



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS 2007

ART, CRAFT, DESIGN

ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Chief Examiner's report is to support teaching and learning and it is hoped that teachers and students of the subject will find it beneficial. The analysis of candidate performance in the 2007 Junior Certificate, Art, Craft, Design Examination and the consequent conclusions and recommendations are based on the reports and experiences of the Assistant Examiners, Advising Examiners and the Chief Advising Examiner during the marking period in June 2007.

The report should be read in conjunction with the following:

- 2007 Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design Project Brief
- The 2007 Drawing Examination Paper
- Relevant Marking Schemes
- Art, Craft, Design Syllabus
- Guidelines for Teachers
- Circular Letter S70/99

The examination papers and relevant marking schemes are available on the State Examinations Commission's website: <http://www.examinations.ie>

1.2 The Syllabus

The current syllabus for Art, Craft, Design was first examined in the Junior Certificate examinations in 1992. The syllabus, which is comprised of core and optional elements, is structured to ensure a balance between experiencing, making and understanding art, leading students to develop personal, technical and aesthetic competencies.

The Art, Craft, Design Syllabus for Junior Certificate and Art, Craft, Design Guidelines for Teachers are available from Government Publications, Postal Trade Section, 51 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 016476834.

1.3 The Examination

The Art, Craft, Design examination consists of two parts, based on a common syllabus for both Higher and Ordinary Levels, as follows:

- (a) A project carried out in class, under the supervision of the Art Teacher between October and May of the final year of Junior Cycle. The project is examined in school in June by Examiners appointed and trained by the State Examinations Commission. The project has a weighting of 75% of the total marks.
- (b) An invigilated examination in Drawing, held in school in May. The Drawing examination has a weighting of 25% of the total marks.

1.3.1 Examination Requirements

(a) The Project

A project brief is issued to candidates in early October, providing them with a list of themes which are common to both Higher and Ordinary Levels. Each candidate selects one theme which will form the starting point for his/her project to be completed by a specific date in May of the following year.

The theme provides the stimulus for the candidate to embark on the journey of research and investigation leading to the production of an extensive body of two-dimensional and three-dimensional work. Support Studies underpin this process through the use of appropriate vocabulary and through intellectual enquiry which produce links and connections with art history, local environment and technology.

The project begins with the initial brief and develops through the process of recording researched material, investigating and analysing ideas, testing selected proposals and making personal judgements leading to a final design solution piece/artefact.

Whilst the themes are common to both levels, candidates at Higher Level are required to produce work at a differentiated level of competence throughout the project. In 2007, Higher Level candidates were allowed to choose between Painting or Graphic Design rather than do both as in previous years.

Candidates at both levels are, therefore, required to submit eight component parts for the project examination as follows:

- Preparation for Painting or Graphic Design
- A completed Painting or Graphic Design
- Support Studies for Painting or Graphic Design
- Preparation for 3D
- Completed 3D
- Preparation for Option*
- Completed Option
- Support Studies for 3D and Option combined

* Option refers to the craft area in the syllabus where a candidate may select a craft from the given list. In addition to this list a candidate may, on application to the State Examinations Commission, select a different option subject in compliance with the requirements of form S64/03.

(b) The Drawing Examination

The drawing examination seeks to assess the candidate's ability to observe, to analyse, to interpret, record and communicate what they are looking at, using a choice of approaches and drawing media and embodying the art and design elements as stated in the syllabus.

The drawing examination paper is released to the candidate one week prior to the date of the examination in order that he/she is fully conversant with what is required. This test

consists of an invigilated examination during which the candidate is required to produce two A2 sheets of drawings as follows:

Drawing from Natural/Man-made Forms

- Ordinary and Higher Level candidates are required to produce a drawing of either a man-made object or a natural form. Higher Level candidates are required to submit a detailed study of a segment as well as a drawing of the chosen item. (A list of items which may appear on the examination paper is supplied to schools each year. Candidates are encouraged to practise drawing these items during the school year).

Drawing from Human Forms

- Higher and Ordinary Level candidates are required to submit their observed and personal drawings as they interpret the pose of the live model who is positioned in front of them. Candidates have a choice of drawing the complete figure or the head and shoulders. (The model's pose is released to the candidates one week in advance of the examination).

1.3.2 The Authenticity of Project Work

The role of the teacher in both the supervision and authentication of candidate work is the key to guaranteeing the integrity of work submitted for assessment. In order that the teacher can authenticate and sign-off on each project as the candidate's own individual work, the instructions require that the work takes place in school, under the direct supervision of the class teacher.

Where a candidate has not fulfilled these requirements and where a teacher is, therefore, unable to authenticate the project work as the candidate's own individual work, the teacher indicates this by submitting a P20 Form. In such an instance, the State Examinations Commission withholds marks for the project component of the examination pending the outcome of an investigation. This action, though regrettable, upholds the principle of inter-candidate equity and ensures that marks are only awarded for the authenticated work of candidates. Where marks are withheld following an investigation, the candidate in question may appeal this decision and he/she is informed of the procedures by which an appeal may be made.

The assistance of teachers and school authorities in maintaining the integrity of the assessment process is essential and is acknowledged by the State Examinations Commission.

2. Ordinary Level

2.1 Introduction

Table 1 shows the number of Junior Certificate candidates who sat the Art, Craft, Design examination from 2004 to 2007.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Candidature	56,864	56,640	57,782	57,395
Total Candidature Art, Craft, Design	21555	21339	21726	21818
% taking Art, Craft Design	38%	38%	38%	38%

Table I: Number of candidates taking Art, Craft, Design 2004 to 2007

As can be seen the proportion of the total candidature taking Art, Craft, Design has remained consistent over the last four years.

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of candidates who took Art, Craft, Design at Ordinary and Higher Levels from 2004 to 2007.

Year	Total Candidature Art, Craft, Design	Ordinary Level	% of cohort	Higher Level	% of cohort
2004	21555	8196	38%	13359	62%
2005	21339	7835	37%	13504	63%
2006	21723	7574	35%	14149	65%
2007	21818	6824	31%	14994	68.7%

Table II: Number of candidates taking Art, Craft, Design (Higher and Ordinary Levels) 2004 to 2007

2.2 Performance of Candidates

Tables 4 and 5 below show the percentages of candidates achieving each grade in Ordinary Level Art, Craft, Design, from 2004 to 2007.

Year	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
2004	8196	14.4	28	32	17.3	5.6	2.4	0.3
2005	7835	17.0	30.3	31.4	14.5	4.6	2.0	0.3
2006	7574	14.3	32.1	31.8	14.9	4.6	2.2	0.1
2007	6824	11.8	28.0	32.4	18.1	6.3	2.9	0.4

Table III: Percentage of candidates by grade awarded in Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design (Ordinary Level) 2004 to 2007

2.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

2.3.1 Project

The work produced by candidates at this level showed varying levels of application, motivation, realisation and perseverance. There was evidence that candidates began their projects with great interest and enthusiasm, but many seemed to lack the required concentration and stamina to complete all aspects of the work. It is essential that candidates complete all the requirements of the project if they are to achieve a result commensurate with their potential.

Many Ordinary Level candidates appeared to spend too much time on areas of study which appealed to them and consequently some aspects of the project were rushed or, in some instances, not completed.

The following provides an analysis of candidate performance in each aspect of the project.

Preparation

At Ordinary Level, candidates are required to present preparation work for Painting or Graphic Design, 3D, and a Craft Option.

Investigation and research are areas that must be evident right from the point the candidate begins to choose a theme from the question paper. Examiners noted that many candidates at Ordinary Level failed to engage in the areas of investigation and research. Examiners were of the view that some candidates commenced working on a theme without giving sufficient thought and consideration to the subject matter. This absence of preparation leads to a lack of impetus and stimulation as the candidate has no plan of action to follow. It becomes very difficult for such a candidate to sustain interest and continue development when problems arise and solutions cannot be found.

Ordinary Level candidates do not tend to exploit the advantages of using different media. They tend to rely on one media skill and expect it to be able to represent all their expectations.

As referred to in previous Chief Examiner reports, candidates at this level rely too much on tracing, photocopies, magazine cut-outs, and secondary imagery as source material for their project work and this is not in accordance with the ethos of the syllabus. It should be noted that marks are not awarded for material where there is no personal creative response evident.

Lack of continuity of the theme was also evident in many cases, and in these instances, Examiners experienced difficulty in linking any of the project components with the candidates chosen theme.

It was evident that some candidates commenced working on the finished piece/artefact without engaging in the development process. Some candidates did not submit any preparatory work at all while in other instances, it was obvious that the preparatory sheet was completed after the event. This is not recommended practice as it leads to the solution driving the design rather than the design leading to the solution. Students should be guided to begin with the essential preparatory stages of the process. Where a focused effort was made to work through the process of planning, research, and investigation leading to designing and making, the candidate was suitably rewarded.

Development

Once candidates make their informed choices in the core areas of the syllabus, it is necessary to show evidence of personal creative development. This can be achieved through the use of various media and techniques to express the ideas and images they wish to represent having investigated the initial visual stimulus. All four areas of study require an amount of personal creative development, which involves research and investigation into various skills. Important decisions on the choice of suitable materials and media become part of the solution process. The continuity of progress becomes evident and the confidence of the candidate can be sustained in times of difficulty when inspiration can be a problem and solutions are not yet clear.

Some candidates at Ordinary Level did not give adequate time and consideration to developing their original ideas. Initial sketches generally became the realised piece in the two-dimensional area. In some instances, no intermediate investigation of visual manipulation was evident to indicate a progression of the thought process. Many candidates chose to use repeated images on all submitted sheets and in some cases the images were not their own work. Candidates who presented cut out images from magazines and failed to show any personal creative development in the use of these images, performed poorly in this examination. However, many candidates adhered to the syllabus requirements and planned their work well, which allowed them to achieve their potential and achieve high marks.

Realisation

This area of the project can be very rewarding for the candidate as all the preparation and development begin to unite to produce the final design solution.

The use of media and materials, understanding of colour in its many forms, along with the experience in manipulation of techniques all come to the fore in allowing the candidate to demonstrate his/her ability and skill. In the three dimensional area, as in all areas, the aesthetic values are developed and the candidate makes the final decisions on the finished piece. This evolves from the knowledge and learning experiences gained by the candidate over the three years of the Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design syllabus.

Examiners noted that Ordinary Level candidates tended to give all their energies and enthusiasm to completing the finished piece/artefact and fail to give the necessary attention to the areas of Preparation, Development and Support Studies. Some candidates seemed to devote all their creativity to the one area that is of interest to them, for example, the 3D option, and they failed to give any attention to the remaining requirements. Ordinary Level candidates should be regularly reminded of the importance of pacing their work and allowing a certain amount of class time to complete all aspects of the project. Ongoing supervision by teachers and self-assessment by candidates may help to avoid this problem of failing to complete all the project requirements.

The standard of painting was varied, and, in many cases, lacked skill in the mixing of colours. Ordinary Level candidates need more instruction in the process of painting and need to experience the many ways of creating shadows, depth and perspective. All of these learning skills help to encourage the candidates maintain their interest in finishing the work. Many candidates experimented with collage to produce their final piece. In many cases it was used to its best advantage, but in other cases the coloured pieces were merely torn and placed on the paper without any thought given to the art of collage. Pastel was another form of expression used by candidates and in the area of reproducing nature, many candidates understood the blending qualities of the material and Examiners noted the production of good, sensitive studies which achieved high marks.

Examiners noted that clay is the most popular medium of choice of most candidates for the 3D component. It is important that candidates who choose to work in this medium are allowed to experience the qualities of the material. They must understand the limitations of the material in order to produce their intended design. Some candidates did not experiment with the material and consequently their intended item failed to materialise. Ongoing supervision and direction in the use of this material together with self assessment on the part of the candidates, is emphasised in this regard. Where candidates were familiar with the medium and took it to its limits, they produced exciting and skilful items which proved how much they enjoyed making them.

The most submitted options were Lino Printing, Fabric Printing, Batik and 3D. When a candidate chooses an option such as lino printing, it is very important that they study the basic characteristics of the craft and understand and follow the necessary stages

that must take place. Examiners noted that many candidates did not adequately plan and prepare their design for lino printing. Candidates who were allowed to transfer initial line drawings directly on to the lino surface did not use or understand the possibilities of using textural areas to enhance their piece. Neither did they understand the process of registration or over printing. Many lino prints were rushed and it was obvious that inks were badly mixed. In some cases prints were not allowed time to dry out before over printing took place, consequently work became messy and disappointing. Good planning and preparation would help avoid many of the problems encountered.

Candidates who chose batik as their option were more successful in producing good work, showing the various skills and techniques that the craft of batik requires. Candidates generally understood the type of design suitable to the craft and took time to develop and execute the work. Good marks were awarded to many candidates who showed a high level of skill and an understanding of the process of batik craftwork.

Support Studies

Examiners noted that the approach of Ordinary Level candidates to support studies varied. Many presented repetitious, photocopied images placed on a page which had little or no relevance to the subject matter, or cut out images from magazines and comics that had no personal input from the candidate whatsoever. This practice should be discouraged as it does not fulfil the syllabus requirements.

Where candidates understood the rationale for Support Studies, they displayed an ability to analyse and evaluate critically sources such as images, objects, artworks and artefacts and they researched material which had relevance to the purpose, meaning and context of the project. The well guided candidate was in a position to establish a connection between their own work and their chosen support studies. Examiners noted that candidates who understood the purpose of support studies tended to submit a variety of personal sketches which went a long way to explain the thought process leading to the material presented.

Examiners suggested that Ordinary Level candidates may benefit from a more hands on, active learning approach to the development of the support studies. This might include: dealing with aspects of environmental planning and preservation, visits to local galleries and exhibitions and possible local craft workshops. The use of suitable vocabulary should be encouraged when dealing with descriptions of local artefacts, sculptures old and new, and when appraising product design. Candidates who experienced this investigation process had no difficulty in producing a relevant page of Support Studies.

2.3.2 Drawing

Observation

Examiners noted that, in 2007, many Ordinary Level candidates demonstrated an improved competency in object drawing. There were some excellent examples of pencil work with an introduction of colour in the form of colour washes and pastel treatment. There were also some examples of mixed media. Many candidates submitted drawings which displayed a sound knowledge of recognising shape, form, and volume and were

awarded for their skills. Examiners were of the opinion that candidates were spending more time developing their observational skills, experimenting with media, and choosing their item to draw, along with the suitable media to represent that item.

Texture and tone were dealt with in a more sensitive manner by many candidates this year and there were some excellent examples of good composition of items. Many candidates dissected fruit and vegetables creating more interesting drawings and allowing them to display their acquired skills.

In the mid to lower achievement range, drawings were mainly executed in hard pencil and consisted of outlines of objects, with no attempt at shading to suggest tone or texture. In some cases little or no skill, either observational or technical, was evident.

In the life drawing section, higher performing candidates who were familiar with the subject produced very sensitive sketches, some used a variety of leads while others used watercolour pencils. The less skilled candidate found the skill of observing the proportions of the model difficult to transfer on to the page. Most candidates chose the head, neck and shoulders pose and tended to have a selected formula to produce the drawing. This method of drawing tends to eliminate any personal input and consequently the candidate fails to achieve a good mark. This method of memorising a method of drawing should be discouraged as it is not allowing the candidate to develop his or her own style of drawing and use of media.

Interpretation

In general, Examiners noted that candidates achieved lower marks for interpretation than they did for observation. Where candidates were encouraged to explore the qualities of the item they were drawing, they tended to produce a more investigative piece of work which allowed them to display all their acquired skills.

Some candidates were capable of interpreting fabric in a sensitive manner using mixed media and superimposing pencil strokes to suggest the grain of the fabric. These were candidates who had the ability to observe and interpret to a high standard. It is regrettable that some of the candidates who performed so well in their drawing examination did not produce work of the same standard for their project.

Candidates, who had difficulty with observation, were unable to interpret the human figure. Examiners noted that some candidates did not practise any drawing and failed to even suggest the human form. It is suggested that time management and plenty of practice could help to avoid this problem.

2.4 Conclusions

- Many candidates taking Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design at Ordinary Level engaged very positively with the subject. Some candidates displayed varied levels of engagement with the project
- There was evidence that candidates began their projects with great enthusiasm but in some instances this was not sustained and some seemed to lose motivation and interest
- Some candidates who appeared to have significant artistic ability failed to complete the project. In other instances, candidates also submitted unfinished and unrelated material
- Examiners noted an increasing misuse of secondary and copied images
- Many candidates did not engage sufficiently in the areas of investigation and research. Examiners were of the view that some candidates began working on a theme without giving enough thought and consideration to the subject matter. This absence of preparation and planning makes it difficult for such candidates to sustain interest and continue work when problems arise and solutions cannot be found
- Many candidates did not exploit the advantages of using different media. Examiners also noted that lack of practice in using the selected media left candidates unable to control what was happening to their work and in many cases the piece was left unfinished
- Many candidates did not give adequate consideration to the Support Studies
- Some candidates failed to sit the Drawing Examination with obvious consequences for their final grades.

2.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

The following recommendations are made in the spirit of supporting and enhancing teaching, learning and the assessment process.

- Teachers are encouraged to pay considerable attention to the fundamental skill of drawing as a tool of communication. This important skill will allow students to communicate visually, to express their ideas, record investigative drawings and explore and improve their ability
- Teachers are encouraged to spend time discussing the various possibilities of each theme with their students. Students need guidance to tease out all the possibilities and limitations of a chosen starting point. The process should be investigated from start to finish. Students should only choose a theme which is relevant to his/her own interests, environment and skills
- Students' work should be regularly assessed. Monthly reviews of work-in-progress will help ensure that essential requirements, such as Support Studies, are not overlooked. Good planning and ongoing student self-review should be encouraged so that all components of the project are afforded an adequate amount of time
- Students should develop their own personal creative modes of expression using all the techniques and media normally employed at Junior Cycle. When selecting stimulus materials, primary sources should be used where possible. The use of copied imagery should be avoided
- When choosing a craft option students should become fully aware of the characteristics and requirements of that craft. Students should familiarise themselves with the tools of the craft and practise using these tools before commencing on examination materials
- Students should be encouraged to make their own personal drawings to illustrate their ideas. Regular use of a sketchbook can go a long way towards improving drawing skills
- Students should adhere to the size specifications stated on the examination papers
- Teachers should make students fully aware of all the requirements of the State Examinations Commission before they commence the Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design cycle.

3. Higher Level

3.1 Introduction

In 2007, 14,994 candidates took the examination at Higher Level while 6824 candidates took the Ordinary Level. This shows a significant increase in the proportion of candidates taking Art, Craft, Design at Higher Level as compared with 2004 and 2005.

3.2 Performance of Candidates

2007 saw a decrease in the percentage of candidates achieving A and B grades with a corresponding increase in the percentage achieving C, D and E grades.

Year	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
2004	13359	22.6	30.9	33.2	11.5	1.5	0.3	0
2005	13504	26.0	33.0	30.6	9.1	1.1	0.2	0
2006	14149	23.6	31.9	32.3	10.6	1.3	0.2	0
2007	14994	22.0	31.2	33.1	11.6	1.8	0.3	0.0

Table IV: Percentage of candidates by grade awarded in Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design (Higher Level) 2004 to 2007

At Higher Level in 2007, there was a 1.6% drop in the A grades and a 1% rise in the D grades as compared with 2006. However, the 2007 outcomes are generally very much in line with those of recent years.

3.3 Analysis of candidate performance

3.3.1 Project

Preparation

The more successful candidates demonstrated a systematic approach to their project, beginning by exploring and investigating ideas relevant to their chosen theme. They chose themes that they were familiar with, and began to develop ideas from primary sources. Working from primary sources gave candidates a positive stance to work from and allowed the candidate to develop a strong personal engagement. Candidates who experienced this engagement had a sound foundation for creativity which helped them to achieve their potential and enjoy doing so.

Candidates who choose unknown themes tend to spend a lot of time trying to acquaint themselves with the theme and have no personal experience to rely on when difficulties arise. These candidates have difficulties in sustaining ideas from conception to realisation resulting in unresolved problems, lack of continuity and unfinished projects.

Examiners noted that candidates who began working from secondary sources had difficulty in maintaining continuity throughout their preparatory sheets. Their projects, generally, became disjointed and in some cases, it was evident that the candidates lost interest.

A large number of candidates who achieved high grades made use of a variety of sources for research and investigation. These included direct observation of their environment, both natural and man-made, art history and local history material, visits to local exhibitions and galleries, local events of interest such as music concerts. All aspects of the project had a starting point which was easily accessible and Support Studies were in some cases the starting point of the project. Others started in the 3D area as this suited their own environment and led them to further investigation which resulted in an exciting, well integrated project.

The more mature and practised candidate tended not to rush the early stages of the project. It was obvious that research and investigation was very important to these candidates as there was evidence of analysing the theme under all the headings of the project. There was a lot of questioning of the suitability of various source materials to represent the ideas that were beginning to develop. Good planning was obvious where the selected theme was continued right through the Painting, 3D, into the option and Support Studies. Assistant Examiners noted that the enjoyment and pride some candidates experienced in making the project was very evident.

Areas which can lead candidates to underachieve and fail to reach their potential include:

- Lack of knowledge of the theme
- Lack of knowledge of the media they choose to work in.
- Insufficient research, investigation and planning
- Lack of continuity throughout the project due to unresolved problems
- Over reliance on copied secondary images with no personal input
- Repetitive use of the same unchanged image
- No exploration of media, techniques or preparation relating to the craft option.

Development

In general, there was a good standard of development evident throughout the projects submitted. Most candidates managed to show continuous development from one area to another throughout the project. Links between components were strong and progressed into Support Studies. High achieving candidates displayed their skills in exploring the different effects that can be obtained by using a variety of media to interpret their ideas. Candidates who had made well informed decisions in the preparatory area continued to develop their creativity and produced highly imaginative work. Many candidates made effective use of personal detailed drawings and clearly displayed the thought process behind their creative responses.

An extensive variety of materials and media were used creatively. These included leads of all grades, coloured pencils, including watercolour pencils, pastels (both hard and soft), charcoal and chalk, paint including oil, watercolour and gouache, and collage. There were

some excellence examples of mixed media where the knowledge and expertise of the candidate was evident.

Some candidates, who were clearly very talented in one particular area of the project, tended to devote all their time and energy to this one area, e.g. the Painting or the Graphics, while neglecting other aspects of the project. Consequently, although these candidates produced excellent work in one area of the project, they did not score high marks overall. Ongoing supervision and guidance would help to avoid this situation.

The main areas where candidates failed to achieve their potential were in the craft option section. For example some candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the specific characteristics of the craft of lino printing. Assistant Examiners were of the opinion that time and patience was a factor also. Many prints were destroyed by overprinting while the ink was still wet. Lack of care and attention in the use of registration, lead to colours being misplaced while overprinting was taking place.

Several candidates failed to achieve marks because of their lack of understanding of the difference between painting and graphic design. The design demands of the craft of graphic design were not always understood and in many cases the work consisted of the transfer of unsuitable images from one sheet to another without any concept of what was required. The message of the graphic was flawed and failed to achieve anything.

In a number of instances the concept of development was not understood and this resulted in sheets of repetitious images being submitted without any further significant development as mentioned on the examination paper.

In a small number of centres, all candidates presented paintings and drawings along with patterns using the exact same layout, design and sometimes the same colours. There was little or no evidence of personal input on the part of these candidates.

Realisation

This section of the project is by far the most successful in the whole process. Some outstanding finished pieces/artefact were produced at Higher Level.

Many of the high achieving candidates rose to the creative challenge and obviously enjoyed the whole process of producing work that was both technically competent and visually exciting. Their work radiated satisfaction and pride and all credit must be given to them. In some instances, candidates excelled in one area but not in another while others achieved their potential through hard work and perseverance.

Examiners noted that where candidates adhered to the requirements of the Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design syllabus in so far as the design process was thoroughly understood, realisation was strong and the work completed satisfactorily.

At Higher Level, candidates generally performed well in the 3D area. Work presented was competent and there was a high level of skill in the manipulation of materials. The media used for 3D varied but in the main it consisted of clay in its many different forms. In some centres combined materials were made use of to interpret ideas and this was

skilfully done. There was much experimentation in the ceramics area and a variety of painted and glazed items were presented.

Examiners observed that some centres did not adhere to the measurements stated on the examination paper. It should be noted that large, oversized items do not achieve more marks.

There were several centres where painting was dealt with in a very sensitive manner. Excellent use of media and combinations of media were successfully used to interpret ideas. There was a marked improvement in the graphic section also. Skills were refined and standards were improved. Examiners were of the opinion that the fact that the candidates of 2007 were allowed to choose between Painting or Graphic Design gave them more time to concentrate on their work and skills became more refined.

Options were varied and executed to a high standard in many instances. Popular crafts were ceramics, calligraphy, lino printing, batik, embroidery and packaging. Puppetry was disappointing in some cases mainly because the materials were not suitable for the craft. Heavy material such as clay can prevent the functionality of the puppet and inhibit the realisation of the item. Candidates can become frustrated when material cannot adapt to their requirements and this can lead to unfinished work. Better investigation of materials at the preparation stage would avoid this problem recurring each year.

Candidates who obtained a lower grade in lino printing failed to become fully conversant with the characteristics of the craft. Prints were mainly line drawings, transferred onto the lino surface. Single line cutting was then applied with little or no attempt at variation in the type of cut or understanding of the elimination process that can lead to an exciting result. There were few good two and three coloured prints submitted.

Fabric printing proved to be popular but only a few candidates exploited the design possibilities of overprinting and the development of motif and symbols into repeat patterns. Very little use of drop and half drop patterns were attempted.

Support Studies

Candidates who understood the purpose and function of support studies produced excellent sheets of personal drawings, done in a variety of media. The most successful candidates linked the different areas to produce well integrated projects with positive connections relevant to the main theme. Many support studies had written information which was well researched and relevant. In some cases candidates continued to explain their written thoughts with personal drawings that added to the context of the support studies sheet. In some cases candidates chose to express themselves by drawing and painting their findings on to the sheet. Ingenuity proved a strong skill for the forward planning candidate.

In a number of instances, candidates submitted layers of photographs and magazine cuttings which had no relevance to the project. Others attached the same image to all support sheets and preparatory sheets.

Candidates should use the relevant art vocabulary when composing a written section for the project and/or when describing the work of artists. Critical appraisal and evaluation

skills should be developed, practised and employed. As stated in the syllabus “...this will lead to an understanding and appreciation of art as well as enjoyment of their own work and that of others.... Art, Craft, Design processes and concepts have a particular vocabulary and the accurate use of relevant words is crucial to the student’s developing grasp of the subject area”. (Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design Syllabus, page 6).

3.3.2 Drawing

Observation

Observation skills at Higher Level were, in the main, excellent. Examiners noted that in some cases the skills achieved in the drawing examination surpassed the standard of the drawing in the main project. It was obvious that time and practise played an important part in the training of many candidates in the skill of drawing. Many candidates demonstrated excellence in the handling skills of the simple pencil. Candidates were aware of tone, texture of different surfaces such as material soft and hard, skin surfaces and the structure of various hair types. In some instances, candidates dissected fruit and vegetables in order to create interesting structures within the composition. Some candidates demonstrated sound judgement and knew when to stop and not over work their drawings.

Candidates who failed to achieve in this area, appeared to commence the drawing without giving any thought to where to position the items or in the case of life drawing, where the model was positioned on the page. In a small number of instances candidates appeared to have had little or no experience of drawing an item or a model at any stage before. More practice and guidance in the different stages of producing a drawing would help avoid these problems.

Examiners reported that in a number of centres candidates submitted drawings of the head and shoulders that seemed to have been practised to a formula rather than based on the live model positioned in front of them during the examination.

Interpretation

Candidates who had developed their powers of observation excelled in the area of interpretation. Much planning and experimentation went into the preparation of the drawing examination, both natural/man-made and life drawing. Instead of choosing to draw one item in the first section of the examination, many candidates allowed the natural flow of the item to dictate the composition of the drawing. Some candidates used their initiatives to enhance the composition by slicing and dicing the fruit and vegetables. Other candidates allowed the leaf structure of the form to dominate the drawing and they then treated the drawing in a decorative manner.

Examiners were impressed at the tonal effects of some of the life drawing submissions. Form, Structure and Texture were often very well represented. The excellent manner in which hair was interpreted while using the simple pencil was also noted.

Examiners noted that candidates who produced highly skilled drawings seem to work well in an examination situation. They appeared to pace their work and fulfil all the requirements. However, these same candidates did not always show the same standard of a developed drawing ability throughout their projects. Conversely some candidates who presented excellent projects appeared to lose concentration during the drawing examination and performed less well.

It is important to note that candidate's achievement can be affected by the item they choose to draw for examination. Some seemed to select an object which did not match their drawing ability and they were unable to interpret what they observed. Others choose items with little or no textural surface, for example, a white dish on a white cloth. Candidates need to be guided on choosing items which will allow them demonstrate their skills and are within their drawing capabilities.

Examiners noted that, in some cases, candidates tended to over-work charcoal drawings and whether intentional or not, this practice disguised underlying deficiencies in structural form.

3.4 Conclusions

- The standard of the project and drawing examinations was very high overall. The success of candidates was due to a systematic approach to the process of investigation and exploration of ideas and media. All of these activities provided a sound foundation for exciting and original artwork
- Examiners noted that candidates who were less successful did not engage sufficiently with the project. They were unable to find solutions when difficulties arose and this resulted in a number of disjointed and unfinished projects being presented for examination
- Some candidates chose a craft option with which they were not familiar. Their design drawings and solutions were, in many instances, unsuitable. This presented production problems and items were left unfinished
- Candidates in some centres failed to grasp the concept of Support Studies and lost the opportunity to make it an essential and integrated aspect of the project
- Some highly talented candidates concentrated too much on one area of the project to the detriment of the rest of the work. Consequently these candidates failed to achieve their potential in the examination
- Options were varied and executed to a high standard in many instances. Popular crafts were ceramics, calligraphy, lino printing, batik, embroidery and packaging. Puppetry was somewhat disappointing in some cases, mainly because the materials were not suitable for the craft
- Examiners noted that candidates who produced highly skilled drawings seem to work well in an examination situation. They appeared to pace their work and fulfil all the requirements
- It was noted that many candidates demonstrated a higher standard of drawing in the drawing examination than in the project
- Some candidates selected objects to draw for the examination which did not match their drawing ability and they were unable to interpret what they observed.

3.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

The following recommendations are made in the spirit of supporting and enhancing teaching, learning and the assessment process.

- Teachers are encouraged to pay considerable attention to the fundamental skill of drawing as a tool of communication. This important skill will allow students to communicate visually, to express their ideas, record investigative drawings and explore and improve their ability
- Teachers are encouraged to spend time discussing the various possibilities of each theme with their students. Students need guidance to tease out all the possibilities and limitations of a chosen starting point. The process should be investigated from start to finish. There should be no uncertainties and no area left unresolved. Students should only choose a theme which is relevant to his/her own interests, environment and skills
- Students' work should be regularly assessed. Monthly reviews of work- in-progress will help ensure that essential requirements, such as Support Studies, are not overlooked. Good planning and ongoing self review should be encouraged so that all components of the project are afforded an adequate amount of time
- Students should develop their own personal creative modes of expression using all the techniques and media normally employed at Junior Cycle. When selecting stimulus materials, primary sources should be used where possible. The use of copied imagery should be avoided
- When choosing a craft option students should become fully aware of the characteristics and requirements of that craft. Students should familiarise themselves with the tools of the craft and practise using these tools before commencing on examination materials
- Students should be encouraged to make their own personal drawings to illustrate their ideas. Regular use of a sketchbook can go a long way towards improving drawing skills
- Students should adhere to the size specifications stated on the examination papers
- Teachers should make students fully aware of all the requirements of the State Examinations Commission before they commence the Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design cycle.