analysed, interpreted, and judged accordingly to demonstrate genuine understanding. Analytical content is very dependent on the key items and intent of the specific topic. Sound understanding of the items and topic

intent, together with in-depth research is therefore essential. Presentations that omitted personal comments and a conclusion, did not convincingly convey an understanding of the topic. A common characteristic of less successful responses was that they contained a great deal of irrelevant material.

In most topics, links and references to works are a necessary inclusion. Where students include photographs or diagrams with their submission, it is highly recommended that these are accompanied with relevant headings or notation to link them to the text. More successful students presented work that demonstrated personal opinion and reflection on researched information. This was cross-referenced to the bibliography, and contained relevant and meaningful use of quotations.

Many sources available on the Internet contain questionable data that all too frequently are incorrect. Wikipedia may be a valid starting point but it should not dominate student bibliographies. Rather than relying on the Internet as a sole source, students should be encouraged to consider local and community resources outside of their immediate school environment, to broaden their searches and research methods.

Students who were successful used the key items to direct their research and presentation content, and ensured that they addressed the key items and hence were able to meet criteria for judging performance. Their presentations displayed informed knowledge gained through extensive research. Teachers should direct students appropriately to the requirements of the various topics through deconstruction of the key items and requirements.

Chief Assessor
Art Practical