Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

Unit code: F7KX 34

Unit purpose: This Unit will examine the history of the genre and its influence on other elements of the communication industry. The Unit is also designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills to enable them to design and create a prototype comic strip, graphic novel or script for an animated film, with reference to the defining features and core concepts of narrative and genre in comics and animation.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1   Describe the historical significance of comic strips, comic books or animation.
2   Analyse comic strips, comics books or animation in terms of narrative and genre.
3   Produce a narrative sequence for a comic strip, comic book or animated film.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it is recommended that candidates should have skills in Communication at SCQF level 6. This may be evidenced by the following:

♦   Higher English (C115 12) or its component Units
♦   Higher ESOL (C222 12)
♦   *Communication* Core Skill (D01B 12) or (F3GB 12)
♦   Communication (EE3T 12) **and** Literature 1 (E9X8 12)
♦   Creative Writing 2 (D0YF 12)
♦   Higher Media Studies (C210 12) or its component
♦   Other similar qualifications or work experience

Core Skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards the Core Skill of *Communication* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. Further detail is provided in the support notes.

General information for centres (cont)

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes. If it is taught as part of the HNC/HND Creative Industries: Media and Communication there may be an opportunity to integrate the assessment of the Unit or parts of the Unit in other Units within the framework.

Assessment: The assessment for each Outcome will be open book and candidates may have access to their own notes, information and course work.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

Unit code: F7KX 34

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Describe the historical significance of comic strips, comic books or animation

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ The contemporary and historical role of comic strips, comic books and animation
♦ The relationship and influences between changing narrative techniques and audience

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

♦ describe the historical background to the comic strip and how it has evolved
♦ illustrate the uses to which comic strips and animation have been put
♦ analyse the crossover in media forms and how this changed the format of the comic strip/book

The assessment will be open book and candidates may have access to their own notes, information and course work.

Assessment Guidelines

The candidate could provide written or oral evidence in the form of extended response answers to set questions. Written responses should total approximately 800 words while oral responses should last for a minimum of eight minutes.

The candidate should be encouraged to show an examination of the social and historical influences on the genre both past and present rather than a listing of facts and information. The historical background to the comic strip could include reference to cave paintings, Hogarth's Gin Lane and graphic novels.

The uses of comic strips and animation may include entertainment, satire and political indoctrination.

An analysis of the crossover in media forms may include comic book to television in the 1950s and 1960s and the influences this had on delivery and audience type.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

Outcome 2

Analyse comic strips, comic books or animation in terms of narrative and genre

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Core concepts and defining features of narrative in comics and animation
♦ Core concepts and defining features of genre in comics and animation

Evidence Requirements

Candidates must:

♦ describe in detail the core concepts and defining features of narrative in the selected comic or animation
♦ describe in detail the core concepts and defining features of genre in comics and animation
♦ provide an analysis of how effective the genre is in the illustrative text or animation
♦ provide an analysis of how effective the core concepts and/or defining features are in the illustrative text or animation

The assessment will be open book and candidates may have access to their own notes, information and course work. The candidate's response must examine a minimum of two genres.

Assessment Guidelines

A written extended response should be a minimum of 800 words while oral evidence should last for a minimum of eight minutes. The written response can be a portfolio of studies of different forms of genre or a single piece of writing examining a minimum of two genres.

The assessment could be carried out by an analysis of illustrative texts or animations that provide the candidate with the opportunity to critically analyse and evaluate at least two different forms of genre and narrative sequence.

Core concepts and defining features of narrative may include narrative structure, plot, character, back-story, introduction, organisation, problem/conflict, solution/resolution, dialogue, artwork, panelling, stereotypes, realism, voice-over narration.

Core concepts and defining features of genre may include genre type (romance, action, mystery, horror, westerns, war, super-hero, social commentary, autobiography, children's, adult, crime, underground, fumetti) setting, sound, music, viewpoint, characters.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

Outcome 3

Produce a narrative sequence for a comic strip, comic book or animated film

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Create a brief for a narrative sequence in a specified comic strip, book or animation
♦ Identify the narrative requirements for a sequence
♦ Identify the defining features of a genre for a sequence

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by designing a narrative sequence in a specified genre and by submitting a brief for a storyline for a comic strip, book or animated sequence.

The detailed brief produced by the candidate should:

♦ identify the defining features of the genre of the comic strip, book or animation
♦ explain the implementation of the defining features of a comic strip, book or animation genre
♦ identify the defining features of a narrative sequence
♦ explain the implementation of the defining features of a narrative sequence
♦ identify the purpose of the brief as well as audience

The response should demonstrate how the candidate has considered appropriately the core concepts and defining features of narrative and genre when designing the storyline sequence.

Assessment Guidelines

Evidence for this Outcome may be presented in the form of a written brief of no less than 500 words or an oral presentation lasting a minimum of five minutes.

The narrative sequence is not required to be a completed story sequence but should at least show the outline of a narrative sequence in a particular genre. The candidate may illustrate this information in the form of a storyboard with supporting notes, multi-media presentation, presentation or written piece.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F7KX 34

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

Superclass category: KC

Original date of publication: August 2009

Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit aims to provide an introduction to the role that comics and animation have had upon popular culture and how the genre has been used for varying purposes throughout history. The candidate will also gain an awareness of the existing state of the medium and how the accepted narrative techniques have evolved in response to changing audience demands.

There is no requirement to produce a completed comic strip, book or animation for this Unit. However, should the candidate wish to fulfil part of the Outcomes of the Unit through the creation of a piece of work this may be accepted as long as the candidate can clearly demonstrate the narrative techniques and genre chosen. The main emphasis of the Unit should be on achieving a broad knowledge of the features and core concepts of narrative and genre in comic strips, books and animation and how these are utilised.

Tutors should feel free to use illustrative material from all appropriate sources and not feel restricted to dealing solely with American comic strips, books or animations.

Centres should also feel free to adapt the delivery of the Unit to suit the interests of their candidates and specific requirements of their course structures.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

For Outcome 1, the tutor may wish to make use of material from all historical eras and varying national sources. However, it may be useful to concentrate on the divergent paths the comic initially took in the UK and the USA as a comparison of how different aspects of both narrative and genre gained different levels of importance in these areas. Candidates may then undertake their own research on how the media evolved which may involve the differences in comic strips, books and animation in other countries, eg the growth of manga in comics and animation in Japan and its influences on American comic strips, books and animation both in film and television.

For Outcome 2, the tutor could use one specific source (for example a single long running comic book title or source of animation) to illustrate narrative techniques and genre and also the changes that have been experienced due to mass audience demands. The tutor may also wish to use a wide ranging illustration of genres to provide a more general background which candidates may then utilise as the basis for their own research. Again this may cover more than one cultural source as reference material.

For Outcome 3, the tutor may wish to illustrate the wide range of storylines and methods used in all forms of the media and introduce the concept of web-based forms of animation. However, care should be taken to illustrate the potential problems of having too wide a scope when candidates undertake their own research.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

Tutors should take a candidate-centred approach by drawing on the candidate's own knowledge of the comic and animation forms and aim to utilise materials which are familiar to candidates as well as historically relevant materials.

Although candidates have to demonstrate an understanding of both the common narrative techniques and genres, they have also to apply this knowledge in the creation of their own illustrative narrative sequence and therefore assessment is open book.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Unit goes some way towards meeting the Communication Core Skill components of *Writing, Speaking and Listening* at SCQF level 6. The key requirements for these components are:

Writing

♦   choose a format for your writing that is appropriate to the readers and the subject matter
♦   choose a layout, structure, vocabulary and graphics (if appropriate) that make your piece of writing clear, suit your topic, and are appropriate for your readers
♦   gather and select relevant information or ideas and present them with supporting detail, in a logical and effective order, linking related information or ideas (for example, beginning/introduction, middle/main body with sub-sections, end/conclusion)
♦   vary your sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary to suit the purpose of your writing and your intended readership (For example, use paragraphing and structural subdivisions to make clear distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments and conclusions.)
♦   emphasise the main points in your piece of writing
♦   use spelling, grammar and punctuation consistently and accurately (for example, complex structure of sentences, clauses, tenses of verbs, commas, question marks, dashes, brackets, colons, semi-colons, italics, paragraphing)
♦   vary language for effect, using a dictionary or thesaurus when you need to
♦   use a writing style that takes account of purpose and readership (for example, giving examples to clarify certain points; avoiding jargon words in communications intended for non-specialists)

Opportunities to develop this skill can easily be incorporated into the delivery of the Unit.

Speaking and Listening

♦   express complex ideas clearly in speech (for example, by choosing language that fits the topic and the situation, and which your listeners understand; speaking clearly and loudly enough; varying speed and tone; pausing at appropriate points)
♦   structure what you say to take account of your own purpose and the audience (for example, presenting the information/ideas, with some supporting detail, in a logical order; linking related information or ideas; making a presentation with a beginning/overview, a middle section with information in logical sequence and sub-sections, and a conclusion/summary of main points; making a sustained and structured contribution to a complex discussion)
♦   emphasise the main points in what you say (for example, through your tone, gestures, volume of speaking)

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

♦   support what you say with images, where appropriate (for example, computer visuals, multi-media tools, models)
♦   integrate the use of body language and verbal communication for maximum impact and clarity when speaking (for example, eye contact, posture and gesture)
♦   listen carefully to any questions from listeners and respond accordingly (for example, by repeating information; rephrasing what you have said; summarising; asking questions of listeners; reflecting on or synthesising the points of view expressed)
♦   adapt your speaking style to take account of the situation and audience, (for example, by giving examples to clarify certain points; by avoiding or explaining jargon words in communications for non-specialists)
♦   listen carefully to what others say, taking account of their contribution, and respond accordingly (for example, by responding to their point of view; explaining your point of view; repeating information; giving extra information; analysing; summarising; synthesising; rephrasing what has been said; asking questions to clarify anything you do not understand; exploring subjects in greater depth)

Opportunities to develop this skill can easily be incorporated into the delivery of the Unit

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open or distance learning; however, it will require planning by the centre to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

Suitable materials are freely available from many sources. It should be noted that digital materials not provided for use from the main DC and Marvel Comics websites may be subject to copyright clearance. Photocopying of materials from publications and other sources is subject to the standard academic restrictions.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**

General information for candidates

Unit title: Narrative and Genre in Comics and Animation

This is a one credit Unit designed to

♦ enable you to understand the features of narrative and genre of comic strips, books and animation.
♦ provide an awareness of the influences upon the media by current and historical events
♦ develop an understanding of how the medium can be used for varying political and socio-political ends.

The Unit will also provide you with an insight into how to use the features of narrative and genre and how to create an effective design idea based on those ideas.

Outcome 1 provides a background to comic strips, books and animation. In this you will analyse how the media has grown to its contemporary position, its origins, its influences and for what purposes it has been used.

Outcome 2 will give an understanding of the types of narrative styles that are commonly utilised and the range of genres used within comics and animation. In this Outcome you will examine a range of different source material to allow you to become familiar with the common features and stereotypes of the form.

Outcome 3 allows you to utilise the information gained in the first two Outcomes to develop your own ideas in the comic strip, book or animation format and will allow you to explore further the influences on both the audience and the media.

The above Outcomes may involve the production of an extended piece of writing or oral presentation assessing your ability to analyse and define the key aspects covered.

The *Communication* Core Skill at SCQF level 6 could be developed in this Unit.