

# Unit 3: Ideas and Concepts in Art and Design

**NQF Level 3: BTEC National**

**Guided learning hours: 60**

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## Unit abstract

Ideas and concepts are the core of all creative art and design thinking. Innovation, imagination and intuition in the vocational world of art and design are essential for practitioners to create successful artwork, designs and products. Professionals use a wide range of intellectual, intuitive and perceptual skills in the generation and development of their ideas. In order to secure commissions practitioners must generate innovative ideas, and be able to refine and present their ideas, in exciting, persuasive and convincing ways.

This unit aims to broaden and deepen learners' understanding of what constitutes creative thinking across contemporary and historical art and design in order to inform their own practice. They will investigate contextual sources to explore and analyse the creative ideas of different practitioners. Through this process learners will analyse the ideas and concepts used by practitioners for different purposes. This will involve studying the use of language, semantics, direct observation, perceptual sensitivity and the practitioners' visual and other influences.

Researching and analysing others' original thought processes should inform and inspire learners' own creative thinking in generating, developing and communicating their ideas and concepts. Learners will develop an understanding of their own innovative thought processes through activities and briefs that provide them with opportunities to explore possibilities within a range of ideas and concepts.

In working through this unit, learners will develop their communication skills. In preparing to progress to professional practice, learners must appreciate the need to create informed and stimulating presentations of their ideas for different audiences.

## Learning outcomes

**On completion of this unit a learner should:**

- 1 Be able to identify and select visual and non-visual references which inform ideas
- 2 Be able to investigate ideas-generating techniques
- 3 Be able to generate and refine ideas in response to given briefs
- 4 Be able to communicate and present ideas and outcomes to different audiences.

## Unit content

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### 1 Be able to identify and select visual and non-visual references which inform ideas

*Identify and select historical and contemporary references:* appropriate visual and non-visual references for key concepts and ideas, eg Dada and Surrealism and the psychology of dreams and the unconscious mind; Symbolists and their use of visions and metaphor; Picasso's sketchbooks for exploratory method; contemporary advertisers for subliminal messages; seminal works of twentieth-century film-makers; the use of photographic techniques in communicating new concepts; the influence of contemporary philosophers on the Bauhaus Movement; other contemporary sources (art and society, the media, performing arts and art and the environment)

*Ideas:* artists' and designers' use of visual, written and verbal influences in communicating meaning through investigating concepts, eg semantics, metaphor, icon, ambiguity, equivalents, mythologies, visionaries

### 2 Be able to investigate ideas-generating techniques

*Investigating techniques:* eg free association, serial thinking, lateral thinking, word and image associations, using instinct and intuition

*Focus:* eg originality, meaning communication, innovation, verbal and non-verbal messages, aesthetic value

### 3 Be able to generate and refine ideas in response to given briefs

*Analysis of brief:* eg clarifying demands of the brief; considering client needs; employing creative thinking to problem solving; focused action planning; identifying any constraints or limitations; reviewing ideas against the needs of the brief

*Generate and refine ideas:* eg notes, audiovisual recordings, rough studies, lists, flow charts, mind maps, thumbnail sketches

*Context:* the client, audience or market, eg who will use or see it, what they may like or dislike and what they need; environments, eg where and how it will be used or seen, what it is linked to; realisation, construction or installation of the final product, eg how many will be produced and by what methods

#### 4 Be able to communicate and present ideas and outcomes to different audiences

*Visualising techniques:* eg through ideas worksheets; sample textile pieces; model-making which might be computer generated and animated; maquettes; photography location shots, contact sheets; video/film clips and accompanying storyboards; web links

*Communicate ideas:* eg how to analyse, modify, adapt and refine ideas, before presenting finished work; analysis of the successes and/or failures of working practices; the reasons for use of materials and techniques; the quality and aesthetics of ideas

*Presentation methods:* eg mounting and display of ideas for discussion; visual and written digital combinations using various programmes; verbal and visual combinations (use of voice-over, audiovisual combinations); use of image/music/sound to communicate desired qualities; web logs and web links opportunities for multimedia approach

*Different audiences:* eg tutors, peers and/or other audiences; these will include audiences with appropriate connections to the concepts and ideas of learners, specialist pathways, eg young people; professional practitioners; office workers; technicians; industrialists/managers/company directors

## Grading grid

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all of the learning outcomes for the unit. The criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 identify and select visual and non-visual references which inform ideas	M1 use the results of purposeful research and investigation to inform own ideas and concepts, demonstrating coherent direction in originating and developing ideas	D1 independently analyse and interpret research to generate personal ideas and concepts, applying sophisticated thinking in generating, modifying and synthesising original ideas
P2 investigate ideas-generating techniques	M2 demonstrate an individual approach to producing purposeful ideas and solutions in response to briefs and to present work coherently and effectively.	D2 demonstrate an individual and perceptive approach to producing and communicating innovative and exciting work using sophisticated presentation methods.
P3 generate and refine ideas in response to briefs		
P4 communicate and present ideas and outcomes to different audiences.		

## Essential guidance for tutors

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### Delivery

For this unit learners need to investigate techniques of creative thinking and the generation of innovative ideas. Through this process learners will analyse the ideas and concepts employed by artists for different purposes and from their research develop skills to generate and develop creative personal ideas. Learners will need to explore and broaden their use of visual, written and verbal communication skills in order to structure coherent presentations to different audiences.

The unit is the basis for learners' understanding of the techniques employed in lateral thinking and, where relevant, could be integrated with other core and specialist pathway unit assignments. Tutors might consider opportunities for individual and group discussions and activities for the purpose of exploring techniques of creative thinking.

Slide shows, demonstrations and presentations could be used to show good examples of innovation in contemporary and historical works, stimulating discussion, exploration and analysis. Learners could use these sessions as springboards for investigating and developing creative thinking techniques when generating ideas for set briefs or, later in the course, for learner-initiated briefs. Visits to galleries, designers' studios and workshops would provide vocational relevance for learners' understanding the creative thought processes of professional practitioners.

An important part of this unit is to develop learners' innovative, imaginative faculties for generating and developing personal ideas. Practical activities such as techniques creating storyboards, thumbnails, annotated sketches, model making or working on digitally manipulated designs should be planned alongside research and discussions.

For learning outcome 1 learners need to identify and select a range of visual and non-visual references which inform their ideas. In order to recognise the contexts and factors that influence and inform the development of ideas (for example the use of language, semantics, direct observation, perceptual sensitivity and visual influences) learners will need opportunities to extend their linguistic skills to record, explain and analyse how the context of the examples they identify influences and informs their own ideas. Tutorials, group discussions, verbal and visual presentations and using structured frameworks might all contribute to the development of learners' language and communication skills.

Learning outcomes 1 and 2 are linked. Learners will need to be taught how to analyse, modify, adapt and refine ideas, before presenting their finished work. In order to develop exciting ideas, it is vital that learners continue to refer to the examples of creative, innovative thinking processes identified in their earlier research. Planned interim critical evaluations, in groups or individually, of learners' initial ideas, could be followed by practical activities. For example, worksheets, maquettes and video clips can be reviewed and modified in the light of critical review. When reviewing, learners will need to analyse the successes and/or failures of their working practices, their use of materials and techniques, and the quality and aesthetics of their work.

For learning outcome 4, planned opportunities for the developing skills needed to create presentations are essential to enable the effective communication of learners' ideas. Presentation methods will include a range of different approaches suited to the ideas and intended audiences, for example mounting and display, presentation of visual and written work, verbal and visual presentation and using bullet points and prompt cards. Methods could include combinations of digital and verbal presentation. It will be important for learners to research audience or client needs in order to focus and select the appropriate information. Opportunities to practice the techniques of capturing audience interest and holding their attention will also be essential.

Learners should be made aware of the potential of this area to enhance and develop their work in all areas of design.

Those working in time-based media may wish to explore more widely than the areas listed in the *unit content* section. Sequential and time-lapse photography, animation, drawing and painting onto film, the use of index cards and sound recording could also provide sources of evidence for presentations of creative thinking techniques at pass, merit and distinction levels for this unit.

This unit will be assessed through observation, ongoing critique and submission of work, undertaken in response to problem-solving exercises covering the three learning outcomes.

Generated evidence should include learners' analysis of problems, developmental work and ideas in response to given tasks. Evidence will be supplemented by the documentation of contextual reference material, identification of key influences on the thinking process in design, and evaluations of learners' work and the thinking processes they have undertaken.

Learners should be able to clearly explain, through display and oral presentation, the techniques used in the development of their ideas.

## Assessment

To achieve a **pass** grade, learners will produce evidence that meets the required standard for all four pass criteria.

Evidence produced for P1 should demonstrate the ability to identify as clearly as possible a range of visual and verbal reference, through eg notes, extended pieces of written texts, bibliographies and lists of references, annotated studies, recorded discussions, observation sheets, activity feedback and completed frameworks.

P1 and P2 are integrated and work towards both might include how learners' research has influenced their own creative thinking through mind-mapping, preliminary sketches and rough studies with notes.

Evidence for P3 could be through audio/visual recorded critical review sessions, observation sheets and witness statements, but also through results of practical activities, for example in ideas worksheets, model-making and samples or test pieces supported by annotated studies.

P4 could be evidenced through learner plans, notes or charts from their market research and audience analysis, and video clips demonstrating presentation and effective communication skills. Learners might use varied presentation methods for different activities using audio visual equipment such as video, film, annotated slides or PowerPoint slides that are of particular relevance to their ideas.

To achieve a **merit** grade all the pass criteria and the two merit criteria must be achieved. The learner should show they are able to find and use their research to generate, creative and develop personal ideas.

Evidence for M1 could take the form of explanatory notes, descriptive and analytical pieces of text or detailed annotated visual studies. There should be evidence of a coherent, clearly defined and planned approach to generating independent and creative ideas.

M2 builds on M1 and learners need to evidence their ability to further refine and modify their creative ideas showing reasoned judgements in decision making. This evidence might be presented through detailed worksheets, refined maquettes, film clips with accompanying clearly annotated storyboards and planned audio visual presentations.

For M2 learners should demonstrate coherent connections with their own and others' concepts and ideas using informed linguistic skills. They should show an individual, imaginative approach to communicating and presenting information. Evidence for this might be through investigating and collating research into different audience needs and developing a range of well-planned presentation methods as suggested in the unit content.

To achieve a **distinction** grade all the pass and merit criteria must be achieved and the two distinction criteria.

For D1 the learner will independently and fluently analyse and interpret research, evidencing their understanding of creative thinking techniques through analytical written pieces, and combinations of visual and textual analysis using in-depth critical vocabulary. Similarly, learners will evidence their ability to apply divergent and lateral thinking to generate, develop and synthesise exciting and innovative ideas.

For D2 learners will demonstrate highly articulate skills of review and refinement towards providing informed and sophisticated ideas for different purposes. Learners will show clear evidence of highly articulate communication skills through independently planned, exciting presentations. For D2 evidence of effective presentations to different audiences might be a chart or graph showing results of their analysis of audience feedback.

### **Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications**

This unit links directly with the core units *Unit 1: Visual Recording in Art and Design* and *Unit 4: Visual Communication in Art and Design*. There is potential for delivering this unit with most units through integrative project work, but in particular *Unit 7: Design Methods in Art and Design*.

The unit provides essential underpinning knowledge for any study of art, craft and design and is relevant to all pathways. It links with *Unit 13: Art and Design Specialist Contextual Investigation*, as it provides background knowledge and research skills which learners can then develop in their own area of specialised interest. This unit also has useful links with other units where learners research contemporary and historical work.

There are opportunities for the development of key skills in this unit. The unit also provides development opportunities for the whole underpinning knowledge and understanding for NVQ Design Level 2 (SFEDI) Unit 22: Develop and Communicate Design Ideas.

### Essential resources

This is a core unit and is therefore mandatory across all specialist subject pathways. The resources needed for this unit will vary according to the specific technical and material demands of learners' work.

Essential resources include:

- *specialist workspaces*: eg studios, workshops, computer suites, video and film editing suites
- *materials, equipment and tools*: eg for 2D, 3D, 4D and associated materials, equipment and tools across all specialist areas
- *specialist staff*: eg for the different specialist pathways; this might also include technical support staff.

Visits to galleries, exhibitions, film reviews, plays, performance and live art, workshops, studios and advertising agencies could play an important role in assignments designing for this unit. Alternatively, bringing professional practitioners from art, design or media backgrounds in to talk about their work could help learners with the evidence requirements for this unit.

Learners should have access to a well-stocked learning centre, where resources include a broad coverage of ideas and concepts across the spectrum of 19th, 20th and 21st and other century art, craft and design. These should include written and visual materials eg books, journals, DVD, video, CD ROMs. The collection should be sufficient to enable learners to source ideas and thinking in art and design, and to find a wide range of reference material for personal research. Learners will need access to specialist media and materials to successfully complete this unit.

Learners will also need to access information via other methods, such as the internet, and should also be encouraged to undertake visits to museums and galleries to research, select and record from relevant and appropriate work first-hand.

There must be sufficient access to audio visual and digital resources to enable learners to understand the range of possible presentation methods appropriate to their ideas and audiences.

## Indicative reading for learners

### Books

Annink E and Schwartz I – *Bright Minds: Beautiful Ideas; Bruno Manari, Charles and Ray Eames, Marti Guixe and Jurgen Bey* (Book Industry Services, 2004)

Berger J – *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin Books/BBC, 1990)

De Bono E – *Serious Creativity: Using the Power of Lateral Thinking to Create New Ideas* (Harper Collins, 1992)

Kristian G and Schlempp-Ülker N – *Visualising Ideas* (Thames & Hudson, 2006)

McAlhone B and Stuart D – *A Smile in the Mind* (Phaidon, 1998)

## Key skills

Achievement of key skills is not a requirement of this qualification but it is encouraged. Suggestions of opportunities for the generation of Level 3 key skill evidence are given here. Staff should check that learners have produced all the evidence required by part B of the key skills specifications when assessing this evidence. Learners may need to develop additional evidence elsewhere to fully meet the requirements of the key skills specifications.

Communication Level 3	
When learners are:	They should be able to develop the following key skills evidence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participating in a group discussion on creative presentation of ideas and concepts for specific audiences</li> <li>making an informed and stimulating presentation of individual ideas</li> <li>investigating contextual sources to explore and analyse the creative ideas of different artists for different purposes</li> <li>synthesising information from research activity</li> <li>writing an analytical account of the creative ideas of different practitioners.</li> </ul>	<p>C3.1a Take part in a group discussion.</p> <p>C3.1b Make a formal presentation of at least eight minutes using an image or other support material.</p> <p>C3.2 Read and synthesise information from at least <b>two</b> documents about the same subject.  Each document must be a minimum of 1000 words long.</p> <p>C3.3 Write <b>two</b> different types of documents, each one giving different information about complex subjects.  One document must be at least 1000 words long.</p>

<b>Information and communication technology Level 3</b>	
<b>When learners are:</b>	<b>They should be able to develop the following key skills evidence:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• planning how to obtain information on the creative ideas of different practitioners using ICT and non-ICT sources</li> <li>• entering and combining information to appropriate software packages, using respective features to improve efficiency</li> <li>• developing their information in order to derive new information appropriate to their tasks</li> <li>• emailing a draft copy of work to tutor for feedback</li> <li>• presenting an analysis of the ideas and concepts employed by artists for different purposes</li> <li>• annotating work to identify any changes made.</li> </ul>	<p>ICT.1 Search for information, using different sources, and multiple search criteria in at least one case.</p> <p>ICT.2 Enter and develop the information and derive new information.</p> <p>ICT.3 Present combined information such as text with image, text with number, image with number.</p>

<b>Improving own learning and performance Level 3</b>	
<b>When learners are:</b>	<b>They should be able to develop the following key skills evidence:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working with tutor to agree approaches to planning their project or learning activity</li> <li>• producing plan or proposal with set targets</li> <li>• using their plans to produce work within the set time constraints of the activity</li> <li>• reflecting on, adapting plans and recording stages of their learning</li> <li>• reviewing progress with tutor</li> <li>• evaluating finished work at close of the project.</li> </ul>	<p>LP3.1 Set targets using information from appropriate people and plan how these will be met.</p> <p>LP3.2 Take responsibility for their learning, using their plan, to help meet targets and improve their performance.</p> <p>LP3.3 Review progress and establish evidence of their achievements.</p>