



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission**

**JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2003**

**ART, CRAFT, DESIGN**

**CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1** The analysis of candidate performance in the 2003 Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design Examination and the consequent conclusions and recommendations contained within this report have been informed by the work and reports of the Chief Advising Examiner, Advising Examiners and Assistant Examiners.

This report aims to support the teaching and learning process in a constructive way and it is hoped that it will be of practical use to teachers and students alike. It should be read in conjunction with the 2003 Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design Project brief, the Drawing Examination paper, the relevant marking schemes, the Art, Craft, Design Syllabus document, the *Guidelines for Teachers* and Circular Letter S70/99 which has been sent to schools.

- The Examination papers and marking schemes are available on the State Examinations Commission's website: <http://www.examinations.ie>
- The Art, Craft, Design Syllabus for Junior Certificate and the Art, Craft, Design *Guidelines for Teachers* are available from Government Publications, Postal Trade Section, 51 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-6476834.

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. Teachers are required to verify that each candidate has fulfilled the requirements for the submission of project work: i.e. it is the candidate's unaided individual work and has been undertaken in class under the supervision of the art 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 **Form P20**. 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.

## 1.2 Participation Rates

Table 1 shows the numbers of Junior Certificate candidates who sat the Art, Craft, Design Examination from 2000 to 2003. In 2003 a total of 58,712 candidates sat the Junior Certificate Examination, of which 21,592 sat Art, Craft, Design as one of their subjects. This figure represents 36.8% of the total examination candidature for 2003. The overall number of candidates sitting Art, Craft, Design has changed little, as indicated in an increase of just 1% since 2000.

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total Candidature (English)	59590	59496	59590	58712
Total Art, Craft, Design	21280	21455	21561	21592
% Taking Art, Craft, Design	35.7%	36.1%	36.2%	36.8%

Note: English is used as the benchmark for numbers sitting the Junior Certificate.

Within the cohort of 21,592 candidates who took Art, Craft Design in 2003, 8,493 sat the Ordinary Level. This represents a figure of 39%. 13,099 candidates sat the Higher Level, representing a figure of 61% of the cohort. The figures indicate an overall increase of 3% in the numbers taking Higher Level since 2000 (see Table 2 below).

Year	Total Art, Craft, Design Candidature	Ordinary Level	%	Higher Level	%
2000	21280	9033	42%	12247	58%
2001	21455	9291	43%	12164	57%
2002	21561	8933	41%	12628	59%
2003	21592	8493	39%	13099	61%

## 1.3 Examination Structure

The Art, Craft, Design examination sets out to examine the syllabus which is structured to ensure a balance between experiencing, making and understanding art, leading students to develop personal, technical and aesthetic competencies. The candidate demonstrates these competencies through Drawing, two-dimensional work (2 D) and three-dimensional work (3D), which are interdependent disciplines underpinned by Support Studies.

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

- (a) a project carried out between October and May, in class, under the supervision of the Art Teacher. The project has a weighting of 75% of the total marks.
- (b) an invigilated examination in drawing, held in May, with a weighting of 25% of the total marks.

### (a) 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 underpins this process through intellectual enquiry into links with art history, technology and through the use of appropriate vocabulary. The project follows a continuum from the initial brief through the recording of research and investigation, through the development of ideas, the testing of proposals, leading to the development of final design proposals and the realisation of the finished piece/artefact. Whilst the themes are common to both levels, the Higher Level candidate is required to undertake one extra component and is also expected to produce work at a differentiated level of competence.

At Ordinary Level each candidate is required to submit eight component parts for the project 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

At Higher Level each candidates is required to submit all the components listed above including **both** Painting **and** Graphic Design - a total of nine parts.

The *\*Option* relates to the craft area whereby candidates select a craft from the following list: Batik, Blockprinting, Etching, Bookcrafts, Calligraphy, Embroidery, Fabric Printing, Screen printing, Weaving, Art metalwork, Carving, Modelling/Casting, Packaging, Pottery/Ceramics, Puppetry. In addition to this list candidates may, on application to the State Examinations Commission, select a different option subject to compliance with the requirements of form S64/03.

## **(b) Drawing Examination**

The drawing examination seeks to assess the candidate's ability to observe closely, to analyse, record and communicate clearly using a choice of approaches and drawing media whilst embodying the art and design elements. It consists of an invigilated examination, during which candidates are required to produce two A2 sheets of drawings as follows:

- Ordinary Level candidates are required to make 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 man-made object or natural form.
- Both Ordinary and Higher Level submit a sheet of figure drawing from direct observation of the model. Candidates have a choice of drawing the complete figure or the head and shoulders.

## 2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

### 2.1 Grade distribution

Table 3 below sets out the distribution of grades at Ordinary Level between 2000 and 2003. In 2003 there was a rise in the number of candidates achieving grades A and B at Ordinary Level. There was also a small reduction in the number of candidates achieving Grade E, indicating a steady downward trend at grade E since 2000. This improvement in candidate performance is to be welcomed.

<b>Table 3: Distribution of grades for 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 at Ordinary Level</b>							
<i>Year</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>NG</i>
<i>2000</i>	6.6	19.0	36.9	24.7	8.8	3.3	0.5
<i>2001</i>	12.1	26.4	33.1	18.3	6.6	3.1	0.0
<i>2002</i>	11.4	27.7	33.5	18.1	6.1	2.8	0.5
<i>2003</i>	14.4	29.8	33.2	15.3	5.0	2.1	0.2

Table 4 below sets out the distribution of grades at Higher Level between 2000 and 2003. At Higher level in 2003 there was an increase in the number of candidates achieving grades A and B. The rate of E and F grades were also down. This improvement continues the upward trend at grades A and B since 2000.

<b>Table 4: Distribution of grades for 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 for Higher Level</b>							
<i>Year</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>NG</i>
<i>2000</i>	16.3	23.5	36.7	19.4	3.6	0.5	0.1
<i>2001</i>	19.6	27.6	34.8	15.5	1.9	0.5	0.1
<i>2002</i>	19.7	29.2	34.9	13.7	2.2	0.3	0.0
<i>2003</i>	24.7	30.8	32.8	10.3	1.3	0.1	0.0

### **3. ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE**

#### **3.1 ORDINARY LEVEL**

##### **■ Project**

The standard of the project varied greatly at Ordinary Level in 2003, ranging from excellently researched, developed and executed work to incomplete, unrealised efforts. A sizeable number of incomplete projects were presented for assessment. In order for candidates to reach their potential in the examination it is essential that they complete all aspects of the project. The practice, by some candidates, to over rely on particular aspects of the project to carry them through, should be discouraged.

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

##### **Preparation**

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

Close attention to preparation should underpin the various components of the project. From this, the candidate's research and investigation of his/her chosen theme, should stem the impetus and stimulation to carry and sustain the project over many months of work.

Visual enquiry is a characteristic of preparation and was often absent at Ordinary Level. Where the candidate obviously engaged with the project as a continuing journey from a selected starting point, development flowed naturally and many examples of creative and inventive work evolved. In 2003 no particular theme was preferred. However, in general, the response to the themes was of a limited nature, where there was an over reliance on tracing, photocopies, cutouts and other secondary imagery as source material. Images were repeated and inadequately investigated leading to much disjointed and somewhat irrelevant work. In some instances Assistant Examiners experienced difficulty in linking any of the project themes to the work presented.

A number of candidates did not submit any preparatory work at all. They focused instead on the finished piece/artefact and did not engage with the continuum of research and development. In other instances the preparation sheet was obviously done after realisation and took the form of a drawing of the finished piece/artefact, especially in the case of the 3D component. Where a focused effort was made to work through the process of designing and making, the benefits were seen in the quality of the finished work.

##### **Development**

The development aspects of the project require candidates to respond to their initial recorded and investigated themes by taking the next step in the process where these images and investigations are advanced to meet the specific compositional and design requirements of the different components. Candidates, through the use of various media and techniques, have the opportunity to respond in a personal creative manner, showing the pathways their ideas have taken from the initial visual stimulus. Good development work is

contingent upon good research, both of which are essential links in the chain that leads from brief to finished artefact.

Minimal development, particularly in the two dimensional components was commonplace. Repeated images and lack of visual manipulation were recurring features. While the potential for development was often present, candidates did not present work that indicated a progression of ideas or the employment of problem solving skills. This often resulted in stagnant and repetitive imagery in all aspects of the project, underpinned by a lack of evidence of skill, both in handling of materials and in the use of appropriate techniques. Less successful candidates over relied on traced images, thereby reducing their own creative input. On the other hand, many high performing candidates achieved full marks for well planned step-by-step stages using a variety of media and following a clear sense of direction.

Generally, development was stronger in the 3D and in the Option areas such as pottery and batik whilst Painting and Graphics were the least successful. Frequently, links between the preparation work and the finished artefact were very tenuous. Development was often only apparent in the finished piece/artefact. It was obvious that many candidates had devoted an inordinate amount of time to making the finished piece/artefact to the detriment of the other steps in the process.

## **Realisation**

At the realisation stage of the project the continuum of research, investigation, development and Support Studies come together to provide the framework for the finished piece/artefact. The realised piece/artefact is the culmination of experience in manipulation of media and materials, design skills, the understanding of properties and their possibilities and limitations. The aesthetic also comes into play where the candidate makes the final determination on all aspects of a particular component, by selecting final approaches and finishes that are all built on understanding, experience and knowledge gained over the three years of Junior Cycle.

As in the past, Assistant Examiners noted, in general, that Ordinary Level candidates concentrated their energy on the finished piece/artefact to the detriment of preparation and Support Studies. In addition, it was noted that a large number of candidates seemed to spend too much time on one component, for example, Graphic Design and then tended to rush the 3D or the Option, leaving them unfinished in some cases. The question of pace is an important aspect of project work and should be addressed as part of the ongoing supervision of the project: when candidates spent too much time on one component this leads ultimately to unfinished projects and a consequent inability to achieve high marks.

The standard of painting was mixed, but the use of collage was seen as beneficial to candidates who experienced difficulties in mastering the use of paint. Clay was the medium of choice by most candidates for the 3D component and included the self-hardening, quick drying varieties. The most favoured Options were lino printing, batik and 3D. Lino printing was generally weak in standard, showing inadequate understanding of the specific characteristics of the craft and lacking in the development of appropriate design solutions. Candidates tended to copy an initial line drawing directly to the lino block and the design possibilities of textural cuts were rarely explored. Batik tended to be more successful where candidates took time to develop and execute designs that were sympathetic to the characteristics of batik.

## **Support Studies**

The approach to Support Studies varied greatly and ranged from a few photocopied images to relevant essays on the lives of artists combined with drawing, painting, collage and mixed media. In some instances, all the candidates from a particular centre presented excellent work. In other instances, candidates displayed a total misunderstanding of the rationale for Support Studies, presenting work, that was often disjointed and limited, which did little to advance the project itself. However, where candidates engaged positively with Support Studies they displayed an ability to analyse and evaluate critically sources such as images, objects, artefacts and texts, showing an understanding of purpose, meaning and contexts. On the whole, however, it was disappointing that so many candidates displayed a limited ability to explain connections between their own work and the work presented as Support Studies.

At Ordinary level candidates might benefit from an approach that would link Support Studies to aspects of their environment through active learning: for example, an unending resource for graphic design is available in all aspects of life; visits to local galleries and exhibitions can introduce the vocabulary of art and encourage the awakening of interest in art history; 3D artefacts can be accessed both by means of sculpture but also through appraisal of product design.

## **■ Drawing**

### **Observation**

A majority of candidates displayed competency in object drawing and some presented work of a high standard. The work varied from confident representational studies showing knowledge of shape, form and the use of tone to limited responses where a lack of observational skills and, perhaps, lack of practice were in evidence. Examiners noted that, in some instances, the drawings produced in the examination were of a higher standard than those executed for the preparatory sections of the project.

Observational skills were notably stronger in the object drawing section of the examination. Candidates favoured man-made objects in general, the option of drawing from natural forms being seldom encountered at Ordinary Level. In the mid to lower achievement range drawings were mainly executed in pencil and consisted of simple outlines of objects such as pencil cases, pencils, rulers, vases and bottle openers with little attempt to address shape, form or texture. Less successful choices included mobile phones and walkmans where candidates tended to concentrate on detail and pattern rather than on modelling and tonal interpretation.

In general, candidates did not seem comfortable with figure drawing. Most life drawing consisted of head, neck and shoulder, executed in pencil, and often seemed to have been had 'memorised' by the candidate.

## **Interpretation**

There was little evidence of a personal style in drawing at Ordinary Level. Pencil was the most frequently used medium on a ground of white paper. Candidates who achieved in the lower grade ranges produced drawings with little energy or vitality. In general candidates achieved lower marks for 'interpretation' than they did for 'observation'

It was obvious that many candidates lacked the necessary practice in the drawing of the human form. This resulted in tentative and badly placed drawings that failed to deal with layout and the use of space. However, where candidates demonstrated confidence in life drawing the work was strong, vibrant and expressive, often involving the use of colour and charcoal.

## 3.2 HIGHER LEVEL

### ■ Project

#### Preparation

Where a systematic approach to the process of exploration and investigation provided the foundation for the project, candidates presented highly original preparation sheets. The use of primary sources and the thorough investigation of themes provided greatly facilitated creativity, and led to strong personal engagement. This proved to be the foundation for work that achieved at the highest level. However, where evidence of personal engagement was absent candidates encountered difficulty in sustaining ideas from conception to realisation and this resulted in uneven or unfinished projects.

High achieving candidates in the A and B grades used a variety of sources for research including direct observation of their environment, both natural and man-made; art history sources; gallery visits; film and video. In addition, Support Studies were integrated from the outset in the most successful projects. Some examiners noted, however, an increasing trend in the use of copied secondary images rather than working from direct observation, imagination or memory as is recommended. "... the student's direct experience, real or imagined, of the natural, human and man-made environment should be the starting point for Art, Craft and Design work." (Junior Certificate Art, Craft, Design Syllabus, p. 6)

There was ample evidence that the most successful candidates took time, at the early stages of the project, to tease out the possibilities of their chosen theme in terms of source material, visual stimuli and the direction the various components might take. All themes were equally popular. The theme *Granny's Collection*, led to many examples of excellent observational drawing of such primary sources as silverware and jewellery. Although most of the research was derived from secondary sources for the theme entitled *The Wonders of Nature*, high achieving candidates developed a variety of imaginative solutions derived from exotic animals, birds and fish. The most successful candidates explored a variety of media and techniques which enhanced their work and in addition to the most commonly used media, included photography, paper mosaic and collage.

The hallmarks of less successful work were an over dependence on secondary or borrowed images, demonstrating little understanding of the value of research and investigation. This led to preparation sheets that were little more than carbon copies of the realised piece/artefact. It was somewhat disappointing to find that a considerable number of candidates tended to repeat the same unchanged static image for all aspects of the project. In some instances preparatory work appeared to have been done after the piece/artefact had been made.

#### Development

Overall, a good standard of development was evident, showing relevant links between each area of the project. Candidates at the high end of the attainment spectrum tended to display an enthusiasm for their chosen theme and presented highly imaginative, vibrant and cohesive linear development in their work. Some excellent examples at the higher achievement range were noted by Assistant Examiners, particularly where the selected theme had been well explored visually and conceptually and where there was a high level

of integration within the all aspects of the project. Where Support Studies were used as an extension of the investigative process exciting responses and interpretations of the project themes emerged and were a delight. The work of many candidates displayed thought processes that were obvious and clear, approaches that were exceptional and innovative, giving reliable insights into their creative responses by means of detailed working drawings. A extensive variety of materials and media were used creatively, including: graphite pencil, coloured pencil, pastels, oil and chalk, paint, collage etc.

Nevertheless, despite the very positive aspects outlined above, examiners reported a few areas which need improvement. The main areas for concern related to the Option where insufficient knowledge of the design requirement for specific crafts was noted. This was particularly prevalent in development for Lino Printing where it was obvious that the design demands of the craft were not always understood and, in many cases, consisted simply of the transfer of unsuitable images. The concept of Graphic Design was often poorly understood by candidates and led to work that was approached in the same way as the painting.

The concept of development also seemed poorly understood by a number of candidates, resulting in vague and directionless work which included, for example, a single image repeated throughout from the same perspective. In some centres a formulaic approach was used, for example, all candidates presented four drawings or paintings using the exact same layout, thereby stifling personal input. In general, at the D to E levels of the attainment, the problems identified in relation Ordinary Level candidates were replicated at Higher Level.

## **Realisation**

Realisation was generally the most successful step in the process. Many outstanding finished pieces/artefacts were produced at Higher Level. High achieving candidates tended to be more adventurous in their use of materials and in technique. These candidates rose to the creative challenge and seemed to enjoy the process of producing work that was both technically competent and visually exciting. Where the design process was thoroughly understood, realisation was strong and the work was finished and presented optimally.

In many instances the 3D component was impressive, demonstrating considerable skill in the manipulation of materials. The media for 3D work varied from centre to centre but there was a good range presented, including ceramics, combined materials, as well as much use of painted and glazed models. Three dimensional construction approaches were often adventurous and included a wide variety of media from clay to chicken wire and tissue - simple materials used well.

Excellent use of media was noted in the most successful work presented for Painting and Graphics and included watercolour, poster paints and collage. In the Painting component candidates frequently achieved high marks. High quality hand rendered lettering was seen in some Graphics submissions where design and craft skills had been developed to a high level.

A wide variety of Options were chosen and executed to a high standard in many instances. The most popular were batik, lino, clay work, calligraphy, packaging and embroidery. However, at the lower end of the attainment range candidates were not fully conversant with the characteristics of the craft they had chosen for the option. Some concern was expressed about attempts at lino printing as, too often, the prints were just simple line

drawing cut and printed in one colour, with little attempt at variation in type of cuts or understanding of the elimination process or the making of two or three colour print. Fabric printing was also popular but many candidates did not exploit the design possibilities of overprinting and the development of motif into repeat pattern. However, even in the most successful options the outcome was, in a number of cases, uneven. This may indicate a difficulty with time management.

## **Support Studies**

Where Support Studies were addressed as an essential and integrated aspect of the project, they were of a very high quality and included, written and visual information, relevant references to artists and the environment and a personal response. Support Studies that consisted solely of photographs and cuttings, although generally very well presented, were less successful. Examiners noted that Support Studies were weak in many projects, appearing to have been done at the end of the process and not conceived as an integral part of the work.

When properly addressed, Support Studies include many of the underpinning ‘building blocks’ that contextualise art in terms of the candidate’s own work. Readers should refer to the section of this report relating to Ordinary Level Support Studies and to the Art, Craft, Design syllabus and Guidelines for Teachers. The syllabus states that “... History of Art, Craft and Design should be introduced in relation to the learning experience, with examples from past and present, worldwide as well as Irish or European, so as to acquaint the student with adult and child art, craft and design from many cultures. Critical appraisal and evaluation skills should be developed, so as to lead to an understanding and appreciation, 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, p. 6)

## **■ Drawing**

### **Observation**

Drawing at Higher Level was strong, and considered by examiners to be superior to that presented in the project. Many candidates achieved full marks, demonstrating proficiency and confidence built on an obviously well practiced foundation developed over the three years of Junior Cycle. On the other hand, at the lower end of the attainment range there was little evidence of direction, particularly in figure drawing.

In the object drawing component man made objects were frequently selected in preference to natural forms. On average a good level of observation skill was in evidence leading to accurate descriptive work. However, a considerable number of candidates did not attempt the ‘close-up/detail’ aspect of the object drawing at all or had chosen objects that did not contain enough detail to sustain an in-depth study.

Figure drawing posed the most difficulty for the average ability candidate. The drawing of head and shoulders in preference to the full figure was more common than in the past and would seem to have been supported by a formulaic or ‘memory’ approach rather than to

direct observation of the model. In general, those who attempted the full figure achieved better marks despite the fact that difficulty with proportion was encountered by a sizeable number of candidates.

### **Interpretation**

Large, confident drawings displaying an individual expressive style were the hallmark of work at the highest level of achievement. This approach was underpinned by strong compositional arrangements together with a varied use of media, producing an exemplary standard of drawing at A and B grades. At the average level of achievement the quality of interpretation was also very satisfactory for both the object and figure drawing aspects of the examination.

Notwithstanding the above positive points, the importance of the choice of object should be emphasised to candidates as many selected objects that were on one hand, inordinately difficult to draw or, on the other hand, were uninteresting and did not allow them to display their interpretative and expressive skills. Most drawings were made in a representational style and candidates favoured the use of pencil, both graphite and coloured, and also pastels. Drawings generally indicated that the candidate had a good concept of form, texture and proportion. However, whilst the better quality drawings were excellent in the rendering of form there was evidence that the application of shading was used, in some instances, to disguise underlying deficiencies in observational skills. There was a tendency to avoid the use of colour in figure drawing although colouring pencil and pastel work were evident more often in object drawing. Charcoal, chalk and pastels were used very effectively by a number of candidates who also included coloured backgrounds for both the figure and object drawing.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

### **4.1 ORDINARY LEVEL**

- Candidates taking Art, Craft, Design at Ordinary Level displayed a mixed level of engagement with the project. Examiners held the view that the main difficulty for Ordinary Level candidates is in sustaining interest and motivation over a long period of time.
- A sizeable number of projects with some incomplete aspects were presented for assessment. This is not to say that the work presented was not of a high standard but, rather, that the candidates had not managed their time adequately and/or had not remained motivated to complete the work. A large number of candidates concentrated on the three dimensional aspect of the project to the detriment of the other aspects.
- Examiners noted an increasing use of secondary and copied imagery and a consequential reduction in the number of candidates who investigated and developed their own ideas and imagery through drawing and through a variety of media. Minimal development followed, especially in the two dimensional aspects of the project and this was commonplace.
- The option was the most problematic aspect of the project for many candidates as they did not display a working knowledge of the option they had chosen. Their design solutions were often unsuitable for the proposed option, leaving candidates with production problems that were difficult to resolve.
- Support studies were often misunderstood and not approached as an essential and integrated aspect of the project.
- A majority of candidates demonstrated competent observational skills in object drawing. However, from an interpretative point of view, much of the work was tentative and executed in a narrow range of media.

## 4.2 HIGHER LEVEL

- All themes were equally popular and provided candidates with ample opportunity to follow a personal approach.
- The standard of the project was very high overall, with a large number of candidates achieving at the highest level. This success was often underpinned by a systematic approach to the process of exploration and investigation, thus providing the foundation for highly original work.
- When candidates worked through the continuum of research-development-realisation using a variety of media and materials excellent results were seen.
- In less successful projects, where evidence of personal engagement was absent candidates encountered difficulty in sustaining ideas from conception to realisation and this resulted in a number of uneven or unfinished projects.
- Examiners noted an increasing use of secondary and copied imagery and a consequential reduction in the number of candidates who investigated and developed their own ideas and imagery through drawing and through a variety of media.
- The Option was the most problematic aspect of the project for candidates and some did not display a working knowledge of the Option they had chosen. Their design solutions were often unsuitable, presenting production problems that were difficult to resolve.
- In the most successful projects the Support Studies were treated as an essential supporting framework for the project. However, the concept was not well understood, in a number of instances, as an essential and integrated aspect of the entire project.
- Examiners reported that the work presented for the drawing paper was superior to that presented in the project, being more expressive and adventurous in the use of media.

## **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 importance of drawing as a tool of communication. Such an approach will help to equip candidates with the necessary skills to communicate visually, thereby allowing them to express their ideas and investigate and explore with confidence across all aspects of the examination.
- Teachers are encouraged to use such techniques as brain storming and discussion to help candidates to tease out the possibilities and limitations of a chosen starting point, in terms of source material and the direction the various components might take. Taking time at the early stages to select the theme that is most relevant to his/her personal interests and aptitudes, places the candidate in the best position to complete the project in its entirety.
- Teachers should encourage candidates to select meaningfully from the list of themes so that they are enabled to produce individual and personal responses. Reflection and taking time to make choices that will sustain candidates over a lengthy period, are of fundamental importance to the completion of the project.
- In order to maximise the opportunity to reach their potential, candidates should be encouraged to work through all the stages of the project in a systematic way, beginning with the preparation sheet and integrating Support Studies as the work progresses.
- By using a variety of stimulus material, preferably primary in nature, candidates should experiment and investigate using all the techniques and media normally employed at Junior Cycle so that they are enabled to find personal creative modes of expression and the motivation to sustain interest over the lengthy time span of the project.
- Candidates should, in so far as possible, select a craft with which they are familiar and have practiced.
- Candidates should take time before commencing work on the project to make a careful choice from the list of themes and to tease out the possible direction their work might take.

- Candidates should be encouraged to pace their work so that all components of the project are afforded an adequate amount of time.
- Candidates should be encouraged to work from primary sources and avoid the use of copied imagery.
- Candidates should view Support Studies as an essential and integral part of the process.
- Teachers should only validate project work completed in accordance with the instructions issued by the State Examinations Commission