### **GLAD**

Group for Learning in Art and Design (formerly: The National Steering Group: Teaching & Learning Strategies in Higher Education in Art & Design)

### **Assessment:**

### Present Practices & Future Development

### **Conference Report**

Third National Conference 27 March 1992

In conjunction with
The Electronic Imaging and Media
Communications Unit
and with support from the Centre for
Continuing Education - Bradford University
The Council for National Academic Awards
The Conference for Higher Education
in Art and Design

### Glad Aims

In the continually changing context of further and higher education, the mission of GLAD is to encourage and support the enhancement of learning in Art and Design by:

- Identifying practices that improve the quality of learning
- Facilitating the sharing, debating and developing of these practices both within and across disciplines
- Encouraging and promoting research which bears on learning

### Third National Conterence Report.

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### **Editor**

Mary Wilson (1996)

### **Editorial Board**

David Buss Allan Davies Simon Lewis David Vaughan Sylvia Wicks Mary Wilson Mantz Yorke

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### **SECTION ONE**

### Introduction

The third national conference on teaching and learning in higher education in art and design aimed to develop further some of the conclusions reached at the previous conference.

At the preceding, second, national conference, participants had agreed that an art and/or design graduate should:

- have substantial knowledge and skills in the chosen subject areas
- be professionally competent in the chosen subject areas
- be able to communicate effectively in written and spoken forms of English
- be able to evaluate cultural and personal values critically
- be able to conceptualise
- be able to form objective judgements
- have interpersonal skills of a high order

(Also see Appendix 1)

The overall aim of the third national conference was to explore how assessment practices signal and at the same time promote the strengths and particular qualities of higher education in art and design, both to students and to those outside the sector.

In the morning workshops conference participants were asked to consider current assessment practices, including:

- where assessment starts
- when assessment occurs
- the messages assessment practices give to students about what is important in any given course

Picking up on the conclusions from the previous conference, workshops were also asked to consider what clear matches there are between assessment practices and what graduates are expected to be able to do, i.e.

 are the messages from assessment practices compatible with agreed desirable course outcomes?

As the majority of art and design courses have traditionally culminated in a degree show, the conference also engaged with issues arising from the degree show's relationship to, or relevance for, assessment and the extent to which emphasis on the degree show might be perceived as devaluing other forms of assessment and, undermining or giving low priority to those aspects of student achievement not directly visible or appreciable within an exhibition context.

To this end, the second workshop of the day focused solely on the degree show in the context of assessment, delegates being invited to consider:

- the extent to which a degree show matches, or can match, its assumed aims and purposes
- the extent to which aims and purposes of a degree show are ever stated and, how far any stated aims measure up to course learning outcomes
- how far the role students take in organising their work for presentation in a degree show can be, or is, used as an assessment tool
- what skills and understanding are ignored in a degree show assessment

Participants were also asked to include in their discussions as realistic an estimate as possible of

the financial costs of degree shows (including tutor and technician time and labour) and to try to weigh such costs against what a degree show can achieve in terms of publicity for a course and personal promotion for its students, at the same time as operating as an assessment vehicle.

The ensuing workshop findings cover a wide range of views encompassing:

- the possible match, or mismatch, between purpose and achievement of degree shows
- the extent to which costs might be worth achievements
- the place of a degree show in a modular / semesterised structure
- the relationship between student learning and the signals given through degree show assessment

Academic arguments were offered for the continuation of degree shows in some form or another but there were also a number of heartfelt fears expressed that the demise of degree shows would spell the end of art schools as many have known them.

These workshops concluded with discussions on whether the degree show might be separated altogether from assessment and other ways in which the aims and purposes of the degree shows as they now stand might be achieved.

Considerations of the degree show in the overall context of assessment were given an added impetus by the contribution made to the conference by David Redhead, author and journalise and managing editor of **Blueprint**, on Outside Perceptions of the Degree Show, in conversation with Mike Catto (University of Ulster) - See Section 3.

### **Editorial Comment**

This conference, the last one to be held under the auspices of CNAA, was held at the University of Bradford, with support from its centre for Continuing Education and in conjunction with the Electronic Imaging and Media Communications Unit of the University.

All subsequent conferences, and other work, formerly undertaken by the National Steering Group for Teaching and Learning Strategies in Higher Education Art and Design, which had been supported by CNAA and CHEAD, have been undertaken by GLAD (the Group for Learning in Art & Design). GLAD continues to have the support of CHEAD, but it is largely a free stranding group which now works in conjunction with different institutions in order to continue to run national conferences on the practices of teaching and learning (see Editorial Board for GLAD membership) and to promote research into teaching and learning.

Due to a number of adverse circumstances, not least of which was the demise of CNAA in 1992, it was not possible to produce the Report of the Bradford Conference until a considerable time lapse after the event.

Certain technical difficulties also mean that this report is less detailed and substantial than other National Steering Group for Teaching and Learning Strategies / GLAD conference reports. In particular, in this report there are no copies of the actual papers given by speakers, but instead a summary is given of the salient points from each speaker's contribution.

There has been some discussion in GLAD of the value of publishing a report so long after the event. However, it was agreed that it would be useful to the sector if a full complement of the Teaching and Learning Conference Reports were available. Moreover, it is clear that this report can be read as more than an historical document of a long past event.

It is evident that some of the views expressed were of particular current significance in March 1992, but it also becomes apparent that a number of issues, queries and debates remain of equal

### significance in 1996/7.

The demands on tutors to ensure student understanding of why and how they are being assessed; the importance of relating assessment to teaching and learning strategies on any given course; the signals given both to students and to the outside world of what skills are given the highest value by the forms and weightings of assessment; the patterns of assessment in modular programmes; the different assessment demands of HND and GNVQ programmes; and the place of the degree show in teaching, learning and assessment; all of these are issues as demanding and challenging to the sector now in 1996/7 as they were at the time of the conference.

### Please Note:

Speakers and conference participants have been shown as attached to the institutions in which they were working at the time of the conference. Many have since moved to other institutions and some institutions have themselves been renamed.

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### **SECTION TWO**

### Assessment: Principles, Performance Indicators, Philosophy

Notes from the panel of speakers:

Sylvia Wicks (CNAA: Assistant Registrar: Art & Design)

Sylvia Wicks' input focused on the responsibilities of the members of a course team in devising a course and their structuring and writing it in such a way that judgements can be fairly made of student achievement.

She stressed a number of basic tenets relevant to assessment which are summarised as :

- Assessment must be used primarily to measure student achievement of course objectives;
   (while at the same time serving to provide feedback to students on their performance and progress, i.e. formative assessment)
- Assessment must also be used to ensure the standards of course achievement are commensurate with national standards for given award

Students must know what is expected of them, i.e. what they must do, and by when, - to achieve a pass or gain a particular award

- It is tutors' responsibility to ensure that all students know what is expected of them and that all tutors teaching on the course share this same knowledge and understanding
- When devising any course, the course team, having decided on the special or particular qualities and characteristics of that course, should ensure that the course learning outcomes and assessment priorities and patterns reflect these
- Assessment modes and patterns should be inextricably linked to all elements of the course, and should directly relate to all teaching and learning strategies i.e. any element of the course seen as important must be foregrounded in both teaching and learning strategies and in assessment
- It must be clear to all students and tutors just what evidence is expected from students to demonstrate they have achieved what the course claims as its objectives and special priorities
- Assessment Regulations must be clear and widely available. They must, inter alia, set out not only what constitutes failure but how students can retrieve failure
- No one member of staff should be isolated in any assessment exercise i.e. expected to make an assessment decision alone
- Course teams must take joint responsibility for assessment policies, procedure and decisions and ensure that appropriate tutors are delegated jointly to make appropriate assessment decisions
- Responsibility for assessment decisions rests with the course team; it should not be passed to External Examiners
- Assessment is a complex procedure: it should never become a simple matter of aggregation of numbers

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### Professor Mantz Yorke (The Liverpool Polytechnic)

Professor Yorke set his comments within the overall context of a changing pattern for Higher Education in this country.

He emphasised the need to recognise:

- Assessment issues are amongst the range of issues currently confronting those responsible for delivery of Higher Education
- The challenges of moves towards mass orientation, rather than élitist provision in Higher Education courses and programmes
- The different challenges to, and problems for, assessment on modular courses
- The need for all course teams, and the sector overall, to confront the questions of what a degree course is about; what students come into higher education to achieve; what they expect to get out of the experience; how courses evaluate student achievement; and what the implications are of these questions for assessment policies and procedures
- The demands and expectations of changing patterns of course delivery and of student learning, with the increased introduction of different kinds of degree level programmes e.g. Joint Honours and Combined Studies programmes, where students may be studying art and design alongside a range of other subjects and disciplines; what happens in assessment when students come into art and design for 'bits' of a programme, and whether there are issues to be confronted regarding the comparability of assessment practices and weightings
- The extent to which course programmes are designed to offer students an education at HE level <u>in</u> art and design or <u>through</u> art and design
- Professor Yorke concluded by encouraging conference participants to appreciate the significant contribution the art and design sector could make to the general development of Higher Education by confronting the kind of issues this conference was raising

### Professor Roger Wilson (Manchester Polytechnic)

Professor Wilson introduced his input with what he saw as a relevant quotation on the quandaries of assessment in R D Laing's <u>Knots</u>, in which the one trying to learn knows that there is something to be learnt but doesn't know what it is, nor how to find out, especially as he/she is concealing his/her lack of knowledge. At the same time this 'student'/learner suspects that the 'teacher' know 'everything' but is unable, or even unwilling, to pass it on.

Professor Wilson's fear was that as teachers we never could agree on what this 'everything' might be.

He then went on to say that in preparation for this talk he had looked through a number of course documents, from his own and other institutions, and had found what he referred to as 'a depressing commonality' of seemingly glib uses of certain words or concepts in relation to assessment.

i.e. Creative - as if we all knew what that is;

Theory - as if this is unproblematic;

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Technical

He expressed his concern that ways should be devised for assessing students' overall achievement rather than concentrating on attempting to evaluate the most observable outcome, that is the artefact(s) produced.

Referring to the Keatsian concept of "negative capability" - i.e. "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries and doubts" (Keats' letters: 1817), he drew attention to the importance of being able to view positively certain aspects of failure, or, at least, 'decent doubt' in any learning process.

He urged teachers to be aware of the different types of intelligence and their different kinds of outcomes and achievements. Listing these as: analytical, ability to see and create patterns (applicable to mathematicians, as well as artists and designers), musical, practical, interpersonal and managerial, he pointed both to the problems of measurability and comparability of outcomes and to the dangers of trying to separate and categorise.

### Mike Catto (University of Ulster)

Mike Catto's contribution came largely from his perspective as an art historian, one whose experience was in teaching art history and theory, sometimes taught, as it were, quite separately from studio practice but increasingly now taught as integrated with studio work.

The thrust of his argument was the importance of recognition of the value of different 'cultures' in art and design education, while at the same time valuing the contribution of one to another. He could not accept any concept of 'stand alone' theory, but wanted students to explore the challenges to theory by practice and to the development of practice(s) from theory.

In terms of assessment, different academic traditions have much to offer to, and to learn from, each other. Moreover, in contexts of Combined Studies programmes these differences and challenges are frequently foregrounded, with dialogue between disciplines and ways of teaching and assessing becoming increasingly important.

In the context of different academic and teaching and learning cultures informing each other the challenges to assessment include :

- the needs and demands of students who, on Combined Studies programmes, bring different values and patterns of learning to art and design modules
- the ways in which assessment criteria and weightings reflect what students coming into art and design from each other disciplines can do, what they want to do, and what they are able to achieve
- the extent to which Combined Studies and Joint Degree students' exit velocity can be seen as appropriate to their own set of values other than solely those of the 'culture' they have visited
- how tutors might themselves learn from the range and variety of students they teach and their different learning needs

In making a final please for more understanding of the traumas some students experience in their move from an HND to a BA course with their different patterns of assessment, Mike Catto asked the conference participants to be aware of the need to celebrate the different cultures confronted in their teaching and assessment practices but also to explore how common assessment criteria can

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be formulated and interpreted.

Bridget Jackson (Camberwell College: The London Institute)

Bridget Jackson offered a range of words used in assessment, drawing attention to the different processes and activities they represent.

She argued that tutors should be aware of the different kinds of teaching and learning that go under the guise of assessment.

Clear differentiation should be made between Summative Assessment in which actual testing of knowledge and achievement takes place, and grade, classifications and awards given accordingly, and Formative Assessment.

Formative Assessment may not be seen strictly as assessment. It is a teaching and learning tool and is probably most useful in the early stages of a course. Formative assessment should be seen as a way of monitoring progress and of guiding students' development but above all should be used as a way of enabling students to develop skills appropriate for evaluating - assessing - their own abilities, progress and learning outcomes.

When it comes to Summative Assessment, course teams should ensure that the full range of skills and learning outcomes, articulated in course objectives, can be properly acknowledged and assessed. In particular, the kinds of interpersonal and communication skills advocated in studio 'crits' need to be addressed in assessment.

Finally, the points made by Sylvia Wicks were reiterated by Bridget Jackson as:

- responsibility for summative assessment lies with the whole course team, not individual tutors and not external examiners
- course teams, aware of their course objectives, must ensure that appropriate assessment modes and practices are in place to allow all students to demonstrate the full range of learning outcomes

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### **SECTION THREE**

### An Outside Perception of the Degree Show

David Redhead (Managing Editor: Blueprint Magazine) in conversation with Mike Catto (University of Ulster)

The conversation began with Mike Catto raising the issue of the relevance of the Art School Degree Show to final assessment of students' degree award.

He pointed out that the tradition of the degree show was dear to the heart of many individuals working in our art and design schools, colleges and departments, but challenged the validity of the tradition in the current higher education climate.

David Redhead gave his perceptions of the degree show, from the position of an outsider, but one who was a potential agent or employer.

He said that he could see that a degree show might be seen as the equivalent of a Hiring Fair with those students grabbing the most coverage who had already learnt how to attract media attention. In this respect he saw the shows as perhaps the academic equivalent of the 'sound bite'.

He understood that a degree show might be seen as celebration of a course or an institution but that someone outside the institution would probably have no idea of how individuals were assessed on the basic of the degree show. This raises the issue of whether celebration and course publicity are compatible with individual student assessment.

Clear differences should be upheld between promotion or celebration of a course and assessment of its students.

His belief was that not many people gained employment directly from such exhibitions. Agents and employers themselves have limited resources to visit a range of shows, whether they are in London or outside the metropolis.

The main thrust of the rest of the conversation was as follows:

Too much emphasis on product does not allow demonstration of process, even though the design process may be of equal value to product and of equal interest to the potential employer.

Not all work produced, even for final assessment, is appropriate for exhibition.

A certain amount of design work may well be available for scrutiny, but not in the same exhibition mode as work produced as art.

Inappropriate display of design work, as though it were art, might well detract from its qualities.

Some students have been made to feel at a disadvantage from their peers if and when the major, or sole, way of demonstrating final work in any institution has been through the degree show exhibition, even while they acknowledge that their work is not seen to its best advantage in an exhibition context.

There may be a number of ways for course and individual student promotion, as yet unexplored. If the degree show were to be abandoned what might be devised to replace it?

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### **SECTION FOUR**

### An Agenda for Development

### Roger Breakwell (The Liverpool Polytechnic)

As current (1992) Chair of CHEAD, Roger Breakwell was pleased to have been asked to draw the conference to a close.

He said that CHEAD, having supported the work of the Teaching and Learning Strategies group from the outset, was even more anxious to declare its support following the demise of CNAA.

He stressed that CHEAD had always seen itself as representing art and design areas of work in colleges and other institutions, had always been anxious to be proactive, to engage with current issues and to offer an agenda for development.

He believed that more than ever now, a national forum was needed to debate issues relevant across the whole art and design sector, and thus it was more than appropriate for CHEAD members to be participating in this conference which was engaged with exploring the complexities of assessment.

## Appendix One - National Survey

Workshop 1 - Summary of most frequent responses on assessment practices employed to assess graduate skills and competencies (Based on Second National Conference).

At the second national conference, participants confirmed that a graduate in art design is someone who:

- has substantial knowledge and skills in the chose subject areas;
- is professionally competent in the chosen subject areas; is able to communication effectively in written and spoken forms of English;
- is able to evaluate cultural and personal values critically;
- is able to conceptualise;
- is able to form objective judgements;
- has interpersonal skills of a high order.

rbal Critical Evaluation Conceptualisa objectivity  ssay / group work critique peer assessme projects self-assessment group critique  ct tutorials group critique published wor group critique group tutorial public	presentations
rtion ritique	
on / Interpersonal Skills  trole play joint projects  client contact interviews team projects  group projects	debate

Note: 1 The survey did not aim to find out what assessment results contributed to the final award.

2This sheet summarises the most frequent responses.

## Workshop 1 : Assessment Timing

# Teaching & Learning Strategies in Higher Education in Art & Design

At the second national conference, participants confirmed that a graduate in art design is someone who:

- has substantial knowledge and skills in the chose subject areas;
- is professionally competent in the chosen subject areas;
- is able to evaluate cultural and personal values critically; is able to communication effectively in written and spoken forms of English;
- is able to conceptualise;
- is able to form objective judgements;
- has interpersonal skills of a high order.

Assessment Methods	Assessment. Where does it start? When does it occur?
Subject Knowledge	
Subject Skills	
Professional Competence	
Written / Verbal Communication	
Critical Evaluation	
Conceptualise Objectively	
Interpersonal Skills	

### Appendix Two - Conference Participants

Note: The Institutions listed are those that delegates representated in 1992 and were accurate at that date. Many colleagues have moved and many institutions have changed their names.

ALSTON Tony
ASHLEY Martin
ATKINSON Catherine
BAINBRIDGE David

BAINES Alan BALL Linda

**BARTHOLOMEW Stuart** 

BEGGS Guy BENNETT BA BLAIR Bernadette BOARDMAN Paul BOUGOURD Jennifer

BOYD Graham BRAKE Steve BRAY Andy

BREAKWELL Roger BRUNNELL Geoff

**BUGG** Rod

BURGESS Maurice BURROWS Stephen

BUSS David BUTLER Paul CARDEW Georgina CAREY Faye CAREY Jennifer

CASTLE Peter
CATTO Mike
CHANEY Judith
CLAY Robert
COBB Jackie
COE Hugh

COLVERSON Ian CONWAY Jan COOK FM

COSGROVE James CRAVEN Michael CRUMPLIN Colin DAVIES Allan DAVIES Simon DE-LEUW David MACLEOD Katy

MACWILLIAMS Jim MASTERS Ray MCLAREN Oliver MIDDLETON June MILLIGAN Barbara MITCHELL Charles MITCHELL John MORLEY Brian London College of Fashion

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

Huddersfield Polytechnic Wolverhampton Polytechnic

Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design

**Brighton Polytechnic** 

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

City of London Polytechnic Leicester Polytechnic

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

Staffordshire Polytechnic London College of Fashion

Hertfordshire College of Art & Design

Clwyd County Council Camberwell College of Arts Liverpool Polytechnic Polytechnic of East London Newcastle Polytechnic

Bradford & Ilkley Community College

The Crafts Council Polytechnic South West

West Surrey College of Art & Design

Huddersfield Polytechnic Chelsea College of Art & Design

Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design

Cardiff Institute of Higher Education

University of Ulster The London Institute Teeside Polytechnic

Kent Institute of Art & Design

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

Bradford & Ilkley Community College

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

Hertfordshire College of Art & Design

Glasgow School of Art Portsmouth Polytechnic

Bath College of Higher Education Falmouth School of Art & Design Scottish College of Textiles

Scottish conege of rextiles

Derbyshire College of Higher Education

Polytechnic South West

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

Sunderland Polytechnic

West London Institution of Higher Education

London School of Fashion

Bradford & Ilkley Community College Cumbria College of Art & Design

Wimbledon School of Art Manchester Polytechnic

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NEWLING John O'REILLY Susie OLDFIELD J PALMER Joyce PASS Graham PEARCE Peter PEARSON Jim PERCY Christine

PLATT Tim
POLITOWICZ Kay
POTTER Alan
POTTER Robert W
RAWLE Philip
REDHEAD David
RIVLIN Chris

ROGERS David SANDERSON Daphne

SANDFORD Gill SAUNDERS Beverly SCULLY Deborah SELLARS Derek SHINN Michael SHEPHERD Max SHORTT LJ

SIMPSON Peter
SKINGLE David
SLATER Peter
SMITH Brian
SOSSICK Mike
SPEET Scilla
SQUIRES Gillian
STARSMORE Ian

STEPHENS John STRICKLAND David SWALES Valerie SYKES Sandy TAGG Robert TAYLOR Dianne THOMAS Angharad

THOMAS Angharac
THOMSON Marion
THORNTON Colin
THORPE Michael

TIMMINS Mark TODD Lily TURNER Paul UNSWORTH Jim VAUGHAN David

WAINWRIGHT Chris WALKER Ruth WARD Janet WARREN Michael WESTON J WHEELER Peter

WHEELER Peter WHITTLE Andrew WICKS Sylvia Nottingham Polytechnic The Crafts Council Nottingham Polytechnic City of London Polytechnic

Derbyshire College of Higher Education

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

Camberwell College of Arts London College of Fashion Teesside Polytechnic

Chelsea College of Art & Design Chelsea College of Art & Design

Birmingham Polytechnic Derby School of Art & Design Managing Editor, Blueprint University College Salford

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

Design & Education Consultancy

Bristol Polytechnic Nottingham Polytechnic

Central School of Speech and Drama

Sheffield City Polytechnic

Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education

Middlesex Polytechnic

Hertfordshire College of Art & Design

Camberwell College of Arts City of London Polytechnic Sheffield City Polytechnic Chelsea College of Art & Design

Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design

Landrillo College Norwich School of Art

London College of Printing & Distributive Trades

Chelsea College of Art & Design

Portsmouth College Leeds Polytechnic

Loughbrough College of Art & Design

London College of Fashion Liverpool Polytechnic

Norfolk Institution of Art & Design

Teesside Polytechnic

Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design

Scottish College of Textiles Wimbledon School of Art London College of Fashion Winchester School of Art

Cumbria College of Art & Design

Nottingham Polytechnic Scottish College of Textiles London College of Fashion Kingston Polytechnic Liverpool Polytechnic

Loughborough College of Art & Design Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design

CNAA

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WILLCOCKS Philip WILSON Louise WILSON Mary WILSON Roger WILSON Tony WOOD Amanda WOODMAN John WRIGHT Michael YORKE Mantz Somerset College of Arts & Technology
Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design
Bradford & Ilkley Community College
Manchester Polytechnic
Camberwell College of Arts
Camberwell College of Arts
Polytechnic South West
Hertfordshire College of Art & Design
Liverpool Polytechnic

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