**Current approaches to the assessment of graphic design in a Higher Education context**

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**Abstract**

This article provides an overview of the current trends in assessment practice within the field of graphic design. The demands placed on educators to apply sound assessment practice for Higher Education subjects is as intense in the field of graphic design as in any other. Forcing the assessment of creative visual work into existing assessment methodologies is incongruous and is often, for good reason, met with resistance from lecturers in this field. Practical art and design modules tend to fall outside of the recognised assessment methodologies as the type of skills and thinking that students must evidence are difficult to define. Lecturers, in order to encouraging creativity, prefer to leave outcomes open ended in order to accommodate the unexpected and unique solutions that students are encouraged to achieve. This and the atypical assessment approaches taken in design subjects make justifying assessment practice to the various role players challenging. In this article current trends that make assessment more transparent, encourage deep learning and give the opportunity to assess not only the final artefact, but the creative process and the development of the learner as a design practitioner, are identified. These approaches can provide lecturers with the basis for building sound

assessment structures and empowering them to clearly justify their assessment practice.

**Keywords:** assessment practice, authentic assessment, deep learning, outcomes-based education, creative process, learner-centredness, constructive alignment, holistic assessment

**Introduction**

This article deals with the assessment of creative work in a higher education graphic design context and identifies a number of current assessment approaches specific to the creative arts. The appropriateness of these approaches is considered in relationship to what needs to be assessed in a creative field such as graphic design and how it should be assessed. The fact that assessment is one of the keystones in teaching and learning in higher education and is under pressure to be transparent, fair, accurate and cost effective cannot be ignored. As pressure for accountable assessment – keeping all role players in mind – increases the approach that lecturers take to the assessment of creative work needs to be defined and substantiated.

**Assessment in the Creative Arts**

Most design courses have very thorough structures and processes for assessment, which generally include documented learning outcomes and assessment criteria. However, most teams of lecturers and individuals marking assignments and being involved in external moderation of final portfolios, have, at one time or another, had queries relating to how work was assessed and these queries, on occasion, escalate to involve individuals and groups who have no knowledge of education or the subject area. Explaining to lay people, such as students and parents, how creative visual pieces are marked is often problematic. As lecturers operating in a learner-centred, outcomes-based higher education system, the description of what is expected of

students and how they will be assessed should be intrinsic to assessment and transparent to all role players. Perhaps some of the responsibility for not being able to communicate our assessment approach lies with us as design academics. For example, as indicated in the policy document *Assessment on Our Own Terms* issued by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) where it states "we are not as adept as we need to be at explaining to others what we do, how it works, and why it works" (NASAD 2009, 1).

As visual artists and experts in the field, we have a deep seated fear of over specifying and creating a rigid system for the assessment of creative work. For many academics who evaluate work using their knowledge, experience and gut feel, this method has worked effectively for many years, so why change? In the same vein the concept of comparing art and design to any other academic endeavour has never sat well with creative individuals and using assessment and grades to legitimise art, is viewed with suspicion (Hickman 2007, 80). In a group of twenty students, each student will arrive at an individual (if not necessarily unique) solution to a creative assignment. All of the solutions will look different and have been arrived at by different routes and this should be encouraged. A system that aims to specify very tightly what is expected of the student could eliminate these diverse processes and result in no risk taking and formulaic submissions. Dineen and Collins highlight the danger of this approach by stating that "teacher and learner are obliged to give up ownership, lateral thinking and divergence in order to satisfy the spurious precision of assessment criteria derived from, and implacably fixed to, learning outcomes" (2005, 48).

The involvement of government, institutional management, sponsors, parents and the students themselves in the education process has created pressure on academics to document, substantiate and justify their assessment practice. The institution as a service provider to increasingly demanding clients (students) and the

emphasis on marks and pass rates "has brought in its wake demands for transparency, accuracy and parity of assessment within and across discipline areas" (Dineen and Collins 2005, 45). Design educators are not immune to the institutional pressures which include providing a cost effective assessment strategy as well as academic success. Time spent marking and money spent on external examiners – often referred to as external moderators in this context - are all part of the costs of running an institution. For many private institutions competing in an increasingly competitive market, good throughput and pass rates are used to attract students. These statistics are commonly based on the marks awarded to students for summative assessments. If the assessment practice is not accountable, this can then influence pass and throughput rates and ultimately the reputation and both academic and financial success of the institution.

The design and advertising industries (which offer graduates a variety of design jobs in many different areas) has a tenuous relationship with design education; very few professional designers are involved in design education except for the odd individual who is willing to serve as a moderator or on an advisory committee. As employers they are often very critical of the skills that graduates have or do not have. To balance this negative perspective, we must add that many design educators have been or are practicing designers and the industry perspective is brought into the studio on an ongoing and daily basis.

As education shifts focus to become learner-centered and outcomes-based, design educators are paying more attention to defining transparent assessment structures and criteria and providing students with clear learning outcomes. If the aim of assessment in terms of current practice is to encourage understanding and deep learning, some educators such as Davies feel that "assessment, as it is normally practised in art and design education, is the major contributor to students taking a surface approach to their work" (2001, 1). As a learning opportunity assessment

feeds our teaching practice, the students' learning and motivation, and sets the standards for the course and the institution. Ultimately assessment is the process and tools that we use to judge students' competence, be it intellectual, practical or reflexive competence – with a focus on both the 'what' (product of learning) and the 'how' (learning process).

**Current research on assessment**

Over the past thirty years, assessment in higher education has been scrutinised, analyzed and researched, although the focus has primarily been on subjects that require written evidence for assessment. Ehmann points out that "design education is somewhat neglected within educational research, perhaps for reasons of its non-standard procedures and methods. With few exceptions, one significant area of neglect in design education research is assessment" (2005, 108). In looking for research relating to the assessment of work produced by design students, one finds little existing literature on the topic when compared to the extensive research published on assessment that is primarily directed towards subjects that are not of a visual or creative nature. The key taxonomies and models by Bloom, Biggs, Collis and Barrett are slanted towards the assessment of written or verbal evidence. Books such as *Evaluating the Quality of Learning The SOLO Taxonomy (Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome)* (Biggs and Collis 1982) provide categories for the demonstration of certain levels of thinking. In the book the most relevant example is one that relates to the assessment of a poetry assignment, this is still a far cry from what is required to assess creative visual pieces (Biggs and Collis 1982, 95-108).

A number of articles relating to assessment as applied to school art especially in the United Kingdom focus specifically on the examination type of assessment of art and the type of learning outcomes that are expected. The various chapters in *The Problem of Assessment in Art and Design* edited by Rayment (2007) are generally

negative when considering the impact of an outcomes-based approach to the assessment of art examinations. Barry Jackson provides a succinct overview of the assessment of design in "Assessment Practices in Art and Design: a Contribution to Student Learning?" which can be found in Gibbs' book *Improving Student Learning Through Assessment and Evaluation* (1995).

The research by design educators such as Allan Davies and Dr Anna Reid, initially based on the assessment strategies published by Biggs and others, has been developed specifically for creative subjects. The articles "Teachers' and Students Conceptions of the Professional Word" (Reid and Davies 2003) and "Uncovering Problematics in Design Education – Learning and the Design Entity" (Davies and Reid 2000) touch on assessment and are amongst a number of valuable documents available on the University of Arts London website. Ehmann's article "Using Assessment to Engage Graphic Design Students in their Learning Experience" (2005) concentrates on how assessment can be used to create a positive learning experience. Grant Ellmers individually and together with Folley and Bennett has published articles that are useful, in particular "Graphic Design Education: a Revised Assessment Approach to Encourage Deep Learning" (Ellmers, Foley and Bennett 2008). To illustrate the scarcity of published articles on assessment in this field, the research for the report *Innovative Assessment Across the Disciplines* mapped and evaluated innovative assessment, the report identified 272 published articles that were categorised as appropriate to the topic, of which only six fell under the category "art, design and media" (Hounsell, et al. 2007, 9).

That said there are a number of books on more general topics such as *Assessment, Learning and Employability* (Knight and Yorke 2003) and the chapter Assessing Creativity Using the Consensual Assessment Technique written by Baer and McKool, in *Assessment Technologies, Methods and Applications in Higher Education* edited

by Christopher S. Schreiner (Ed.) (2009, 65-77) which provide useful information on aspects of the topic.

**What is Assessment?**

As with any form of assessment the basic requirements to be "fair, reliable and valid" (SAQA 2000, 6) apply to assessment in the design field. Assessment includes many facets such as assessment methods (observation, evaluation, questioning, etc.), instruments (tests, projects, assignments, examinations, portfolios, etc.), uses (formative and summative) and participants (peer, self, panel, moderator) (SAQA 2000, 18).

There are a number of areas that are currently receiving attention, such as authentic assessment, assessment to accommodate various learning styles, ensuring that assessment instruments accommodate "multiple perspectives and context sensitivity" (Beets 2007, 578) and learner-centered assessment.

Assessment provides lecturers with opportunities to evaluate their own teaching practice and its effectiveness, to provide feedback to students, to encourage learning, to motivate students, to allocate marks and most important of all to determine the quality of learning. Weimer considers assessment in a learner-centred approach "the most effective tool a teacher [lecturer] has to promote learning" (2002, 17).

**Role Players/Context**

There are a number of role players to be considered when one looks at assessment in higher education, including the students themselves and the lecturers. Although learner-centred education is encouraged within most institutions, few have involved students in the structuring, designing, choosing and evaluation of assessments. There are a number of historical and practical reasons for this that will not be

discussed within this investigation. The complexities of lecturers approaching their teaching from a learner-centred approach and yet using teacher-centred assessment is discussed in Drew and Shreeve's paper "Assessment as Participation in Practice" (2006), which to a large extent is still the practice at many institutions. Assessments are therefore structured, designed and administered by the lecturers for each subject, leaving students largely in the dark about the process and many do not understand how they have been assessed or the aims of the assessment other than to award marks.

The South African Government and various education departments are role players, in particular the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and Department of Education (DoE) as they oversee aspects such as the accreditation of degrees and quality assurance for both public and private institutions. Accredited service providers of higher education in South Africa working within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), in compliance with government regulations and strategies, are under the obligation to describe the desired learning outcomes of a learning programme or module and each assessment opportunity in the courseware given to students. "The NQF is an outcomes based education and training framework for education and training standards and qualifications. As such, the assessment practices and procedures for the NQF have to be aligned to those of an outcomes based education and training system" (SAQA 2000, 6).

Industry including the advertising, graphic design, corporate design, printing, publishing and multimedia industries, employ graphic design graduates. The relationship between industry and higher education is not always satisfactory. In the *IDA World Design Survey Pilot Project South Africa,* issued by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) Design Institute in 2008, only 17% of industry respondents strongly agreed that "design students studying at accredited

governmental institutions in South Africa (universities and universities of technology) get the correct training and practical experience to equip them sufficiently when they enter the job market" (SABS Design Institute 2008, 61) private institutions faired only slightly better scoring 19% in the same category. Another facet of industry influence is that many design academics are also practicing designers and the requirements of industry can dominate their approach to facilitating learning and how work is benchmarked. The practitioner-lecturer who often has no pedagogical background, may adopt the traditional master apprentice studio-based approach which leads to a focus on teaching rather than on learning (de le Harpe, et al. 2009, 46).

Within institutions academics are increasingly under pressure to improve pass and throughput rates. These statistics are used to describe success and can be applied to performance-based funding which determines subsidies, budgets and bonuses. The analysis of assessment results and the use of the results becomes of great significance to prospective students and their parents, the government, the institution, management, campuses, faculties and individual lecturers.

The role players can therefore be influential in terms of providing an overall structure and goal for education, by indicating to education what learning outcomes should be achieved and by using the statistics gleaned from assessment for secondary purposes. Add to this the establishment and maintenance of standards and who should decide these: industry, academia, government, that particular institution or the individual lecturer.  All adds to the complexity of pinpointing assessment and the marks allocated. Remer underlines this confusion when referring to the lack of consensus for art education at school level "there is still little general agreement on whether or how we should assess the arts, who should conduct the assessments, and to whose standards the assessments should adhere" (2010, 82). The same problem prevails at higher education level.

**In design what are we trying to find evidence of?**

Although each institution, lecturer and potential employer may not agree on all the specific skills that a graphic design graduate should exhibit, there are some areas of consensus. Skills relating to entrepreneurship, communication and team work would be required. Technique is another area that most agree on, even though the specifics may change slightly from industry to industry and with advances in technology. Technique could include mastering the formal aspects of design such as use of colour, layout, typography, mastering various mediums that designers have access to, which can include handwork, photography, computer software and production techniques. As the student progresses one would expect to see an increased level of mastery of skill, technique and appropriateness. However, design education must offer and expect more than pure mastery of technique, as this approach would be teaching "essentially technical, skills-based processes rather than as cognitive, ontological and performative processes" (Dineen and Collins 2005, 48) and would not be in line with the requirements of an applicable qualification or the expectations of a dynamic and creative workplace.

Moving away from technique, lecturers look for more intangible skills that relate to how students think, conceptualise and contextualise their work within the design practice and historical design context. In terms of thinking skills, designers have always been expected to demonstrate innovative thinking skills, they are expected to be lateral thinkers who can conceptualise unique solutions to problems, work intuitively, make unexpected connections, imagine new and different possibilities and arrive at products that are occasionally outside of the existing knowledge base (Knight and Yorke 2003, 3). Design is not created in a vacuum, each piece that a student creates relates to the end goal which is often to satisfy a role in visual communication and a client, even if the client is often fictitious as defined by the lecturer. Student work should be contextually effective as it exists within the history

and theory of design and for assessment purposes would be compared to current or past examples of this type of work and formal aspects of design theory. The expectations are therefore for students to evidence a combination of technical, thinking and creative skills for assessment.

**Creativity**

In assessment of the learning of graphic design students one of the challenges is to explicate what meaning we expect students to construct and how they should provide evidence of this constructing. Moreover, this challenge expects us to consider assessing both the final product and the learning process.  An area of difficulty in graphic design is that many of the outcomes that relate to learning are not easy to evidence or measure, as  Davies points out: "our challenge is greater because we work with rather more ambiguous terms such as 'creativity', 'imagination', 'originality' etc as well as understanding" (2000, 01). There is little doubt that industry and the academic world expect graphic design graduates to produce creative work and so the term creativity if it is an outcome to be assessed (evidenced and measured), needs to be defined and some agreement reached as to what creativity looks like.

Herrmann sees creativity as a process to produce something "original, unique and usually novel" (1999, 1). If one were to look for the characteristics of the creative process Walker and Parker use the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Educations' definition of creativity as, "using imagination, pursuing purposes, being original, judging value" (2006, 299). Norman Jackson sees the need for creativity in all disciplines and highlights the key elements as being imaginative, original, curious and resourceful, combining, connecting and synthesising information and concepts, critical and analytical thinking and effectively communicating ideas to others (2006, 3). Creativity is often seen to be instinctive rather than logical, which would make the creative process difficult to describe. Brinkman points out that although there may be disagreement as to whether one can teach creativity,

education can support and motivate students plus provide the rewards, opportunity, goals and structure that encourage and assist them to produce creative work (2010, 49). In his field of music he feels that we "can teach and model techniques for generating ideas, for being sensitive to personality traits that might encourage creative expression and risk-taking in their work" (Brinkman 2010, 48).

Some of the pertinent points that come out of these and other definitions is that creativity is considered a 'process', that ideally it would result in a product that is different to anything that has been seen before, that the creator has to experiment, reflect, revise, spend time with and take risks in order to arrive at the final product or solution and that the creator him-/herself may not be aware of the process or be able to describe it.  All in all creativity is one of the complex achievements as defined by Knight and Yorke (2003, 1), that makes graphic design difficult to assess.

## Current Models and Approaches to Assessment

### Outcomes-based

In South Africa great emphasis has been placed on outcomes-based education (OBE) at both school and higher education levels. The Higher Education Qualifications Council (HEQC) indicates that outcomes "should be derived from the knowledge base of the curriculum and the demands of the discipline as well as the needs of the profession or career" (CHE 2004, 24). The outcomes-based approach is commonly used at higher education institutions in South Africa. The method of defining what it is that students are expected to be able to do and know and then working back to establish ways to assess these objectives is common assessment practice.

Within the design of a module lecturers formulate specific end-points of learning or objectives as they were called in the past related to the requirements of the profession, industry, the subject, the level of study. Broader aims such as managing ones time and working effectively in groups are also included as critical cross field outcomes. These are, within the course, translated into outcomes that students should master, and should be "achievable, observable and measurable" (Buss 2007, 2), thereby forming the basis of what is to be assessed. In the design field specific learning outcomes could describe expected technical mastery as well as creative and conceptual mastery.  Using learning outcomes is common practice in Europe, Australia, in the USA and many other regions.

Considering this, the various approaches and/or models identified below all operate within outcomes-based education. The approaches that were identified are categorised as follows: analytical, Biggs constructive alignment, expert/connoisseur, final product, holistic and authentic. The categories are based on the approach being current as defined in recently published literature and there being a particular theoretical basis for the approach. In all categories there are potential overlaps and cross overs that will be illustrated within the discussion.

**Analytical Approach**

An approach whereby each learning outcome is allocated a mark is considered by Davies to be an "analytical approach to assessment" (2000, 4). Depending on the approach of the lecturer each assignment may contain many or only a few learning outcomes. In some cases lecturers try to specify every aspect that they consider to be important for the student to achieve.  They are of the opinion that it provides students with clear guidance and therefore an understanding of exactly what is expected of them. For inexperienced lecturers such a comprehensive list of criteria that can be observed and measured is helpful and reassuring. The approach lends

itself to the assessment of the technical skills that students are expected to demonstrate. The analytical approach certainly satisfies the administrative aspects of education: each learning outcome and assessment criterion is clearly defined; marking can be done quickly with little or no debate, there is a paper trail for each aspect of the assessment; if there are queries, the sheer quantity and detail of the approach is impressive.

Having the paperwork done however, does not necessarily make for a good or effective system as it can firstly result in student's ticking off a checklist of learning outcomes that they have achieved. Based on this they might expect to pass or even achieve a good mark. When this fragmented check list is seen in conjunction with the final piece it does not always reflect the 'worth' of the piece. The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) policy brief highlights this by stating that "this does not mean that functioning parts will automatically create a functioning whole, much less an outstanding result" (2009, 2). The students' final work when presented may contain the correct elements, but does not gel or have any cohesion and so does not achieve the overall objective of the brief.

Secondly some students use these assessment structures to guide them through the process of creating their designs, which could mean that they may only produce what is indicated in the structure. This issue was in fact the starting point of this investigation, when a student mentioned that she had received a good mark for a particular brief because she had added something to her design that was not defined in the brief or in the assessment criteria.

The third factor is that with a rigidly detailed assessment structure and detailed learning outcomes all student work could eventually look very similar. Walker and Parker identify one of the problems with rigid learning outcomes when related to the practical examinations that secondary school art students in England are required to

complete: "A principal concern is whether an assessment objectives driven [learning outcomes-driven] examination model inevitably leads to formulaic practice that inhibits the creative potential of students and restricts the nature of their experiences" (2006, 298). The same goes for higher education. Students will not be encouraged to imagine unique approaches with unintended learning outcomes. If lecturers recognise the value of the work even though it falls outside of the defined learning outcomes, how do they justify to students and management awarding a high mark? Lecturers are concerned that the process leaves little room for unintended learning outcomes and as technical aspects are easier to define the "negative conclusion that can be drawn is that we will end up teaching and assessing only those outcomes that can easily be measured" (Davies 2000, 3). In contrast to this approach some design lecturers feel that "assessment objectives [learning outcomes] need to be read as open expansive statements capable of being evidenced in a wide variety ways and forms, rather than as narrowly specified prescriptions" (Walker and Parker 2006, 300).

**Biggs Constructive Alignment**

Constructive alignment is an approach to teaching and learning defined by Biggs and Collis (1982) in which the curriculum is aligned to what students should learn and therefore to how they are assessed. Ehmann defines the "constructively aligned learning environment is structured so that students are more likely to engage in these learning activities. Assessment should explicate what it is students are expected to learn and measure student attainment of the learning outcomes" (2005, 108). Reid and Davies have extend the concept of constructive alignment to include students' concept of the professional world as this influences how learning outcomes need to be formulated and in fact what students expect to learn (2003, 37). Constructive

alignment is therefore used as an approach to the structuring of teaching, learning and assessment in design disciplines.

Biggs and Collis provide the SOLO taxonomy for evaluating the quality of learning and the demonstration of certain types of thinking such as "extended abstract, relational, multistructural, unistructural and prestructural" (1998, 224-225). This taxonomy, which encourages deep learning, is designed to be used in a variety of subject areas. However, as Barry Jackson points out the "taxonomy has been constructed using written or verbal evidence for analysis" (1995) and is therefore not easily applied to art and design.

**Expert/Connoisseur**

A long tradition of using the expert or connoisseur to evaluate art and design exists. Hickman defines a connoisseur as being someone with experience, a high degree of perception, and "sensitivity to otherwise subliminal characteristics" (2007, 81). The lecturer in the class situation is an expert and passes judgement on work while it is in process and judges and grades the final pieces. Currently most higher education institutions in South Africa involve an external examiner, who may be an academic or industry expert, in the final assessment of graphic design subjects. The connoisseur in these situations is familiar with the learning outcomes expected, but not with the student and so is considered to provide an impartial assessment of the final product. However, as the investigations of Orr have illustrated the power discrepancies between junior and senior lecturers impact on the marks awarded (2007, 653), and this too could occur in the external examination process.

**Assessment of Final Product**

In keeping with a learner-centered approach and trends in experiential and action learning, emphasis has moved from teaching to learning, and this implies that

assessment too should shift from purely the assessment of the final product, to include assessment of the process and the person. Relating to the previous section, seeing evidence of thinking processes, problem solving, imagination and the less visible aspects of learning are as important as seeing evidence of the technical skills mastered. Davies emphasises this by stating that "the difficulties in assessment in art and design is in being able to differentiate between the quality of a student's product of a particular project and the quality of learning as an outcome of the making of that product" (2000, 2). Many institutions require students to include all rough work, sketch books and visual diaries to assist with the evaluation of the students' process.

Lindström however has devised an approach whereby the final product is assessed using criteria relating to the finished product and criteria relating to the process. His approach was tested on portfolios created by Swedish school students and makes use of a rubric that considers a product category assessing formal aspects such as intention, communication, visual elements and principles and craftsmanship, plus a process category consisting of investigative work, inventiveness, ability to use models and capacity for self-assessment. These are plotted against four developmental stages from expert to novice (Lindström 2007, 88-89). He indicates that his research refutes "the view that process criteria are intrinsically difficult or impossible to assess" (Lindström 2007, 91).

**Holistic Assessment**

The consideration of three aspects for assessment has been proposed by de le Harpe, et al., who recognise "the process and the person, beyond a view that positions the product or art/design artefact above all else" (2009, 37). They propose that assessment structures should change to incorporate studio assessment as well as assessment of the final product. Using studio assessment provides the lecturer with an opportunity to not only assess process, but to involve students in peer and self-assessment, thereby improving the students professional skills, understanding of

their and others' work as well as their ability to analyse and judge graphic design. The research done by Ehmann adopts this strategy of allocating equal weighting to product and process, where students are involved in peer and self-assessment at various stages in the design process (2005, 109). Assessment of process "can encourage a deeper approach to learning where risk-taking and discovery are emphasised, rather than a surface approach" (Ehmann 2005, 109).

Ellmers, Foley and Bennett adapt this approach to apply it in an authentic assessment situation. Once again assessment takes place at various stages in the design process. They divide the assessment criteria between 'design thinking' and 'design doing' by requiring the students to articulate their concepts, reflect on feedback, present their designs at various stages of the process and on completion (2008, 82). Their final structure relates each criteria to the requirements expected of the student and the deep learning approach expected (Ellmers, Foley and Bennett 2008, 83-84).

Hickman considers the broad aims of art education (at school and college level – therefore higher education in the South African context) to be "social utility, visual literacy and personal growth" (2007, 85). Ipsative assessment which would consider personal growth and the transformation of the student through learning and his/her experiences or "where students are marked in part according to their own effort" and "on individual student learning journeys" (Orr 2007, 653) receives little attention in terms of assessment and research. It is acknowledged that going through the learning process changes the individual, but to observe this transformation and to assess it is generally avoided. The development of the student as a practitioner means that a student becomes "a practitioner through change in the student lifeworld" (Drew and Shreeve 2006, 1). This aspect of transformation and learning

might be the most accessible to assess when considering assessing aspects such as teamwork, presentations, professionalism, adherence to deadlines, participation and awareness of own process.

**Authentic Assessment**

Most assignments or briefs in graphic design education tend towards authentic assessment. "Authentic assessment emphasizes the practical application of tasks in real world settings" (Fook and Sidhu 2010, 154). Lecturers intentionally create real life assignments as a designer might receive in an advertising agency or as a practicing freelancer. In some cases service learning modules involve groups of students working on projects for real clients. This approach has been seen to be more student-centred and has less emphasis on purely developing skills, but encourages the development of the person. Authentic assignments provide lecturers with the opportunity to triangulate their assessment of learning through feedback from the client, the student, peers and their own observations which would intrinsically include assessment of the final product, the process and the person. The benefits of this type of project are immeasurable and if designed correctly can involve the student in a community from which they can learn not only design skills, but more about the world, themselves and their peers.

**Conclusion**

Assessment of creative subjects is pulled in different directions by the various role players, although the majority are looking for a transparent, understandable, accurate and cost effective assessment system that will support learning within outcomes-based education. Design academics look for a system that will encourage creativity and skill development, ensure high standards and good results and yet accommodate the idiosyncrasies of a creative field.

Few graphic design lecturers use assessment to encourage deep learning and certainly the statement by Remer that "assessment, research, and evaluation need to become a hefty part of in-service professional development if we are to increase the effectiveness of arts learning" (2010, 87) cannot be disputed.

If one considers the various approaches that are available to lecturers at present, it seems feasible that with this information we can analyse and evaluate our assessment practice and make use of the more appropriate approaches to become more effective lecturers. Clearly formulated but not overly restrictive learning outcomes, a system whereby the development of the person and process as well as the final artefact is considered and using assessment to encourage deep learning would benefit all parties.

Making the process accessible to all still remains a challenge. However, clearly stated supporting documentation and encouraging students themselves to assess their own and other students' work could go a long way to clearing up inaccurate perceptions and queries when final marks are allocated. Considering assessment and familiarising oneself with the various approaches could lead to academics being able to more easily justify and substantiate the process and the final results.

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