

# Visual Arts

2013 Chief Assessor's Report



Government  
of South Australia

**SACE**  
Board of SA

# VISUAL ARTS

## 2013 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

### OVERVIEW

Chief Assessors' reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

### SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

#### Assessment Type 1: Folio

In this assessment type successful students clearly linked the development of an idea through various stages and processes of skills development, leading to a resolved work of art or design. Creative thinking and problem-solving processes were clearly annotated, with observations and analysis related directly to the conceptual focus of the folio. These students had defined their concept, theme, or idea as a starting point to give a clear direction for exploration. In developing their ideas they were able to expand on possibilities and create a variety of meaningful extended connections.

Well-produced folios displayed labels and headings to reflect students' creative thinking and problem solving. Annotations summarised the thinking and learning, providing direction for more exploration and experimentation. It is not effective practice to incorporate scrapbooking, decorative embellishment, filler pages, large formatted colour swatches, or colour mixing with extensive process photographs in the pages of the folio, as this clouds the evidence of authentic learning.

Teachers and students worked together to address the specific features of the assessment design criteria for this assessment type. Successful folios demonstrated links and a balanced response to the practical application, knowledge and understanding, and analysis and synthesis assessment design criteria, reinforced throughout by appropriate use of visual art terminology.

A significant number of students displayed high levels of competency in the development of skills in technique and media. They used problem-solving skills supported by informed analysis and personally meaningful knowledge of visual arts concepts, showing insightful understanding of aesthetic and/or functional qualities.

Students are to be encouraged to provide evidence of knowledge and understanding of visual arts in different cultural, social, and/ or historical contexts in relation to the focus of their folio. In the better folios, students used this knowledge to make direct connections to their development of ideas, exploring styles, techniques, and concepts.

These folios demonstrated students' development of ideas, with research related to recognised and significant practitioners who inspired imaginative and personal responses.

Some students chose design briefs that lacked possibilities for creative conceptual development and thus limited their achievement. Students should be realistic in choosing a design problem on which to base their brief.

Students should be aware of the clear link between the creative processes in both Art and Design as this is used as a framework for developing their ideas. Students are encouraged to include: brainstorming to define the idea or concept; research; generation of ideas; visual thinking and problem solving; and acknowledgment of relevant knowledge and understanding.

Successful folios indicated a balanced approach, incorporating only relevant research that informed the development of ideas. This allowed for greater depth of exploration of ideas, and creative conceptualisation, which included hand-drawn concept development, and media experimentation and refinement. Teachers should encourage students to include references to specific design practitioners and their work in relation to problem solving.

The more successful students used primary sources for inspiration, the development of ideas, the exploration of media, and the refinement of technique, including personal photographs, interviews, visits to art galleries, observations, and drawing studies.

If specific feature AS4 is used, evaluations of, and conclusions about, arts learning need to be demonstrated through analytical annotations, with reference to practitioners, techniques, aesthetics, and ideas.

It is suggested that students who submit their folios electronically save them as a PDF document that has been scanned or saved as continuous pages. Scanning needs to be of sufficient dpi (dots per inch) to allow for legibility and to do justice to the content.

## **Assessment Type 2: Practical**

The highly successful students presented works in which personal connection and engagement with the concept were clearly evident. These works were original, authentic, and varied in media and form, displaying a high degree of technical ability and aesthetic consideration. The less successful students relied on derived imagery and/ or current popular techniques and did not experiment with or extend the techniques to develop personal concepts or interpretations.

Teachers are reminded that the content and evidence in the folio should not influence their assessment of student work for the practical. The resolved practical task can be assessed against specific features PA1 and PA4. Students develop work that reflects their conceptualisation and application of technical skills, providing greater scope for success in the resolution of imaginative or personally relevant ideas.

In all areas of design students need to demonstrate their ideas through two-dimensional and/or three-dimensional resolutions. The accompanying practitioner's statement provides further evidence of conceptualisation.

The best design work showed evidence of considerable conceptual development and resolution of ideas, which went beyond applying one idea to a range of scenarios.

When students present a body of resolved work, it should demonstrate a conceptual strength and meaning both within and across the works. It should not consist of a selection of similar pieces. The collection of works may be representative of one idea, the connecting concept, but they are the result of a variety of interpretations. Successful bodies of works often explored a variety of media and forms.

The practitioner's statement is an integral part of this assessment type, and as such can have an impact on the student's overall grade. Many students were disadvantaged by not presenting these statements to support their resolved work.

Successful students viewed real art works, and used reference materials other than the Internet. They were able to make sophisticated, highly perceptive, and discerning evaluations of their own work and that of other practitioners. These students used appropriate visual arts language to interpret and analyse art and design works from different contexts, and form insightful conclusions.

Teachers can support student success in the practitioner's statement by encouraging the drafting process. Teachers can reduce the number of specific features for assessment of this task to allow students to support and explain their work precisely. Teachers encourage students to refer in the statement to other practitioners, where elements of their practice relate and connect directly to the students' resolved work.

Successful practitioner's statements used visual arts language by referencing elements and principles of art and design to comment on ideas in works of art and design, and the application and manipulation of the media as well as stylistic features and formats.

## **EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

### **Assessment Type 3: Visual Study**

Many responses showed that students clearly understood the purpose of the study, and had an organised approach to the exploration of the topic or question. Teachers and students understand that, for a 20-credit subject, the word limit for this assessment type is 2000 words.

It is essential for students and teachers to work closely together to establish suitable topics that provide sufficient scope for study. Inquiry questions, rather than a wide topic (such as Gothic art), provide a structure for the study, giving it a purpose. A well-developed question gives a point of reflection for the conclusion.

In some classes the visual study was overstructured, with all students researching a single artist or practitioner. Teachers are discouraged from guiding students to deliver their studies in the same format as this limits possibilities for individual interpretation. Students should avoid creating a visual study as a large project, incorporating too many copied and downloaded pages of unnecessary information.

Teachers need to be aware that the practice of integrating large blocks of text from various sources with highlighted sections can make the visual study disjointed and difficult to assess. Some students access imaginative and ground-breaking ideas

relating to technology. These studies were often exciting and reflected a wide range of research.

A suggested approach for a visual study is for the teacher to guide students in doing background research with trials and experimentation. This prepares students to work independently to construct their findings. Students are advised to draft and edit the material, refining each page in order to demonstrate learning as concisely as possible. Some teachers guide students to use coloured legends across their work to indicate aspects of learning.

Another strategy used by teachers is to arrange an introductory experience for classes, such as workshops with a practising artist. This builds student confidence in analysis and in the deconstruction of art and design topics, themes, and styles.

Some students used impressive print and layout pages that simply masked research that was limited and lacked in-depth analysis and understanding. Glossy reproductions such as book presentations are not part of the guidelines in the subject outline.

The type of topics to be avoided include 'Evolution of Products', 'What is the Design Process?', and 'Study of a Design Era'. These tend to limit students' ability to analyse, synthesise, and develop their own concepts.

### *Practical Application*

#### PA1

Students were less successful when they mimicked ideas by artists and designers and did not create their own 'imaginative or personally relevant visual ideas'. Students should not spend excessive time re-creating an artist's work; instead, they should use the artist's style or influence to inform their own concepts. Many students studied only one artist or designer and this limited the range of concepts they explored. Students are to be encouraged to select significant artists or designers who have produced a reasonable body of work.

#### PA3

Many studies were clearly organised, with layout and well-labelled work that signposted students' creative thinking.

### *Analysis and Synthesis*

#### AS1

Successful students use visual arts language to critically analyse their own experimental work, rather than just stating facts or making statements of what they have done. Students should avoid giving accounts of works of art or design that are descriptive and lack depth of analysis.

#### AS2

A strong visual study makes connections to the topic through evaluations and conclusions. These conclusions focus on students' learning and ability to synthesise the ideas of artists in relation to their own conceptualisation. It is suggested that students do some preparatory learning about the elements and key principles of arts or design. Statements such as 'love this image, eye-catching, wow factor' are to be avoided.

Teachers can prepare students by explicitly teaching the skills of researching, investigating, and interpreting works of art and design.

AS4

Successful students developed insightful evaluations of their own practical work in comparison with works of artists and designers. These students were able to form in-depth conclusions about their creative visual arts learning.

### *Inquiry and Exploration*

IE1

Students who undertook primary research from a number of sources were able to respond better to issues and questions in their study by, for example: creating surveys, conducting interviews, meeting artists in residence, participating in workshops, visiting practitioners, communicating by email or online chat, and attending exhibitions relevant to their study. These successful students edited and removed unnecessary information and, as a result, produced a study that was condensed and refined in relation to the focus of their topic.

Students who produced the less successful responses used a limited range of sources and failed to cross-reference to substantiate their findings and opinions.

Students need to use clear referencing to acknowledge sources in footnotes and in the bibliography.

IE2

More students understood the link between exploration of a practitioner's work and experimentation with their own ideas. Successful students used this inspiration from other practitioners to develop and explore a personal aesthetic.

## **OPERATIONAL ADVICE**

Teachers are reminded that the current learning and assessment plan (including the addendum when appropriate), task design sheets, and assessment notes are part of the moderation materials for final moderation (on site) and for final moderation (at a central venue).

Teachers ensure that student samples selected for moderation are clearly labelled.

Teachers understand that on-site moderators are to work in a private and quiet location.

In preparing the visual study for marking, teachers ensure that each page of the work is marked with the student's SACE registration number.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The SACE Board will conduct clarifying forums for Visual Arts teachers in 2014.

Support materials, including examples for all assessment types, will continue to be updated and available on the Visual Arts minisite. Suitable references to support learning in visual arts can be found under Subject Advice and Strategies in the Support Materials section of the minisite.

Visual Arts  
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