


AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ALIGNMENT OF ILLUSTRATION IN HIGHER
EDUCATION PRACTICES AND THE VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

STUART LLOYD DUMVILLE

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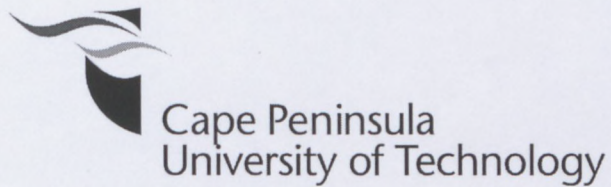
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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ALIGNMENT OF ILLUSTRATION IN HIGHER
EDUCATION PRACTICES AND THE VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY**

**By
Stuart Lloyd Dumville**

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Technology: Graphic Design

in the Faculty of Informatics and Design

at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Supervisor: Professor C Winberg

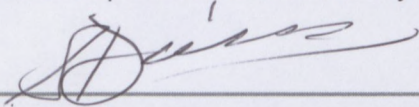
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(September 2012)**

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DECLARATION

I, Stuart Lloyd Dumville, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.



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ABSTRACT

University graduates entering the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries do so with the hand and digital illustration knowledge and skills that they acquired during their time of study. As a result of the ever-changing developments in technology, the parameters of hand-generated illustration within the visual communications industry have increasingly progressed toward digitally generated artwork. This thesis investigates the alignment or non-alignment between illustration teaching and learning practices in higher education and professional practice in the visual communications industry, with a view to identifying the gaps, and their causes, in the knowledge and skills of graduates entering the workplace.

The study uses the lens of Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987) to investigate practices in higher education and industry sites. Both the higher education and workplace investigation was guided by the research questions: 1) What comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in higher education? 2) What comprises an activity system in professional illustrators' practice? and 3) How can the higher education and professional activity systems be aligned for their mutual benefit?

The comparative study uses both quantitative questionnaire data and qualitative data derived from interviews conducted in both higher education and workplace sites, including the analysis of samples of illustration at both sites. The research reveals areas where there is both alignment and non-alignment and recommendations are made with a view to ensuring that illustration programmes in higher education are aligned as closely as possible to the needs of the workplace.

The contribution made by this research is both theoretical and practical. The theoretical knowledge framework that has been developed outlines academics' and practitioners' of illustration theorising of current trends in both hand and digital illustration curricula in higher education and current trends and needs of digital and hand illustration in the visual communication industry. In broad terms, there is alignment with regard to technical skills and the tools used across both sites, while there is non-alignment with regard to knowledge of and preparation for the workplace and self employment, for example, time management, interpersonal skills and the acceptance of critique. The practical contribution is in the form of recommendations to curricula, which when applied should better prepare graduates with the practical and skills required of illustrators in the unpredictable, demanding world of work, which they encounter on leaving their academic institutions.

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Illustration Studios/agency /Publishers

Am I Collective Illustration Studio; 1 Horse Town Illustration studio; Mcfaul Studios; Sparx Media Illustrators agency; Storyboards Inc; CTIJF, Espafrika; Oxford University Press

Illustrators

Mary Grande Pre; Emily Bartsch; Clay Butler; Shelly Wood; Yasmine Penniman; Karen Ahlschlager; Hung Liu; Milton Glaser; Dean Kelly; Rial de Wet; Graphic designer/illustrator JJ

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GLOSSARY

Terms/Acronyms/Abbreviations	Definition/Explanation
Scamps	Thumbnail sketches, often very small, quick drawings that are useful when brainstorming ideas. These ideas are often discussed with the art director and/or copywriter and further adjustments made. Scamps are quick, slick images.
Roughs	The art director then decides which ideas have relevance to the final outcome of the project and the designer then fine tunes the image in pencil or on the computer. The roughs are an important stage in determining the final outcome, which is then presented to the client.
Final (finished) artwork	On clients approval the final artwork is begun. The proposed image that was initially conceptualized in the scamps stage could take the form of a commissioned photograph and/or illustration, which is combined with type and design elements.
Illustration	Handmade or digitally created imagery in the form of drawings, collages or paintings such as fruit, information graphics and conceptual imagery around a theme for the design industry, advertising and publishing industry.
Crits	Critiques of student artwork by the lecturer including input from students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This chapter explains my motivation for doing this Masters thesis and the topic I have chosen; it explains the focus and the rationale of this study and provides background information to the research problem and the research questions and objectives that investigate both higher education (HE) and workplace activity systems.

1.1 Rationale

The rationale for choosing the topic, "An investigation into the alignment of illustration in HE and the visual communications industry", came about as a result my research dissertation done for the Higher Diploma in Higher Education, a professional course for university teachers. The title of this dissertation was: "An ideal drawing and illustration course that progressively equips students to have relevance in the marketplace". The motivation for both the research dissertation and this thesis was a result of my experiences in teaching students on the Extended Curriculum Programme (previously known as the 'Foundation Programme', as well as first, second and third year level students. I experienced first-hand that there were gaps in their drawing and illustration skills, as well as in their exposure to brainstorming and conceptualising ideas for an illustration task. The apparent lack of skills to cope with the demands that third year ultimately placed on the students led me to explore a "step-up" learning process for the drawing and illustration curriculum at the undergraduate levels of study. I observed that each level in the curriculum was made up of *ad hoc* assessment tasks that were not linked to one another. Because the relevant basic knowledge areas of drawing and illustration techniques, both hand and digital, and the use of a broad range of mediums, by third year students was generally weak, it was difficult for the graduating students to adapt to the demands of the workplace, where they would be expected to apply their knowledge and skills in different situations. As part of the process of writing the dissertation, I interviewed creative directors in a design studio and an advertising agency on the current status of illustration in the workplace and the demands placed on illustrators, which provided insight into the needs and trends within the industry. As a result of these findings, I decided it would be beneficial to both HE and industry to do a more in-depth research at the Masters level into the alignment or non-alignment of the higher education illustration course and the visual communications industry.

1.2 Description of third year programmes

Four HE sites were selected. Three of them were Universities of Technology, while the fourth site was a traditional university. The focus of this research is on University of Technology programmes where the emphasis is on preparing the students for the workplace. The

rationale for using a traditional university was to make use of a research-based institution with as different approach to a University of Technology as possible in the form of a negative case study, where, if in spite of those differences the results were similar, then generalisations could be made about teaching and learning.

The third year illustration programmes at the three universities of technologies varied. At site 1, the illustration programme took place one morning a week throughout the academic year. The focus of the programme varied between perceptual drawing and applied drawing and illustration projects that were at times linked to other subjects such as Communication and Design. Because of university teachers' time constraints, there was no collaboration with industry in terms of real world projects. At site 2, the illustration programme took place during five whole day sessions interspersed throughout the academic year. The focus of the programme was on creative drawing and illustration projects that were either independent or interlinked with other subjects such as Communication and Design. There were no real world projects, but the briefs were often South African-based with South African brands and content. At site three, the subject was called Drawing in which illustration briefs were sometimes presented; it took place one morning a week throughout the academic year. The emphasis was that the projects had to matter within a real world context. Also, apart from industry-generated briefs, the students were encouraged to create their own briefs and criteria with a focus on open-ended briefs where the final artwork had to function within their chosen context.

For the fourth year programme at a traditional university, the students had broad themes where they were encouraged to find a client, to find an organisation within sustainability, to work with someone or to work with the community, where it wasn't so much a client but where they would address a community based problem. Within a community-based context they did research, and all the projects were geared to address issues through the visual exploration and development of concepts within those themes.

1.3 Background to the Research Problem

This research study is in the broad area of HE programmes in graphic design, advertising and publishing. The specific focus is on the training of illustrators for these industries. The research problem is the alignment of higher education practices within these programmes with the demands of the industries for which students are being prepared. In many design-related programmes there is a lack of alignment between the HE programme and its related industries (Dannels, 2003). In this study, HE is understood as an 'activity system' (Engeström, 1987) that comprises particular practices, regulations, approaches, tools, actions,

expectations, and so on. The graphic design, advertising and publishing industries can be similarly understood as activity systems comprising different practices, regulations, approaches, tools, actions, expectations, etc. While the interests of HE (developing students) and the interests of workplaces (professional practice) are different, there are opportunities for constructive alignment for their mutual benefit (Dias, Freedman, Medway & Paré, 1999). There is therefore a need for curriculum revision and teaching methods both to promote student development and to align HE practices with those of its related industries.

1.4 Statement of Research Problem

The focus of this research is a comparison of the activity systems related to illustration training in higher education and illustration as a professional practice in the workplace, using methods developed for the comparison of activity systems. The comparative study draws on interview data across a variety of HE and professional sites. The purpose of the study is to improve practices in HE illustration training for the benefit of both the higher education programmes and the industries that employ illustrators.

1.5 Research questions and objectives

1.5.1 What comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in higher education?

To identify, establish and determine what comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in HE.

1.5.2 What comprises an activity system in professional illustrators' practice?

To determine, develop and establish what comprises an activity system in the world of professional practice with regard to illustration.

1.5.3 How can the higher education and professional activity systems be aligned for their mutual benefit?

To establish, determine and identify how, for mutual benefit, both the HE and the workplace activity system can be brought to productive alignment through constructive change.

1.6 Research context

In the South African context many students enter graphic design programmes with gaps in their drawing and painting skills and a lack of exposure to methods of brainstorming and conceptualising ideas for illustration tasks. Sutherland points out that, in the South African context, many students applying for entry to graphic design programmes are:

...truly disadvantaged in that they had been denied access to art or design education at school. Added to this were the limited financial resources available in the community to pay the fees, and the high equipment and material costs that graphic design demands. Thus, our admission criteria assess a student's potential rather than proven skill and talent (Sutherland, 2004:55).

The difficulties that arise when such students are accepted into a programme require a re-examination of the step-up learning process and the drawing, illustration curriculum that they are exposed to through the undergraduate levels of study (Adams, 2006). Typically the levels in the graphic design curriculum are made up of *ad hoc* assessment tasks that seem not to be linked to one another (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

Tracking the journey of underprepared students in illustration programmes, in the first year of an Extended Curriculum Programme (ECPs) students would have little or no knowledge of the basics of drawing and illustration. If the course is thorough and the students are exposed to a wide range of basic drawing and illustration practices that would provide them with a good foundation of knowledge and skills on which to progress through to first-year mainstream courses. Successful students would enter first-year with the advantage of having encountered the theory and practical knowledge of how drawing and illustration are applied and aligned to other subjects such as the History of Graphic Design, Communications Design and Design Techniques.

The first year students, who enrol for the graphic design course without having completed the first year of the ECP, enter with varying levels of prior exposure to drawing and illustration through having done art at school (grade 12) level and/or some further art schooling at a college of art. Often, students enter first-year with gaps in their learning; this is why it is critical that the basics of drawing and illustration are approached with thoroughness in a spiral sequence, a term used by Rowntree, (1981), which is closely aligned to Susan Toohey's (1999) "encounter, try it out and get feedback approach". For example, the foundation built in the ECP and first year needs to be carried through each successive level to the third year. The students need to see and experience the developmental outcomes as they apply and reapply a technique they have learnt in the ECP or first year. The concept or brief will become progressively more difficult and might develop from hand skills into computer generated computer based imagery. Another reason is that the curriculum between first, second and third year tends to be made up of *ad hoc* assessment tasks that seem not to be linked to one another.

The general outcome of the learning programme at a University of Technology, the progression from ECP to third year, is readiness for the workplace. The knowledge and skills that have been learned and often repeated at progressively higher levels, from ECP through to third year, should reach a sufficiently high level for the student to apply his or her knowledge in the workplace. At a University of Technology the emphasis and focus is on what the students should be able to do at the end of the programme, which is strongly linked to workplace readiness.

1.7 Theory in use

The guiding theory for this study is Activity Theory, a set of related approaches that view human-produced artefacts, such as utterances, texts, drawings and equipment, as part of the activities that give rise to and use them (Engeström, 1987). A view of learning through activity theory Engeström and Leont'ev, (1987,1977 cited in Tuomi-Gröhn, & Engeström, Eds. 2003:1:4) see learning as a collective activity system where significant learning processes are achieved through collective activities. Practices in a workplace can similarly be conceptualised as comprising components of activities in dynamic relationships. The activity systems of HE and the world of work can be compared at the level of the components of the systems and their forms of interaction. This view is that meaningful transfer of learning from higher education to the workplace takes place through interaction between activity systems.

I have applied the principles of Activity Theory to data collection and data analysis by identifying, establishing and determining what comprises an activity system in the world of HE and professional practice respectively with regard to illustration with regard to the elements of activity, namely subjects, tools, objects (or objectives), the division of labour, community of practice and its rules. According to Lave (1993), learning is a process of becoming a member of a sustained community of practice by developing an identity as a member of a community and becoming knowledgeably skilful. Lave & Wenger (1991) emphasise the point that effective learning is social and supportive in the form of community of practice and starts at the periphery or margins before it becomes centrally accepted or mainstream.

1.8 Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides an overview of literature that is relevant to the investigation of the alignment and non-alignment of illustration in higher education and the workplace.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology and outlines the comparison of both higher education and workplace activity systems based on Engeström's (1987) expanded

mediational triangle. The chapter outlines the research focus, research questions and objectives and research design.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings from the four higher education sites in this study. The findings are presented with the intention of answering the first (HE-based) research question, which is: What comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in higher education?

Chapter 5 presents and discusses the findings from workplaces. The findings are presented with the intention of answering the second (workplace) research question, which is: what comprises an activity system in professional illustrators' practice?

Chapter 6 starts with the comparison of the Higher education and workplace activity systems with the intention of answering the third research question, which is: How can the higher education and professional activity systems be aligned for their mutual benefit? With reference to the findings, I make recommendations on aligning the HE activity system more closely to the workplace activity system.

1.9 Summary

Having outlined the rationale for this research and provided the background to the research problem, within the research context, I go on, in the next chapter to overview the research literature on the alignment and non-alignment between undergraduate education and the needs of workplaces, with a focus on illustration and related fields.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE EDUCATION AND PRACTICE OF ILLUSTRATORS

2.1 Introduction to the literature on higher education and the workplace

The literature review provides an overview of research that is relevant to the study of the alignment and non-alignment between undergraduate illustration education and the needs of related workplaces. There is a small, but growing, body of literature that focuses on different aspects of design and illustration education at the higher education level, as well as the nature and advancements in the field of illustration practice. This literature is reviewed under the following categories: 1) illustration in higher education, 2) illustration in practice, 3) collaboration between illustration teachers and illustration professionals 4) towards a theoretical framework for the alignment of higher education and illustration practice.

2.2 Illustration in higher education

2.2.1 Graduate skills and attributes required by the workplace

Because of changing work patterns in a demanding work environment, higher education has to ensure that graduates have the right skills to be competitive (Ball, 2003). A linear career path in any field of study is no longer a realistic expectation for the 21st Century graduate, especially so for the creative industries that involve a mixture of short-term contracts, employment in smaller enterprises, further study and part-time and freelance work rather than a predictable career progression (Ball, 2003). To be able to manage in this unpredictable work environment a range of skills such as communication, interpersonal and teamwork attributes are essential; these also include personal attributes that will help organisations to deal with change, which are:

- intellect and problem-solving;
- analytic, critical and reflective ability;
- willingness to learn and continue learning;
- flexibility, adaptability and risk-taking;
- An understanding of the world of work, some commercial awareness, and an appreciation of work culture.

Work experience, volunteering and extra-curricular activities of all kinds have great potential for building students' confidence in the workplace (Ball, 2003). A more holistic' approach is required to help students to value and apply these attributes within their courses and in work-related activities.

To empower learners, an approach is required that treats students as intellectual performers rather than students who respond as a non-participating and questioning audience (Harvey, 2000). This transforms teaching and learning into an active process, which enables students to go beyond the narrow confines of their academic discipline to applying themselves to whatever they encounter in the post-education world.

Sen (2004) emphasises the importance of educating for life, especially democratic participation and social awareness, not just for academic or professional purposes and Nussbaum (2011) makes a point that professionalism is a wide concept and should not be defined by narrow outcomes; it is about developing expertise with strong ethical and social responsibilities.

2.2.2 Employability skills in the curriculum

Blackwell and Harvey, (1999, cited in Mason, Williams & Cranmer, 2006:7) found in a study that design courses explicitly sought to equip students with employability skills, partly because of the highly competitive economic environment that the students enter where in many small enterprises they are required to have a range of management and business skills as well as technical proficiency in design.

Mason et al. (2006) claim that in order to embed key skills in the curriculum – such as a greater emphasis on oral presentations, there should be more real world tasks in teaching, group working and the introduction of more final-year projects intended to develop independent learning skills. Changes in assessment practices included an increased weighting in assessment for problem solving. Winberg (2004) emphasises the fact that there is a need to ensure that our research, our learning, and our partnerships are grounded in real world matters.

2.2.3 Acquiring communication skills through Critiques

With specific reference to design education, researchers have recognised oral communication as a central part of the educational process of introducing students to the traditions, values, and performative rituals of design studios and future design workplaces (Dannels, Gaffney & Martin, 2008). In a design context in higher education, communication skills are learned within the critique, which is a communication event in which the students present their designs or illustrations and staff and/or students provide valuable feedback (Dannels, Gaffney & Martin, 2008). The critic, in providing feedback to the student, not only helps the students to understand the principles of design, but also provides clues as to the terminology used by designers (Alshare, Lane & Miller, 2011).

2.2.4 Overcoming language barriers experienced by second language speakers

The change in student demographics that has taken place in South Africa over the last twelve years has brought with it new challenges, for example, a wide range of abilities in the classroom and greater student numbers (Makoni, 2000). Learning must therefore be developmental in a differentiated way, meeting the students' level and in a safe non-judgmental environment helping both the competent and the struggling students to feel valued and challenged to grow. It is particularly important that the struggling student still feels important in spite of his or her barriers to learning and the resultant slowness. It is important that the teacher explains each section of an assessment task (brief) clearly using a scaffolding methodology while the students listen and then practice or apply this information and with on going support eventually become independent (Rose et al, 2003). The more talented students too need to feel challenged, understood and also catered for. A project brief should have sufficient depth to encompass the wide range of abilities (Winberg, Engel-Hills, Jacobs & Garraway 2012).

2.2.5 Vocational education: the integration of work and learning

Vocational knowledge has dual purposes, namely, to provide students with academic knowledge that is necessary for the practice of their occupations, as well as advanced skills and practices, that prepared them for the world of work (Young, 2006). Vocational education thus has two "directions": the one direction faces towards the academic disciplines and the second direction towards the skill and knowledge demands of workplaces and occupations (Barnett, 2006). Firstly, the workplace knowledge component allows for the possibility for the student or trainee to develop both workplace and broad occupational skills and knowledge. Secondly, the disciplinary component of vocational knowledge enables the student to see beyond the specific workplace or occupation he or she is in and can provide the foundation for a student to higher or professional education.

A vocational curriculum that is limited to practical and procedural knowledge ties this knowledge to specific contexts and organisations (Bernstein, 2000). This knowledge is therefore non-transferable to other related contexts and organisations. Vocational education on the other hand, has always incorporated a dual goal, namely preparation for employment as well as the personal and intellectual development of the individual. However, if programmes of vocational education neglect disciplinary knowledge they run the risk of quickly getting out of date and offer no possibilities of progression or transfer.

Design departments at colleges, universities and art schools are as diverse and individualistic as the students they teach (Shapiro, 2004). However, they have one thing in

common and that is they are all dealing with rapid change in both the profession and the way design is viewed by society.

2.2.6 Transfer of learning

The transfer of learning that takes place from HE to the workplace involves the transference of knowledge and skills to new contexts, also described as the "recontextualisation" of knowledge (Bernstein, 1999).

The pedagogic recontextualizing field may be strongly classified internally, producing sub-fields specialized to levels of the education system, curricula, groups of pupils. It is useful to distinguish agencies of pedagogic reproduction, which, within broad limits, can determine their own recontextualising, independent of the State (the private sector) and agencies, which although funded by the State may have a relatively larger measure of control over their own recontextualizing (Until recently the universities) (Bernstein, (1990), cited in Singh, 2002:5)

Transfer of learning from higher education to the workplace

In order for students to be well prepared for the world of work, it is important that learning that happens in higher education is transferred to the workplace. Lasonen and Young claim that:

Transfer has been a problem intrinsic to general and vocational education in advanced countries since the beginning of mass schooling and the growth of college-based programmes of vocational education. With the demise of old industries and the expansion of learning demands by new industries, most European governments are trying to find ways of tackling the problem and more generally of improving the quality of vocational education. In the reformed vocational course, students are expected not only to acquire more broad-based skills and knowledge not previously associated with vocational education, but to be able to apply what they learn in workplaces (Lasonen & Young, 1998: 63).

Transferring knowledge and skills to new contexts

Donnelly (2004) emphasises that the capacity to connect and do things with what has been learnt and apply this knowledge in other situations, is important. Employers are looking for creative innovators and problem solvers where creativity is the ability to make sense out of complexity in an environment where the creator is often working with multiple, often conflicting factors, pressures, interests and constraints such as budgets and time.

There needs to be a balance between vocational pedagogy, which is influenced by workplace activities and disciplinary pedagogy. This becomes more pronounced the higher the level (Barnett, 2006). Knight (2000) believes that a graduated student should, to a large degree, have achieved what the curriculum specified but the skills learned must also be transferable, meaning that the knowledge and skills that the students have progressively learned over a programme should be transferable to related areas of work. The students should be able to use knowledge gained in different situations.

Transfer in illustration education

In the constructivist perspective, knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received from the environment, enabling the students to make meaning through analysis, investigation, collaboration, sharing and building on what they know and have researched rather than processing facts and skills they have been given in parrot fashion (Dougiamas, 1998).

A project brief should have sufficient depth to encompass a wide range of abilities. As Young (2006) has argued, in the case of career-focussed education generally, knowledge gained in higher education must be appropriate to enable students to apply it in different situations. For this purpose, the knowledge basis of any professionally oriented qualification should encompass both “vertical” (or theoretical) and “horizontal” (or practical) knowledge (Bernstein, 1999; Barnett, 2006). This could take the form of linking projects within a programme where, for example, a project could be designed in such a way as to involve the knowledge and skills of subjects such as Illustration, Communications Design, Design Techniques and History of Graphic Design. The cross-disciplinary component could be the incorporation of the specific knowledge of the disciplines with the practice-based knowledge developed as students work on real world projects.

2.2.7 Flexibility in education: a broad range of technical skills

Sandhaus, co-director of the graphic design programme at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, claims that:

Today, the biggest challenge in graphic design education is getting a grasp on where the profession is going based on technological, cultural, social and economic changes, determining how we want to respond to the changes and then having the fluidity in the programme to make those changes (Sandhaus, 2004:42).

The Liverpool School of Art and Design offers both illustration and animation (Hitchen, 2007) and the Head of the Art Department, Hitchen, (2007) stresses that drawing is the central

discipline for both disciplines. He also says that all students are given the opportunity to explore moving image during the first year and that they aim to provide an environment where illustrators and illustrators can learn from one another. At Liverpool School of Art and Design, crossover between specialist areas is encouraged where this interdisciplinary approach produces graduates who can combine elements of illustration and animation in real-world projects and commissions:

Illustrators need to be equipped with an increasingly broad range of technical skills and it's not surprising that some will choose to answer a brief with a short animated sequence and if their work is destined for the Internet, being able to add movement can be an important bonus (Hitchen, 2007:44).

Gates (2007) believes that:

You can do well if you do illustration and animation because the client doesn't need to look for two people to do a job (Gates, 2007:42).

2.2.8 Developments and trends in higher education

During the last decade, colleges have increasingly taken a multidisciplinary approach to teaching, with students more often involved in project teams that include designers, illustrators and photographers. The reason for this is to prepare graduating students who on entering the industry are comfortable working with an illustrator, whatever the project (Grannell, 2008).

2.2.9 Graphic design/illustration educational programmes: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment

In order for interactive design to move forward, we must generate thinkers, entrepreneurs and innovators in the classroom so they will have the ability and ambition to do more than mediate between the idea and end product using code or commercial software (Tselenti, 2006). This can be done by surrounding the students with process-sensitive problems and interdisciplinary projects that put them in touch with culture, current events and social issues. A new graphic design curriculum such as this would create a self-motivated student with a passion for life-long learning.

The complex issues of creative processing and research when solving problems of contextualised visual communication need to be addressed. Projects should demonstrate both a practical understanding of established methodologies and also self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems (Tselentis, 2006). These challenges go hand-in-

hand with the notion that successful cutting-edge illustrators need to be educated, socially and culturally aware communicators utilising both intellectual and practical skills.

Khoury et al. (2009) claim that written research can propel the profession of graphic design forward into a realm of more substance and significance. Design writing and research will further establish the disciplinary basis of graphic design as an intellectual process. They state that changes within undergraduate graphic design studies can prepare student designers to be more than visual artists, technicians or craftsmen. Written research can propel graphic design students to play a relevant and enriching role within the design profession.

Practical skills such as rendering techniques and digital, new technology based skills, are essential regarding the education of the illustrator but must be seen as a form of training associated with the vocational aspects of illustration, which must be encountered early in the students' development (Male, 2007). Towards the final part of their education, the development of a personal iconography, through drawing, media exploration and visual interpretation should be attempted.

What distinguishes one undergraduate programme from another has much to do with the overall teaching philosophy (Heller & Fenandes, 1995). Most illustration programmes offer the same fundamental skill and concept-based classes although some schools may differ as to whether skill/craft is more important than the idea/concept. However, in the end it is the quality of teaching itself that is the deciding factor, because without motivated teachers, there is little chance for motivated students. Added to this, the goal of an illustration programme is to prepare students to enter the profession. Within the three to four year course of study, a competent programme will emphasise:

- drawing and painting
- the use of various media such as pen and ink, watercolour, woodcut, oil painting and computer generated imagery
- the exploration of form through editorial technical and book illustration
- the development of content through meaning and story
- problem solving through allegory, metaphor and symbolism
- the development of a strong portfolio

Upon graduation, a student should be able to draw or paint (hand or digitally) proficiently, conceptualise intelligently and have a portfolio that highlights these abilities (Heller & Fernandes, 1995). However, an undergraduate programme cannot teach "talent", but will

attempt to bring out the best in students given their range of abilities. The ability to succeed as a professional illustrator does not only depend on the ability to draw and conceptualise, but also requires considerable hard work and dedication. Finding the right balance between education and experience is important. Heller and Fernandes (1995) point out that while some art schools and colleges may give credit for professional work which students have sourced in the business world others may encourage that real assignments be given as part of coursework. They stress that no matter how the end result is achieved; a student should learn both in and out of an academic environment adding that it is never too later to enter the classroom and never too early to experience the real world:

Technology has caused the paradigm within which illustrators function to shift. The computer is a required tool and it is the new medium. Print is no longer the premiere showcase for freelance illustration ...The print media will still endure, but the high profile illustrators of the past three decades have to find other outlets for their work. So how do we prepare for an uncertain future?...It implies that a solid grounding in the fundamentals (drawing, painting, composition and concept development) by a responsible student will allow that student to choose from the possibilities and opportunities that present themselves (Allen, 2000: 89-92).

Allen (2000) feels that a willingness to learn is an essential ingredient in a student's education experience; so too is a lecturer's awareness of an important factor in the learning process, which is the building and nurturing of the students' self-esteem, the generator of performance. Negative critiques of artwork executed with genuine effort can demotivate the students, whereas constructive critiques can be motivational and serve as a catalyst for a breakthrough. Within this safe environment, where the students can learn more about themselves by taking risks and grow beyond their perceived potential, Allen (2000) says that education should stress the fundamentals and encourage the desire to learn. However, he stresses that this is only possible when the students are not only willing to learn, but have a burning desire to excel in their chosen field.

2.2.10 Aligning Assessment with long-term learning

According to Boud and Falchikov (2006):

Preparing students for lifelong learning necessarily involves preparing them for the tasks of making complex judgements about their own work and that of others and formaking decisions in the uncertain and unpredictable circumstances in which they will find themselves in the future. (Boud & Falchikov, 2006: 402)

Candy et al (1994, cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2006: 403) emphasise that if students are to be encouraged to be lifelong learners, they must be discouraged from any tendency towards an over-reliance on the opinions of others, which Boud and Falchilov (2006) interpret that if students are always influenced by the judgements of others they may not acquire the broader set of skills that enable them to judge their own and others' work with confidence.

2.2.11 Research into the teaching of drawing in the digital age

Student drawings should be both perceptual and conceptual, creating drawings as an expression or as a statement. The ability to express perception is desirable but the ability to formulate concepts is essential. Curriculum planning for the development of drawing must adapt to the many radical changes and to opportunities that the digital environment has created (Schenk, 2005). Computers and certain types of software give students and professional designers with limited drawing ability, the support to produce and present good concepts through visually convincing images that could not have been produced otherwise. Furthermore, encouraging students to develop a theoretical understanding of drawing usage develops a critical eye and appreciation of what constitutes good drawing applied to different contexts beyond their own range of drawing skills and experience (Schenk, 2005). This could, for example, apply to a graduated student who on entering the visual communications industry is given the responsibility of commissioning an illustrator to create a drawing or illustration within a particular design or publishing context.

Importance of drawing

The importance of traditional drawing is supported by scholars such as Schenk (2005) who states that the ease and spontaneity of the traditional drawing systems are still valuable, if not vital, in the early planning stages of a design project. Schenk argues that by avoiding the documentation (preliminary scamps) of how they have interpreted the brief, they also avoid revealing how they have approached the creative process of developing original, vibrant concepts suited to the assigned context. The ability, through the application of drawing conventions, to express emotions and celebrate experience is important (Schenk, 2005).

Arisman (2000) explains that illustration departments in art schools are under pressure to expand their course loads into more graphic design and computer classes. As a result of this change the required drawing classes tend to suffer, resulting in a smaller number of students who can draw. However, Arisman feels that this group will become highly employable because the process of drawing can unlock the entire creative process for an artist. Drawing takes time and in that time one finds oneself and having found oneself. It is time to enter the digital age with the computer as a partner, but not an end solution in itself.

2.2.12 Teaching creativity

Drawing versus computers as an important part of the creative, brainstorming process

With the emphasis on computer-based imagery and design, students are increasingly reluctant to see the value of brainstorming by creating a range of thumbnail scamps on paper. The beneficial effects of the introduction of computer-based technology to the studio have been acknowledged as bringing new opportunities for students with weaker drawing skills to visualize their ideas and opportunities for designers and researchers to explore new forms of drawing (Schenk, 2005). However there are some concerns about the effects of decreasing engagement in the traditional paper-based drawing on the development of visual literacy and creativity in design students.

Research on the teaching of creativity

A curriculum designed to encourage creativity must hand over a high proportion of the responsibility of learning to students in contrast to the traditional roles where teachers are responsible for teaching and students for learning. An environment is needed in which the students initiate the learning process and are supported by their teachers who take the role of facilitators of learning (Elton, 2006). This method of teaching is supported by a study that included feedback from 20 art and design lecturers interviewed in a qualitative and quantitative survey (Dineen, Samuel & Livesey, 2005). The research study confirmed that the primary aim in teaching illustration is the development of the individual's innate creative potential:

- Taping into the imagination and curiosity of the student helps them access something that's deep inside.
- Within the centrality of the teacher-student relationship, it is very important to show students you are interested and care about what they are doing. This concern for them and their feelings opens their attitude thus enabling them to push beyond their own locked-in, mechanical boundaries.
- The ultimate aim of educational partnership is student independence and helping them see and unlock what is already there and build their confidence to express themselves as individuals rather than seeing the world through the eyes of the lecturer.
- Independence was important for creative success and their personal education aims include taking risks in order to develop their creativity and push boundaries by thinking outside of the box.
- It was essential for the students to be actively committed to their own education, which was reaffirmed by a lecturer who said he is motivated to ensure that the students meet their own challenges independently, irrespective of whether the

outcome is weak or strong, but in doing so, they create an environment where they derive satisfaction from their own development.

Dineen, Samuel and Livesey argue that educators:

use a broad range of methods and strategies to engage learners with differing intelligences; there is a focus on one-to one teaching, acknowledging a variety of learning styles and capacities; open-ended and student-led projects are used to increase students' intrinsic motivation and allow for personal engagement; an emphasis on heuristic tasks encourages productive rather than reproductive thinking; assessment-schemes focus on diagnostic feedback and offer a radical redefinition of 'failure'. It should be noted that all of the educators prioritized 'meta-learning' over knowledge transmission, encouraging students to engage, question, debate, challenge and, ultimately, form their own world view (Dineen, Samuel & Livesey, 2005: 166).

Teachers of creativity, participating in another study (Bull & Montgomery, 1995), recommended that a climate be established in which students feel safe and free to explore their creative potential. This exploration should lead the student to openness to creative experiences, internal aptitude and external environments. This openness, in turn, promotes curiosity and inquisitiveness, leading to insight and innovation.

The keeping of a visual diary as an important part of the creative process

A visual diary develops the discipline of thinking through ideas, allowing students to grow, and, importantly, develops the ability and openness to be self-critical (Gillham & McGilp, 2007). The continuous, meticulous recording and analysis involved develops practitioners who are able to observe their progress more closely and in turn come to understand their practice better (Gillham & McGilp, 2007). This observation emphasises the importance of the scamps-to-rough-drawing process because it encourages critical, lateral thinking and openness to making necessary adjustments and additions.

Engagement and creativity

The students' understanding of creativity, as a concept or practice, impacts on their motivation or desire to become part of the design community (Reid & Solomonides, 2007). Swede (1993, cited in Reid, & Solomonides, 2007:28) maintains that creativity is more than just a response to a situation; it is a process that results in an outcome that possesses at least two qualities: 1) it must be unique and 2) it must have value. Swede also suggests that creativity is not only linked to individuals working alone, but also to groups. Reid &

Solomonides (2007) point out that Swede's ideas imply that within creative endeavour, there is something about the situation in which the creation has been placed that makes it significant and unique and that the notion of "group activity" also suggests that creativity is socially constructed.

For creativity to be recognised, it must be seen as unique and of value to a certain community of people (Reid & Solomonides, 2007). Therefore, they conclude, design educators and students become that community and may intuitively agree to and understand what creativity means in that specific context. They claim that engagement can be seen in various ways such as: some form of relationship between students and their studies, some aspect of student behaviour and motivation and quality of work and a passive or active approach to teaching and a level of student interest.

Harris and colleagues suggest that:

Academic engagement is defined as engaging in the activities of a course programme with thoroughness and seriousness. Indicators of academic engagement are cognitive (organizing and planning his/her own work, entering deeply into learning on his/her own), affective (being motivated, persevering, taking pleasure in the course, being interested), conative (giving the necessary energy and time) and relational (Harris et al. (2004), cited in Reid & Solomonides, 2007: 28).

For students to be engaged and creative, there is a need for them to feel that they are learning through deep involvement within the context of their learning and to be experiencing and doing the processes of design in such a way as to see the purpose and benefit of what they do, and to sense that they have a benefit to the professional design community. To be engaged in design and learning design, the students' self-perception of success is highly dependent on their internal personal attributes. Intuitively, the students support the idea that engagement and recognition of their creativity is within the community of designers where they see themselves as active participants. Wenger, (1999, cited in Reid & Solomonides, 2007: 37) claims that design tasks and briefs should be very carefully set in such a way as to allow the students to engage with learning and their subject passionately and meaningfully, thereby providing a link to the professional community of designers.

2.2.13 Teaching art and design history

Sutherland (2004), in an article titled "Paradigm Shift: The challenge to Graphic Design Education and Professional Practice in Post-Apartheid South Africa", gives a brief history of graphic design in South Africa, where under colonial rule and the nationalist government,

indigenous art and culture was undervalued. Because of apartheid policies, South Africa, before 1990 was viewed by advertisers as a predominantly white market.

As apartheid crumbled and the previously disadvantaged sector had more disposable income, so did the paradigm shift towards an emerging black market that most designers were unprepared for. However, even with the new paradigm, the low skills base of prospective students, the expense of graphic design education and the high expectations of industry remains a problem that needs to be addressed by all stakeholders.

Because of the increasingly rapid transformation of the education system at all levels, the number of students entering the workplace with a different worldview is increasing. This view will eventually enhance and inform the development of a new South African design philosophy and aesthetic (Sutherland, 2004:51-60).

For Heller and Fernandes (1995), art schools are the place where intuition meets knowledge and where aptitude is increased through the attainment of skills; but that it is often in a sealed environment in a limited course of study. By being exposed to subjects such as literature, sociology or history, the student will have a better understanding of the subjects and themes that an illustrator will encounter in a majority of assignments. By being familiar with literature, for example, Heller and Fernandes emphasise the student or illustrator in professional practice will be exposed to centuries of metaphor, allegory and symbol, which when translated into imagery is the foundation for strong visual ideas. A broad understanding of history provides a foundation of social, cultural and political knowledge that is frequently required in illustration briefs.

Without this broad understanding of history, a student artist may make aesthetically pleasing pictures – even occasionally extraordinary ones – but Heller and Fernandes (1995) believe that being visually literate is not simply a matter of using some shapes to represent others, but assimilating, synthesising and translating human knowledge and experience into visual terms.

2.2.14 Teaching of Business practice

Heller and Fernandes (1995) say that few, if any, schools provide courses in studio management, which include a range of activities such as what furniture and supplies to buy, to what accounting and bookkeeping procedures to follow, to choosing self-promotion options that are realistic and relevant to different clients. Also, art schools rarely prepare

students to meet with art directors or art buyers, to shop around for agents or representatives, or cope with difficult clients. They stress that in a field where clients sometimes take advantage of artists, it is imperative for the graduated student to know how to survive in the real world. Hodgeson (2010) says designers and illustrators need business communication skills that can be categorised as: very good verbal, negotiation, presentation and listening skills including excellent writing skills.

2.2.15 Encouraging a strong work ethic for the workplace: high expectations

Being aware of how focused and disciplined the lives of today's successful illustrators are, Ferry (2000) says that he knew whether or not his illustration students were going to make it in the highly competitive and talented world of illustration; they needed to be disciplined in order to be successful. As a result, he has high expectations of his students and expects regular attendance in all his classes, telling the students that each class is a necessary educational experience in the development of course subject matter and that class participation is one of the considerations by which they are graded.

2.2.16 Continuing Education

Hellen and Fernandes (1995) state that graduation from art school of a postgraduate programme is only the beginning of a long journey and stress that education should not be limited to academies or institutions, but should be a process that continues throughout a career, especially with all the advances in technology that continue to alter the fundamental practice of illustration. Therefore it is imperative for the graduated student to keep adding to the store of knowledge by keeping abreast of and experiencing new developments while continuing to refresh old skills. They highlight the fact that continuing education is one way to keep in touch with new developments in the world of illustration, regardless of one's level of expertise. Ball (2003) claims that there is evidence that creative graduates continue to learn throughout their lives, many without the financial support of a large employer. She emphasises that in the creative industries, in particular, where workers adapt, change direction and offer flexible services, continuing professional development is essential for success.

2.3 Illustration in practice

This section addresses issues with regard to illustration in the workplace with regard to the professional knowledge and skills required of someone working in the creative industry. Included in this section are the creative skills required, and an overview of the history of art and the developments and trends in illustration practice.

2.3.1 Employability in the workplace

The creative industry sector is predominantly made up of micro-businesses and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which have particular characteristics, and needs (Ball, 2003). The implications for the future are that graduates, whether working as employees or freelancers, include the following:

- plan and manage their careers effectively,
- excellent communication and interpersonal skills,
- research skills,
- promote themselves effectively to find work and develop professional networks,
- manage their time and plan their work with minimum supervision,
- be able to take responsibility early on,
- work well with others and
- add value to an organisation in a short space of time.
- intellect and problem-solving;
- analytic, critical and reflective ability;
- willingness to learn and continue learning;
- flexibility, adaptability and risk-taking;
- An understanding of the world of work, some commercial awareness, and an appreciation of work culture.

Hodgson's research (2010) confirms the above findings:

Employees or freelancers need to be well organized, meet multiple deadlines, manage projects, time and clients, communicate effectively, negotiate, persuade, and use the language of business. There is strong evidence for the need to have excellent writing skills and to engage in ongoing concise and effective verbal, email and written communication with clients. An employee or freelancer also needs to be able to discuss projects with the employee/client and by asking questions, establish and communicate what is required (Hodgson, 2010).

According to Alshare, Lane and Miller (2011), communication skills continue to top recruiters' lists of desired attributes for prospective employees even above the hard skills necessary to perform a specific job. Effective business communication skills help to minimize mistakes, which consume time and money. The cost of miscommunication contributes to lost productivity, which cannot be directly calculated Catt, Miller, & Hindi, (2005, cited in Alshare, Lane & Miller, 2011: 187).

2.3.2 Flexibility in the workplace

Castells (2001) claims that in modern workplaces there is an increasing demand for individuals who can work with flexibility in response to rapid knowledge and technology transformation and changes, be self-motivated and disciplined and work within complex network systems. The continued relevance of illustration lies in the intelligence applied to picture making and in the ability to embrace continuing change (Rees, 2000). Being conversant with digital technology, e-mail, and the Internet should be as common use of the fax and telephone. He stresses that the means by which artists mutate and “bridge and barriers” depends on their personal flexibility and ingenuity, adding that the greatest threat posed to illustrators and their livelihoods is in continuing traditional thinking in this greatly changed arena of activity.

2.3.3 Hand skills versus the new technologies in illustration

Hassell (2006) director and co-founder of digital agency Ralph writes:

Beyond passion, enthusiasm and being a team player, software skills are very important, but not always vital to a successful job application. More important is the willingness to learn new ones. We look out for people who have taught themselves the skills they need to get the job they want to do. University or college is good, but they don't necessarily teach you the skills that are useful in the real world (Hassell, 2006:32).

Research into the changes in the role of drawing in the digital age

Research done with graphic design practitioners in commercial design studios indicates that the initial thinking, brainstorming stages should be conducted outside the digital environment and before they are developed as computer generated visualisations (Schenk, 2005). The ease and spontaneity of the traditional drawing systems are still valuable, if not vital in the early planning stages of a design project. However, a weakness in traditional drawing skills could be compensated for satisfactorily by working in a digital environment when presenting ideas and preparing for production. Generally computers are used in the development and refinement of design solutions for presentations and final production.

The importance of drawing

The ability to draw, regardless of personal style or content, will become more in demand. Film and animation are obvious examples where drawing storyboards, or visualising a character in motion, does not necessarily demand personal style and content and is often determined by the writer (Arisman, 2000). In *Computer Arts* (2008), the value of the sketchbook is personal for an artist, commercially or otherwise, which holds visually defined

thoughts and creative explorations that may or may not become finished art pieces. They are thought of as visual diaries and, because of the time invested in them, they assist the artist in developing a unique visual language and as this continues to grow and creative ideas are explored further, the layers of meaning and reference can be returned to at a later date.

This creative journey through the pages of a sketchbook can enable designers to call on unrelated observations, sketches or thoughts to be transferred into a new context that perfectly suits a specific brief. Savimaa (2008), an illustrator, claims that thinking less and sketching more allows his thoughts to evolve new ways to express himself. He believes that with this visual archive, when he gets a brief from a client with the usual tight deadlines, he is able to consult his sketchbook/gallery and pick up ideas, elements and inspiration.

The importance of drawing as the fundamental language of a children's book illustrator is pointed out by Salisbury (2004) who claims that if one's work is not underpinned by convincing drawing then no matter how many techniques one develops, there is the danger that it will become mannered or bland. He adds that carrying and using a sketchbook is an important way of developing one's perspective on the world:

...In many ways, the activity of drawing from observation is merely a means to an end. The really important thing is how you process the visual information that you have absorbed, and how you use it imaginatively in relation to a text of personal flight of fancy (Salisbury, 2004: 20 – 58).

The important influences of digital image-making

As hardware and software continue to improve so too has creative imaging and manipulation software become far more powerful and easier to use. The explosion in the use and accessibility of both the Internet and digital photography has also helped to fuel the rise in digital image-making. With the tools for manipulating digital photographs readily available, many illustrators and designers have sought to increase their range of skills and move into areas closer to commercial digital illustration (Zeegan, 2005). This is confirmed by Heller (2000), who feels that digital media, especially Photoshop, has had a profound influence on the way in which art directors and designers currently view illustration. Where once graphic designers depended on the rendering skills and conceptual abilities of illustrators, they can now assemble illustration-collages by themselves. He claims that although Photoshop has not replaced the need for illustrators, as a tool it is far more threatening than any previous technological development in the history of illustration. He says that before Photoshop, art directors and designers worked together with illustrators of the content of illustration, but were reluctant to interfere in the image-making process itself. Today, digitally changing

components of an illustrator's artwork using Photoshop, without the artist's permission, is on the increase. Also, before digital methods, art directors were reluctant to rely on stock art as a means to illustrate articles or advertisements. Yet, with increasingly efficient digital platforms and websites, stock art has become an accessible, inexpensive, and hassle-free alternative to commissioning original illustration.

As a result of these developments, illustration has adapted from being primarily representational to predominantly symbolic. With so many digital (illustrative) options available today, the preference for photographic and digitally created imagery, painted and drawn illustration, whether narrative or symbolic is viewed as something that thrived in the pre-computer era.

Heller (2000) claims that whether one calls this period, crisis or transition of realignment "the end of illustration" is not as near as expected. However, that owing to digital media and other design issues, illustration is in a state of flux with demands that could dip or rise. He stresses that education is the first part of any solution, saying that for too long, illustrators have been pedagogically segregated from designers, where even the most exclusive schools do not reinforce the long-term marriage of the two disciplines, which invariably create a form of segregation that reinforces hierarchies and perpetuates the myth of the lower caste illustrator. Although the educational needs of the disciplines diverge, there should be integration at certain stages; for example, even with the computer, designers need to know drawing, while illustrators should be literate with type. On a conceptual level, illustrators and designers can share visual ideas, methods and strategies for conveying information and telling stories. Heller (2000) concludes that education is only the beginning of a process. Graphic designers are learning that design is a means of framing content and in order to expand it to a more creative role, it is necessary to take partial or total control of the creative process. Similarly, illustrators must take a more collaborative or entrepreneurial role in the production of idea products. Illustration may not be as popular in the past, but painted and drawn art continues to evoke ideas and emotions in its viewers. Heller ends the article stressing that unless illustration is reintegrated into the broader design process, a significant part of the visual media will disappear.

The impact of digital video on illustration

Digital video is slowly starting to replace analog video. What we are seeing is a complete transfer of media from the traditional analog realm into the digital realm. The implications of this are many for the illustrator. Illustrators must stay technically aware of the progress of digital technology to be able to work effectively within the parameters of these new media. Most importantly, the illustrator must uphold traditional principles of illustration, and not allow

technology to compromise the creative process (Wands, 2000). He determines that for the illustrator, the computer's capacity to quickly reproduce and create multiple variations is one of its most appealing characteristics. He says, however, that one of the problematical ways in which technology has impacted on design theory, is the need for the illustrator to keep abreast of ever increasing technical literacy. Because of these advances, an illustrator must be familiar with the latest software and be up-to-date with the knowledge of the factors that govern the final results. For example, if a corporate logo is to appear in print, on television and on the Internet, the illustrator needs to be conversant with all the requirements of these different media for the logo to be completely successful. The end product is often required to work effectively over a wide range of digital as well as traditional media. He concludes that although the fundamentals of good design will always remain the same, the shift to the digital screen away from printed material makes it imperative for illustrators to stay abreast of new technologies, which will impact how they create and how audiences perceive their digital work.

2.3.4 Engagement and creativity

Swede (1993, cited in Reid, & Solomonides, 2007:28) maintains that creativity is more than just a response to a situation; it is a process that results in an outcome that possesses at least two qualities such as it must be unique and it must have value. He suggests that this is not enough, emphasising that to be creative, it must be recognised. Swede also suggests that creativity is not only linked to individuals working alone, but also to groups. Reid and Solomonides (2007) say that Swede's ideas imply that within creative endeavour, there is something about the situation in which creativity has been placed that makes it significant and unique and that the notion of group activity also suggests that creativity is socially constructed. For creativity to be recognised, it must be seen as unique and of value to a certain community of people.

Mclean (2005) claims that the type of work environment that employees work in has a direct impact on the levels of creativity within an organisation. A culture that supports and encourages control will result in diminished creativity and innovation. The primary reason for this is that control negatively affects intrinsic motivation. Conversely, when an environment of open debate and discussion is in place, and when trust exists among employees, especially with management, employees can feel more open to take risks and put forth creative ideas (Mclean, 2005).

2.3.5 Art and design history in the workplace

In terms of applying knowledge of the history of art and design, Heller and Fernandes (1995) emphasise that the most effective illustrators have not only mastered skills or developed certain styles, but have confidently and appropriately used symbol and metaphor in their work. They also stress that the illustration field does not only require illustrators with advanced degrees, but also there is a desperate need for illustrators who are not only art specialists with a narrow focus, but are well trained and well read artists. The need for well-read artists is supported by Viva (1995) who says:

In general, I think that any visual artist would benefit from studying the history of art and design, and from making it a habit to visit both public and private galleries. This is far more interesting and rewarding than poring over illustration and design annuals. It is useful to understand what social and historical circumstances led to the development of visual languages, as well as their decline. Internationally, there is a rich illustration and design heritage that, if understood by more practitioners, could enrich their work and help put current modes into perspective (Viva, 1995:19).

2.3.6 Developments and trends in illustration

Grannell (2008) says that illustration is booming, after years when photography was a more popular choice with art directors. He stresses that until fairly recently, the world of illustration was unstable because photography had taken over from the drawn, painted or rendered image in advertising or editorial. This resulted in illustrators having to take the leftovers. Zeegan (2008) echoes this saying that a feeling of desperation has been replaced by an optimistic look, in that the vogue for illustration isn't just a flash in a pan, but is here to stay as a viable alternative to the photographic image. He observes that numerous large, corporate brands now regularly use illustration to differentiate themselves.

Grannell (2008) explains that the reasons for the resurgence are complex, citing several reasons for the developments. He says that from a purely aesthetic point of view, the already large numbers of styles continue to grow and that in spite of the wide range of technology available to illustrators, work that looks too obviously computer generated is becoming less and less sought after. Because of the increasingly visually aware consumers, art directors are looking for more unique, dynamic visuals that aren't necessarily highly finished in execution. This development has resulted in briefs becoming less prescriptive, giving illustrators more opportunity to be creative and experimental. Grannell believes that creative freedom is at an all-time high within the industry with an explosion of illustrators who are making a living from their art and as a result; he says that it is no surprise that the invention and turnover of styles is more rapid than ever. Because some trends come and go quickly,

some commissioning editors warn that illustrators must be aware of what is no longer in vogue, to avoid creating work that is seen as dated rather than breaking new ground.

Grannell (2008) believe that decorative swirls and repetitive patterns, mostly created using vector graphics, was very popular but is now avoided because of overexposure. He says that although the decorative has its place in specific circumstances, industry is now moving towards conceptual, technique-based work where handmade illustration is being favoured rather than overtly digital and clinically produced work. The reason for this trend is the desire of art directors to get more character into illustration, resulting in work that genuinely engages its audience on a conceptual and emotional level, rather than merely dazzling with effects. Zeegen (2008) confirms this, saying that what we are seeing is just the beginning of a more open, honest return to the use of craft in illustration. He stresses that the market place has had its fill of Photoshop collages and cold, clinically finished vector based illustration; the market now seems wider, where there is no house style, and anything goes. He emphasises that although style can be important in getting noticed, substance is very important when creating successful work and we're leaving a period in which too much illustration was devoid of any real essence. What is therefore important is that illustrators marry visual flair with ideas.

Wiggins (2008), a freelance designer who commissions UK *Esquire's* illustrations thinks that ideas are the one place where an illustrator can be unique and make a difference. He stresses that despite the new emphasis on craft, a strong piece is not necessarily about whether an illustrator is more technically gifted than someone else, but about the ideas they generate and communicate. He argues that the best illustrators today are those who are efficient at doing an illustration by getting the idea right the first time, saying a lot with a little and turning it around quickly. He continues that although traditional imagery is definitely experiencing a revival, those who work in other areas such as vector-based illustration needn't worry as long as they put their own imprint and character into their work.

Cox, founder of the London-based Central Illustration Agency, states:

Artists are being given a greater level of intellectual responsibility to interpret briefs in an individual manner. And while some struggle with the notion of doing the art director's job, most revel in the creative freedom of taking ownership of the concept, producing a more engaging personal response, while also feeling like an intrinsic part of the creative team (Cox, 2008: 52-62).

Grannell (2008) believes that the mini-boom that the illustration industry is experiencing will last for at least as long as outlets remain for creativity, beauty and hard-hitting illustrated concepts. The public is getting better at understanding illustration as a whole and there is a hunger for varied imagery that engages the senses and embraces concepts more thoroughly and individually than the bulk nature of photography. He concludes that the only threat to illustration is from fashionable trends in that creativity moves in cycles and in time, people always become tired of a certain genre. He says that the newfound exposure illustration is enjoying could lead to its fall once again because a new trend could arrive, capturing the imagination of consumers and clients.

2.3.7 Business skills required by the workplace

A strong work ethic: Professional behaviour in the workplace

Professional behaviour, according to is about being ethical, respectful, responsible and reliable, and by pursuing a strong work ethic and high standards, being punctual with regard to meeting deadlines and attending meetings (Hodgson, 2010). A 'strong work ethic' is thus necessary:

I believe if you exercise a strong work ethic, which includes truly following your voice, consistently getting your work out there, and making no excuses, opportunities will present themselves (Ferry, 2000:120–121).

2.4 Collaboration and alignment between higher education and industry

2.4.1 Developments in the relationship between higher education and industry

Flexibility has become an important characteristic for both HE and industry with regard to social transformation. If flexibility in both HE and industry has become an important development with new technologies, so too has the need for collaboration between industry and HE become a cornerstone in preparing students for industry (Buchanan, 1998). Buchanan (1998) believes that we are witnessing an era marked by the emergence of design as a discipline. Because we are living in a world of massive and rapid change, we must prepare our students for a changing world. He claims that in the era that is unfolding, education and practice are partners and while design educators continue to teach basic skills they are, through research, investigating the nature of design, therefore playing an important role in shaping educational programmes on all continents. He continues saying that instead of following behind current practice, the design educator may, in fact, anticipate new conditions of practice where research in some cases is posing questions about what design will be in five or ten years time. He concludes, saying that as this work unfolds, we begin to influence practice itself and design firms come to interact with design education programmes

in a new way; to discuss problems, to ask our views and also invite us to be part of the ongoing exploration of new forms of practice.

The need for collaboration and links between creative enterprises and higher education in research and development is confirmed by Ball (2003) who believes that because of the small size of the enterprises available to many graduates, the possibilities for placements and work experience are limited. By involving entrepreneurs in student projects, student awareness of the potential and needs of industry is increased. She argues research has shown that employers expect that graduates should develop a sense of commercial awareness throughout their higher education. They consider the most important skills and attributes to be communication, working with others, IT, research, self-development and problem-solving. A key finding in the research is that there is a distinct mismatch between the skills developed in HE and the expectations and needs of graduates and employers in the creative industries. From the employers' viewpoint, HE is not producing the graduates with the skills and attributes it is looking for. Increasingly, graduates are expected to have some experience of the workplace as a desirable element of their degree courses.

The recent *Higher Education Careers Service Review 50* recommended that in response to changing employment and career patterns, students need to be better informed with up to date career information, access to a broader range of options, with more discerning and sophisticated guidance tools, as well as for personalised, impartial guidance to help them to make the right choices. There is clearly a need for both academic staff and careers advisers to be educated about developments and opportunities in the workplace through more involvement with the world of work (Ball, 2003).

2.4.2 Work-based learning

Defining work-based learning

There are different forms of work-based learning, namely: learning for work (e.g. work placements), learning at work (e.g. company in-house training programmes) and learning through work (work that is linked to formally accredited further or higher education programmes) (Gray, 2001). The way that universities and institutions of technology understand work-based learning impacts on teaching and learning as well as on research where learning is seen increasingly more as a life-long process. This awareness is reflective where teaching methodology and learning processes have changed to accommodate collaboration with different kinds of extra-academic partners, for example, the inclusion of service learning in academic curricula (Winberg, 2004). Winberg argues that within career-focused education, such as at universities of technology, disciplinary and professional

knowledge is reconfigured and realigned to meet the needs of industry, society, entrepreneurship and communities. Purely academic criteria of excellence have limited applicability for a student preparing to enter the world of work.

Work-based learning is different to classroom learning in a number of important ways:

- Firstly, work-based learning is centred around reflection on work practices and is not merely the acquisition of knowledge and technical skills but reviewing it and learning from first-hand experience.
- Secondly, work-based learning arises from action and problem solving within a working environment, which is based on live projects and challenges to individuals and organisations. The creation of knowledge is seen as a shared and collective activity where people discuss ideas and share problems and solutions.
- Finally, work-based learning requires more than the acquisition of new knowledge; it requires the acquisition of meta-competence, which is learning to learn (adapted from Gray, 2001: 4-5).

Gray says many companies have been eager to embrace work-based learning, mainly because they have recognised the importance of what Senge, (1990, cited in Gray, 2001:5) termed the 'learning organisation' where the learning and talent of the individual is encouraged and promoted so that the organisation itself begins to shape its future. He further emphasises the need for developing the higher-level skills of analysis, evaluation and synthesis as well as the ability to be an independent learner, which Schön, (1983, cited in Gray, 2001:5) terms a 'reflective practitioner'.

The assessment of work-based learning

The assessment methods used in work-based learning require that the students are more focused on problem solving and they take more ownership of the assessment process (Gray, 2001). The solving of important work-related problems and the understanding and use of academic theories in doing so, requires that learners are self-motivated, self-reflective, are able to work with others (in peer groups), and are able to access both their own and their peers' performance. Some of the assessment methods proposed are:

- Self and peer assessment
- Assignments and projects
- Memorandum reports
- Portfolios
- Dissertations and theses
- Presentations

- Poster displays
- Placements (from Gray, 2001).

Gray emphasises that there are two groups involved in work-based learning. Its main audience is adults in full-or-part time employment who wish to study part-time where the philosophy is to regard learners as self-directed problem solvers who bring their personal skills, knowledge and attitudes to their learning. The other group, however, are those students who engage in work-based learning from within the programme and as a result have different experiences, needs, expectations and approaches their studies. Both groups, according to Gray, are exposed to the important processes and aims of work-based learning, which is to develop a dynamic synergy and dialectic (alignment) between academic learning and work-based practice.

Work-based learning is becoming increasingly important for organisations that need professional development in order to create a dynamic, flexible workforce (Gray, 2001). HE institutions are similarly beginning to recognise the workplace as a legitimate site for learning (Boud, 2000). The alignment of assessment processes lies at the centre of the relationship ensuring that all parties negotiate constructively to put in place assessment tools that meet the collective needs of all partners in the learning process. This alignment of assessment processes is a bridge between vertical (university) knowledge and horizontal (workplace) knowledge. Understanding the whole picture of learning, and how to assist students to become active in managing their learning and importantly their own assessment once they have entered the world of work is necessary Boud, (2000, cited in Boud & Falchikov. 2005:35).

2.4.3 Flexibility in education and the workplace

Flexibility has become increasingly valued by employers; flexibility involves multi-tasking skills that are more integrated and simplified by the new technologies (Barnett, Parry, & Coate, 2001: 442). This is an important consideration for flexibility between hand and computer illustration skills and the ability to reflect on what is needed in different situations. The need for flexibility in a world of change is further emphasised by Harvey (2000) who says that learners need to be able to help the organisations in which they work after graduation to transform within this environment of rapid and continuous change. He stresses that graduates will not be able to do that if they are not able to work in teams, communicate well, analyse and synthesise adding that in the future, they will have to be self-transformative, which requires reflective and critical abilities.

2.5 A theoretical framework for the study of illustration in educational and professional contexts

In the literature review above, the focus has been on researching professional knowledge, skills and attributes, the tools and the environments in which the artwork is generated, and curricular, pedagogical and assessment arrangements to develop professionalism. In this section, as part of the process of developing a theoretical framework for this study, I now turn to Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987).

Activity Theory is a set of related approaches that view human-produced artefacts, such as utterances, texts, drawings and equipment, as part of the activities that give rise to and use them (Engeström, 1987). Activity Theory understands learning as a collective activity system where significant learning processes are achieved through collective activities (Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003: 4). This means that meaningful transfer of learning takes place through interaction between collective activity systems. For example, meaningful transfer of learning takes place through interaction between the university and the workplace where they may engage in collaborative interaction in which both activity systems learn from each other. This could be in the form of a brief designed by a design studio for third year students that will be applied in a real work environment setting such as a community outreach programme. Engeström and Leont'ev, (1987, 1977 cited in Tuomi-Gröhn, T. & Engeström, Y. Eds. 2003: 1: 4) state that the knowledge and skills do not remain intact, but are actively interpreted, modified and reconstructed in the processes of activity and transfer. Both parties benefit from the collaboration and developmental transfer between activity systems.

Tuomi-Gröhn, Engeström and Young (2003) state that the importance of transfer of learning allows people to adapt to new situations by using what they have learned to solve problems or to learn quickly and be able to adapt and cope with new situations.

2.5.1 Learning as an activity system

At a university of technology, the focus is on preparing the students for the world of work.

Figure 2.1 represents learning as an activity system in HE:

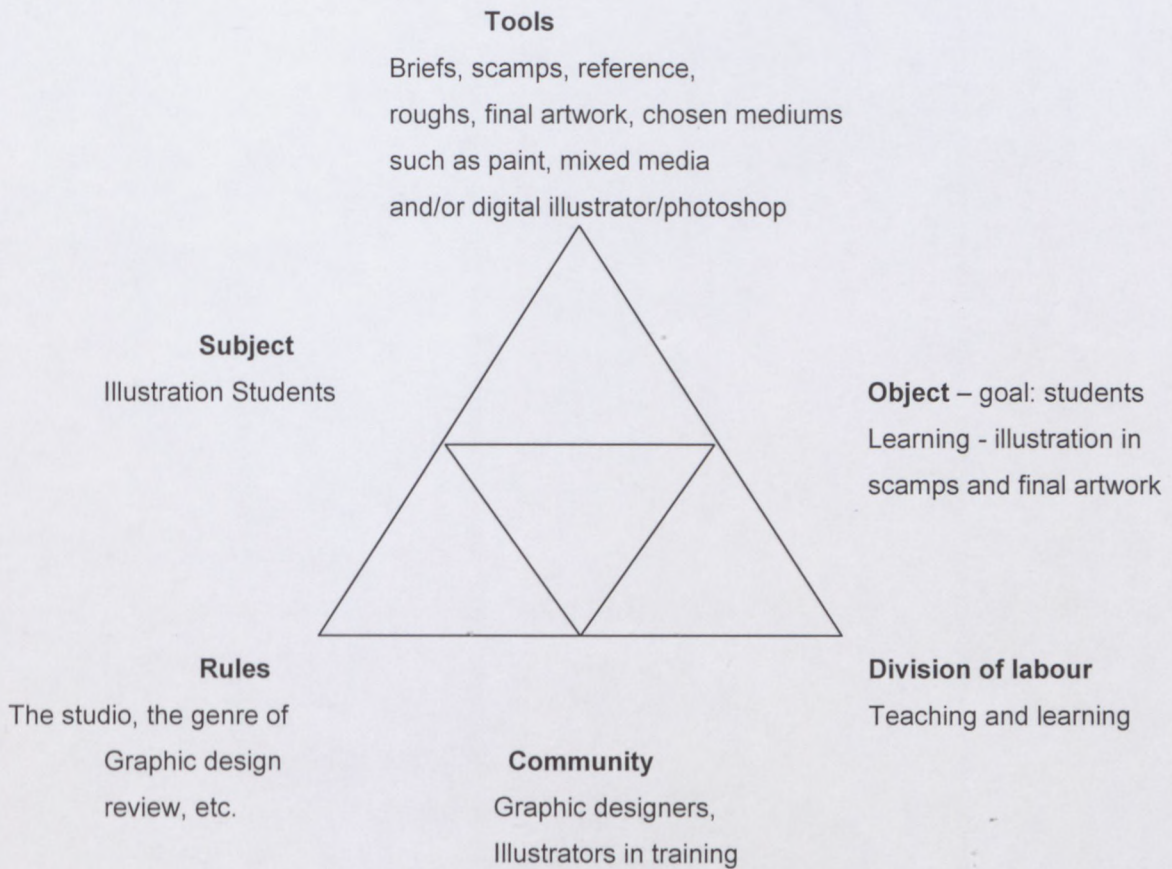


Figure 2.1: An activity system for higher education

Figure 2.1 above shows the main elements interacting the HE activity system: the subjects are the students who are learning to become professional illustrators; their learning is mediated with a variety of tools (both to do the work of illustration and to support their learning); the object (or goal) of their activity to produce artwork of a high standard (which is required if they are to pass the course). This learning is embedded in a social context which consists of the division of teaching and learning labour, a community that develops its own cultural norms and practices, and a set of 'rules' that are established by the discipline or field of illustration and the university context.

2.5.2 Work as an activity system

Professional work can similarly be represented as subjects using tools to achieve goals or outcomes. Figure 2.2 represents an outline of an activity system in the visual communications industry:

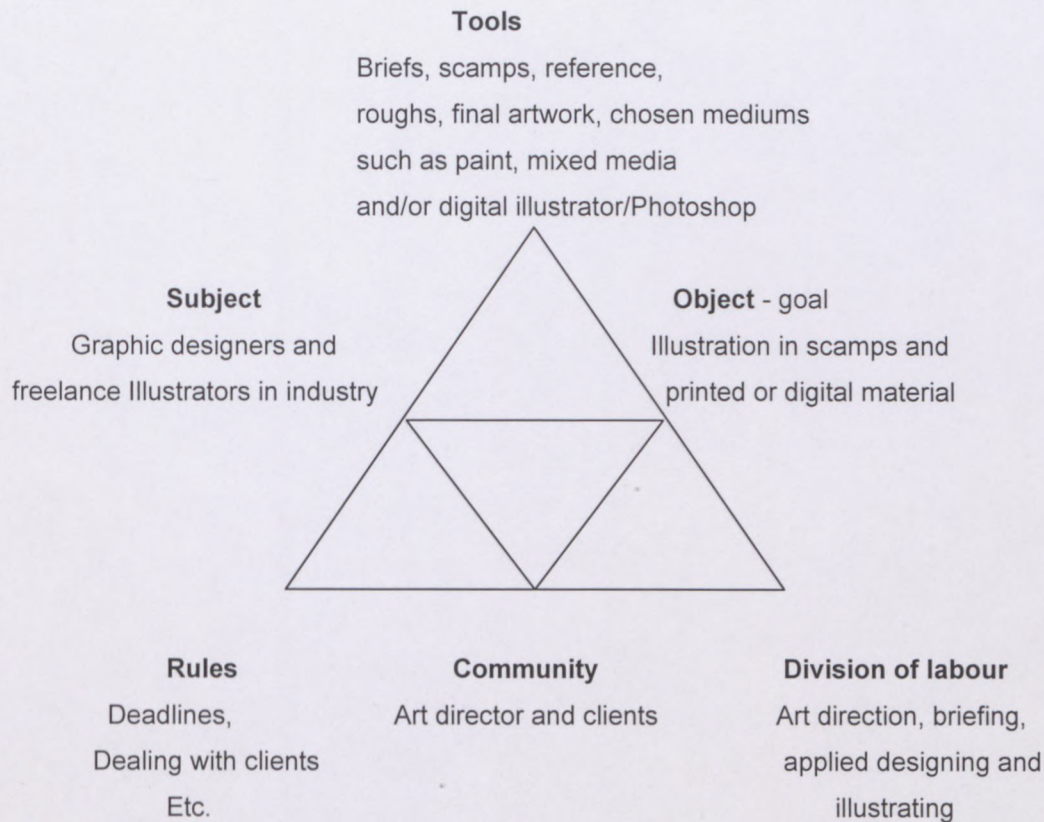


Figure 2.2: An activity system for professional illustrators

Figure 2.2 represents an activity system in the world of professional practice in illustration-related fields. The subjects are now the professional, qualified illustrators and/or graphic designers, the use a range of tools to accomplished their 'object', which the production of professional standard artefacts. Their work is similarly embedded in a context where there is a division of labour, a community of practice, and a set of 'rules' that regulate the practice of professional illustrators. As can be seen when comparing the two activity systems there are likely to be differences and similarities across the system. Using Activity Theory as a framework for understanding teaching and learning in HE and practice in the world of work enables a systematic approach to the study and comparison of the two activity systems across a range of sites.

2.6 Conclusion: the main points of the literature

In this chapter, I have presented an overview of research and theory to a study of the alignment and/or non-alignment between undergraduate illustration education and the needs of related workplaces. Because of changing work patterns in a demanding work environment that is predominantly made-up of micro-businesses and small and medium sized enterprises, HE has to ensure that graduates have the knowledge and skills to be competitive, such as design knowledge, visual literacy, communication, interpersonal, teamwork skills and

personal attributes. Employees or freelancers need a range of abilities: to be well organised, meet multiple deadlines, manage projects, time and clients, communicate effectively, negotiate, persuade, and use the language of business. In order to assist the students in developing their confidence in the workplace, work experience, volunteering and extra-curricular activities need to be encouraged using a holistic approach that helps the students to apply the necessary attributes within their courses and in work-related activities.

Because of the changing student demographics and inherent challenges such as greater student numbers and abilities, both the struggling and more talented students need to feel supported or challenged, understood and catered for. A project brief should have sufficient depth to encompass the wide range of abilities. In a design context in higher education, good communication skills required by the workplace are learnt within the critique, which is a communication event in which the students present their designs or illustrations and staff and/or students provide valuable feedback. This feedback provides an overview of the principles of design or illustration and also clues as to the terminology used in the workplace.

In modern workplaces there is a need for individuals who can work in an environment that demands a high level of flexibility in response to rapid knowledge and technology transformation and changes. Within this unpredictable work environment, illustrators need to be equipped with an increasingly broad range of technical skills. To prepare students to be adaptable, a school of art and design encourages an interdisciplinary approach that produces graduates who can combine elements, for example, illustration and animation in real-world projects and commissions.

If successful cutting-edge illustrators need to be educated, socially and culturally aware communicators utilising both intellectual and practical skills, the students need to be surrounded with process-sensitive problems and interdisciplinary projects that put them in touch with culture, current events and social issues. A curriculum such as this would create a self-motivated student with a passion for life-long learning.

Practical skills both hand and digital are essential regarding the training of an illustrator but must be encountered early in the students' development. The early exposure to the skills necessary to generate relevant imagery must be followed in the final part of the students' education by the development of personal iconography. The students need to be well versed in verbal, textual language that can be translated into original, challenging concepts using appropriate practical skills.

Because of the changing student demographics and inherent challenges such as greater student numbers and abilities, both the struggling and more talented students need to feel supported or challenged, understood and catered for. A project brief should have sufficient depth to encompass the wide range of abilities. In a design context in higher education, good communication skills required by the workplace are learnt within the critique, which is a communication event in which the students present their designs or illustrations and staff and/or students provide valuable feedback. This feedback provides an overview of the principles of design or illustration and also clues as to the terminology used in the workplace.

Technology has caused the paradigm within which illustrators function to shift. The computer is a required tool and although print is no longer the premiere showcase for freelance illustration; the print media is still relevant. A solid grounding in the fundamentals (drawing, painting, composition and concept development) is therefore important; this includes a willingness to learn and passion to excel by the students, and awareness by the lecturers in building and nurturing the students' self-esteem through constructive critiques and encouraging the desire to learn. If the students are to be encouraged to be lifelong learners, they must be discouraged from an over-reliance on the opinions of others, which may limit their ability to judge their own and others' work with confidence.

In spite of digital technology in the form of vector drawings, hand drawing is still important, both perceptual and emotive or in the form of scamps to present to a client. It is an important part of the creative, conceptual process and the fundamentals are an essential foundation to the digital component.

Because of continual developments in technology, an illustrator must be familiar with the latest software and be up-to-date with the knowledge of the factors that govern the final results. For example, a corporate logo often needs to work effectively over a wide range of digital as well as traditional media such as appearing in print, on television and on the Internet.

For creativity to be recognized, it must be seen as unique and of value to a certain community of people. The type of work environment that employees work in has a direct impact on the levels of creativity within an organisation to the extent that where a culture supports and encourages control, it negatively affects intrinsic motivation and will result in diminished creativity and innovation.

In order to prepare students to meet the creative needs of the workplace, a curriculum, designed to encourage creativity, must hand over a high proportion of the responsibility of

learning to students, where the students initiate the learning process and are supported by their teachers who take the role of facilitators of learning. To unlock the individual's innate creative potential, the lecturer needs to show students he or she is interested and cares about what they are doing. The aim of encouraging student independence is to build their confidence to express themselves as individuals, by pushing boundaries and thinking outside of the box rather than seeing the world through the eyes of the lecturer. It is essential for the students to be actively committed to their own education to see the purpose and benefit of what they do, and to sense that they have a benefit to the professional design community.

In industry, there is a need for well trained and well read illustrators who have a sound knowledge of the history of art and design and are socially aware. This enables them to confidently use symbol and metaphor in their work and rise beyond the narrow confines of having purely mastered hand and digital techniques and styles.

By being exposed to subjects such as literature, sociology or history, the student in higher education will have a better understanding of the subjects and themes that an illustrator will encounter in the majority of assignments. A broad understanding of history and a familiarity with literature when translated into imagery is the foundation for strong visual ideas and provides a foundation of social, cultural and political knowledge that is frequently required in illustration briefs.

Developments and trends in illustration emphasise that it is here to stay as a viable alternative to the photographic image. Numerous large, corporate brands now regularly use illustration to differentiate themselves. Because of the increasingly visually aware consumers, art directors are looking for more unique, dynamic visuals that aren't necessarily highly finished in execution. This development has resulted in briefs becoming less prescriptive, giving illustrators more opportunity to be creative and experimental. However because some trends come and go quickly, illustrators must be up to date with what's in vogue avoiding work that is seen as dated rather than breaking new ground. The trend is the desire of art directors to get more character into illustration, resulting in hand-work that genuinely engages its audience on a conceptual and emotional level, rather than merely dazzling with digital effects. The market is now wider where there is no house style. Anything goes, but digital illustrators need to put their own imprint and character into their work as apposed to cold, clinically finished vector-based illustration.

In a field where clients sometimes take advantage of freelancers, it's vitally important for graduated students to know the tips of how to survive in the real world, which could be in the form of knowing how much to charge clients through very good verbal, negotiation, presentation and listening skills including excellent writing skills.

With regard to professional behaviour in the workplace, illustrators are expected to be ethical and respectful, responsible and reliable, and by pursuing a strong work ethic, execute work of a high standard within the deadline and be punctual when attending all meetings. In order for the graduating students to make it in the highly competitive world of illustration, the students need be self-disciplined and attend classes regularly. Class attendance is one of the criteria by which they are graded.

Collaboration and links between creative enterprises and higher education in research and development is important. By involving these entrepreneurs from small or large enterprises in student projects, student awareness of the potential and needs of industry is increased. There is a distinct miss-match between the skills development in higher education and the expectations and needs of graduates and employers in the creative industries. From the employers' viewpoint, higher education is not producing the graduates with the skills and attributes it is looking for.

The Activity Theory framework is relevant to both HE and workplace activity systems, which both be understood as the interaction of subjects, tools, object, community of practice, division of labour and design studio rules. Learning is seen as a collective activity system where significant learning processes are achieved through collective activities. This view is that meaningful transfer of learning takes place through interaction between collective activity systems.

In the next chapter, I present the research methodology used in the comparison of the activity systems relating to third year illustration training in higher education and illustration as a professional practice in the workplace.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction: the research focus

The visual communications industry (graphic design, advertising and publishing) is a dynamic field in which the illustrator's role, due to developments in technology, has evolved and is continuing to evolve. In the main, the graduating illustrator is someone who has attended an undergraduate graphic design programme where illustration is taught as a discipline within the course. Due to the technological advances in the workplace, the attributes required of a graduating student have evolved (or should have evolved) to keep abreast of these developments. The new skills and personal attributes that the modern workplace requires have also resulted in changes. Has this change influenced the graphic design and illustration programmes, the tools used and the design and illustration artwork, the lecturers approach to imparting knowledge to the students, and the relationship between the lecturer and students? Are the communication and negotiations that take place between student and lecturer reflective of those between the freelance illustrator and the client? It is within these dynamics between higher education and the workplace that I made use of Engeström's (1987) expanded mediational triangle (see 3.3.2) to form a theoretical framework for the study of illustration in educational and professional contexts and to conceptualise the research design.

The focus of this research was a comparison of the activity systems related to third year illustration training in higher education and illustration as a professional practice in the workplace, using comparative methods. The comparative study drew on observational and interview data across a variety of higher education and professional sites.

3.2 Research Questions and Objectives

This research study has three main guiding questions and objectives, namely:

- 3.2.1 What comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in higher education?

Goal: to identify, establish and determine what comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in HE.

- 3.2.2 What comprises an activity system in professional illustrators' practice?

Goal: to determine, develop and establish what comprises an activity system in the world of professional practice with regard to illustration.

3.2.3 How can the higher education and professional activity systems be aligned for their mutual benefit?

Goal: to establish, determine and identify how, for mutual benefit, both the HE and workplace activity systems can be brought to productive alignment through constructive change.

Productive alignment does not mean that workplaces dictate to higher education. The workplace cannot dictate to Higher education as its approach is largely pragmatic and excludes the theory that accompanies the practical assignments in a HE institution, which are designed to ensure that the knowledge gained by the students is both practical and academic with clearly defined developmental outcomes for each level.

By focussing on work-readiness for specific jobs in specific companies, but more broadly, making sure that the students are exposed to a wide range of illustration applications ensures they are able to adapt to the many types of employment in the graphic design, advertising and publishing fields.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Research approach

My research approach was a qualitative one that entailed interviewing heads of departments or subject supervisors, lecturing staff, students, employers, employees and freelance illustrators to obtain multiple sources of data on the two activity systems. Initially, I created a combined quantitative and qualitative questionnaire for students. The questionnaire was based on an activity system comprised of student's evaluation of their own skills, the identification of the tools used, future, community of practice (peers) and studio rules (classroom behaviour) with a view to establishing, from the students' perspective, the current activity system of teaching drawing and illustration, their skills, abilities (both computer and hand generated) and attitudes. With this information, I was able to establish areas where the students agreed or disagreed with the statements made, which assisted me in establishing the types of qualitative questions relevant and necessary for higher education and the workplace interviews. 75 third year students from 3 Universities of technology filled in the questionnaires. In the qualitative interviews, Four HoDs, four graphic design lecturers, four illustration lecturers from three universities of technology and a traditional university were interviewed. On each of the four sites, six students were interviewed. Art directors in an advertising, design and 2 illustration studios and an managing illustration coordinator in a publishing house and editor were interviewed respectively including two freelance illustrators.

3.3.1.1 *Limitations of the research*

The students surveyed were senior students, nearing the end of their university studies and the literature on student self-assessment suggests that more senior students are more accurate at self-assessment, particularly with regard to skills; students' (whether senior or junior) are less accurate with regard to knowledge domains (Boud & Falchikov, 2006; Ross, 2006). Race (1994) states that, in general, students are accurate in their self assessment, but there is a tendency for weaker learners to overrate themselves in which they are new, and for some more skilled learners to underrate themselves in areas in which they are experienced. Therefore, by interviewing a broad range of students across four sites, their assessment of their own ability, their peers and lecturers and community of practice was deemed accurate enough to evaluate and present in the findings and subsequent recommendations and conclusion.

3.3.2 Researching higher education as an activity system

Figure 3.1 is an activity system representing illustration in higher education and is based on Engeström's (1987) expanded mediational triangle. The framework below has been developed to establish what academics and practitioners of illustration theorise are the current trends in both hand and digital illustration curricula in higher education.

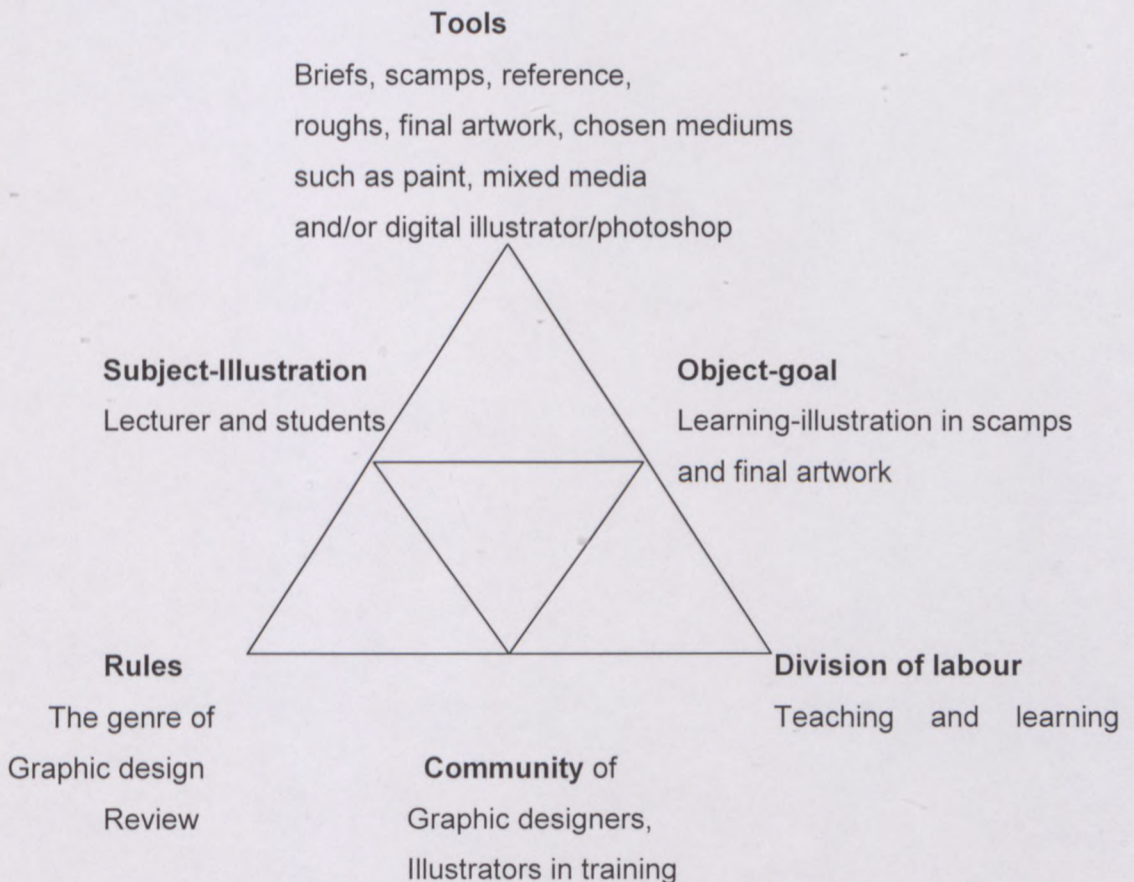


Figure 3.1: Using Activity Theory to guide data collection in HE

The research design to address research question 1 comprised a survey questionnaire and focus group interviews. All of these data collection methods were informed by the activity system as represented above. For example, the questionnaire attempted to obtain student data on the following activity categories:

Subjects (Section A): Personal profile (skills) designed to determine the students' opinions of their hand and digital skills and abilities and their conceptual, lateral thinking, communication and time management skills.

Tools (Section B): Software and other illustration equipment (tools) designed to determine the students' exposure to different types of software and establish their feelings about the continuous changes in software development and their confidence in working in different media in both colour and black and white.

Object (Section C): "Your future" – to determine firstly the different types of illustration done thereby establishing the types of illustration they would present in their portfolios, hand or computer generated or a combination of both. Furthermore, by establishing whether or not they felt they were ready for industry with regard to up-to-date knowledge of what is required by and where to source freelance work in industry, the skills to meet the requirements of industry and who intended specializing in illustration, a comprehensive in-depth view of their abilities and their understanding of their future needs was attained with a view

Division of labour (Section D): "Your lecturers" was designed to establish from the students point of view, their ability to negotiate and accept constructive criticism from their lecturers (communication skills), the linking of other disciplines with illustration, the streamlining of deadlines from a cross-section of disciplines through the lecturers meeting regularly to discuss projects and time frames.

Community (Section E): "Your Peers" – To determine, from their viewpoint, the attitudes of the students towards their work and whether or not these positive or negative attitudes had a direct bearing on the standard of their work. Also established was their opinion as to whether or not they benefited from group work.

Rules (Section F): Classroom rules – To determine the students' opinions of studio rules regarding the respect shown by students towards their peers and lectures including giving constructive rather than destructive criticism, a general consensus on meeting deadlines on meeting deadlines or facing penalties, late coming, absenteeism and general discipline and

respect shown towards the lecturers and fellow students within the classroom, thus creating a productive atmosphere. (Please refer to Appendix A for a sample questionnaire).

3.3.3 Researching professional work as an activity system

Figure 3.2 is an activity system that similarly represents illustration-based work in professional workplaces and is based on Engeström's (1987) expanded mediational triangle. The framework below has been developed to guide the sub-study on the current trends and needs of digital and hand illustration in the visual communication industry.

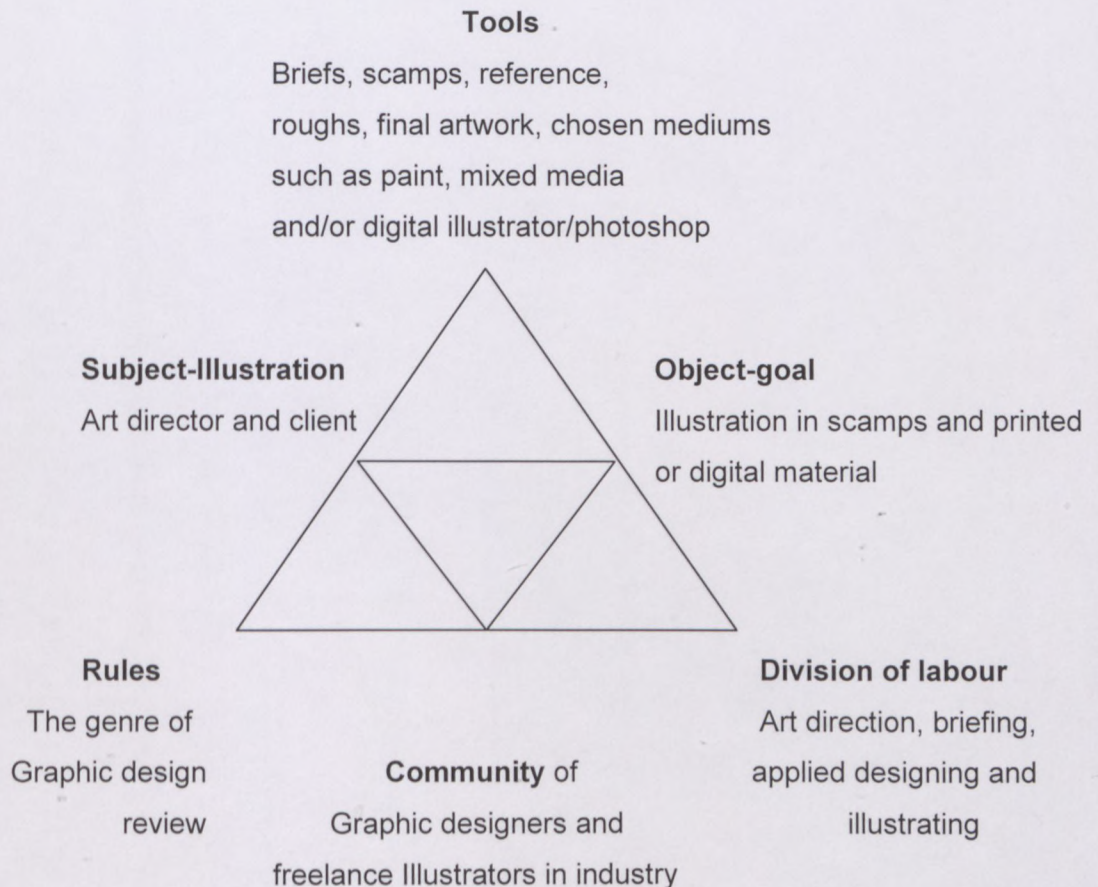


Figure 3.2: Using Activity Theory to guide data collection in workplaces

The research design to address research question 2 comprised focus group interviews in the workplace. The data collection methods were informed by the activity system as represented above and in order to be able to compare with higher education sites, the workplace interview questions were designed with the same framework. (Please refer to Appendix B for workplace interview samples).

3.4 Research methods

The research methods comprised comparative case studies on a variety of HE and workplace sites.

3.4.1 Data collection

3.4.2 Higher Education Data collection

The HE sites consisted of four higher education campuses where students and their lecturers in a drawing/illustration course were surveyed and interviewed. The sites were selected across different provinces where Illustration was taught. Four HE sites were selected. Three of them were universities of technology, while the fourth site was a traditional university. The rationale for using a traditional university was to make use of a research based institution with as different approach to a University of Technology as possible in the form of a negative case study, where, if in spite of those differences the results were similar, then generalisations could be made about teaching and learning. Initially questionnaires were used with students, thereafter the research was conducted in the form of both focus group and individual interviews. The students (on all campuses) were interviewed in small groups of a maximum of six individuals and the heads of departments and lecturers from each campus were interviewed on an individual basis.

3.4.3 Workplace Data collection

The second site consisted of interviews with two design studios, two advertising agencies, two publishing houses, and the director of an illustrators' web-site that serves as a site where design, advertising and publishing studios can search for and commission potential illustrators. It also involved interviews with two professional freelance illustrators, as well as an interview with an agency, which employs full-time illustrators. The sites were selected to represent a variety of illustration graduate destinations.

3.5. Motivation for the number of interviews

The research consisted of case studies on two sites. The first site comprised of four interviews with the head of department or subject supervisor, the graphic design and the drawing, illustration lecturer and a focus group of students in each of four higher education campuses. The second site comprised of four interviews with the employer, creative director or editor in a design studio, an advertising agency, a publishing house and an illustrators' website hosting agency. In addition to this were two interviews with professional freelance illustrators.

3.6 Motivation for qualitative individual interviews

The motivation for using qualitative research was based on the desired outcomes of my research, which is focused on "what", "how" and "why" type of questions rather than the "how

much” or “how many” type of questions of quantitative research. Draper (2004) says that qualitative research can be broadly described as interpretive and naturalistic. My research was aimed at establishing and comparing activity systems in both third year illustration training in higher education and illustration as a professional practice in the workplace.

By comparing both activity systems using qualitative research, the degree to which illustration in higher education is aligned or unaligned to illustration, as practiced in the workplace, was investigated. What skills and personal attributes are graduating students required to have as professional illustrators? Are the tools that the students use in producing their hand made or digital artwork up-to date with current trends in the workplace? Is the artwork generated by the students at the required level of that produced by freelancers or full-time illustrators? In other words, is what the graduating students have learned transferable and through creative application of a similar standard to what is required of an illustrator working in a graphic design, advertising or publishing context?

Qualitative research is concerned with the recording of the process of what is being researched. It is concerned about the environment in which the activity takes place such as demographics and varying abilities in higher education. In this study it is concerned with national and international trends in design and illustration in the workplace, which determine the skills required of students entering the workplace.

The illustration generated within both the activity system in higher education and the workplace was photographed and became an important unit of analysis. The primary aim of the chosen qualitative research method was to be able to give in-depth descriptions and understanding of the similarities and differences in the activity systems in both higher education and the workplace and of the illustration generated within the two systems. Geertz (1973, cited in Draper, 2004: 644) refers to the emphasis in qualitative description as “thick description”, a rich detailed description of specifics within a context.

By researching the activity systems and the illustration generated within the education sites and the workplaces within the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries, I aimed to describe and understand the process of how the artwork was created within these systems. Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that if one understands events against the background of the whole context and how such a context gives meaning to the events concerned, then one can really claim to have understood the events.

3.7 Objectivity and Validity in Qualitative research

One of the methods of enhancing validity and reliability in qualitative research is through triangulation, which according to Babbie and Mouton is generally considered to be one of the

best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research. The reason for choosing a number of universities of technology and workplace sites was to broaden the research base through triangulation and therefore draw on a range of approaches. By comparing these multiple approaches and artworks in higher education with those in the workplace, it was intended to ensure objectivity, validity and transferability.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) refer to transferability as the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. They add that it is the obligation of the researcher to ensure that findings can be generalised in sample form and assimilated readily by the targeted population (HE institutions) who will apply the findings in other contexts therefore demonstrating transferability.

In the context of aligning illustration in higher education with the visual communications design industry, it was my intention to do in-depth research interviews in both contexts including purposive sampling in the form of taking photographs of student and professional illustrators' work and collecting the relevant briefs giving instruction that inform one of the requirements of each task.

The information gathered, according to Guba and Lincoln (1984, cited in Babbie, & Mouton, 2001: 277) should contain sufficiently detailed descriptions of data in context and should be reported with sufficient detail and precision to allow the reader to be able to judge the degree of transferability. The reader (an illustration lecturer in higher education) should therefore be in a position to apply it to similar or new contexts in which third year illustration students are being prepared for the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries.

3.8 Units of analysis

The units of analysis are the elements of activity in illustration as required by higher education and as required in the design, advertising and publishing industries. Within each research question, the units of analysis will focus on different aspects of illustration in the workplace, including the skills, motivation and attitudes of the freelance illustrator.

In research question 1 (What comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in higher education?), the unit of analysis is the activity system in the training of illustrators in higher education: Subjects (or students), tools available and applied in HE, object or goals of learning, the division of teaching and learning labour, the community within which the teaching and learning practices take place, and the design studio rules.

In research question 2 (What comprises an activity system in professional illustrators' practice?), the unit of analysis is the activity system of professional practice in illustration: Subjects (or new and experienced professionals), tools tested and applied in industry, object or goals of illustration professional work, the division of labour, the community of practice and the rules that govern professional practice.

In research question 3 (How can the higher education and professional activity systems be aligned for their mutual benefit?), a comparison of the two sets of analyses show how the HE and workplace activity system can be brought into constructive alignment for mutual benefit.

3.8.1 Data analysis methods

3.8.2.1 *Questionnaires*

Questionnaires were given to the third year graphic design and illustration students at the three University of Technology sites (but not the traditional university) where the lecturer in charge felt that due to portfolio preparation and the fact that a number of students were working off campus, it would be better to focus on the focus group interview only. The questionnaires contained both quantitative and qualitative data that was systematised, using a spread sheet, and was then analysed using basic statistical methods. Figure 3.3 is an example of the statistical analysis of the "Division of Labour" section of the questionnaire.

THIRD YEAR QUESTIONNAIRE DATA							
SECTION E: DIVISION OF LABOUR							
1) STATEMENTS							
Q #	a) capacity	b) atmosphere	c) success	d) ability	e) commitment	f) group work	g) benefit
01B	3	3	3	5	5	0	-5
02B	-3	3	-3	5	3	3	3
03B	3	0	0	5	3	3	3

Figure 3.3: Division of labour section of the questionnaire

(Please refer to Appendix A for a full sample questionnaire).

3.8.2.2 *Observation data*

All observational data of student and professional illustrators' work was photographed. The images were then thematically analysed to identify categories of activity.

3.8.2.3 Interview data

Interviews were transcribed and transcripts thematically analysed to identify elements of activity, which served to summarise the elements of research design for the interview questions through sub-questions, methods and objectives that:

- defined how each research question was broken down into respective sub-questions, therefore giving an overview of the intended research.
- defined how and what method of research would be used to obtain research data, for example, through literature analysis or through in-depth interviews.
- defined the objectives of the research questions, therefore giving an in-depth look at the reason for the intended research and an overview of what each research question was intended to achieve.

3.9 Delimitation of the research

The research was delimited to the illustration component of graphic design programmes at universities of technology and other design related institutions and the work of illustrators in industry. The research was delimited to the third year of study in order to determine what illustration skills are being taught to students at exit level at various institutions and to determine the needs of work related industries thereby improving practices in higher education illustration training for the benefit of both higher education and industry.

3.10 Research ethics

The ethical principles developed by Babbie (2004) were applied to avoid interviewees feeling coerced into participating in the research. Added to this was the honouring of the interviewees' privacy. In the case of interviewing lecturers at a higher education institution, permission was sought from the head of department. Protecting the interviewees' identity, unless otherwise agreed to, and treating him or her with respect, was an important consideration in the collection of research data. With regard the students' questionnaires, all students were provided with covering letters, explaining the nature of this research project, ensuring their confidentiality and explaining that participation was voluntary. In other words, informed consent was obtained from all of the research participants.

3.11 Summary of the main points of the research methodology

The research design was a comparative study encompassing three sites using both quantitative and qualitative research in the form of quantitative questionnaire data with a qualitative component and qualitative interview data. The questionnaire was structured according to Engeström's (1987) expanded mediational triangle (activity theory), and was

given to University of Technology students on two sites with the aim of assisting in the formulation of the qualitative interview data.

The qualitative interviews took place in both higher education and the workplace with a view to establishing what comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in higher education and the illustrators' world of professional practice. These interviews took place with the purpose of answering my third and final question, which was "How can the higher education and professional activity systems be aligned for their mutual benefit?" By comparing both activity systems using qualitative research, the degree to which illustration in higher education is aligned or unaligned to illustration, as practiced in the workplace, was investigated.

Both higher education and workplace samples of illustration were collected with a view to analysing, using a rubric, the overall standard on both sites to establish if there were any gaps between them. By researching the activity systems and the illustration generated within the education sites and the workplaces within the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries, I aimed to describe and understand the process of how the artwork was created within these systems.

In the chapter 4, the next chapter, the quantitative and qualitative data from the higher education sites is discussed and analysed.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS: GRAPHIC DESIGN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

4.1 Introduction

The research findings from the higher education sites, including a discussion and analysis of the findings, are presented in Chapter 4. This chapter includes findings from the student participants as well as from the academic staff participants (lecturers and heads of programmes and departments). The findings address the research question: What comprises an activity system in the training of illustrators in HE? The findings therefore describe and analyse the nature of the activity system in the training of illustrators in terms of the categories associated with activity, namely: subjects, tools, object, division of labour, community of practice and rules (Engestrom, 1987).

This chapter has two main sub-sections: the focus of the first section (4.2) is the presentation and analysis of the student data (derived from questionnaires, written reflections and interviews). The focus of the second section (4.3) is on university teachers' perspectives, which draws on interviews with third and fourth year illustration lecturers, graphic design heads of departments and graphic design lecturers. To conclude this chapter, the findings are summarised and conclusions are drawn with regard to the higher education activity system.

4.2 Student data

The student data is presented in three sub-sections, namely questionnaire data (4.2.1), reflection data (4.3.1), and interview data (4.4.1).

4.3 Student data from questionnaires

The findings from the quantitative questionnaire data are presented with reference to the categories of activity 1) the profiles of students as subjects in the activity system; 2) The tools for learning and practicing visual communication 3) The students understanding of the purpose of their higher education studies 4) The relationships and environments in which the activities take place 5) The roles adopted by the students and lecturers 6) Students adherence and respect for studio rules.

4.3.1 The profiles of students as subjects in the activity system

In the questionnaire, the students were asked to assess themselves in terms of their hand and digital illustration skills, as well as a range of other skills, values, and knowledge attributes. The selection of students' key self-assessment responses are shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Students' self-assessment

Statements	Student ratings*	
	Average	Mode
Progressive improvement has occurred throughout my studies.	3	3
Creating scamps is an important part of the creative process.	3	3
Researching other artists' work has helped me set a new standard.	4	3
I feel confident using different illustration techniques.	3	3

*Rating scale: 5 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 0 = undecided, -3 = disagree and -5 strongly disagree

As can be seen from Table 4.1 (above), most students “agreed” (rating value 3) with the statements made in the questionnaire. As senior students reflecting on their studies, they generally felt that there had been progression and that they had developed illustration skills and knowledge. The higher rating that students gave to researching the work of other artists is worth noting. In a graphic design and illustration context, such research mostly comprises the study of professional illustrators' work for inspiration on styles and techniques.

Khoury et al. (2009) consider that an overly practical focus in design courses as limiting both on creativity and the further development of the profession. They claim that design research will further establish the discipline of graphic design as an intellectual process, and state that changes within undergraduate graphic design studies can prepare student designers to be more than visual artists, technicians or craftsman. Research can propel graphic design students to play a relevant and enriching role within the design profession (Khoury et al., 2009).

In other sections of the questionnaire, the students consistently rated themselves as “good” with regard to their hand and digital illustration skills, and it was the students' perception that their illustration skills were up-to-date and at a level required by industry. The importance of traditional drawing is supported by scholars such as Schenk (2005) who states that the ease and spontaneity of the traditional drawing systems are still valuable, if not vital, in the early planning stages of a design project.

It should be noted that the students surveyed were senior students, nearing the end of their university studies. The literature on student self-assessment suggests that more senior students are more accurate at self-assessment, particularly with regard to skills; students' (whether senior or junior) are less accurate with regard to knowledge domains (Boud & Falchikov, 2006; Ross, 2006). Race (1994) states that, in general, students are accurate in their self assessment, but there is a tendency for weaker learners to overrate themselves in

areas in which they are new, and for some more skilled learners to underrate themselves in areas in which they are experienced.

4.3.2 Tools for learning and practicing visual communication

The different higher education sites all require students to be familiar with a standard range of hand tools and digital tools. In the survey questionnaires, students identified the illustration software and other programs that they were familiar with: Illustrator, Microsoft office, In Design, Flash, Photoshop, Ms Word and MS Power Point with the exception of the Wacom tablet and Ms Excel.

The data indicates that the students were, on the whole, exposed to a wide range of software with the exception of the use of a digital drawing tablet. Their lack of knowledge of working with a digital drawing tablet could be limiting as illustrators need to be equipped with an increasingly broad range of technical skills (Hitchen, 2007).

Rapid changes in software development have generally created a situation in higher education where students are expected to embrace these changes as they occur during the time they are studying. The students were asked to assess themselves with regard to whether or not they were stimulated by the changes in software development and their level of confidence in working in different media in both black and white and colour.

Table 4.2: Students' tools – self-assessment statements

Statements	Student ratings*	
	Average	Mode
I am stimulated by the continuous changes in software development.	1	3
I am confident about working in different media in black and white	3	3
I am confident about working in different media in colour	3	3

*Rating scale: 5 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 0 = undecided, -3 = disagree and -5 strongly disagree

According to their self assessment data above, the students were generally aware of, but not necessarily stimulated by, the continuous changes in software development. There might have been a fluctuation to the probability of the results if the social condition of the students had been taken into account. However, they unanimously agreed that they were confident about working in different mediums in black and white and colour.

4.3.3 Object: Students understanding of the purpose of their higher education studies

The data suggests that the students were exposed to both hand and digital illustration that focused mainly on design and advertising, with limited exposure to publishing, an important

source of work for illustrators. Illustration in a design and advertising context goes through times when either photography is in vogue at the expense of illustration or visa versa. In more recent times, digitally, vector based generated illustration was used in preference to hand generated illustration but that trend has changed (ref needed). Because of these changing trends illustrators need to be flexible and conversant in both. Practical skills such as rendering techniques and digital, new technology-based skills, are essential with regard to the education of the illustrator (Male, 2007).

Students' understanding of how well they have been prepared by their studies.

The students were asked to respond to a number of statements with regards to whether or not they felt their studies had prepared them for life after university.

Table 4.3: Students' self assessment

Statements	Student ratings*	
	Average	Mode
I feel that I have been provided with up-to-date knowledge and skills for the industry.	0	3
The graphic design course has benefited me because I have knowledge of the industry and feel prepared.	0	3
Good basic skills are essential for my future employment.	3	3
Researching the artworks of professional illustrators is a way to prepare myself for industry.	3	3
I know where and how to source freelance illustration work	0	0
I accept that their education would continue throughout their working life.	4	5
I intend specialising in illustration.	0	0

*Rating scale: 5 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 0 = undecided, -3 = disagree and -5 strongly disagree

Most of the students were undecided with regard to four of the statements in table 4.3.1f above concerning whether or not they felt their studies had prepared them for life after university. Peter Knight (2000) states that a graduated student should, to a large degree, have achieved what the curriculum specifies but the skills learned must also be transferable. In the context of higher education illustration studies, this implies that the illustration knowledge and skills that the students have progressively learned, from foundation or first year to third or fourth year, should be transferable and should be applicable to related areas of illustration in the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries. Students should be confident that the knowledge gained in higher education could be used in different situations.

In responding to the survey, the students agreed that good basic drawing skills were essential for their future employment, while researching the artworks of professional

illustrators was a way of informing them of the standards required by industry. They strongly agreed that they needed to keep abreast of developments in industry, and that their education would continue throughout their working life. Ball (2003) claims there is evidence that creative graduates continue to learn throughout their lives, many without the financial support of a large employer. She emphasises that in the creative industries, in particular where workers adapt, change direction and offer flexible services, continuing professional development is essential for success.

4.3.4 Community of practice: Relationships and environments

In a higher education context, the relationship between students and lecturers and the environment in which activities take place plays an important role in how knowledge that is necessary for the graduates' survival in the workplace is transferred.

The students were given the self-assessment statements listed in Table 4.4 below that pertain to the above mentioned factors that influence the environment in which information is transferred.

Table 4.4: Community of practice – self-assessment statements

Statements	Student ratings*	
	Average	Mode
I can accept constructive feedback in a critique by my lecturer.	3	3
My lecturer has encouraged me to explore different illustration techniques.	3	3
We are sometimes given illustration projects that are linked to the other disciplines such as communications design, design techniques and history of art.	3	3
I am unable to cope when the lecturers give too many deadlines within the same or similar time period.	1	3
The lecturers should meet regularly to discuss what deadlines they have planned to ensure that the work required of them is not all due on the same day or within a few days.	5	5

*Rating scale: 5 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 0 = undecided, -3 = disagree and -5 strongly disagree.

The students in table 4.4 above unanimously agreed that there was a constructive classroom environment with the single exception of category d) where the students were undecided as to whether or not they were able to cope when too many deadlines were given within the same or similar time period. The fact that on average, the students felt they were able to accept constructive criticism is an important part of the learning process, which according to Allen (2000) is the building and nurturing of self-esteem; whereas negative critiques of work executed with genuine effort can breakdown confidence. On the other hand, Allan stresses

that constructive critiques delivered with 'ruthless compassion' can serve as a catalyst for a breakthrough.

Apart from most students agreeing that their lecturers had encouraged them to explore different illustration techniques; they were also given illustration projects that were linked to other disciplines. According to Donnelly (2004), such interconnectedness enhances the capacity to connect and transfer what has been learned and apply this knowledge in other situations. This interlinking of disciplines is supported by Grannell (2008) who says that during the last decade, colleges have increasingly taken a multidisciplinary approach to teaching, with students more often involved in project teams that include designers, illustrators and photographers.

With regard to being able to cope with overlapping deadlines, the students were undecided, but they unanimously agreed that it was important for the lecturers from the different disciplines to meet to discuss deadlines and ensure that they were achievable.

4.3.5 Division of labour: The roles adopted by the students and lecturers

In some respects, the academic studio is a simulation of the art/design studio that is common in workplaces that employ illustrators. In some cases, illustration lecturers (in their role as "clients") generally create the brief and assesses the final artwork, whereas in other cases, the students create own brief relating to the organisation that they are dealing with; the lecturer facilitates this process and assesses the students' work. Within the work environment in the design studio in mind, the students were given self-assessment statements with regard to the 'division of labour' statements in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Division of labour – self-assessment statements

Statements	Student ratings*	
	Average	Mode
Some students work harder than others in the design studio.	3	3
There is a lot of joking and laughing when we are in the drawing class.	1	3
Students who miss lectures and don't focus in class are unsuccessful.	0	0
Not all students have the same level of drawing skills.	4	5
Committed students who persevere are successful and meet deadlines.	3	3
There are drawing assignments and brainstorming sessions that involve group work.	1	3
I benefit from group work.	0	3

*Rating scale: 5 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 0 = undecided, -3 = disagree and -5 strongly disagree.

According to the data above, the students agreed that some students work harder than others in the drawing studio; they were undecided on the levels of joking and laughing when they're in the drawing class and were also undecided whether students who missed lectures and lacked focus in class tended to be unsuccessful. Ferry (2000) says he knew that if his illustration students were going to make it in the highly competitive and talented world of illustration, they needed to be disciplined too. They strongly agreed that not all students have the same drawing skills and agreed that committed students who persevere are successful and meet their deadlines. They were also undecided whether or not they benefited from group work.

4.3.6 Drawing studio rules: adherence and respect

Students were asked to agree or disagree with a range of statements that were intended to raise awareness of studio rules (both explicit and implicit).

Table 4.6: Studio rules – self-assessment statements

Statements	Student ratings*	
	Average	Mode
Everyone treats each other with respect in the drawing studio.	2	3
When I crit others' work, I always give constructive criticism.	3	3
We have to hand in projects on time, or face penalties.	2	3
Late coming is not tolerated in the drawing class.	0	0
No-one is allowed to wander in and out of the studio during class.	0	0

*Rating scale: 5 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 0 = undecided, -3 = disagree and -5 strongly disagree.

As can be seen in Table 4.6 above, on average the students agreed that peers and lecturers treat one another with respect in the drawing studio and when students critique one another's work, they provide constructive criticism. They also agreed that projects should be handed in on time or students face penalties. The students were undecided that late coming is not tolerated in the drawing class and that no-one is allowed to wander in and out of the studio during class. This would possibly indicate a relaxed atmosphere in the studio where students become accountable for managing their time. The ability to succeed as a good professional illustrator doesn't only depend on the ability to draw and conceptualize, but also requires considerable hard work and dedication (Heller & Fernandes, 1995). Allen (2000) says education should stress the fundamentals and encourage the desire to learn. However, he stresses that it will only work if the students are not only willing to learn, but have a burning desire to excel in their chosen field.

4.3.7 Summary of the main points of the quantitative data

According to the quantitative data above, the students generally felt that they had progressed during their studies and had developed good illustration skills and knowledge. They perceived that their illustration skills were up-to-date and at a level required by industry and on the whole and were exposed to a wide range of software with the exception of the use of a digital drawing tablet. They were generally aware of, but not necessarily stimulated by, the continuous changes in software development. However, they unanimously agreed that they were confident about working in different mediums in black and white and colour.

The data suggests that the students were exposed to both hand and digital illustration that focused mainly on design and advertising, with limited exposure to publishing. Most of the students were undecided their studies had sufficiently prepared them for entering industry. Good basic drawing skills were emphasised as essential for their future employment, and they strongly agreed that they needed to keep abreast of developments in industry through research, and that their education would continue throughout their working life.

They unanimously agreed that it was important for the lecturers from the different disciplines to meet to discuss deadlines to prevent unnecessary overlapping deadlines were that were perceived as often unmanageable and in some cases made the classroom environment unconstructive. On average, the students were able to accept constructive criticism; most agreed their lecturers had encouraged them to explore different illustration techniques and they were also given illustration projects that were linked to other disciplines.

Within this constructive environment, the students on average agreed that in the drawing studio, peers and lecturers treat one another with respect, for example, when critiquing one another's work, they provide constructive criticism. A mostly relaxed studio atmosphere was agreed on where students become accountable for managing their time or face penalties for not handing work on time.

The qualitative student data section now follows the quantitative data analysis.

4.4 Qualitative questionnaire data from third year students

The final section of the questionnaire enabled students to make general comments on their educational experience; these data are discussed below, under the identified categories. This section comprises six sections, namely: 1) Students' sense of their exposure to a broad range of illustration skills, 2) Students' estimation of their proficiency with hand and digital tools, 3) Students' perceptions of their readiness for the real world, 4) Students' understanding of the need to balance support and discipline in the graphic design studio, 5)

Achieving success through self motivation and being motivated by the lecturer, and 6) Students' feelings about rule enforcement and accountability in the graphic design studio.

4.4.1 Subjects: students' sense of their exposure to a broad range of illustration skills

Students' comments on their illustration skills used are presented and analysed in this section, with the purpose of determining whether or not the students feel that they have been adequately exposed to a broad range of hand and digital illustration skills.

Limited /unlimited exposure to a broad range of illustration skills

On the whole, the students appeared satisfied with their exposure to various illustration skills with the exception of Student Q41C whose interest was in storyboarding, an area where he/she felt their exposure was limited: 'I was expecting to get more projects that would allow me to improve my skills but unfortunately there were very few' (Student Q41c). A Student made the following observation:

Students from other institutions should strongly be encouraged to work on their basic hand rendered drawing skills. They should stay away from vector drawings, which will soon fade away and then people will go back to the beauty of line making by hand (Student Q42C).

The above student's emphasis on the temporary demand for computer generated vector drawing implies that it is less important than hand generated drawing. Hitchen (2007) says that illustrators need to be equipped with an increasingly broad range of technical skills.

4.4.2 Tools: Students' estimation of their proficiency with hand and digital tools

Below is a discussion on students' views on the tools that they are familiar or not familiar with.

Levels of familiarity with hand and digital illustration tools

Some students felt that they weren't sufficiently familiar with all illustration techniques, media and digital programmes. For example, a student commented that:

[We need] more workshops on illustration techniques, more info on current industry changes, more freedom when it comes to the mediums & materials that can be used for illustration purposes - more competitions (Student 07B).

The students' perceived lack of exposure to technology was also mentioned:

Since first year, we wasn't fully explained how to work with all the programmes (Student 09B).

The general lack of familiarity with practical skills, such as rendering techniques and digital, technology-based skills, is a concern, as Male (2007) emphasises that these skills are essential in the education of an illustrator and should be seen as training associated with the vocational aspects of illustration and should be encountered early in the students' development.

4.4.3 Object: Readiness for the real world

I now turn to students' comments on whether the illustration course had benefited them in terms of 1) whether they felt that their hand and digital illustration skills were suitable for employment in industry; 2) students' understanding of importance of drawing in creating scamps as part of the concept phase; 3) students' understanding of the value of drawing through closed or open briefs presented; 4) whether they felt sufficiently exposed to business knowledge required in the real world; and 5) whether they felt that their portfolios portrayed independence of thought with regard to uniqueness of styles.

Determining the benefits of the drawing/illustration course: students' confidence in hand and digital illustration and readiness for the 'real world'

According to the data, the majority of students felt that the drawing/illustration course had not benefited them and was not up-to-standard in some areas. One student, for example, claimed to lack confidence, and felt not up to third year standard: "I dislike Graphic Design Drawing 3!" (Student Q8B). Another third year student, Student Q9B, felt that the drawing techniques for "illustration or normal design" had not been fully developed and was thus not confident to enter the illustration industry. This unpreparedness was echoed by a fellow student who commented that because of the situation, students had to teach themselves many skills through experiences outside of the course, but claimed: "I still feel unprepared but I want to leave this institution" (Student Q34C).

Students' lack of confidence in drawing skills, both for illustration or creating scamps for design concepts is problematic, because confident drawing is crucial and the process of drawing can unlock the entire creative process for an artist (Arisman, 2000). Not all students experienced a lack of confidence, as can be seen in Student Q43C's comment below:

I felt more competent in drawing before I came to tech. The lecturers also tend to prefer a certain style of drawing and illustration and therefore some students will do better because they are more comfortable with it (Student Q43C).

The above students' perception of needing to please the lecturer is, however, a misunderstanding of the basic principle of illustration education, which is student independence, through facilitating and building of confidence to enable students to express themselves as individuals, rather than seeing the world through the eyes of the lecturer (Dineen, Samuel & Livesey, 2005). A lack of knowledge, as well as the lack of confidence of how to apply drawing to different contexts, was pointed out by one student who said:

Because most graphic designers were very self conscious about their hand drawing, they used photos instead of illustration: Drawing is mainly offered in the foundation years thereafter we seem to forget about how we can apply it to our projects (Student, Q57D).

This lack of confidence appears to stem from limited access to drawing tuition in the years after the foundation/first year phase. In contrast to the negative comments of the students above, another student wrote:

I think the illustration course has been very beneficial, and has helped to develop my skills and understand what an illustration professional is required to produce. However I think having a stronger industry connection with having visiting lecturers would be great (Student Q31C).

The above reference to the importance of collaborating with industry is supported by research (e.g., Heller & Fernandes, 1995) that claims that while some art schools and colleges may give credit for professional work, which students have sourced, in the business world, others may encourage real assignments to be given as part of coursework. No matter how the end result is achieved; a student should learn both in and out of an academic environment, as it is never too late to enter the classroom and never too early to experience the real world (Heller & Fernandes, 1995).

Perceived importance of drawing in higher education and the value of well-executed scamps in the design concept phase

In the digitally orientated graphic design studio environments, the importance of creating scamps as a means of documenting ideas before they are applied to the digital realm is well documented. One Student respondent felt that students had to be encouraged to illustrate [draw] all the time:

The truth is, after your first year, you don't do hand illustrations as often as you did in your first year from second year onwards; the course is more about learning design programmes and the truth of the matter is you can't do a good design without a good plan so you have to draw your scamps first then after design (Student Q19B).

This student's emphasis on learning computer software at the expense of developing drawing skills that can be applied to scamps before they go onto the computer is contrary to research that claims that the ease and spontaneity of the traditional drawing systems are still valuable, if not vital, in early planning stages of a design project (Schenk, 2005). However, Schenk also says computers, and certain types of software, give students and professional designers with limited drawing ability, the support to produce and present good concepts through visually convincing images that could not have been produced otherwise.

Connecting to the professional community: working within the parameters of vague or clearly defined briefs

Only one student commented on working within a brief:

The drawing subject and its briefs are very vague. Some briefs are just vague, and therefore get a vague response and ... [expletive] work! (Student Q55D).

The strong emphasis made by the student above on the perceived vagueness of drawing as a subject and the briefs presented is not supported by the research that claims that by setting design tasks and briefs in such a way as to allow students to engage with learning and their subject meaningfully and passionately, a link is created to the professional community of designers (Reid & Solomonides, 2007: 37).

The subject Professional Practice: prepared or unprepared for the real world

There was a strong feeling among the students that the subject Professional Practice had not prepared them for industry. In spite of learning many helpful skills as a designer, one student respondent felt the most important skills were lacking: "like marketing ourselves outside; how to place value on my design, so that I am able to charge the customer the right price" (Student Q16B). Another student wrote:

We HAVE NOT LEARNED ANYTHING!!! From Professional Graphic Design Practice and History of Art! Since 1st year with [lecturer name omitted] where is the ground work when we walk out of here for maybe one day starting our own business and learning about entrepreneurship! (Student Q1B).

Another student felt that they needed to learn more business related topics, such as how to actually make a living in the illustration industry, and suggested the following:

Provide internships or work experience, to learn a better understanding of the working environment (Student Q53D).

A fellow student agreed, commenting that they needed "more marketing and advertising subjects. Business studies to equip us to run our own businesses" (Student Q66D). Another student expressed similar concerns:

We won't know anything about doing business whether we're freelancers or illustrators etc (Student Q9B).

The perceived lack of knowledge about how to market themselves, how to charge for an assignment and the basics of entrepreneurship is raised by Heller and Fernandes (1995) who stress that in a field where clients sometimes take advantage of artists, it is imperative for the graduated student to know how to survive in the real world. The need for business awareness is supported by Ball (2003) who emphasises that employers expect graduates to develop a sense of commercial awareness throughout their higher education.

Portfolio preparation: Experimentation and development of a personal style; gateway to the future

The data indicates there were limitations where, for example, one student felt that the lecturers imposed their personal styles onto the students work: "which can be irritating" (Student Q35C). Dineen, Samuel and Livesey (2005) emphasise that the ultimate aim of higher education is student independence, through facilitating and building their confidence to express themselves as individuals rather than seeing the world through the eyes of the lecturer.

One student referred to the self imposed limitations of being influenced by local styles, and not researching and increasing awareness of national and international styles and trends. This student felt that Durban artists were trapped in their own style, which was either similar throughout, or that other artists were trying to copy it:

I would like to see examples from different states/provinces and compare them to [name's place] (Student Q46D).

This tendency to be over reliant on others' styles was echoed by another student who wrote:

There is a lot of feeding off each other within institutions – one good illustrator/designer comes along and for years after, students feed off elements of a style that has been successful in the past instead of doing something new and fresh; almost a safety net. I am aware that I do this too, but I have a dislike for it (Student Q47D).

The reliance of students and illustrators on copying other's styles indicates a lack of intellect and creativity. Tselentis (2006) says that successful cutting-edge designers and illustrators need to become socially and culturally aware communicators utilising both intellectual and practical skills.

4.4.4 Community of practice: a supportive environment linked to the real world

The community of practice in which the students' learning takes place is influenced by 1) the scheduling of deadlines between lecturers, 2) the linking of illustration projects to other subjects, 3) external collaboration with industry in the form of real world tasks, 4) a supportive role in a demanding environment, and 5) the impact of class sizes on quality of teaching. These issues are discussed below.

The scheduling of projects between lecturers: single or overlapping deadlines

An issue raised by one student had to do with the difficulties of meeting deadlines when they were not coordinated, that is, when submissions were due on the same day or close together. For this student, overlapping deadlines were experienced as a lack of communication or coordination:

Furthermore, there hasn't been any communication between these lecturers (Student Q25C).

Exploring creativity through experimentation and a student centred approach to learning

A student nearing the end of his or her studies commented that:

We need to experiment much more, especially for a final or 3rd year student; bigger variety less constriction (Student Q10B).

The above comment suggests that students needed more variety and opportunities for experimentation; this is confirmed by Bull & Montgomery (1995) who claim that a climate should be established in which students are free to explore their creative potential. An alternative to a restricted learning environment is one proposed by Elton (2006) who claims that a curriculum, designed to encourage creativity, must hand over a high proportion of the

responsibility of learning to students, in contrast to the traditional roles where teachers are responsible for teaching and students for learning.

A balanced environment with discipline, structure and experimentation was suggested by one of the student respondents who felt that illustration could be split into 2 sectors:

One stream of projects disciplined & structured to facilitate the focused development of our own medium & /or style and another stream for experimentation; I feel strongly about these things and have often found myself frustrated in my course - sometimes in a constructive way (Student Q30C).

This balance is supported by Tselentis (2006) who emphasises the need for structure when projects are intended to demonstrate a practical understanding of established methodologies as well as self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems.

A supportive role within a demanding environment

A supportive environment in which lecturers should show they are caring and supportive to both struggling and hard working students was emphasised by one of the students, who writes:

I think if the lecturer noticed that any student is struggling, he/she must or perhaps give his time to help a hard working student; to help from either foundation till third year, I believe that would add value to hard working individual. I think personally, I thought I was going to be good within drawing/illustration, as I had fallen in love with drawing since I was young (Student Q22B).

The student's implicit comment about the centrality of the teacher-student relationship in which students are shown that lecturers are interested and care about what they are doing, is supported by the research literature (e.g., Dineen, Samuel & Livesey, 2005).

Impact of size of classes on lecturer-student contact time: advice versus constructive critiques

Students felt that big classes and a shortage of lecturers made it difficult for students to always get sufficient time to see lecturers. As one student put it: "This frustrates me no end" (Student Q34C). Between the first and third year, this student felt that students should progressively be allowed more autonomy in decision-making because:

There is too much babying in the beginning of first year so when we as students have to make our own choices later on, it is hard to do so without a lecturers approval (Student Q34C).

This need for progressive autonomy is supported by the research literature (e.g., Elton, 2006); the new learning environment he says is a place in which the students initiate the learning process and are supported by their teachers who facilitate their learning. Quality time spent with the lecturer, with specific reference to constructive critiques, was valued by one of the students who made the following suggestions:

Regarding lecturers, handle their time spent with students better. Talk to the student strictly about their project: what's good in it so one can build on those qualities but also say what is bad as to better the artwork. More importantly, have a comment of worth and basis (Student Q29C).

The importance of lecturer crits of student artwork in between projects was seen by one of the students as important in order to ensure, "the end products are good" (Student Q65D); another student added, "We need constructive crits that are in aid of students getting good marks" (Student Q55D). Constructive critiques of artwork can be motivational and can serve as a catalyst for a breakthrough (Allen, 2004).

Students felt that regular rotation of lecturers was seen as negative, in the sense of constraining a strong relationship with the students, and positive, because it had exposed students to a stimulating variety of styles. One student cited having several illustration lecturers (3 in 2nd year), (3 in 3rd year) as a reason for the lecturers not having spent much time with them:

The necessary and constructive relationship hasn't been given the chance to grow... It's not at all helpful for us, although being exposed to their styles is interesting (Student Q38C).

4.4.5 Division of labour: achieving success through self-motivation and being motivated by the lecturer

One of the student respondents claimed that that organised, motivated teachers, in turn are able to motivate learners:

Our drawing and illustration classes are the most relaxed and sometimes the most disorganized class we have, it mostly depends on the teacher. If the lecturer puts in effort, we do as well (Student Q36C).

Heller and Fernandes (1995) believe that, without motivated teachers, there is little chance for motivated students; and that motivated teachers and learners are necessary to maintain a sense of overall purpose that is required to accomplish what is stipulated in a brief. Allen (2000) similarly points to the role of the lecturer in motivating students. He is concerned that education should stress the fundamentals and encourage the desire to learn. However, he stresses that education is possible only if the students are not only willing to learn, but have a burning desire to excel in their chosen field. Another student respondent writes about the importance of:

I think it is important to find a balance between a relaxed environment & a professional academic one, as it is important to be relaxed to let your creativity flow, but at the same time, you need discipline to accomplish your brief (Student Q37C).

4.4.6 Studio Rules: rule enforcement and accountability in the graphic design studio

Design studio rules: enforcement or accountability

One student respondent felt strongly that disciplining students over lateness due to extraneous factors such as traffic jams was unfair and only necessary in a school environment, not at tertiary level where there should be more understanding by the lecturers of students' contextual constraints:

I personally feel that keeping a student outside the classroom without listening to his reasons why he/she is late is very unfair and selfish. One thing that lecturers should remember is that we are not at school anymore, we don't have busses that pick and drop you off; some of us don't have cars, some of us have to walk, we don't control traffic or what happens on the road or outside. Lucky for me our 3rd year lecturers are very understanding. I just love them. Going to miss them!!! Good luck sir!!! (Student Q4B).

Ferry (2000), writing on attendance requirements, expects regular attendance by all students at all classes, explaining that each class is a necessary educational experience in the development of course subject matter and that class participation is one of the considerations by which students are graded.

4.4.7 Summary of the main points of the qualitative questionnaire data

The students on the whole, appeared satisfied with their exposure to various illustration skills. A student said that computer generated drawing was more temporary in demand than hand generated drawing implying that it was perhaps less important. However, in terms of tools, some students felt they weren't sufficiently familiar with all illustration techniques, media and digital programmes.

According to the data, the majority of students felt that the drawing/illustration course had not benefited them and were not up to standard in some areas, for example, due to lack a lack of confidence, and not to be up to third year standard. The lack of confidence in drawing skills, both for illustration or creating scamps for design concepts appears to stem from limited access to drawing tuition in the years after the foundation/first year phase. A student who felt the illustration course had been very beneficial in terms of developing skills and an understanding of the requirements of a professional illustrator also felt there was room for a greater connection to industry.

A student felt there was too much emphasis on the learning of software programmes at the expense of hand drawing skills, which were perceived as essential to the brainstorming, scamping process. Another student felt the drawing subject and its briefs were very vague. Added to these limitations was a strong feeling among the students that the subject Professional Practice had not prepared them for industry in terms of important skills such as knowledge of how to market oneself and how to determine how much to charge a client for a proposed task.

In terms of portfolio preparation through experimentation and the development of a personal style, reference was made that lecturers imposed their personal styles onto the students work. However, a student determined there were self-imposed limitations such as students being influenced by local styles, and not researching and increasing awareness of national and international styles and trends. A need to copy others styles indicates a lack of intellect or creativity.

With regard to the community of practice, which is generally very demanding, overlapping deadlines were experienced as a lack of communication or coordination between lecturers. Reference was made that the students needed more variety and opportunities for experimentation. The required environment in which the creativity took place was said to be a caring supportive one for both struggling and hard working students. Between the first and third year, the same student felt that students should progressively be allowed more

autonomy in decision-making, therefore increasing student independence. Organised, motivated lecturers were said to motivate learners.

Within the context of studio rules, emphasis was made that at tertiary level, the lectures should be more understanding with regard to punctuality due to factors such as transport issues. Third year lecturers were said to allow more student accountability.

The qualitative data analysis is followed in the next section by the Individual interviews with third and fourth year students.

4.5 Individual interviews with third and fourth year students

In this section, I present and analyse academic student data with regard to third year graphic design students from three Universities of technology, and fourth year students from a traditional University. This section comprises six sections, namely: 1) Students' understanding of their needs and abilities in terms of illustration, 2) the illustration tools that students have been exposed to, 3) Students' understanding of their learning objectives, 4) Students' understanding of the graphic design studio and classroom as communities of practice, 5) division of labour in the studio/classroom, and 6) the rules (both explicit and implicit) of the studio/classroom.

4.5.1 Subjects: Students' understanding of their needs and abilities

In a complex, demanding environment, the students' experiences often vary according to their ability to cope in a number of ways such as: 1) their motivation and enthusiasm to succeed, 2) their perception of their exposure to illustration skills, 3) their sense of how they had progressed during their studies, and 4) their performance within set deadlines.

Ability to persevere and remain self motivated

The student interview data emphasises that perseverance is important and was something one had to work at in the form of consulting people when one "just can't think of any ideas" (Student 1.1) or focusing on the job at hand and giving "it all I can" (Student 2.1). Harris et al, (2004) claim that one of the indicators of students' academic engagement is being effective, which includes being motivated, persevering and taking pleasure and an interested in the course. Student 3.1 said:

There are times when you have a week to do a project and you really don't feel like doing it anymore...you have to bite the bullet because in industry you can't go, I don't want to do it...I do persevere, but after a lot of internal kicking and screaming (Student 3.1).

Taking criticism and working with it constructively

Most students interviewed felt that it was important for them to be able to accept criticism of their work by their lecturer and their future art director; Student 4.1 emphasised that it was “really important to take criticism and work constructively with it and not let it get you down”, while Student 1.3 felt that it was vital because “you just get blinded...you just don't see the mistakes”. This need to be open in order to avoid tunnel vision was echoed by Student 3.2 who said:

We have to be able to accept criticism; our work can't be too precious to us, from the scamps stage right through because we're working to a brief for a purpose and our interpretation of that might be difficult for others [to understand] so we need to accept criticism (Student 3.2).

While critiques are necessary in illustration, Allen (2000) stresses that negative critiques of artwork executed with genuine effort can demotivate students whereas constructive critiques can be motivational and serve as a catalyst for a breakthrough, where the students in a safe environment can learn more about themselves by taking risks and grow beyond their perceived potential.

Student 2.2 felt that it was important to find a middle ground when negotiating scamps because “maybe you're so focused on a concept” and that criticism from an art director or lecturer “would point you in a better direction, but still keeping in with the concept that you've come up with”. Student 4.1 determined that criticism was very important “throughout the different stages”, but if you felt strongly about something, then you should express it, but “also hear what the other person has to say”, which was echoed by Student 4.2 who felt that a lot of people were defensive about their work, which was unnecessary, and they should be open to criticism.

Exposure to a broad range of illustration skills and media: limited or unlimited?

The data indicates the students did not reach consensus with regard to their exposure to illustration skills. Some students said there was limited exposure to certain hand and digital illustration, while others felt that they had been exposed to a broad range of techniques, both hand and digital. A limitation was cited with regard to their exposure to different types of illustration such as “missing out on print making, which limits us if we need to apply those things on the outside” (Student 2.1). Financial considerations were also seen as restrictive because “we can't as students afford to do the things we like and explore things” (Student 2.2). In contrast to the restrictions quoted above, Student 3.1 said they had explored many illustration techniques, which Student 3.2 confirmed saying:

A visit by members of an illustration studio was very inspiring, seeing how illustration can go into com design. It does show you what's out there, what you can do to do to improve yourself (Student 3.2).

Direct exposure to professional illustrators is an important part of the learning process according to Reid and Solomonides (2007) who claim that in their terms and for students to be engaged and creative, there is a need for students to feel that they are learning through deep involvement within the context of their learning and to be experiencing the processes of design in such a way as to see the purpose and benefit of what they do, and to sense that they have a benefit to the professional design community. Student 1.1 stated:

We were taught that [i.e., exploring illustration techniques using different techniques] in first and second year so now we have the freedom to use any medium we want to use...based on whatever project you are actually working on. You look if it's appropriate to the project and then you use that medium. We have been exposed to different mediums (Student 1.1).

The reference above to having explored illustration techniques early in their training is supported by Male (2007) who emphasises that practical skills such as rendering techniques and digital, technology based skills must be seen as a form of training associated with the vocational aspects of illustration, which need to be encountered early in the students' development.

Student 4.1 felt that they'd had broad exposure and had basically covered everything, with the exception of digital illustration, which Student 4.2 felt was lacking, but that they had "concentrated a lot on hand made stuff...and there are a lot of techniques that we learned". This is a concern, as Illustrators need to be equipped with an increasingly broad range of technical skills (Hitchen, 2007). Exposure to techniques was often self-generated as in the case of Student 4.1 who said that students had been encouraged to research visual artists' work with a view to seeing how they had applied the different techniques.

In response to Student 4.4's declaration that it was a mistake for "an illustrator to go directly on the computer" because there was a definite need for initial hand-drawn and hand experiments, Student 4.3 felt that being able to work directly on a computer, digitally, came with experience, which most students did not yet have. The ease and spontaneity of traditional hand drawing is still valuable, if not vital in early planning stages of a design project, even though computers and certain types of software give students and professional

designers with limited drawing ability, the support to produce and present good concepts through visually convincing images that could not have been produced otherwise (Shenk, (2005).

From first year to third/fourth year: A developmental progression of drawing and illustration skills

The overall feeling amongst the students who were interviewed was that they had improved in a number of ways. This development included improved conceptual ability, which Student 1.1 said was emphasised in illustration. With reference to some of the factors that played a role in improving their conceptual ability, Student 4.1 said:

A lot had happened where everything in my everyday now influences my work and through this greater awareness, one was able to see how the art theory and art history they did in the first three years were linked to visual culture and how that theory base opens your world up to so many different things (Student 4.1).

Having a broad understanding of history provides a foundation of social, cultural and political knowledge that is frequently required in illustration briefs. By being familiar with literature, the student or illustrator in professional practice will be exposed to centuries of metaphor, allegory and symbol, which when translated into imagery is the foundation for strong visual ideas (Heller & Fernandes, 1995).

The knowledge of how to simplify was cited as an important development from the first year that was "just cluttered and now I understand the power of simplification" (Student 1.2). The expansion of knowledge and expanded choices within technology led to simplification where Student 1.3 determined:

At first we were fascinated by texture, the whole [range of] effects in Photoshop... realised they can be used in simpler ways, don't have to use them if you don't want to...can create ones own textures (Student 1.3).

Student 2.1 said, "I gained more knowledge in illustration and technical work with programmes. This was echoed by Student 3.1 who through a developmental progression had learnt more styles of drawing and about working with colour and realised "there are times when illustration can't apply to some pieces of design and possibly someone outside of our industry wouldn't understand why that is". Student 2.2 emphasized that the knowledge and experience of working with scamps at foundation level was good preparation "so I went

straight into first year and knew exactly what I needed to do and how to apply the knowledge”.

The demanding environment of Graphic design in higher education: deadlines

Lapsing deadlines for students not coping was cited as a contributing factor in demotivating students who met deadlines who said extensions weren't going to happen in industry. Student 1.1 stressed:

Handing in work on time... I'll hand it on Tuesday, the work is done, but they'll give you a whole week... an extension... it's bad...students like us who meet the deadline... half the class make excuses and then the lecturer says okay, give it to me next Tuesday... all the time (Student 1.1).

The tendency to be demotivated by extensions was echoed by Student 1.2 who said:

I'm starting to slack off because I know... they're going to give us an extension...have it in our mindset...it's not going to be like that in industry (Student 1.2).

The transition from first and second year dependence on the lecturer for support and approval to third year independence was also said to lead to lack of direction and laziness. Student 3.1 felt they were “babied a lot” and were “trained to seek the approval of the lecturer”. In third year, when they had to work by themselves, Student 3.1 said:

I think I lost my rhythm and became lazy...deadlines totally lapsed this year... I work really well to a deadline...extensions are good to a point; things got a bit haywire this year (Student 3.1).

Candy et al, (1994, cited in Boud, D. & Falchikov, N. 2006: 403) emphasise that if students are to be encouraged to be lifelong learners, they must be discouraged from any tendency towards an over-reliance on the opinions of others, which (Boud, & Falchilov (2006) interpret that if students are always influenced by the judgements of others, they may not acquire the broader set of skills that enable them to judge their own and others' work with confidence. Multi tasking and time management skills were emphasised as very important when working on multiple projects. Student 2.1 said that most of them did deliver on time:

Probably there would be two people who would not be on deadline...we are working on more than one project at a time and time management skills are very important...now, there are different projects [multi-tasking] and you have to submit on Monday, so you have to work your way (Student 2.1).

A student from the traditional university said:

I always meet deadlines because our deadlines are always strict. In the first few years, if you missed a deadline you'd get zero except if you had a decent excuse...they kind of forced us to be able to manage our time properly (Student 4.1).

This strict approach was said to have forced them to manage their time properly and also in fourth year in spite of having more freedom due to less contact sessions.

4.5.2 Tools: Hand and digital illustration

I now present and analyse academic student data with regard to the tools used by the graphic design students in the creation of illustration, hand-generated and digital. There is one sub-section that consists of the students' understanding their needs and abilities in terms of the importance of being able to work in a wide range of mediums in black and white and colour.

Black and white or colour: a personal preference or needs determined by cost factors and the end product; print or digital

Working in black and white or colour elicited mixed responses and personal preferences. "I don't really like black and white illustration" (Student 1.1), while others such as Student 3.1 felt more comfortable with colour, and guessed that one had "to be strong with form and scale" if one was working with black and white. Student 4.1 emphasised that if a design or an illustration worked in black and white, "then you know it's good...colour may just enhance it". The importance of working in black and white was further emphasised by Student 1.2 as a means of assisting one in determining special needs, in terms of getting to know the negative space and positive space "to get to know what you can fit in, where you need to fill in the space and things like that". Cost considerations were cited by Student 1.1 as a reason why they had restricted their colour palette in design because of printing costs in industry:

"Less colour is better ...we restrict our colour palette" (Student 1.1).

Wands (2000) claims that although the fundamentals of good design will always remain the same, the shift to the digital screen away from printed material makes it imperative for illustrators to stay abreast of new technologies, which will impact how they create and how audiences perceive their digital work. Student 2.1 said that they had worked in black and white when developing corporate identity and apart from working on greyscale storyboards (Student 2.2) said that they had received some knowledge of working in colour in earlier stages of the course.

4.5.3 Object: the ideal student/job candidate - standard of work

There are ten sub-sections that consist of the students' understanding of their need for preparation for industry and lastly the standard of work produced. Within these subsections, I present and analyse academic students' data with regard to the ideal student/job candidate in meeting the standard of work required by industry.

Defining illustration in relation to the workplace: a narrow or broad interpretation?

The varying views in the data on the meaning of the term illustration were highlighted by two polar opposite thoughts: firstly it was seen as putting together imagery to create a message, "to draw something in order to convey a meaning" (Student 1.1) to which Student 1.2 added saying an illustration is "something that cannot be photographed, that you can draw yourself". On the other end of the scale, Student 4.1 said it was "definitely broader than just drawing". "[You] can't say this is where illustration starts and this is where it ends" (Student 4.4). Student 4.2 saw it as a form of visual communication that communicates some sort of idea or thought or concept. Illustration was defined as a fine art piece but "done for commercial value" (Student 3.1) and was seen by Student 3.2 as a more expressive form of artwork that could be used for anything. "For me, illustration is more about taking an actual object and warping it to something that's still recognizable as an object, but stylized" (Student 3.5).

The fact that there were so many varying views on the meaning of the term illustration, suggests that the perceptions of graduating students would continue to evolve as they entered the workplace. Continuing education is one way to keep in touch with new developments in the world of design/illustration, regardless of one's level of expertise (Ball, 2003).

The following samples of illustration, Figures 4.1 – 4.6 represent some of the diversity of illustration mentioned above. Fig 4.1 is a representational pencil drawing that could be used in an advertisement and/or editorial magazine article. Fig 4.2 is an example of an illustration that has been linked to a community based project where the image is a digital representation of a wall of a crèche created as part of a presentation for a community outreach campaign. An emotive editorial image had been created in 4.3 where the expressive style emphasises the underlying spatial dynamics between people on trains. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 are both expressive hand-generated female portraits that have been created in two different mediums. Figure 4.4 has been created with expressive brushwork using contrasting colour whereas in Fig 4.5 the emphasis is on the textural look and feel of coloured beads. This creative, dynamic feel is further emphasised in Fig 4.6 where abstract

patterns and contrasting colours create an eye-catching illustration, which has been digitally created.



Figure 4.1: Representational illustration



Figure 4.2: Applied Community based illustration



Figure 4.3: Editorial expressive illustration



Figure 4.4: Expressive illustration



Figure 4.5: Mixed media illustration



Figure 4.6: Abstract pattern illustration

Determining the benefits of the drawing/illustration course: Students' confidence in hand and digital illustration and readiness for the real world

According to the data, most students felt the course had benefited them and were confident their hand and digital skills were ready for industry. Student 1.1 felt confident "because now my standard of drawing and illustrating matches up to what people are doing in industry". Student 3.1 thought it had been of benefit but it was because of their illustration skills. "I know a lot of people who can't really draw well, but they illustrate really well". Student 3.2 said, "we don't know as much as we should to create digital images that are purely from computers; you don't have to scan in anything, it doesn't look hand-drawn".

The lack of drawing ability wouldn't necessarily be a limitation according to Schenk (2005) who says computers and certain types of software give students and professional designers with limited drawing ability, the support to produce and present good concepts through visually convincing images that could not have been produced otherwise.

The benefit of the drawing/illustration programme was seen by Student 4.1 in the context of the whole graphic design programme where the influence of drawing on illustration and how one approaches illustration, influences ones design work; "I think it's very interlinked and everything you do has an influence on other subjects". This interlinking where the skills learnt to apply to one task can be adjusted and adapted for another is what Young (2006) determines as a sign of having acquired deeper knowledge and enables those who have learnt it to move beyond the confines of specific situations.

Although Student 4.1 felt very confident with hand skills and said they had used all the digital software programmes, he or she said, "I'd still be wary of working in an illustration company because I don't think I have the full scope of what the electronic media can do". Student 2.1, however, didn't feel the course had benefited them in every way:

I've just figured out I'm interested in illustrations, in hand-drawn stuff; in the third year and feel that I've missed something. I am a bit nervous about going into industry but I'm sure the skills we've learned will be sufficient enough for me to get employment (Student 2.1).

Student 2.2 said they hadn't been exposed to all the illustration trends in the graphic design industry; "we need to work on our strengths and that would equip us to go into the workplace". For those who lacked confidence and had a feeling of having missed out on learning certain illustrating skills, hand and digital, it would counter what Hitchen (2007) says that Illustrators need to be equipped with an increasingly broad range of technical skills.

Perceived importance of drawing in higher education and the value of well-executed scamps in the workplace

The data suggests that drawing is an important component in the education of both designer and illustrator. Student 4.1 determined that it could be in the form of educating and influencing "how you look at and perceive things...how things work together". This included giving one the ability to observe society and the target market and "a way you get your style" (Student 1.1) who added that the creation of scamps is "the way the whole concept starts; and "as the first part of design; it starts with the scamp in an idea, into concepts and then the

whole illustration". The importance of traditional drawing is supported by scholars such as Schenk (2005) who states that the ease and spontaneity of the traditional drawing systems are still valuable, if not vital, in the early planning stages of a design project. Figure 4.7 below is an example of a scamp done by a third year student in preparation for the final artwork in figure 4.8

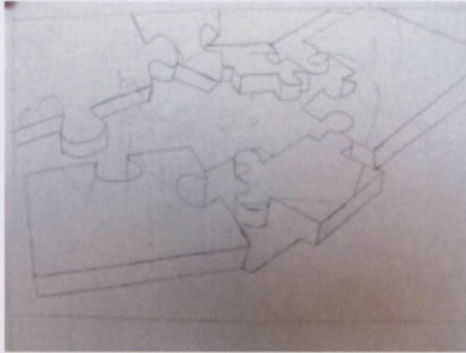


Figure 4.7: Pencil Scamp



Figure 4.8: Final artwork in gouache

Student 2.1 emphasised:

It's part of the process, and an important means of communication between you and the client where a good scamp would be so much easier for the client to understand where you're coming from (Student 2.1).

(Student 1.2) echoed the importance of scamps as a form of communication, "so they [your art director, lecturer] can see the way you think through observation". The importance of drawing as part of the concept phase was determined by Student 4.1 who said:

If you do want to go into the industry and do illustrations for magazines or packaging, then I think it is necessary to do well executed scamps...thumbnails, preliminary sketches are an important part of the process, definitely...sometimes you do something and it ends up being a final product (Student 4.1).

Scamps were also seen by Student 3.1 as "part of the creative process, [but] the level of your scamps should be that someone else should understand it visually without you having to explain it to them". "You can even take the hand drawn illustration and take it straight and trace it maybe digitally" (Student 2.3). Student 1.2 also felt drawing was a way "to understand

the light source” and it “teaches [one] to look at detail” (Student 1.3), which was echoed by Student 2.2 who determined:

The discipline of drawing itself, the concept of when we are drawing...observing, is very important for a graphic designer...not only observing the actual subject matter that we're drawing, but it will give us the ability to observe society and people, our target market (Student 2.2).

Student 1.1 made an interesting observation saying that they were not the same in drawing and creativity was not dependent on good or bad drawing. “Some people have bad drawings, other people have good drawings; those people with bad drawings turn out with the better designs in the end”. The student concluded saying “when your drawing is bad, some person will actually find it attractive to look at and be interested in it”. Salisbury (2004) says that in many ways, the activity of drawing from observation is merely a means to an end. The really important thing is how one processes the visual information that one has absorbed, and how imaginatively it is used.

Good communication skills for the workplace: Learning through giving presentations

The need for the students to give presentations of their work “in front of the class and the lecturers” and the added benefit of giving them in English was cited by Student 4.1 as a means to learning good communication skills and improving ones second language skills:

“I think that helps a lot [when encouraged to do presentations in English] because a lot of the big companies in industry are English because it's more universal”
(Student 4.1).

Dannels, Gaffney and Martin (2008) say that in a design context, in higher education, communication skills are learnt within the critique, which according to Alshare, Lane & Miller (2011), not only helps the students to understand the principles of design, but also provides clues as to the terminology used by designers.

The essential elements learned were that through using “constructive criticism, it taught everyone to stand up and say what you feel and think” (Student 1.1) and how to interpret and express why one had drawn something in a certain way and how one “sees different things in different artworks” (Student 1.2). “I have gained confidence standing in front of people and saying this is what I did and this is how I got to finish this product” (Student 2.1). For graduating students to be able to manage in the unpredictable work environment in the visual communications industry, Ball (2003) says a range of skills such as communication, interpersonal and teamwork attributes are essential.

Defining the needs of industry: working within the parameters of a brief versus open-ended briefs ... or innovation versus restriction

Adhering closely to a client's brief was determined important, but in some circumstances, if the client didn't really know what he or she wanted, adding to it within the general needs of the client was possible. Student 3.1 determined that it was a guideline that should be followed closely because "in industry, it's not your own stuff, you do it for a client, they have to be happy with it" and "if you misread your brief, things can go very wrong" (Student 2.1). Student 1.2 made an interesting observation that sometimes clients didn't really know what they wanted so as a designer, one could sometimes "add some more stuff for him to think about, so you can actually interpret the brief in your own way but at the same time keeping what he wants".

A student felt they were too restricted in terms of pushing boundaries and the opportunity to work with open-ended briefs would have been beneficial. Although agreeing that one could lose a client by not adhering to a brief, Student 2.2 would have liked to have done open-ended briefs because:

Sometimes you feel that you are restricted in so many ways and if you are allowed to push the boundaries you can do much more and improve your design, but now you're so restricted to try things. Sometimes we were too restricted (Student 2.2).

Student 4.1 said "I think it depends on the client... open ended briefs are very nice for growth and creativity". According to Student 3.1, "In industry, it's not your own stuff, you do it for a client, they have to be happy with it", but in terms of the importance of being given open ended briefs, responded saying, "Ya it helps...you can see innovative stuff in industry and not the same stuff, over and over".

Student 4.2 said that during their fourth year, the lecturers hadn't given them any briefs, so they had to come up with their own project, which ran for the whole year and because they had to think of smaller sub-sections and it was completely open, "it really taught us to design our own brief". Open-ended and student-led projects should be used to increase students' intrinsic motivation and allow for personal engagement; an emphasis on heuristic tasks encourages productive rather than reproductive thinking (Dineen, Samuel & Livesey, 2005).

However, according to Student 4.3, independent projects still required structure in helping one meet deadlines:

Even in independent projects, it's important to know beforehand what your aims are, what you're working towards otherwise you'd never get anything done (Student 4.3).

Researching the work of professional illustrators: setting new benchmarks through research

According to the students' data, research was emphasised as an important part of the process of generating artwork, but was executed in different ways and at different stages by the students. It was a way for students to expose themselves to what illustrators are doing both nationally and internationally.

Student 2.1 emphasised that research was not to copy, but to "get the feeling of what the person [illustrator] was going with and what they were trying to explain to the viewer...just getting that feel and incorporating that into your own style". Student 2.2 saw research as the starting point, the foundation of what one's work was going to look like; "no research, no basis, no starting point". The need to research, to see what had been done, was according to (Student 2.3), "a way to improve one's style and give it that personal edge; that's how I use research as a tool".

Student 3.2 said that the lecturers had shown them different styles and they'd had to do their own research; however, Student 3.1 emphasised, "I don't think I've researched a style that would relate to how I draw". Student 1.1 said they did research for history where they wrote an essay and critiqued the style of an illustrator:

Each person had to do an essay on any contemporary artist out there, Postmodernism (Student 1.1).

The balance between practical and theoretical knowledge is supported by Heller and Fernandes (1995) who say a broad understanding of history provides a foundation of social, cultural and political knowledge that is frequently required in illustration briefs; there is a desperate need for illustrators who are not only art specialists with a narrow focus, but are well trained and well read artists.

The subject professional practice: prepared or unprepared for the real world?

The overall feeling of the students was that their exposure to the subject professional practice or industrial psychology hadn't prepared them for running their own business or for operating as a freelancer. Student 2.2 was emphatic that no information was received, for example, on "how to find a job or set up a CV". Student 2.3 said "we just know how to design and illustrate and submit work...we've learnt a little theory" to which Student 2.4 responded,

stressing that “at third year level we should have been exposed to how would we go about charging [clients]”. Student 3.1 echoed this lack of readiness for the workplace saying, “It was a huge disappointment...on the business side I’m lacking” and emphasized that the business knowledge required would have to come from contacts in industry.

This lack of business knowledge is counter to what research reveals is important. According to Blackwell & Harvey (1999, cited in Mason, Williams & Cranmer, 2006:7), because of the highly competitive economic environment that the students enter, in many small enterprises, they’re required to have a range of management and business skills as well as technical proficiency in design. Student 1.2 said that one could rather do freelance later in life:

When you've learnt from industry what really goes on...we do learn a lot in PDP but it wouldn't be straight after tech and then be a freelancer. If you're capable then you can, but if you still need more experience and knowledge about that field, you need to go and work somewhere [first] (Student 1.2).

This lack of business knowledge and experience is opposite to what Ball (2003) says is important. She emphasises that for graduates are able to manage in an unpredictable work environment, they need an understanding of the world of work, some commercial awareness and an appreciation of work culture.

Student 4.1 said that although they’d had industrial psychology in second and third year, which was the only business orientated subject they had been exposed to, “it was very broad...it didn’t go into specifics...how much to charge [a client]”. “We were encouraged to do an internship to get us to go into the industry...to see how it works...a class in that [business skills] would be nice” (Student 4.2).

Keeping up with the continuous changes: a journey toward lifelong learning

The students were unanimous that because of continuous changes in technology one would have to keep up-to-date. “You’ve got to keep yourself updated with what’s going on otherwise you’re going to be left behind” (Student 4.1). Student 2.1 emphasised, “We’ve been made aware you constantly need to be aware of the changes and keep up with them...you have to be where the trends are”. “The more you learn, the better you are...it’s good to update yourself, to know what’s happening in the world in design and illustration” (Student 1.1). This view toward lifelong learning is emphasised by Hellen & Fernandes (1995) who say graduation from art school is only the beginning of a long journey and stress that education should not be limited to academies or institutions, but should be a process that continues throughout a career, especially with all the advances in technology that continue to alter the

fundamental practice of illustration. Therefore it is imperative for the graduated student to keep adding to the store of knowledge by keeping abreast of and experiencing new developments while continuing to refresh old skills (Hellen & Fernandes, 1995).

Portfolio preparation: experimentation and development of a style – gateway to the future

Most students said they had experimented with a variety of mediums and styles, both hand and digital. (Student 1.1) determined they'd experimented with a variety of mediums and styles, both hand and digital "to show the client I can do all types of styles". Upon graduation, a student should be able to draw or paint (hand or digitally) more or less proficiently, conceptualize intelligently and have a portfolio that highlights these abilities (Heller & Fernandes, 1995).

Student 3.1 said that in spite of the fact that the year had been "a bit chaotic" with more than one lecturer, they'd experimented with a wide variety of styles during the year. Emphasis was made that during second year there was a link between having one lecturer, where:

Even though he'd changed the projects, there was definitely a style that we developed, which I liked because we could find our style. This year's been a destruction of our style, which is not bad because we can then carry on building it [new styles] (Student 3.1).

Student 2.1 said, "we've just developed a personal style...focus on one style", while Student 4.1 said they'd done enough different kinds of artwork and "you do develop your own style, adding that one could apply it in different ways; "[we] will be able to apply it to designs and illustrations that do look different". This adaptability, according to Young (2006) is a sign of having acquired deeper knowledge and enables those who have learnt it to move beyond the confines of specific situations where the skills learnt to apply to one task can be adjusted and adapted for another.

Specialising in illustration; Sufficient or insufficient knowledge of how to source freelance work on entering the world of work

According to the data, the students felt that if they specialized in illustration, they had insufficient knowledge of where and how to source freelance illustration work or how to market themselves on entering the world of work. Student 1.1 felt that "to do freelance work, you need to go to industry first and know where everything is". "I don't think in this course we know how to market ourselves in term of illustration" (Student 1.2). This lack of knowledge is contrary to Heller and Fernandes (1995) who say a student should learn both in and out of

an academic environment adding that it is never too later to enter the classroom and never too early to experience the real world.

However, the Internet was cited by Student 3.2 and Student 4.1 as a potential source of information and Student 4.2 confidently said "they have skills to quickly find out when necessary". "Networking is very important to get to know people...to discover new things" (Student 4.3). This ability to be resourceful is supported by Harvey et al (1997, cited in Harvey, 2000:8) who say one of the important things employers want of students is for them to have the ability to find things out. In contrast to this, Student 2.2 felt that they should be "provided with the basic network...like if you're looking for this specific kind of job or want to go in this direction, these are places you can go to". Student 2.3 emphasized that what was needed was closer collaboration with industry:

For industry to have a closer relationship with the university because you find in other courses that, for example, in electrical engineering, they're close with Eskom; they're working together. We don't have that. When we go out of school, we have to figure it out on our own, where to go, which places to go to find jobs and all of that (Student 2.3).

Illustration was cited as a subject where the students hadn't built any connections with industry. "We haven't done any live briefs...just for what it's like for industry. For our other subjects, we have done some live briefs, its just illustration [where we haven't]" (Student 3.4). Apart from been given a freelancers' website, (Student 3.3) said, "we were told a lot of the time, there's little work, there's little work".

The above lack of exposure in illustration to industry through live, industry generated briefs is opposite to Buchanan (1998) who stresses that if flexibility in both higher education and industry has become an important development with the new technologies, so too has the need for collaboration between industry and higher education become a cornerstone in preparing students for industry.

4.5.4 Standard of work

A selection of artwork was made randomly from third year students at three Universities of technology and fourth year students at a traditional university and the students' artwork is analysed in rubrics (See appendices c-i) with regard to: (Subjects) Overall proficiency of Illustration skills, (Tools) use of black and white or colour (quality of tonal variation, contrast, spot colour or contrasting, complementary colour); quality of application of hand, digital or combined generated artwork, (Object) creativity, conceptual skills; communication of concept

through drawing, proportion, distortion. The rubrics are combined with the workplace findings.

In terms of skills, the higher education artwork demonstrates a good level of proficiency with the exception of an airways instructional graphic and promotional illustration in the form of a CD cover and a pizza box. The students demonstrate a good understanding and appropriate use of colour, both subtle and contrasting (complementary) indicating a general alignment and readiness for the workplace.

In terms of quality of application of media used in hand, digital or a combination of both, the artwork is competent. In the promotional illustration analysis of Fig 4.9, 4.10 and 4.12, the students generally demonstrate a sophistication in their use of chosen media and excellent use of colour which is in direct contrast to the pizza box (Fig 4.11) and the CD cover (Fig4.13) that are unsophisticated in terms of the use of the chosen media and use of colour and therefore not at the level required by industry. In contrast to Fig 4.11, the second pizza box illustration Fig 4.12 demonstrates the required criteria. Versatility and consistency of application are important factors determining the successful career of an illustrator.



Figure 4.9: Packaging illustration
Digital illustration



Figure 4.10: Point of sale and carrier bag illustration
Digital illustration



Figure 4.11: Pizza box illustration
Hand illustration



Figure 4.12: Pizza box illustration
Digital illustration



Figure 4.13: CD cover 1: The greatest Jazz
Hand illustration

Higher education artwork is original on average with some exceptions such as poster illustration (Fig 4.13 and 4.14), book illustration (Fig 4.15 and Fig 4.16), editorial illustration (Fig 4.17) and CD cover illustration (Fig 4.18) that reflect uniqueness.



Figure 4.14: Poster 1



Figure 4.15: Poster 2



Figure 4.16: Children's book illustration



Figure 4.17: Children's book illustration



Figure 4.18: Editorial illustration

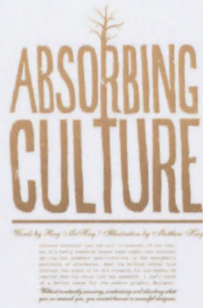


Figure 4.19: CD cover 2

Versatile drawing skills

Although the drawing skills of the higher education samples are generally good and communicate the intended concept well, there are areas of average ability. Versatile drawing skills are essential to the process of communicating concepts, both hand or digitally or a combination of both. An illustrator working digitally, apart from the ability to trace images using software, needs to have excellent drawing skills so he or she can confidently add character to the drawings or heighten tonalities, for example. The good drawing skills in Fig 4.20 are confidently applied digitally in Fig 2.1 and demonstrate a sound knowledge of tonal variation and contrast. In Fig 4.22, the digitally generated drawing skills are sophisticated in application, which is lacking in Fig 4.23 where apart from an attempt at stylistic relevance, the drawing skills demonstrated are not of industry standard. In Fig 4.24, the drawing skills that are demonstrated in the CD cover are lacking with regard to proportion and knowledge of greyscale tonal values.



Figure 4.20: Pencil drawing for poster



Figure 4.21: Digitally applied drawing

the year that when a lecturer had briefed them for a project, “another lecturer could have helped us in the process; they haven’t communicated”.

Student 4.1 emphasised that overlapping of deadlines rarely happened, but, “if they did, then the lecturers were very lenient with them, especially theory lecturers” and because in fourth year, they already knew how important deadlines were, they could work within the constraints of what they are doing at that moment knowing; “it’s not as important to meet our theory deadlines as our practical deadlines” (Student 4.1). Student 4.2 felt that the lecturers did structure the deadlines, as they “don’t have a graphics and illustration deadline at the same time”.

The linking of illustration projects to other subjects

The students varied in their response with regard to linking illustration projects to other disciplines such as communications design: some said only certain disciplines were linked while others emphasised they were encouraged to combine everything from design and illustration to linking their theory with graphics.

Student 1.1 determined that most projects such as “design and communication are linked” where communication was seen as a unifying factor. Student 3.1 said there had been interlinking of some projects, which was in contrast to Student 4.1 who emphasised because it was very interdisciplinary and they were encouraged to combine everything, their illustration projects sometimes “end up looking more like graphics projects almost”. The skills learnt to apply to one task could be adjusted and adapted for another. Young (2006) emphasises that this adaptability is a sign of having acquired deeper knowledge and enables those who have learnt it to move beyond the confines of specific situations. Student 4.2 elaborated on how interlinked their practical and theory subjects were saying:

In fourth year you are expected to link your theory with your graphics as well as you can. For example, you have to do an article for a final theory project and they encourage you to use what you have done...use the same research base for your theory and practical or the same topics (Student 4.2).

Student 4.3 emphasised that through interdisciplinary studies:

We do Photography and phil studies...we work with a much broader field than just illustration and that helps our illustration greatly because it gets influences from outside from the other things that we touch on (Student 4.3).

By being exposed to subjects such as literature, sociology or history, the student will have a better understanding of the subjects and themes that an illustrator will encounter in a majority of assignments. By being familiar with literature, for example, the student or illustrator in professional practice will be exposed to centuries of metaphor, allegory and symbol, which when translated into imagery is the foundation for strong visual ideas (Heller & Fernandes, 1995).

Exploring creativity through experimentation and real world tasks

The data reflects that most students felt the lecturers had encouraged them to explore their creativity and while a student saw their creativity stifled by lecturers perceived subjectivity, others felt in illustration, they had been encouraged to experiment and explore different scamping ideas, general mark making and media exploration. Student 2.1 unhesitatingly emphasized that the course was driven by the whole creative process, "trying to get us into the mindset of being creative; every piece of work needs us to put our most creative concepts". Although Student 3.1 thought they had been encouraged, there was also a strong feeling of frustration because of the lecturers' perceived subjectivity:

You may sometimes feel that they are stunting your creativity because they want it done in a certain way...most of the time, I've felt very lucky to be on the same page as the lecturers and get my creativity out there without feeling too criticized by them (Student 3.1).

The above reference to excess lecturer control is contrary to Dineen, Samuel & Livesey (2005) who say the majority of the lecturers in a research survey added that the ultimate aim of the partnership is student independence, through facilitating and building their confidence to express themselves as individuals rather than seeing the world through the eyes of the lecturer. Bull & Montgomery (1995) confirm the need for student independence and recommend that a climate be established in which students feel safe and free to explore their creative potential. Student 4.2 determined that all through their studies:

[They] really encouraged you to explore, especially with illustration; if you made scribbles on a piece of paper and wanted to throw it away they'd say no, use that maybe...they do encourage you to let go (Student 4.2).

Gillham and McGilp (2007) support the use of a visual diary which they claim develops the student's discipline of thinking through ideas, allowing him or her to grow, and adjustments to be made and importantly it develops the ability and openness to be self-critical. They stress that the main pedagogical case is that the continuous, meticulous recording and analysis

involved makes practitioners who are able to observe their progress more closely and in turn come to understand their practice better.

Student 4.3 thought that they had had a lot of opportunities to experiment “in terms of ideas and media as well. We're lucky that we have the resources that we have here...silk-screening, different techniques of illustration to experiment.” Student 2.2 felt that the projects that were given to them were projects they could easily relate to because they “are happening in the world...a real world context”, which Student 2.1 emphasized was important in terms of the briefs they got, which should be almost parallel to what was happening in industry “so we can get a feel for what is required of us when we leave”.

The access to resources and real world projects that were cited as a motivating factor is supported by Wenger, (1999, cited in Reid & Solomonides, 2007: 37) who says design tasks and briefs should be very carefully set in such a way as to allow the students to engage with learning and their subject passionately and meaningfully, thereby providing a link to the professional community of designers.

A supportive role within a multi-lingual environment: understanding briefs

The students felt that they had either received sufficient support from the lecturers in terms of understanding the briefs or they had found their own research methods of ensuring they understood the meanings of all the words.

“I do understand all the briefs because I read them again and again” (Student 1.1) or as Student 4.1 put it, “you had to research all the words and techniques and lingo that's used in the brief that you're busy with”. Student 1.2 said the lecturers explained the briefs to them; “If there are questions, we ask; we've never had a problem with not understanding”. However, sometimes through misinterpretation, student 1.3 found that the work he or she had generated and handed in was different to what everyone else had done. Student 3.1, however, emphasised that because there were some bi-lingual lecturers, “they interpreted [the briefs for us] quite well.

Due to the language problems associated with a multi-lingual environment, Rose et al (2003) say that learning must therefore be developmental in a differentiated way, meeting the students' level and in a safe non-judgmental environment helping both the competent and the struggling students to feel valued and challenged to grow. They emphasise that the struggling student still feels important in spite of his or her barriers to learning and the resultant slowness. It is important that the teacher explains each section of an assessment task (brief) clearly using a scaffolding methodology while the students listen and then practice or apply this information and with on going support eventually become independent.

Impact of size of classes on contact time with lecturers: advice versus facilitation of projects and student independence, maximizing creativity

The classes were seen as anything from medium sized to big and really big, but consistently the students thought the lecturers had given them sufficient attention, determining too much would have adversely affected their decision making and creativity. Student 1.1 said “sometimes [they] give us the attention we need” and Student 1.2 responded saying the lecturers left it up to the students to approach them and “if around, they come to you”. Student 3.1 felt that in spite of riots and having different illustration lecturers with the resultant time differences between them and having struggled to get to see them, it was good. Student 3.2 emphasised:

This year, because of the times, I've had so much freedom because I've never been able to connect with a lecturer for enough time... I've fallen back on my own intuitiveness...has been interesting for me to see I've taken less direction from the lecturer and still felt confident (Student 3.2).

The students' reflection above on the positive aspects of student independence is supported by Elton (2006) who claims that a curriculum, designed to encourage creativity, must hand over a high proportion of the responsibility of learning to students in contrast to the traditional roles where teachers are responsible for teaching and students for learning. The new way, he says, is an environment where the students initiate the learning process and are supported by their teachers who take the role of facilitators of learning. The need for student independence is supported by Dineen, Samuel & Livesey (2005) who say it's important for creative success and the students' personal education aims include taking risks in order to develop their creativity and push boundaries by thinking outside of the box.

Student 2.2 made an important observation that although they had been given sufficient attention, “the system we've been exposed to hasn't made us feel have to rely on the lecturer by first considering what they think instead of thinking on ones own”. “If the client doesn't know what he or she wants and they give you the opportunity to come up with the concept, for me, it's really difficult then, your client telling you I want this and this” (Student 2.4). Dineen, Samuel & Livesey (2005) emphasise the importance of facilitating and building the students' confidence to express themselves as individuals rather than seeing the world through the eyes of the lecturer.

Student 4.1 felt that the classes weren't too small where one would be given too much attention and said, “There's enough space to go on your own, but it's small enough to have

sufficient contact time". The contact time sessions according to Student 4.2 varied where they consisted of "a wide range of focus group, individual things, big group crits, and the whole class". Student 4.3 said:

Often you are afraid to go on, but it's not that you can't see the lecturer when you have to, [you are] encouraged to go on and experiment...it's not necessary to go to each contact session...get more freedom as the years move on" (Student 4.3).

4.5.6 Division of labour

In the graphic design faculty, communication between the lecturer and students was seen as a two way process rather than the traditional lecturer centred approach to teaching: "it's not a guy just standing there talking to you, it's much more conversation, I think that helps a lot". This traditional design-teaching approach is confirmed by Harvey (2000) who claims that to empower learners, an approach is required that treats students as intellectual performers rather than students who respond as a non-participating and questioning audience. He emphasises that this transforms teaching and learning into an active process, which enables students to go beyond the narrow confines of their academic discipline to applying themselves to whatever they encounter in the post-education world.

4.5.7 Rules of behaviour

Design studio rules: enforcement or student accountability

Rules for accountability, non-attendance, punctuality and respecting others' space or opinions in the design studio were important but not at the expense of a relaxed atmosphere. Some students felt the need to be in a relaxed environment where one could talk and laugh; for example, Student 1.3 said, "I wouldn't be able to be in a place where everyone is tense everyday". Student 3.1 saw this form of student engagement as students helping one another and having fun in the process; "the work does get finished...if you don't like the noise, you can just use the next studio".

The fact that some students got the brief and stayed away for a week or more while others worked in the studio and still get ninety-five per cent for their project was seen by Student 2.1 as a form of unfairness by the institution and emphasized that rules were very important because if someone didn't know where to draw the line it could jeopardize your productivity. "Maybe you develop a certain work ethic and if somebody disrupts that, it can jeopardise your work".

Student 1.1 felt that respect for other people and their opinions was a basic principle of life, which was echoed by Student 1.2 who said, "It applies to every occupation; you have to be punctual as well". Student 4.1 also saw rules of behaviour as important because non-attendance showed "you've got to take responsibility for yourself".

Design studio rules: similarities and differences to the workplace

Respecting deadlines, professionalism, accountability and self-discipline were cited as very important. Some students saw the rules in the design studio and the workplace as similar. Student 3.1 emphasised that "a deadline should be a deadline", and agreed that there should be penalties for late submissions, but contradicted the statement saying:

I'm glad they never manifest the penalties...there are certain people who never hand in their work on the deadline...if you enter industry it's unacceptable...needs to be not that high school punishment system...we need to leave with the mindset that even if the institution was lax, we need to step into the role of the real world (Student 3.1).

This view on the need for taking responsibility for ones action was voiced by Student 3.3 who as a result of having done an internship in an agency saw it as a free environment, but one in which one took responsibility and exercised the self discipline required when working in a team. "Some discipline [is an] important part of [our] mindset on leaving varsity". Student 4.1 who had also done an internship, felt that the environment was "very similar". "You know you have to work hard; everyone knows they have to put in that time". Student 2.2 said, "I think that the set-up of our classroom [is similar to] a studio...it's a basic outline of what it would be like, so I think it's important that the system is [design rules are] in place".

However, Student 3.2 felt that in terms of coming in everyday, it wasn't necessary for everybody because as a freelance illustrator, you wouldn't have to see clients daily:

Some people are productive in different ways. Some people really can't work at Tech; [they] like working at home in their spaces. In industry it might work like that as well...it's relative to the type of illustrator you are and the client that you have (Student 3.2).

The above claim by student 3.2 to the fact that it is not necessary for all students to attend class everyday is contrary to educationalist Ferry (2000) who says that if his illustration students are going to make it in the highly competitive and talented world of illustration, they need to be disciplined too. As a result, one should have high expectations of students and expect regular attendance. Each class is a necessary educational experience in the

development of course subject matter and class participation is one of the considerations by which they are graded (Ferry, 2000).

4.5.8 Summary of the main points of the student interview data

The student interview data above emphasises that the ability to persevere and to accept criticism of their work by the lecturer and future art director is important. Some students felt that there had been limited exposure to certain hand and digital illustration while others emphasised that they were exposed to a broad range of techniques, both hand and digital. In terms of a developmental progression of drawing and illustration skills from foundation/first to third/fourth year, the overall feeling was that they had improved in a number of ways such as improved conceptual ability through greater awareness of history of art and the link to visual culture; the power of simplification; more styles of drawing and working with scamps and colour. Lapsing deadlines for students not coping was cited as a contributing factor in demotivating students who met deadlines who said extensions weren't going to happen in industry. The jump between first and second year dependence on the lecturers' opinion and approval and third year greater independence was said to be too great and also a demotivating factor. Multi tasking and time management skills were emphasised as very important.

With regard to tools, working in black and white or colour elicited mixed responses and personal preferences. Some students didn't like black and white illustration while others felt more comfortable with colour.

The varied views of the term Illustration elicited varied responses where it could be an image or concept put together to convey a message with an emphasis on the fact that it had to be drawn and could not be photographed. This view was countered where it was broader than just drawing or in turn an expressive or stylised piece of artwork that could be used for anything.

According to the data, most students felt the course had benefited them and were confident their hand and digital skills were ready for industry. The benefit of the drawing/illustration programme was also seen in the context of the whole graphic design programme where the influence of drawing on illustration and how one approaches illustration has an influence on other subjects. However, some students expressed a lack of confidence and experience in all aspects of electronic media or hand illustration and were therefore felt they were not fully confident and prepared for industry.

Drawing was seen as an important aspect of a designers and illustrator's education with regard to communicating a concept to a client through the scamping phase. It was also seen as an important part of the process of observing the actual subject, which gave them the ability to observe society and people, their target market. Giving presentations was cited as a way of developing confidence through learning good communication skills and improving ones second language skills.

The ability to adhere to a client's brief and add to it if necessary was emphasised as important, but certain students felt they were restricted in terms of pushing boundaries and emphasised that open-ended briefs were good for growth and creativity. Added to the importance of creativity was the importance of research as a way of exposing students to what students were doing both nationally and internationally in terms of styles. Emphasis was made that research was an essential component of creating a foundation on which to build.

There was an emphasis on inadequate knowledge of the business skills required of freelance illustrators and designers in industry. On the whole, the subject Professional Practice had not prepared the students. To keep up with the continuous changes in technology, there was unanimous agreement that one would have to keep-up-to-date through lifelong learning. Most students had exposure to and had experimented with a number of mediums and styles, both hand and digital. A student made an interesting observation that the different styles could be applied in different ways to different designs and illustrations. According to the data the students entering the world of work had insufficient knowledge of how to source freelance work and how to market themselves.

With regard to community of practice, overlapping deadlines due to a lack of communication between lecturers was seen as problematic in terms of creating the need for extensions. Where there was communication between lecturers at the traditional university, the students said that the theory lectures were lenient with deadlines to accommodate the more important practical deadlines. This communication between lecturers was also heightened and seen as a unifying factor when a number of subjects were interlinked. Reference was made that at the traditional university because the course was very interdisciplinary they were encouraged to combine everything, which they felt helped the overall standard of illustration due to the multiple exposure to outside influences.

The lecturers were said to have encouraged them to explore their creativity; however, reference was made to the stifling of creativity by certain lecturers' perceived subjectivity. Access to resources and real world projects were cited as a motivating factor and within a

multi-lingual environment most students with ESL issues had either received extra support from the lecturers or had found their own methods of ensuring they had understood all the briefs. Some misinterpretation of briefs resulted in the handing in of work that was not aligned to the stipulated requirements. The overall feeling was that although there was both sufficient and insufficient contact time with the lecturer, the students were in most cases encouraged to be independent in their thinking, which in turn increased their confidence.

In terms of the division of labour, emphasis was made on the balance between a lecturer and student centred approach. Equally important, was the need for respecting deadlines, professionalism, accountability and self-discipline.

The head of department and lecturer interview data now follows the student interview data.

4.6 Individual interviews with Heads of Department and third and fourth year graphic design and Illustration lecturers

4.6.1 Lectures understanding of students: balancing discipline and creativity

I now present and analyse academic staff interview data from three Universities of technology and a traditional university, which include interviews with graphic design heads of department, graphic design lecturers and illustration lecturers. I have defined the head of dept as (HoD), the illustration lecturer as (Illus lecturer) and the graphic design lecturer as (GD lecturer).

For reasons of confidentiality, I have put heads of departments and programme heads or coordinators into the same category. For convenience all are referred to as heads of department (HoDs). I have combined the head of departments', graphic design lecturers' and illustration lecturers' data because of the close similarity between the interview questions.

There are six sub-divisions in this section, namely: 1) HoDs and lecturers' understandings of the students, 2) the illustration tools that students have been exposed to, 3) HoDs and lecturers' understanding of learning objectives, 4) HoDs and lecturers' understanding of the graphic design studio/classroom as a communities of practice, 5) division of labour in the studio/classroom, and 6) the rules (both explicit and implicit) of the studio/classroom.

HoDs and Lecturers' understanding of the students' needs and their abilities

GD Lecturer 2 felt the students were generally able to persevere, which was partly driven by their personal drive and interest in the project at hand, but emphasised, "they don't have that choice in the real world". GD Lecturer 3 said, "they are forced to persevere in order to pass"

also emphasising that the students who made it to third year were quite serious about their careers.

Illus Lecturer 2 said, "A high percentage of students are not able to persevere on their own. Their self esteem is very low and they do require spoon feeding". Allen (2004) stresses that an important factor in the learning process is the building and nurturing of self-esteem, which he determines is the generator of performance. Illus Lecturer 1 felt it depended on personality:

You find some students collapse under pressure and others thrive on it; they love the buzz...it's very difficult to make a blanket statement...it depends on the individual (Illus Lecturer 1).

GD Lecturer 1 said, "Often the students that are a little more insecure who don't tend to come and see you; they don't often work on the criticism that they get". With regard to good communication skills among students, Illus Lecturer 2 felt that "many students, particularly English second language speakers, needed confidence building and more positivity".

The importance of a broad range of illustration projects: students' understanding of the brief and communication skills

Lecturers felt that it was important for students to tackle a broad range of projects and be exposed to what Tselentis (2006) calls solving problems of contextualised visual communication through creative processing and research. Illus lecturer 3 determined:

There are different skills that are needed to do commercial illustration...one is that you can have your own style and expression, but you need to be able to follow a brief...you can have a very distinct signature but you should be able to adapt to any brief to be able to have a long career as an illustrator...a lot of the students really struggle with that (Illus lecturer 3).

The HoDs interviewed underlined the importance of the brief, and of the students' understanding of it. Clear briefs and extra support for second language speakers were cited as important. Wenger, (1999, cited in Reid & Solomonides, 2007: 37) says by setting design tasks and briefs in such a way as to allow students to engage with learning and their subject meaningfully and passionately, a link is created to the professional community of designers. This suggests the importance of collaboration with industry led projects, which exposed the students to terminology used in the workplace.

Because many students did not speak English as a first language, HoD 1, felt that through industry contact, where the brief is developed through a collaborative process with the students, discussions develop where they are exposed to how the terminology is used in a real world context. An example of students lacking the burning desire to excel is expressed by Illus Lecturer 3 who said, “the students squandered the opportunity to enhance their communication skills by not taking a presentation seriously, which was in the form of presenting their initial thinking and receiving class feedback”.

In a design context in higher education, Dannels, Gaffney and Martin (2008) say that communication skills are learned within the critique, which is a communication event in which the students present their designs or illustrations and staff (lecturers and/or members from industry) and students provide valuable feedback. The importance of the critique is echoed by Alshare, Lane & Miller (2011) who say that by providing feedback to the student, it not only helps the students to understand the principles of design, but also provides clues as to the terminology used by designers.

Because of language difficulties, which created challenges in terms of the communication barriers between staff and students, HoD 2 felt that it was up to both lecturer and student to ensure that there was adequate communication, which was emphasised by GD Lecturer 2 who made time after the session for anybody who didn't understand.

Exposure to a broad range of illustration skills: Limited or unlimited exposure

The lecturers felt the students were and should be exposed to a broad range of illustration skills, both hand and digital. The illustration lecturers agreed that there was a need for gauging the students' strengths and previous levels of ability with regard to both hand-rendered and digital illustration, without limiting the students to any particular type of illustration. In terms of whether the students' exposure to different types of illustration was limited or constricted in any way, the lectures response varied.

Illus Lecturer 3 felt that the students weren't limited because “they had three illustration lecturers throughout the year so they did get exposed to quite a variety of styles...hand rendered, digital and what they felt like doing”. Illus Lecturer 4 felt that the students were exposed to a wide range of illustration techniques, although these were not client driven. Students' exposure could also be compromised by outside distractions in the form of competitions, which limited the time required to cover a broad range of techniques (Illus Lecturer 2). According to Illus lecturer 1, the students' exposure to both hand and digital illustration was an important part of their training but the need varied.

Male (2007) echoes the importance of practical skills such as rendering techniques and digital, new technology based skills but emphasises they must be encountered early in the students' development. Illus Lecturer 1 also emphasised that depending on the students' strengths, the lecturers could "guide them in the direction they need to go" or, as Illus lecturer 2 determined, they could actively choose to put more emphasis on hand-skills as a way of countering what might be an imbalance between the two applications where their digital-skills were of a higher standard. Illus Lecturer 3 who said, "Throughout the projects, it was very much a balance of both", confirmed this need for balance. Illus Lecturer 4 explained:

The integration of hand- and digital illustration was promoted in the subject area called 'Interdisciplinary Visual Studies' (not illustration) where the students could do film, photomontage, animation and so on (Illus Lecturer 4).

Hitchen (2007) supports a multi disciplinary approach saying that illustrators need to be equipped with an increasingly broad range of technical skills both hand and digital, where for example if artwork is destined for the Internet, being able to add movement in the form of animation can be an important bonus.

More exposure to the fundamentals of drawing and conceptual thinking and time to explore and experiment was emphasised as important for undergraduate students before reaching their final year and ultimately the workplace where time for learning new skills became scarce.

Because they don't do drawing in fourth year, HoD 4 said, "the undergraduate drawing course could be more rigorously structured...with conventional elements like object drawing, and character development". HoD 1 said it varied from student to student where the better ones had put effort into learning illustration because of "the level of interest the student had in that field". "The students who had elected to specialize in illustration would have explored illustration in a number of different contexts" (HoD 3). GD Lecturer 2 said:

Because in industry you don't have the time to train yourself, it's really just using what you've got, the tools that you've learnt over the years and you've got to run. The students need more time to explore, experiment and be encouraged to be more conceptual in their thinking; "this [institution] is the best place to apply it (GD Lecturer 2).

The need to be contemporary and original using both hand and digital skills

In the teaching of illustration, the HoDs and Graphic design lecturers varied in what they thought was important. HoD 1 emphasized that the students had to generate their own imagery: photography or illustrated material. This need for originality was also stressed by HoD 4 who said the students weren't allowed to use computer effects and filters because "we teach students to push boundaries and to be challenging". He also emphasized that in the fourth year the students come into contact with industry and it was important to try and have ones work published. A student should learn in and out of an academic environment; it is never too early to experience the real world (Heller & Fernandes, 1995). HoD 3 felt:

The lecturer teaching illustration should be working as a freelance illustrator because he or she would need to understand what good illustration is... to understand what's contemporary... referring them to the best of contemporary illustration (HoD 3).

The need for exposure to contemporary illustration was echoed by GD Lecturer 3 who emphasised that third year is a time when students "start fine tuning their conceptual skills and personalised styles" in a manner that is contemporary and "communicates to a specific target audience".

Students' readiness for the 'real world'

Commercial illustration demands a balance between addressing a client's brief and being creative: "you can have your own style and expression, but you need to be able to follow a brief" (Illus Lecturer 3). This balance between encouraging creativity through allowing the students to create own themes and topics and other projects where "they are more strictly confined" was echoed by (Illus Lecturer 2).

Illus Lecturer 1, however, who also felt that at third year level it was important that the students have a space to develop their own voice through playful experimentation and determining their own audience, emphasised that the projects had to "to matter"[within a] "real world context". This need for balance is supported by Tselentis (2006) who says projects should demonstrate both a practical understanding of established methodologies as well as self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems. Elton (2006) emphasises that a curriculum, designed to encourage creativity, must hand over a high proportion of the responsibility of learning to students in contrast to the traditional roles where teachers are responsible for teaching and students for learning. The new way, he says, is an environment where the students initiate the learning process and are supported by their teachers who take the role of facilitators of learning.

Most of the lecturers emphasised the need for contextuality, although Illus Lecturer 4 felt a 'real world context' was not always necessary. Like Illus Lecturer 1, Lecturer 4 felt that the students had to articulate their concepts to ensure that they were relevant within the chosen context.

In response to whether the drawing, illustration skills the students had progressively learnt from foundation to third year had sufficiently equipped them for industry, Illus Lecturer 1 felt the skills in the class were diverse; she found that, for some in third year, there were gaps in their skills and knowledge. For example, some could draw from reference, but not from imagination while others were too 'end product orientated'. Illus Lecturer 2 felt that there were too many third year students who were not of third year standard and as a result were insufficiently equipped for industry. Illus Lecturer 3 felt that the group had an advanced scamping ability while Illus Lecturer 4, had the opposite opinion; she reflected that although they had definitely had the training, often their scamps weren't up to standard. The HoDs and GD lecturers felt that the drawing, illustration skills the students had learnt from first year to third or fourth year had prepared the students for industry with some "room for improvement and consolidation of teaching the fundamentals of drawing" (HoD 2); "we could still drum it in to them more that that is the way you communicate...with other creatives...we could emphasise it more" (GD Lecturer 3).

With regard to the above mentioned lack of drawing and scamping skills, Schenk (2005) says the beneficial effects of the introduction of computer-based technology to the studio has been acknowledged by lecturers in a series of interviews as bringing new opportunities, for students with weaker drawing skills, to visualize their ideas and opportunities for designers and researchers to explore new forms of drawing. However, he says there are some concerns about effects of a decreasing engagement in the traditional paper-based drawing on the development of visual literacy and creativity in design students.

The demanding environment of graphic design in HE: deadlines and critiques

Some lecturers determined they always had to extend the deadline because the students on the whole couldn't manage their time properly; time management skills were seen by all lecturers as essential to their success in industry.

The highly competitive environment in which student work, places a number of demands on the them, for example, with their general ability to cope with generating artwork within a given time period. Illus Lecturer 2 said, "the students need to structure and manage their time management skills by meeting small deadlines in the process [leading up] to the final

deadline”, This was not always possible according to Illus Lecturer 3 who said, “they always needed to extend deadlines because the students on the whole were unable to manage their time properly; they weren’t very serious that a deadline is a deadline”. Lecturer 1 felt “the lecturers had fallen into a pattern of collapsing things for the sake of an incoming project and students tend to exploit that a bit”. By always extending the deadline they [the lecturers] were too lenient which she stressed wouldn’t happen in industry. “Some students can’t multi task; they feel paralysed...you often hear the students saying they’re paralysed by the amount of work on their desks and being torn between many assignments” (Lecturer 1).

The inability to complete an assignment within a given time period is unacceptable to employers who are looking for creative innovators and problem solvers where creativity is the ability to make sense out of complexity in an environment where the creator is often working with multiple, often conflicting factors, pressures, interests and constraints such as budgets and time (Donnelly, 2004). This is echoed by Ball (2003) who believes that graduates who enter the workplace working as employees or freelancers have to manage their time and plan their work with minimum supervision.

This competitive environment leads to both positive and negative criticism of the artwork once it has been completed and presented for general group crits or individual feedback sessions with the lecturers. “They have to learn that’s part of the process of being here [University] is receiving criticism, comment and reflection all the time” (Illus Lecturer 1). Illus Lecturer 2 felt strongly that “it should be both positive and negative criticism...the negative criticism has to be presented in a way that is constructive”. Allen (2000) emphasises negative critiques of artwork executed with genuine effort can demotivate the students whereas constructive critiques can be motivational and serve as a catalyst for a breakthrough.

The students’ attitude to criticism was highlighted by Illus Lecturer 3 who said, “They struggled with that and still saw it as a personal attack and as a result don’t like doing changes and even when you explain why...they don’t want to listen”. She said, however, that their attitude did improve during the year, which is reflected in her observation that “the class as a whole persevered and did push themselves; they were keen to do it”.

Confidence levels when working with the tools of the trade

With regard to exposure to a wide range of mediums in black and white and colour: Illus Lecturer 2 felt that the students were far more confident working with black and white than in colour because they lacked experience in that area. In contrast to that Illus Lecturer 3 said that their black and white scamps were of a high quality and “they had quite a mature understanding of colour...colour selections and limited colour palettes”.

When asked if they were confident that the students' hand and digital skills were suitable for industry, Illus Lecturer 1 made an interesting observation saying, "we've found that students who have been exposed to software at high school level are very comfortable working on the computer". Illus Lecturer 4 said that she thought it depended on the individual and even though they had received training in both, it was out of preference where some expressed a lack of confidence in working on computers where others "stick to the computers like fish to water and they're completely confident doing everything in Illustrator and Photoshop".

In terms of whether the students' drawing skills progressively learnt from first to third or fourth year had equipped them for industry, Illus Lecturer 1 said that the skills in the class were diverse and many students felt they cannot draw. This translated into a lack of confidence:

In third year, the first part of the year is spent just giving people the courage to draw. There are gaps...some students are just too end product orientated...they're paralysed by that end product expectation (Illus Lecturer 1).

The above reference to the students' preferences between digital and hand mediums is contrary to the skills required in the workplace. Both are equally important and a diversity of skills increases the marketability of the graduates. Allen (2000) says that although the computer is a required tool and it is the new medium, the print media will still endure, so in order to prepare for an uncertain future, the students need a solid grounding in the fundamentals (drawing, painting, composition and concept development), which will allow them to choose from the possibilities and opportunities that present themselves in the future. Lecturer 4 said that often their scamps weren't up to standard, but sometimes they were just lazy and 'look for an easy way out'.

Research: an active approach to success

The ability to research was determined a key to success by Illus Lecturer 1 who emphasised, "All the strongest work is always shown to be coming from people who've done a bit of their own research'. Illus Lecturer 4 said that by third and fourth year the students had internalized the need to do research and did it automatically.

Most of the lecturers agreed that research was a means of assisting students in reaching the standards required and motivating them in setting new benchmarks for themselves. Illus Lecturer 1 felt the stronger students were the students who had chosen the course for the right reasons; "they are passionate, they do that by themselves...they are so hungry to learn all the time and they will even communicate with people and find tutorials". Illus Lecturer 3

differed saying that she felt that generally the students didn't take their research to deeper levels where "if they find something interesting they don't really go and find something else that the illustrator has done or who they are". Allen (2000) emphasizes that no matter how much the students are encouraged by their educator; they will only reap the benefits if they are not only willing to learn, but have a burning desire to excel in their chosen field.

Illus Lecturer 3 said, "It [research] does help, but the students are confused between referencing and copying and unless there is a significant amount of referencing done, they end up copying".

Research: a passive approach to self-imposed limitations

Self imposed limitations by certain students due to a lack of openness to referencing material, sources and new ideas were said to limit their own development, which resulted in the same references being used for completely different briefs indicating a lack of commitment their own education. Illus Lecturer 3 said:

Although the students had three illustration lecturers throughout the year and were exposed to a variety of styles...hand rendered, digital and what they felt like doing, but they limited their own development by not being sufficiently open to referencing new sources and new ideas. Throughout the projects they kept on referencing the same styles...some people rehashed the same references for a completely different brief (Illus Lecturer 3).

She determined that the students generally didn't take their research to deeper levels. "If they find something interesting, they don't really go and find something else that the illustrator has done or who they are".

This indifferent approach to their studies is contrary to Dineen, Samuel and Livesey, (2005), who say that all the lecturers interviewed in a research survey acknowledged that it was essential for the students to be actively committed to their own education, which is echoed by Allen (2000) who stresses that the students should not only be willing to learn, but have a burning desire to excel in their chosen field.

4.6.2 Tools: Hand and digital illustration - Bridging the divide

With regard to the tools used by the graphic design students in the creation of illustration, hand-generated and digital, I present and analyse HoDs and academic lecturers' data. There are two sub-sections that consist of lecturers' understanding of students' needs and abilities firstly in terms of the importance of being able to work in a wide range of mediums in black

and white and colour, and secondly in terms of the lecturers confidence that the students hand and digital illustration skills are suitable for employment in industry.

Black and white: a close relationship to colour

In the graphic design, advertising and publishing industry, the use of black and white or colour is project dependant, for example, a black and white illustration for a newspaper or a full colour editorial illustration for an up-market magazine.

Working in a wide range of mediums in black and white and colour was seen as important by the HoDs and lecturers, particularly when converting an understanding of black and white tonal values into colour to give depth and form to a colour illustration; "In every project, if the black and white stage is not working, colour won't solve the problem" (GD Lecturer 2). Illus Lecturer 3 felt that at third year level she didn't feel that any brief should be so specific, which was echoed by Illus Lecturer 4 who said, "It's open in fourth year for the students to choose". Open-ended and student-led projects are used to increase students' intrinsic motivation and allow for personal engagement (Dineen, Samuel & Livesey, (2005).

HoD 1 determined, "At third year level, the students tend to become too specialised... with a particular medium", which was echoed by HoD 3 who thought that versatility was important and they needed to be exposed to everything they could in their training. "They experiment with a wide range of materials, also unconventional materials as well as what meaning does that medium also give to the illustration or the text" (Illus Lecturer 4). HoD 4 said he thought the students needed to go through all of that training but at the same time "they must learn where their own voice resides and how it resonates". Dineen, Samuel and Livesey (2005) echo this saying the majority of the lecturers in a survey emphasise that the ultimate aim of the partnership is student independence [beyond the training], through facilitating and building their confidence to express themselves as individuals rather than seeing the world through the eyes of the lecturer.

Hand and digital illustration skills for industry: a delicate balance

Financial considerations were expressed as a limitation in keeping the students up-to-date with technology. GD lecturer 1 said:

Our biggest problem that we have, is the software is changing, for example, what we are having to do is to start all the new software from fourth year and we work down...industry expects us to work on CS4 because they are all still working with freehand and all of that stuff, but now they're expecting our students to come through and start teaching the guys in there because some studios are on it (GD Lecturer 1).

Asked if they thought the students' hand and digital skills were suitable for industry, the lecturers varied in their response. "The students' abilities with regard to hand skills, in some cases, were more advanced than others and correspondingly, at least 50% were technically advanced" (Lecturer 1). Lecturer 2 stressed the need for balance between the two mediums; "the students who had the skills were the achievers and the students' hand and digital skills should be fifty, fifty at this stage". This was confirmed by Lecturer 3 who said there was a sophistication and maturity about the students' digital and hand illustration on the whole. Lecturer 4 said that the students were trained in both.

Male (2007) states that practical skills such as rendering techniques and digital, new technology based skills, are essential regarding the education of the illustrator but must be seen as a form of training associated with the vocational aspects of illustration, which must be encountered early in the students' development. Towards the final part of their education, the development of a personal iconography, through drawing, media exploration and visual interpretation should be established.

4.6.3 Object the ideal student/job candidate: standard of work

I now present and analyse academic lecturers' data with regard to the ideal student/job candidate in meeting the standard of work required by industry. There are nine sub-sections that consist of HoDs and lecturers' understanding of students' need for preparation for industry.

Defining illustration in relation to the workplace

Illustration was seen in both a conventional way, which was an image that accompanied a text or stood on its own or in an unconventional form of mark making that was either design or fine art orientated; it could also have nothing to do with drawing at all. Illustration, in comparison to photography, was also a way of giving more impact and meaning to an image.

The conventional sense of illustration, by non-photographic means, was described as a "single image and accompanies a text of some kind" (HoD 1) or it highlights a message in the form of "a visual representation of a concept" (HoD 2). Illus Lecturer 4 countered the reference to always seeing illustration alongside text saying, "It's about image making and not particularly illustrating a text and that the act of thinking visually is the root of all illustration". Illus Lecturer 2 said, "One could find many interpretations with illustration applied in so many ways, both high end and in the form of scamps and roughs, with drawing and sketching tapping into all areas of the course".

Like Schenk (2005), who says a senior lecturer working with illustration students emphasizes that, the ability, through the application of drawing conventions, to express emotions and celebrate experience is important, GD Lecturer 2 said:

By expressing oneself in a medium other than by photographic representation, illustrating is a way to kind of bring more meaning and more impact; [it] allows you to give life to something that's just a thought (GD Lecturer 2).

The above reference to expression was echoed by GD Lecturer 3 who said, "It makes tacit information more expressive and stylised". However, (HoD 3) said, "Although illustration always incorporates some conceptual problem and is directed towards a particular target market, it may have nothing to do with drawing at all" which Illus Lecturer 3 reaffirmed saying, "It's about creating a visual that tells its own story and not necessarily about drawing". HoD 4, on the other hand, stressed that illustration didn't have to be accompanied by text at all and could stand for itself, used in a positive creative way such as: "scamping, working out ideas and making marks and drawings and any visual ideas, textures can also be illustration...it can be so many things". This was echoed by GD Lecturer 4 who said she saw it as:

A relationship between image and text but also illustration as a text in itself...I think mark making, the type of line, even the technique or the medium plays a role in the communication of that and certainly for me, marks are important think mark making, the type of line, even the technique or the medium plays a role in the communication of that and certainly for me, marks are important (GD Lecturer 4).

The importance of drawing: equipped or ill equipped for the workplace?

The drawing skills of third year students differed where some were proficient while others weren't up to the required standard. Both Illus Lecturer 1 and Illus Lecturer 2 said that the skills within the class differed where some could but many were insufficiently equipped for third year with Illus Lecturer 2 emphasising, "there are too many, in my opinion, they can't, they're not able to...some of them don't have anywhere near the standard required for third year".

Like Schenk (2005), who says that a research professor determined that student drawings should be both perceptual and conceptual, the participating HoDs and GD lecturers unanimously agreed that drawing was as an essential part of a graphic designer's education in both perceptual and conceptual form. "They've got to understand form, depth, proportion and dimension, which have to be reinforced all the time" (GD Lecturer 2). It is important to encourage students to develop a theoretical understanding of drawing usage so that they

can develop a critical eye and appreciation of what constitutes good drawing applied to different contexts beyond their own range of drawing skills and experience (Schenk, 2005).

(HoD 1) emphasised that "If they [the students] can't draw [objects or people] then, they can't create them on the computer either". This is contrary to academics in a study, who acknowledge the support that computers and certain types of software give to students and professional designers with limited drawing ability (Schenk, 2005). However, he says there are some concerns about effects of a decreasing engagement in the traditional paper-based drawing on the development of visual literacy and creativity in design students. In fourth year, drawing as a skill was optional and applied in different contexts chosen by the students. Lecturer 4 said:

They don't do drawing in fourth year anymore...they do it full-time up to third year and then in fourth year it's up to them, they have to do it in their drawing book (Lecturer 4).

Both HoD 1 and 2 felt that drawing skills should be in place and applied in the conceptual phase before going to the computer. This was echoed by HoD 4 who stressed, "immediately one can start thinking if you draw". It's "a way of discovering things...a way of thinking, a visual thinking...to communicate your idea" (Lecturer 4).

There was unanimous agreement on the importance of being able to produce scamps in the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries. HoD 4 felt that scamping is fundamental to the conceptualising and visualizing process, which was echoed by GD Lecturer 1 as "the key to original concepts and imagery and the tool to strip down design to barest elements" (HoD 3). GD Lecturer 2 emphasised:

A third year or B Tech student isn't allowed to design something without producing a scamp that shows me his or her understanding...scamps give you a perspective of the concept presented. Although the level of finish to which the scamps can be presented varies between crude and more resolved, their ability to communicate an idea to the client is important (GD Lecturer 2).

The importance of traditional drawing in the form of scamps is supported by scholars such as Schenk (2005) who states that the ease and spontaneity of the traditional drawing systems are still valuable, if not vital, in the early planning stages of a design project.

Good communication skills for the workplace

By exposing the students to real world projects and communicating with industry, this need to develop personal attributes was indirectly supported by Illus Lecturer 1 who said:

They're thrown in the deep end where they have to present themselves...we probably only teach them by giving them feedback afterwards and commenting on how they've coped with the situation in retrospect (Illus Lecturer 1).

This method of teaching communication skills is supported by Alshare, Lane and Miller (2011) who say the critic in providing feedback to the student, not only helps the students to understand the principles of design, but also provides clues as to the terminology used by designers.

Exposure to national and international trends: setting new benchmarks through research

The lectures unanimously said that they show the students examples national and international illustrators work of the type of illustration styles relevant to the project they've been given or designed themselves and the students balance that with their own research "they have gathered their own favourite sites and blogs and are inspired by that" (Illus Lecturer 1). GD Lecturer 2 emphasised that it was important to:

First introduce students to what you know is currently happening, which gives them a bit of confidence in you...and with that, they go out and go deeper into it ...they'll come and up-date you with what's currently happening (GD Lecturer 2).

GD Lecturer 3 said:

What we've done in the theory subject this year, we ran a research project where the students had to go and source especially local designers/illustrators...get inspired...can identify with because they're local and do a presentation on them...we force students to research their own stuff...all had to attend each others presentations so they all get exposure (GD Lecturer 3).

By bringing in top designers and illustrators into the studio to set projects and do show reels with them, GD Lecturer 1 said, "They look at what students are doing globally and they start seeing themselves". The site where the research takes place is predominately on the Internet. Illus Lecturer 1, however, like Illus Lecturer 4, said that she uses the library often and shows them Journals out of choice because, "they judge and filter the work that's out there according to their own criteria; they will articulate and they will explain why they have selected their winners".

Illus Lecturer 2, 3 and 4 inferred that they use a multi-layered approach through exposing students to on-line or referenced images applicable to the given project and in the case of Illus Lecturer 3 she said, "It was about looking at what happens overseas and how do we interpret that in a South African context". Illus Lecturer 4 added that they do an internship where they work in a studio for two or three weeks.

The above multi-layered approach to exposure to design and illustration trends is supported by Reid and Solomonides (2007) who emphasise that for students to be engaged and creative, there is a need for students to feel that they are learning through deep involvement within the context of their learning and to be experiencing and doing the processes of design in such a way as to see the purpose and benefit of what they do, and to sense that they have a benefit to the professional design community. Illus Lecturer 1 emphasised that the students with the passion to continue learning, researching and investigating new ideas independently were "the people who will probably stay in the industry", which was reaffirmed by Illus Lecturer 2 who said, "All the strongest work is always shown to be coming from people who've done a bit of their own research".

The subject Professional Practice: a means to survival in the real world

It was generally felt that there was adequate to inadequate exposure to business skills through the subject professional practice. Like Heller & Fernandes (1995), who stress that in a field where clients some-times take advantage of artists, therefore making it imperative for the graduated student to know the tips on how to survive in the real world, most HoDs and lecturers supported the idea of a subject like "Professional Practice" to help students to develop basic entrepreneurial skills, and to prepare them for the real world of graphic design and illustration. Most acknowledged that the teaching of business skills was not without difficulties where, for example, HoD 1 claimed, "staff members have absolutely messed it up". "I never feel that we get the perfect setup...we are living in a world that's changing weekly" (GD Lecturer 1). GD Lecturer 2 emphasised that if applied correctly:

That is the one area that we protect any future students' placement in industry or employment ...that protects him to know his rights in the world and how to run a business ... the rest you'll learn in the world of work (GD Lecturer 2).

All illustration lecturers were not up-to-date on what the subject Professional Practice entailed but most saw it as having an important role to play to the extent that Illus Lecturer 2 said:

I think it is very, very beneficial...without that subject, they were not going to make it out there [in the visual communications industry](Illus Lecturer 2).

Heller and Fernandes (1995) confirm the importance of business studies saying that in a field where clients some times take advantage of artists, it is imperative for the graduated student to know how to survive in the real world.

The HoDs were aware of the need for drawing and illustration staff to keep up-to-date on developments in their field, and to pass this knowledge on to students. GD Lecturer 4 determined:

I can't say that it [Professional Practice] prepares them adequately, but certainly it gives them an idea on how they can do research...do market research and understand the market and understand an audience...the knowledge they get there...creating work for a client, they can use to set themselves up in business...they must be able to make those cross links with lateral thinking (GD Lecturer 4).

Keeping up with the continuous changes in software: a journey toward lifelong learning

Due to the speed at which technology was advancing, the students would have to upgrade their knowledge and skills throughout their working life. Wands (2000) emphasises that one of the problematical ways in which technology has impacted on design theory, is the need for the illustrator to keep abreast of ever increasing technical literacy. Because of these advances, an illustrator must be familiar with the latest software and be up-to-date with the knowledge of the factors that govern the final results.

Within this ever changing technological environment, most of the lecturers felt they were up-to-date with the programmes, but Illus Lecturer 1 said that students who had computers at home were at an advantage over those that didn't who she observed as been a bit slower. She emphasised, however, that everyone had the opportunity to upgrade more specific skills in afternoon classes. GD Lecturer 2 felt that in third year, they couldn't teach everything, but "the students know what the tool can do, the rest you develop as you go along, but the essentials are taught".

The lecturers felt that it would be necessary for the students to continue upgrading their knowledge and skills throughout their working life because as illus Lecturer 2 put it,

“technology is moving fast and they're going to have to upgrade that constantly”. Illus Lecturer 3 determined they would have to keep on top of everything that was going on around them, but some students would be surprised when they went out and got a job that not all companies were up-to-date with the latest software. Like Harvey (2000) who says that the primary role of higher education is increasingly to transform students by enhancing their knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities while simultaneously empowering them as lifelong critical, reflective learners, Illus Lecturer 4 emphasised that the students are taught to self teach as well as apposed to relying only on the lecturer to pass on information and skills. “What we've tried to promote is lifelong learning” (GD Lecturer 4).

In terms of lifelong learning GD Lecturer 2 said he definitely “encourages [the students doing] a course like marketing, which should be a follow up in the creative field... What our students find themselves doing is doing extended courses after they've studied. They go and study further”. GD Lecturer 1 said:

We're living in an age where unfortunately, before you used to have one skill and you could use it, especially as designers, everyday you're doing something new, there's new software coming out (GD Lecturer 1).

Portfolio preparation: gateway to the future

Due to the high levels of competitiveness in the visual communications industry, there was consensus among the lecturers with regard to the students having been exposed to a wide selection of illustration. Illus Lecturer 3 said:

You need to show you can do different stuff and have a very broad selection of stuff in your portfolio, and that's very important [if one wanted] to have an extended career (Illus Lecturer 3).

Upon graduation, a student should be able to draw or paint (hand or digitally) more or less proficiently, conceptualize intelligently and have a portfolio that highlights these abilities (Heller & Fernandes, 1995). Illus Lecturer 2 cited time constraints as a reason for the students producing a limited range of illustration. “It wasn't a large confident portfolio, but rather a component of a portfolio that supported some of their other subjects”. Illus Lecturer 4 said:

Some students felt that because a lot of the work was socially and community research project based and the commercial aspect of illustration wasn't emphasised during their training it would be a problem when they presented their portfolios in the end (Lecturer 4).

References: a means of sourcing freelance work

Most lecturers supported the students in the form of giving them reference of where to look for freelance work. However, Illus Lecturer 2 felt that it also had to come from the full-time staff that had, in the course of their teaching and contact with industry had built up a database of contacts. Illus Lecturer 4 said that because a lot of students do the post grad illustration course, which she thought gave them more time to mature and create more extensive projects and “from there, they often get publishing deals”.

Desired outcomes of the illustration programme

The illustration lecturers considered it important for the students to have been exposed to doing a variety of types of illustration with the required level of maturity and sophistication, across applications, within set deadlines and “the projects had to vary between those with a strong commercial value and others with little commercial value” (Illus Lecturer 2). The reference to being able to apply illustration across applications is confirmed by Knight (2000) who says that a graduated student should, to a large degree, have achieved what the curriculum specified but the skills learned must also be transferable, meaning that the illustration knowledge and skills that the students have progressively learnt, from foundation / first year to third / fourth year, are transferable and can be applied to related areas of illustration in the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries. The knowledge gained must give the students the ability to use it in different situations. Although Illus Lecturer 4 had emphasised there wasn't an industry focus, she said:

to realise their specific projects and briefs that they've designed themselves successfully so if they set out to work for a specific NGO...to see it as an entire integrated form of research (Illus Lecturer 4).

A good basic technical education was seen as important, but the ability to communicate a message through illustration as a stand-alone image or as an integrated part of a graphic design campaign with text was seen as essential. “Illustration must serve the purpose of enhancing the message, the visual message” HoD 2. The emergence of a personal style was deemed important by HoD 3, who stressed that illustration should also be taken into the digital arena, but apart from having a good basic technical education, the students need to have “learnt to push boundaries, to challenge, think creatively, conceptually” (HoD 4). Male (2007) emphasises that towards the final part of their education, the development of a personal iconography, through drawing, media exploration and visual interpretation should be established.

4.6.4 Community of practice: Internal and external collaboration

The environment in which the teaching of the students takes place is influenced by: (1) contact between HoDS and lecturers in the form of meetings (2) contact between lecturers through integrated tasks (3) external collaboration with industry in the form of real world tasks, (4) the extent to which students are exposed to illustration techniques, (5) the creativity generated through the pursuit of innovation (6) teacher, student relationships (7) the impact of class sizes on quality of teaching, (8) lecturers' feedback in response to student' research (9) required styles for a portfolio and (10) the design studio work environment.

Meetings: a way of intercepting problems, finding solutions

Meetings between lecturers to discuss problem areas such as conflicting deadlines, problems with non-attendance and non-performing students are important. The Graphic design curriculum is demanding both from the diversity of disciplines involved and the demands placed on the students to achieve a certain level of competence in spite of the exacting workload and the tight deadlines they are exposed to. Within this demanding environment, the HoDs and lecturers saw regular meetings as essential to coordinating the implementation of the curriculum.

However, within that complex environment HoD 2 determined, "we've got to do the job at the end of the day". GD Lecturer 2 said they access student marks and those struggling; "we discuss it in a meeting to find out where the problem is and what is causing it...I believe we do not spend sufficient quality time discussing the students, but there is discussion on that subject". Generally, time management problems were seen as much of a student problem as "it is a planning problem on the staff side" (HoD 1), which was echoed by HoD 4 who said things were not always perfect, and they [staff] weren't always able to streamline everything perfectly.

Most lecturers agreed on the importance of meetings to discuss problem areas, but it was size dependent. "It is easier to pick up on those things in smaller groups; where our groups are so large, it does tend to fall away" (Illus Lecturer 1), which was echoed by Illus Lecturer 2 who said that in the past when she had worked with a small group of lectures and they had collaborated on solving problem areas, "it worked perfectly". Illus Lecturer 3 felt that last year it would have been beneficial to have had meetings to discuss problems with non attendance and non performing students. By connecting and finding out if the others were also experiencing problems with the same individuals, Illus Lecturer 4 said, "We try and intercept big problems before they snowball out of control".

Collaboration between lecturers, interlinking of subjects and integrated tasks

Graphic design departments have strongly collaborative cultures, which demand many meetings and considerable coordination. Students and university teachers often work in integrated ways, for example, there might be a full week of intensive studio work. "With the Sappi project, the photography, the professional practice and the communications design subjects are very tightly interlinked...at third year level one also sometimes one wants the freedom to respond to a live [real world] brief" (HoD 3). HoD4 explained:

We're interlinking them a lot more...it's fairly well integrated; it's becoming more and more integrated...this department was founded on the principles of the Bauhaus and some of those have still stuck so we have this cross fertilization between visual communication design, jewellery design, fine art and then theory" (HoD 4).

GD Lecturer 4 said she thought collaboration was important where in first, second and third year:

We try to co-ordinate all the projects they do in illustration and drawing and try to draw that into graphic design so they also use their illustration in graphic design...we plan our year ahead...In fourth year they have broad themes; they do research, so all the projects are geared to address issues...the visual exploration and development of concepts within those themes (GD Lecturer 4).

The Illustration lecturers agreed on the importance of collaboration between lecturers so that the end result was the students do not see subjects such as illustration and communications design as separate, but integrated to the extent that Illus Lecturer 4 said:

I send and discuss all my briefs with my colleagues in design and the drawing lecturer so that they know what we're doing in illustration and she can then also enhance or focus on certain skills (Illus Lecturer 4).

"Collaboration between lecturers is very beneficial to the students and the work is richer (Illus Lecturer 2). The benefits of collaboration between disciplines is emphasised by Young (2006) who states that the skills learnt to apply to one task can be adjusted and adapted for another. This adaptability is a sign of having acquired deeper knowledge and enables those who have learnt it to move beyond the confines of specific situations. A University of technology needs to support and value work that is done within disciplines, across disciplines and beyond disciplines (Winberg, 2004).

HoD 2 said there were some difficulties working in an integrated way where “There are attempts to interlink, but the tendency is for them [separate subjects] to drift apart”. GD Lecturer 2 who said the subjects were run separately where drawing was independent, but “the knowledge learned or gained is applicable to com [communications] design...each subject is equally important...fail one subject and you fail the year”. This need for interlinking was further emphasized by HoD 2 who said part of his mandate for next year was to ensure that there was a personal convergence between all five subjects. However, GD lecturer 3 said that they although they had integrated a lot of drawing into communications design, “illustration has been running as a stand alone subject because of the staffing problem, because if we had a permanent that was teaching illustration, it would be great because we could actually plan integrated projects”.

In order to work in an integrated way, HoD 3 felt one really needed a very good oversight of the projects, of “the linkages between the projects, of the timing, of the deadlines, of the hand-ins and the outcomes”. Through close collaboration and communication, GD Lecturer 1 said:

We try not to move deadlines, but sometimes you have to...We talk to each other and we usually see that it's the same students that are having problems (GD Lecturer 1).

The benefits of the above mentioned importance of strong collaborative cultures between disciplines is seen by Grannell (2008) as a way of preparing graduating students who on entering the industry are comfortable working with an illustrator, whatever the project. He says that during the last decade, colleges have increasingly taken a multidisciplinary approach, with students more often involved in project teams that include designers, illustrators and photographers.

Collaboration between higher education and industry: real world tasks

The need to connect the third or fourth year course to industry was agreed on by most HoDs and lecturers, either in the form of real world projects run by industry or through studio internships. Barnett (2006) emphasises that there needs to be a balance between vocational pedagogy, which is influenced by workplace activities and also disciplinary knowledge and becomes more pronounced the higher the level. This need for balance is confirmed by Winberg (2004) who says that at a University of Technology, disciplinary and professional knowledge is reconfigured and realigned to meet the needs of industry, society, entrepreneurship and communities rather than purely for academic criteria of excellence that has limited applicability for a student entering the world of work.

The need for students to be exposed to the world of work is echoed by Ball (2003) who says that because of the small size of the enterprises available to many graduates, the possibilities for placements and work experience are limited. By involving these entrepreneurs in student projects, student awareness of the potential and needs of industry is increased. She says research has shown that employers expect that graduates should develop a sense of commercial awareness throughout their higher education. The extent to which the institution and industry were linked was that "about 80% of the 3rd year projects are connected to industry" (HoD 1), who stressed they were run, critiqued and time managed by industry and several had gone on to be produced as actual products. This close relationship to industry was echoed by GD Lecturer 1 who said they did nine projects:

Only one of them wasn't set by industry...sometimes it's not appropriate to have all industry, but that's why I like there to be a bit of flexibility...ours is like the real world...they're connecting with the new trends and styles. We [HE] don't pay out students, but there are prizes...What will happen is that the one that is selected and...going into production they will then get paid extra to develop it, to take it through and finish it so the students are learning how to deal with clients, how to iron out all the problems, how to take it to print (GD Lecturer 1).

HoD 2 felt that exposure to industry could take on different forms such as: the placement of students into internships, real world tasks or entering competitions. Although they welcomed briefs from industry, GD Lecturer 3 said because industries time was so limited, there had to be "some sort of incentive for them, but we haven't been sure what that incentive is". The traditional universities fourth year programme was more closely aligned to projects that were community, research based, socially responsible design where "it's not so much a client but where a problem is and they would address that" (Lecturer 4). The focus on community-based projects was because HoD 4 felt that in some cases, the emphasis on adhering to real world briefs becomes a bit mechanical and limiting in educational value:

You have to do what you're told...if it's not done in that way, they're not interested either...if they're simply going to be dictated to by the brief then I don't see any point in that, it's not educational (HoD 4).

Although most illustration lecturers felt that setting real world tasks was important, there were varying approaches to exposing the students to the real world. Illus Lecturer 2 said that in her opinion, although the third years shouldn't take part in outside competitions because they took up too much time, real world tasks were an essential part of the students' training, but stressed that as a part-time lecturer paid by the hour, it was difficult to organise.

Rather than giving the students real world tasks, illus Lecturer 3 gave projects that promoted well-known South African brands and content such as Kulula Airways and the FIFA 2010 World Cup campaign. Illus Lecturer 4 felt that by fourth year, as the students were working with a cultural organisation or NGO, she felt more confident to bring someone in from industry, from a publisher, for example, to talk to the students about current trends and show samples of artwork and give them real world tasks.

Exploration of illustration techniques: a developmental timeline

The general consensus was that although the lecturers encouraged the use of a broad range of illustration techniques, in some cases, for example with illus Lecturer 1, because of her limited knowledge and experience of using technology, she said, "If I was more technically skilled, I would have pushed some students more in a particular direction". She did stress "I respond to a very broad range of aesthetics... at our end of the year exhibition you'll see that there isn't a formula going and it's often a comment that comes to us". Illus Lecturer 2 felt that although time in third year was limited, she managed to teach them a few techniques:

They had been exposed to the basics and it was often a case of refining what they had been taught in first and second year or covering a few specifics within a technique that they hadn't thought of before (Illus Lecturer 2).

The need in third year to teach the students new techniques both hand and digital is not supported by Male (2007) who states that practical skills such as rendering techniques and digital, new technology based skills, are essential regarding the education of the illustrator but must be seen as a form of training associated with the vocational aspects of illustration, which must be encountered early in the students' development. Towards the final part of their education, the development of a personal iconography, through drawing, media exploration and visual interpretation should be established.

Toward creativity: abandoning boundaries in the pursuit of innovation

Through exposing the students to conceptually orientated tasks, the lecturers encouraged the application of the brainstorming process rather than formally teaching the creative process. Open-ended briefs encouraged experimentation and pushing boundaries. "I try and do projects where they can really abandon the boundaries a bit, flaunt their stuff and go where they personally would like to go" (Illus Lecturer 1). This was echoed by Illus Lecturer 3 who said, "I try and encourage them to find something that they are comfortable with".

Dineen, Samuel and Livesey (2005) support the use of open-ended and student-led projects which they say are used to increase students' intrinsic motivation and allow for personal engagement; an emphasis on heuristic tasks encourages productive rather than reproductive thinking. Teachers of creativity, participating in a study, recommended that a climate be established in which students feel safe and free to explore their creative potential. This exploration should lead the student to openness to creative experiences, internal aptitude and external environments, which in turn, promote curiosity and inquisitiveness, leading to insight and innovation (Bull & Montgomery, 1995).

Teacher, student relationships: a supportive role within a multi-lingual environment

An open, safe environment gives a lecturer a better understanding of the student's personality traits and learning, difficulties, which in turn enables him or her to create an environment where the students feel they are regarded as individuals. The lecturers were unanimous in saying that it was essential to have an environment in which the students felt "safe enough to come to you to help them with the text that they don't understand" (Illus Lecturer 1) and an accommodating approach, "which has had positive results within the classroom" (Illus Lecturer 4).

In feedback from a qualitative and quantitative survey of art and design lecturers, Dineen, Samuel & Livesey (2005) speak about the centrality of the teacher-student relationship where it is very important to show students you are interested and care about what they are doing. Illus Lecturer 2 emphasised the need for support saying that she found that even at third year level, there were still huge problems because of multi-lingualism, which was a reason why she encouraged more one on one interaction with the students rather than crits because in a group situation, those students are not able to verbalise their questions adequately. She said:

I find that even with the written brief, a lot of them come to me and say, 'look I haven't read it' and that says to me they can't read it, so we do it verbally and I go through things bit by bit with a few opportunities for them to ask me questions...with repetitive questions to ensure they understand it...It's a very supportive, hands on thing (Illus Lecturer 2).

Rose et al, (2003) emphasises the need for extra support saying where needed it's important that the teacher explains each section of an assessment task (brief) clearly using a scaffolding methodology while the struggling students listen and then practice or apply this information and with on going support eventually become independent.

However, group crits shouldn't be negated as Dannels, Gaffney & Martin (2008) say that communication skills are learnt within the [group] critique, which is a communication event in which the students present their designs or illustrations and staff (lecturers and/or members from industry) and students provide valuable feedback. The importance of the critique is echoed by Alshare, Lane & Miller (2011) who say that by providing feedback to the student, it not only helps the students to understand the principles of design, but also provides clues as to the terminology used by designers.

Impact of size of classes on quality of teaching

There were mixed views on whether the classes were small enough to give enough attention and advice to the students. Illus Lecturer 1 and 3 felt that the time allocated to their subject was sufficient for them to interact with the students, while Illus Lecturer 2, on the other hand, felt that the four hours allocated to her subject per week was insufficient for all the students in a large class to get round to seeing her. Illus Lecturer 4 said in spite of the fact that she had to multi-task between supervising post grad students and fourth year theory articles over and above teaching fourth year illustration, she managed because at fourth year level the students were proficient with a lot of techniques and where necessary in the case of specific skills, she used tutors as well to "show the class how to do a lino print, for example".

Researching the artworks of professional illustrators

The lecturers unanimously agreed on the importance of encouraging the students to research the artworks of illustrators where they brought the images they had sourced to class and discussed them with a view to showing different options and different ways of solving a problem. In the case of illus Lecturer 2, if the students asked how they were they were achieved, they explored that together.

Development of style: a means to portfolio preparation through industry feedback

The general consensus was that it was important to encourage the students to develop more than one style. Illus Lecturer 1 said that she assisted students in developing more than one style for end products such as packaging, a book cover or an editorial "where the content is specifically located in a particular context". Importantly, however, she felt that certain styles might be inappropriate and as a lecturer one would direct the students through communication and reading the situation.

Illus Lecturer 4 said that during the full four years of study, the students had many opportunities to experiment with many different techniques and styles but although she stressed the need for variety, she maintained that in fourth year, during longer projects, the number of styles should be limited and linked to what they were doing. She also said that

although they don't teach the students to make a specific portfolio, they received guidance through feedback from people in industry who "crit their work throughout the year so they get an idea of how the work would be viewed if they go for an interview or send their portfolio away to an ad agency". Ultimately, it was the students' responsibility. Illus Lecturer 3 said that although their portfolios were generally good, she hadn't had any contact with the students during portfolio preparation, which was something she wanted to change in order to assist them with giving context to their projects.

Mirroring the workplace: a respectful environment with unity of purpose

The HoDs described the design/drawing studio as non-hierarchical and emphasized the need for a basic respectful relationship between lecturer and student. "I would never want to rule a studio like a dictator...at tertiary level, people need to have that internal commitment" (HoD 2). HoD 3 echoed these sentiments by emphasising:

A lecturer is not a teacher and it's a different system to a high school. It's not hierarchal; as a lecturer I don't know everything and I don't expect the students to behave like children either...it's a respectful relationship (HoD 3).

HoD 1 determined that personal relationships were important and within that interactive environment. "There is a code of ethics, there's confidentiality, there are deadlines, there's punctuality, there's time management, and there's communication... I think there should be unity of purpose". HoD 4 who said, "they've got to work together as a team and as a community", supported this unity of purpose.

4.6.5 Division of labour

Mirroring the workplace or maximizing creative development

In third year in higher education, the illustration lecturers generally create the brief. However in some cases, "the students determine their own audience and they set their own criteria" (Illus Lecturer 1). In the case of collaboration with industry, the brief is sometimes generated by an art director in a design studio, who also presents it to the students at a briefing. This could be in the form of a competition. Generally, because of industry time constraints, the lecturer concerned will oversee the project by giving assistance with regard to adjustments to scamps and assisting with the final artwork if necessary.

In fourth year, at the traditional university, the students contact an NGO and through discussion and negotiation, they create a brief relating to organization they're dealing with. Illus lecturer 4 explained:

In fourth year we see it more as a research year and it has to do with sustainable design and community based projects so you have to work with an NGO or some organization. We try to guide them through the projects that they've chosen and we'll make certain suggestions and we get people in from industry to crit their work throughout the year so they get an idea of how the work would be viewed if they go for an interview or send their portfolio away to an ad agency (Illus Lecturer 4).

There was a strong case for placing similar demands on the students that they would encounter in the workplace by Illus Lecturer 1 who determined that where she thought the course did give the students a taste of the work environment and the chaos that sometimes happens was "where there are a few projects running at the same time, different voices, different styles and different clients contradicting each other...they certainly get a taste of the real environment". This was partly countered Illus Lecturer 2 who thought there should always be a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere in which the students could be creative.

However, she emphasized, "It wasn't acceptable for the students to impose their own behaviour on other students because they had to work as a team and allow each other their own space". She emphasized that a good work ethic was instilled in the students through having a lecturer who was a good role model. This reflection is confirmed by Heller & Fenandes (1995) who say that lecturers who are good role models are said to instil a good work ethic in the students. In the end, it is the quality of teaching itself that is the deciding factor, because without motivated teachers, there is little chance for motivated students.

4.6.6 Rules of behaviour

I now present and analyse academic lecturers' data with regard to the rules of behaviour in the graphic design studio namely: work ethic, absenteeism, punctuality, deadlines (penalties) and respect for lecturers and fellow students' environment in which the teaching of the students takes place. Also analysed are the perceived similarities and differences of rules of behaviour in higher education and the working environment.

Design studio rules: enforcement or accountability

The university work environment was different to the workplace in terms of core times; however, unless the students developed a strong sense of accountability and self-discipline, they would struggle to cope in the work environment.

Certain expectations of the students were cited as what would be expected in the professional context. "I think deadlines, sticking to meetings, doing what you say you are

going to do and managing your time is important" (HoD 3), who also felt "the rules of the studio are determined by what the professional package is". GD Lecturer 3 said, "They [the staff] often debated how much time they imitated industry or how much they are "a nurturing, supportive and flexible environment". HoD 2 expressed a need to try and emulate and reflect on "the requirements of the world of work outside", which GD Lecturer 2 said were different in certain aspects and there should be a balance between work and play:

Let a student be a student, let them have their fun, but let them understand the urgency of there's a time for fun, there's a time for play, there's a time for work, let's get down to it. You can't take that away from them (GD Lecturer 2).

There was a divided approach between enforcing rules where, for example, with regard to students not meeting deadlines, Illus Lecturer 1 said:

I'd like it to be stricter...We've fallen into a pattern of collapsing things for the sake of an incoming project and students tend to exploit that a bit...the bottom lot need more input, need those structures of discipline, deadlines and discipline more, but I can't always say that it's enforced.

"In the work environment no work means no pay and no job at the end of the day" (Illus Lecturer 2). Illus Lecturer 4 countered the need to impose punishment on the fourth year students:

Although the university's work environment is not the same as an office with regard to times, we expect them to be accountable for what they've done, to be able to finish work within the due time...I'm not going to check up on them everyday in fourth year (Illus Lecturer 4).

Illus Lecturer 2 and 3 felt that punctuality and behaviour were very important. Lecturer 3 didn't mind that the students weren't always in class, but felt that it was important for them to attend briefing sessions and presentations and if they failed to attend it was up to them to catch up.

Ferry (2000) says that by being aware of how focused and disciplined the lives of today's successful illustrators are, he knew that if his illustration students were going to make it in the highly competitive and talented world of illustration, they needed to be disciplined too. This level of accountability is echoed by Ball (2003) who says graduates who enter workplace working as employees or freelancers have to manage their time and plan their work with

minimum supervision, work flexibly with good communication and interpersonal skills and be able to take responsibility early on.

4.7 Summary of chapter 4

As can be seen from the discussion and analysis of the HE findings, there are several points of agreement, but also several points of disagreement between the student and academic staff data. The higher education data analysis is summarized in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.7: Summary of higher education data

Activity categories	Findings from student Data	Findings from academic staff data
Hand & Digital drawing skills		
Subjects	Most students had experimented with a variety of mediums and styles, both hand and digital.	Students were and should be exposed to a broad range of illustration skills, both hand and digital.
	Knowledge of the world of work	
	Understanding of appropriateness of using illustration in specific design contexts.	-
	Respecting and responding to the brief	
	Important to adhere closely to a client's brief; in some circumstances where possible, add to it.	Broad range of projects through open and closed briefs; adapting to any brief is important; strict adherence to the brief seen as limiting in educational value.
	The importance of creativity	
	Open ended briefs are good for creativity.	Encourage creativity through a broad range of projects using open and closed briefs
	Motivation, perseverance	
Important to develop ability to focus, consult, accept constructive criticism	Some students' motivation is mainly to pass or through personal interest in assignment. Lack self-motivation and professionalism. In industry, equal attention given to all projects.	
Verbal, Textual interpretive ability		
General understanding of briefs; some misinterpretation of briefs by second language speakers leads to submission of incorrect artwork. ESL issues.	Should be able to adapt to any brief to have a long career as an illustrator. A lot of students really struggle with that.	
Constructive criticism increases student confidence levels. Negotiating skills to discuss brief with lecturer and future art director, important.	More insecure students less able to accept criticism.	
Giving presentations, a way of improving communication skills and improving second language skills.	Communication skills taught through feedback at critiques.	
Time management skills		
Adjusting deadlines demotivates students who work hard to meet deadlines; Multi-tasking important	Many students lack time management; need guidance.	
Business and employability basics		

	Students are not prepared for running their own business or for operating as a freelancer.	Professionalism and business know-how are important, but not adequately addressed.
Tools	Tools for learning and practicing visual communication	
	Some students had broad exposure to a broad range of techniques; both hand and digital while others had limited exposure. Most students were confident their digital skills were ready for industry; some were more advanced in hand skills. Some couldn't draw well but could illustrate well.	students should be exposed to a broad range of illustration skills, both hand and digital using conventional and unconventional materials A lecturer felt some students were insufficiently equipped for industry. Exposure to both hand and digital illustration should be equal: some imbalances due to student preferences.
	Keeping up with new technology - Resources	
	Student recognition of the need for keeping up-to-date with the changes and trends in both design and illustration.	Financial considerations expressed as a limitation in keeping the students up-to-date with technology.
	Variety of media	
	Student preference of working in black and white or colour. Some encouraged experimenting with and exploring using different media.	Working in black and white and colour in a range of mediums important; emphasis on versatility. A lecturer said third and fourth year level briefs shouldn't specify either black and white.
Object	Defining Illustration	
	Illustration is both drawing something in order to convey meaning or in a broader sense it's more than just drawing and one couldn't define exactly what it was.	Illustration could be a conceptual image alongside text or on its own, a form of mark making and drawing in the form of scamps and roughs. Sometimes has nothing to do with drawing. In comparison to photography, it was also a way of giving more impact and meaning to an image.
	Object – Standard of work	
	Basics Good level of proficiency	
	Colour	
	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	
	Design sophistication and consistency	
	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand/digitally generated media	
	Originality	
	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	
	Versatile drawing skills	
	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	

	Object – needs of the workplace	
	<p>Keeping up-to-date through research</p> <p>Keeping up-to-date with the changes and trends in both design and illustration (nationally and internationally) through own research.</p>	<p>Research: a key to success</p> <p>The ability to research, a key to success: good research always results in the strongest work Lecturers show illustration samples</p> <p>Students do own research in the library and on the Internet. Self imposed limitations.</p>
	Industry ready portfolios: a matter of style	
	<p>Experience with different techniques, subject matter and a developed style could be applied in different ways to different designs and illustrations.</p> <p>Most students had experimented with a variety of mediums and styles, both hand and digital.</p> <p>Ref to having more than one lecturer and experimenting with a wide variety of styles throughout the year.</p>	<p>With feedback from industry and lecturer input, a variety of contemporary styles used appropriately in particular contexts to a specific target audience important.</p> <p>Time constraints cited as a reason for a limited, but competent portfolio.</p> <p>Emphasis on community research based work and limited commercial illustration.</p>
	Knowledge of how to market and source work	
	<p>Most had insufficient knowledge of where and how to source freelance illustration work or how to market themselves on entering the world of work.</p> <p>Some students determined through the Internet and by networking, they would quickly find out.</p>	<p>Some lecturers supported the students in the form of giving them reference of where to look for freelance work.</p> <p>Postgraduate students thought to get more freelance and publishing deals because of time to mature and create more extensive projects.</p>
	Visual culture and art theory and art history	
	<p>Improved conceptual ability as a result of a greater awareness of how art theory, art history are linked to visual culture and how that theory base opens one to new ways of seeing.</p>	<p>Having a sound knowledge of illustration as an art form and trade through history to the present.</p>
	Importance of drawing	
	<p>Drawing is an important means of communication between designer, illustrator and the client.</p> <p>Drawing influences how one observes society and the target market.</p>	<p>Drawing is perceptual and conceptual; essential to a graphic designer's education.</p> <p>Drawing (scamping) an important part of the conceptual, creative process before going onto the computer.</p>
Division of Labour	Division of Labour	
	<p>In fourth year at the traditional university, students create own brief relating to organization they're dealing with; Lecturer facilitates and assesses.</p>	<p>In third year, the illustration lecturers generally create the brief and assess the final artwork</p> <p>In the case of collaboration with industry, the brief is sometimes generated by an art director in a design studio, who also presents it to the students at a briefing. Limited by industry time constraints.</p>
Community of Practice	A safe formal or informal creative environment	

	<p>In the graphic design faculty, communication between the lecturer and students is a two way process</p> <p>Some too restricted in terms of pushing boundaries; no opportunities to work with open ended briefs.</p> <p>Most encouraged to explore their creativity; some stifled by lecturers perceived subjectivity</p>	<p>A respectful non hierarchical relationship between the lecturer and students creates an interactive environment with unity of purpose</p> <p>Students needed to push boundaries and be challenging. Emphasis on originality.</p> <p>More exposure to the fundamentals of drawing and conceptual thinking; time to explore and experiment</p>
Creative buzz		
	<p>Overlapping of deadlines from different subjects seen as problematic with regard to the ability to cope. Extensions given to those not coping.</p>	<p>The importance of creating a taste of a real work environment with multiple projects running at the same time; partly countered by another lecturer who determined that a relaxed, comfortable studio environment enhanced creativity.</p> <p>Importance of meetings between lecturers to coordinate the curriculum, discuss problem areas. Lack of planning results in unnecessary extensions to deadlines.</p>
Collaboration with industry: Benefits and time constraints		
	<p>Access to resources and real world projects cited a motivating factor. Inspirational visit by members of an illustration studio.</p> <p>A need expressed for more drawing workshops, collaboration with industry and up-dates of current industry trends.</p>	<p>Important for students to be exposed to industry through collaboration and real world projects or projects relating to well-known South African brands and content.</p> <p>Industry generated live briefs, internships or competitions that expose students to current trends, styles and terminology used in the workplace. Industry time constraints.</p> <p>The traditional universities fourth year programme more closely aligned to community, research based projects, than real world tasks.</p>
Collaboration and integration of disciplines		
	<p>Collaboration with partial to full integration of illustration projects to other disciplines such as communications design and theory.</p> <p>Emphasis on the benefit of the drawing/illustration course in relation to the context of the whole graphic design programme.</p>	<p>Collaboration between lecturers and integrated projects enriches work.</p>
Lecturer support in the learning process		
	<p>Sufficient support from lecturers in terms of understanding the briefs or own research methods ensuring they understood the meanings of all the words.</p>	<p>Lecturers who were good role models were said to instil a good work ethic in the students. Lecturer feedback after student presentations to industry; communication skills are encouraged rather than taught.</p>

	Constructive criticism was emphasised as essential to accept because one became blinded by ones own mistakes.	Clear briefs and extra support for some second language speakers important. Overcoming language difficulties the responsibility of lecturers and students.
	Impact of the size of classes on quality of lecturer/students contact time	
	Classes medium sized to really big; sufficient attention from lecturers, Through adverse circumstances, which lessened lecturer, student contact time, a student felt empowered by the increased freedom and still confident in spite of having been given less direction.	The classes were generally small enough for the lecturer or tutor to give individual attention, but insufficient time allocated to the subject was cited as a problem when teaching a large class.
Design studio rules	Enforcement or accountability	
	<p>Rules for accountability for non-attendance, punctuality and others space or opinions in the design studio were important but not at the expense of a relaxed atmosphere.</p> <p>Strict deadlines during first few years at traditional university forced them to manage their time properly.</p>	<p>A need for balance between a relaxed, flexible studio atmosphere. Student accountability with respect for deadlines, punctuality should be automatic in third and fourth year or the students would struggle to cope in the work environment.</p> <p>Over managing leads to institutionalized students who lack creative edge. University work environment different to the workplace in terms of core times.</p> <p>Adhering to deadlines, attending arranged meetings, doing what one said one was going to do.</p>

4.8 Conclusion

The data showed that the students and academic staff mostly agreed with regard to the skills required of new graduates entering the visual communications industry. There were areas, however, where they differed, such as an academic staff member who saw a strict adherence to the brief as limiting in educational value. In terms of motivation there was some discrepancy as to whether the students were intrinsically motivated or motivated by having to pass or by their personal interest in the project at hand. There was misinterpretation of briefs by some students, due to English second language issues and reference was made to the fact that more insecure students were less able to accept criticism. It was suggested that many students lacked time management skills, but this was countered by some students who emphasised that part of the problem was that certain lecturers extended deadlines thus demotivating those who on the whole were submitting work on time.

In terms of the tools used there was an imbalance due to student preferences where some students were more advanced in digital skills than hand skills and visa-versa. This is counter to the importance of an equal exposure to both as emphasized by most staff members. As a

result some students were said to be insufficiently equipped for industry. Financial considerations expressed as a limitation in keeping the students up-to-date with technology. The student preferences of working in black and white or colour was counter to the need expressed by a staff member who emphasized they needed to be versatile in using both.

On the whole the standard of the artwork generated by the students was good. Although the students and staff agreed on the importance of research, a lecturer felt that certain students limited themselves by not gathering a wide enough variety of referencing material. These limitations were further emphasized by a staff member who said some scamps weren't up to standard due to inherent laziness or a lack of drawing skills. Some students at a traditional university felt there would be a problem in presenting portfolios because of the emphasis on community research based work and limited commercial illustration.

The staff members and students generally agreed on a non-hierarchical relationship. Although the staff members generally felt that the students needed to push boundaries and be challenged, some students emphasized they were restricted in doing so and others felt stifled by lecturers' perceived subjectivity. Collaboration with industry was said to be limited by industry time constraints. Although collaboration between lecturers and integrated projects was said to enrich work, insufficient time allocated to these meetings creates staff time management problems and overlapping deadlines; lack of planning results in unnecessary extensions, which in turn demotivates those students who meet deadlines. This tendency is out of alignment with industry where equal attention must be given to all projects and if not it suggests a lack of motivation and professionalism.

The misinterpretation of briefs by some second language speakers, which lead to the submission of incorrect artwork, possibly indicates a lack of language support by certain lecturers. In certain cases, however, it could mean that the students concerned lacked motivation and the commitment required to ensure they understood all elements of the brief.

The reference made to the fact that more insecure students were less able to accept criticism, was acknowledged by the students, but emphasis was made that the criticism must be constructive. In some cases certain students took longer to accept criticism and make necessary adjustments to artwork, but gradually this changed with time.

The students and staff members did not agree with regard to time management skills. Reference was made to fact that many students lacked time management, but this was countered where some students highlighted the fact that part of the problem was that certain lecturers extended deadlines demotivated those who on the whole were coping.

The strong emphasis by both students and academic staff on the importance of learning business studies, which on the whole wasn't preparing graduates sufficiently for the world of work would suggest an urgent rethink on how to improve methods of equipping them to ensure they are equipped with vital knowledge on how to charge and invoice clients, or find a job and set up a CV.

The students were generally exposed to a range of digital and hand skills, which were defined as important by the lecturers. However there was an imbalance due to student preferences where some students were more advanced in digital skills than hand skills and visa-versa. This is counter to the importance of an equal exposure to both. As a result some students were said to be insufficiently equipped for industry.

Although keeping up-to-date with technology was seen as important by both students and staff, the financial considerations expressed by departments would limit the graduating students' potential to be up-to-date and be competitive in gaining employment both full-time and as free lancers. The student preferences of working in black and white or colour was counter to the need expressed by a staff member who emphasized they needed to be versatile in using both. A lack of experience in working in either would limit the students' chances of obtaining freelance illustration work in the visual communications industry.

In the next chapter, I analyse the data from the graphic design, the advertising, and the publishing industry.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS: ILLUSTRATION IN THE VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from a number of workplaces in which illustration is practiced is presented and discussed. The findings are presented with the intention of answering the research question: 'What comprises an activity system in professional illustrators' practice?' The purpose of the chapter is to analyse activity systems in the world of professional practice with regard to illustration. The findings are presented in alignment with categories of activity, namely: subjects (in this context, the subjects are new professional illustrators), tools (which includes the equipment, techniques and media used by professional illustrators), objective (in the case of professional worksites, the objective is usually to meet or exceed the terms of the client's brief, but in this study, the intermediate objective is the achievement of a professional standard of work), division of labour (or how the work is distributed), community of practice (or how the work is accomplished in professional settings) and rules (or the social conventions of the workplace).

The findings presented in this chapter result from the analysis of data from interviews conducted with art directors, creative directors, commissioning editors and freelancers in different workplaces. The workplaces selected included graphic design, advertising and illustration studios and the book, educational and magazine publishing industry. The data from these workplaces were analysed separately because of differences in the needs of the different workplace environments, the types of illustration commissioned and the methods of execution. By conducting interviews, in a variety of environments, it was my aim to ensure that the research findings reflected a broad range of types of illustration commissioned and the environments in which the illustrators work, as freelancers and, to a lesser degree, as full-time employees.

Samples of artwork were collected from the various sites where the interviews were conducted and analysed with a view to determining the standard of illustration currently generated in the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries. The artwork chosen consisted of hand or digitally generated illustration or a combination of both.

The research findings are presented in the following order: firstly, I present and analyse the qualitative findings from interviews with representatives of graphic design, advertising and illustration agencies; and secondly, I present qualitative findings from interviews with illustrators in the publishing industry. This chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

5.2 Individual interviews with graphic design, advertising and illustration agencies

5.2.1 Creative directors and art directors' understanding of illustration needs in visual communication industry

Industry representatives' understanding of the requirements of an illustrator and their impressions of new graduates/entry level employees: technical and personal / interpersonal skills creativity and attitudes.

Skills required by the visual communications industry: a meeting of concept and technique

In terms of the basic skills, the employers and illustration agencies unanimously agreed that a combination of hand and digital illustration skills was important including design skills. "Students focusing on traditional media must have basic computer knowledge" (Employer 3). The computer skills required of an illustrator were defined as "Illustrator, Photoshop and Coral Painter" Employer 4, who also emphasised that illustration, was a foundation for graphic design because:

It brings another dimension to whether it be logo design; if you've got a designer who illustrates as well; illustrations by a graphic designer are usually accurate towards the brief (Employer 4).

Although freelancer 1 emphasised that to have talent as an illustrator one had to be able to draw, to have a sense of design basics beyond drawing was also seen as important. "Coming from a design background has been very beneficial for us as illustrators". The ability to interpret a brief well was seen by Employer 2 as vital and having a particular style or uniqueness coupled with versatility, including marketing and business skills. Flexibility has become increasingly valued where the skills most valued by employers are not higher level skills, but are multi tasking skills, which are more integrated and simplified by the new technologies (Ainley, 1998, cited in Barnett, Parry, & Coate, 2001: 442). The majority of employers felt that the new graduates' technical skills were generally good, with some exceptions as Employer 1 expressed it:

I've got two young graduates in my studio at the moment, who are exceptionally good at illustration; they're good designers and good illustrators, but that's not always the case (Employer 1).

Freelancer 1 explained that "on a technical level in illustration [there are] a lot of good people coming out; creatively as well". Employer 3 saw new graduates as having more advanced

computer skills than the old school with their traditional hand skills, and although strong computer skills in some respects were seen as good:

Sometimes there may be a lack in traditional media...sometimes we get people who approach us and we ask to see their full portfolios because sometimes we're not sure if they're just manipulating images or if they've got the hand-skills; they're not able to create out of nothing (Employer 3).

Importantly, Employer A felt that new graduates need to understand where and how design and illustration fit into the commercial, communications world; "it's a meeting of both concept and technique". To have this understanding on entering the world of work, Reid and Solomonides (2007) say the students need to feel they are learning through deep involvement within the context of their learning and to be experiencing and doing the processes of design in such a way as to see the purpose and benefit of what they do, and to sense that they have a benefit to the professional design community.

Personal / Interpersonal Skills: time management, meeting deadlines and the ability to multi-task

The newly graduated employee must have the confidence to apply his or her skills to the job at hand and to be creative and adaptive in dealing with unforeseen circumstances and tight deadlines, which are very much a part of the design, advertising and publishing industry.

The importance of time management within the framework of deadlines was seen as essential. Employer 4 emphasised:

The [visual communications] industry is about time management; [deadlines are] non negotiable. We've never in four years missed a deadline...what we do is gauge everybody's skill and what they do...you get that guy to work on a project for ten minutes and then you give it to somebody else...so in the end that one project was passed through the studio...we mix and match skills. It makes for a completely different outcome (Employer 4).

Freelancer 1 stressed that with illustration:

There are always deadlines...sticking to those deadlines is very, very important whether you're running a small studio or freelancing...being able to time manage multiple jobs is very key (Freelancer 1).

To manage in this demanding work environment Donnelly (2004) explains that employers are looking for creative innovators and problem-solvers where creativity is the ability to make sense out of complexity in an environment where the creator is often working with multiple, often conflicting factors, pressures, interests and constraints such as budgets and time.

Working within the set deadline Employer B said:

An illustrator who works in the communications industry must show a commitment to taking an idea through to the final artwork stage (Employer B).

Understanding the brief to ensure a minimum of changes and meeting the deadline was seen by Employer 3 as “really important”, who added, “The urgency of deadlines depends on the sector and turnaround time”. Interpersonal skills were said to come in to play with gauging how particular the client was, “then you give them what they want” (Employer 4) who added that a client would direct a very tight brief. Hodgson (2010) confirms the above saying employees or freelancers need to be well organized, meet multiple deadlines, manage projects, time and clients, communicate effectively, negotiate, persuade, and use the language of business.

Creativity: a requirement of an illustrator in industry

Reid and Solomonides (2007) say that for creativity to be recognised, it must be seen as unique and of value to a certain community of people. There was consensus on the importance of creativity and it was seen as ‘central to what they do’ (Employer 1). This employer also said there were craft illustration categories in award shows so innovation in illustration for them was also quite a big thing:

We don't want to keep doing the same thing. We want to challenge ourselves and challenge the illustrators to find newness in illustration and uniqueness...how can we do things in a new way (Employer 1).

Because of the increasingly visually aware consumers, art directors are looking for more unique, dynamic visuals that aren't necessarily highly finished in execution. This development has resulted in briefs becoming less prescriptive, giving illustrators more opportunity to be creative and experimental (Grannell, (2008). Freelancer 1 saw creativity as essential because of the combined input required between client and illustrator during briefings:

A lot of the time the concept or the idea that we go through is partially derived from us or partially from the client. There are obviously occasions with the client where they'll

tell you pretty much exactly what they want. I think in any creative industry, having a creative talent is important...and having an ability to come up with concepts; a lot of the time you have to come up with the concepts by yourself (Freelancer 1).

Miscommunication through weak communication skills, predominantly among the young, inexperienced illustrators, was seen by Employer 2 as having a negative impact on creativity where:

Often they're really enthusiastic about the work and come up with creative ideas, but they're often don't thoroughly understand what the client wants, so they're not really on the same page as the client (Employer 2).

Hodgson (2010) says there is strong evidence for the need to have excellent writing skills and to engage in ongoing concise and effective verbal, email and written communication with clients. Employer 4 saw some institutions as better than others in preparing graduates for industry:

It shifts...in my personal opinion...the kids aren't allowed to express themselves and develop their own niche and build confidence in what they're good at...not be influenced by other styles (Employer 4).

As can be seen from the interview data above, employers value creativity and the ability to express and communicate individual creativity in ways that are appropriate to the client and the brief.

Attitudes: the importance of perseverance and remaining motivated

In an environment where conditions vary all the time in the form of changes and jobs being cancelled or going through a slower period, Freelancer 1 explained:

you have to have a thick skin because there are going to be times when jobs like that don't go your way and also as a freelancer, you'll have to be prepared for the up and down nature of the freelance industry. It's very important to be able to accept it and also to move on and learn from it; there are always changes and stuff to be re looked at; don't take things too personally, don't be too precious... there is definitely is a good turnover of illustration work out there so just to persevere through that and not get too down when jobs don't necessarily go your way (Freelancer 1).

It is unlikely that first drafts of illustrations will be unconditionally accepted; revisions and changes are much more common. In the light of this feature of the industry, it is important that the illustrator is able to make the required changes to a drawing, while maintaining a positive attitude.

The fact that each piece of work goes through a process from scamp or impression of the final artwork before the final artwork was something that Employer 2 said “designers and illustrators need to be open to”, emphasizing one shouldn’t take it [the changes and criticism] personally and rather see it as constructive. Employer 1 said that in spite of explanations and negotiations with the client over work done “sometimes you just have to change things; we then have to pass that on to an illustrator”. Employer 3 felt it was part of their job to prevent the client, after a lot of time is spent on the project, going back to the illustrator and due to miscommunication saying “you’re completely barking up the wrong tree: it’s our job to make sure it doesn’t happen”. Employer 4 stressed “It’s a hard core industry” and put it down to the individual emphasizing the institution couldn’t teach one how to persevere saying, “if one had a degree then one would already have a certain amount of perseverance”. Employer 4 also pointed out that because it wasn’t only one person working on a brief and through resource management “everybody’s involved all the time, so anybody can take over because you diversify the skills”.

To be able to manage in an unpredictable work environment, Ball (2003) says one has to have a range of communication, interpersonal skills with the ability to be flexible, adaptable and able to solve problems. Freelancer 1 saw the attitudes of new graduates as very good. “They are very motivated; need to be motivated to find work”. This was partly countered by Employer B who determined, “The younger guys want to be guided; they want to be told what to do” (Employer b). With regard to the ability to persevere: Employer 1 said:

I like employing people with high energy levels, simply because of the nature of what we do because we're obviously looking for ideas; I want people who are energized and kind of out there and obviously good interpersonal skills...positive attitudes (Employer 1).

Understanding clients' requirements through good communication skills

In the workplace, the ability to interpret a brief well, communicate and negotiate the essential requirements with the client and add to the brief is important. The consensus among the interviewees was that the necessity of working within the parameters of a brief or with open-ended briefs was both client and job dependent. Between understanding the vision one had and depending on who was briefing, both Employer 1 and Employer 2 determined

respectively that it was important for the illustrator to “bring something to the party” and “to interpret something and enhance your seed of an idea...and add to a brief”. Cox (2008) confirms this saying that Illustrators are being given a greater level of intellectual responsibility to interpret briefs in an individual manner. Most are thriving in the creative freedom of taking ownership of the concept, producing a more engaging personal response, while also feeling like an intrinsic part of the creative team.

Employer B emphasised:

It's a two-way thing between the creative director and the illustrator; it's collaborative. I'm not going to commission an artist and pay a high hourly rate if they can't conceptualise along with us (Employer B).

Employer 1 added that it was also important to be able to verbalize and negotiate in terms of the brief. This was echoed by Employer 3 who said, “They need to be able to take a brief really well; they need to be able to question so they really understand the brief well”. This also applies to the freelancer communicating and negotiating with the client about a brief via email, sending samples of work done and receiving feedback and/or confirmation of acceptance of final artwork. When outsourcing work, Employer 2 said that after a few bad experiences through designers and illustrators not fully understanding briefs, “You don't use those people again; that's how it works”. Freelancer 1 elaborated on the briefings expected from different clients:

For advertising clients it will be very brief driven, for magazines the illustration is driven by the article, and for posters for events or bands briefs a bit more open ended, a bit more creative...at exhibitions and illustration based events, there are opportunities to really do your own thing (Freelancer1).

Freelancer 1 also made an important observation saying if one came from a design institution one would be familiar with the terminology used in briefs and briefings, but from a fine art background one might struggle a bit at first, but determined, “Terminology is something you can get used to”.

Taking time to understand the terminology used would be limiting because Hodgson (2010) emphasises that a freelancer needs to be able to discuss projects with the client and by asking questions, establish and communicate what the client needs.

5.2.2 Tools: Hand and digital illustration

In this section, interview data on tools for illustration is discussed. There are two sub-sections that consist of the creative directors and art directors' understanding of their full-time and freelance illustrators' needs and abilities: firstly, the importance of being able to work in a wide range of mediums in black and white and colour and secondly, the hand and digital tools required by industry.

Use of mediums in black and white or colour: personal preference or job dependent?

The employers and freelancer determined that colour was mostly used in the design advertising industry although it was job dependent. Employer 2 said, "For a newspaper it might be in black and white" and emphasised that it depended on what was required of the illustration. Freelancer 1 saw having knowledge of different mediums as important because most work is colour-based:

Knowledge of colour theory is key and a sense of colour... also important is knowledge of the printing processes, how colours work when they're printed and how they work on the web (Freelancer 1).

Wands (2000) confirms that it is important for an illustrator to have a general knowledge of reproduction processes. For example, he determines that if a corporate logo is to appear in print, on television and on the Internet, the illustrator needs to be conversant with all the requirements of these different media for the logo to be completely successful.

The hand and digital tools required of industry: a life long journey of keeping up-to-date

Keeping up-to-date with software such as Adobe creative suite with CS 5 in Photoshop, Illustrator and In Design was seen as essential to the tools of the trade of a digital illustrator by Employer 1 who said, "It depends on what their skill is and how they're working". The shift to the digital screen away from printed material makes it imperative for illustrators to stay abreast of new technologies, which will impact on how they create and how audiences perceive their digital work (Wands, 2000). This was partly countered by Freelancer 1 who said:

Keeping up to date [with Adobe creative suite] is definitely important, but it's not quintessential; I think, if you can keep within one or two of the most recent one [upgrade] from my experience you can sort of get by (Freelancer 1).

Employer 4 emphasised:

If you stop developing yourself, then you stop, full stop. We get bored very quickly, so the more you push yourself not to get bored, try new stuff, as soon as there's something new, you want it...maybe you'll discard it if you don't like it, but you will initially go and find out (Employer 4).

Employers essentially want employees who intellect, problem-solving skills and the willingness to learn and continue learning (Ball, 2003). Employer 3 observed that many illustrators got by with minimal digital skills, but emphasised that being able to search the Internet for reference was important. "Using the Internet as a tool enables you to speed up something so you can slow down on other things, so you've got more time to illustrate".

In terms of hand generated illustration, pen and ink was singled out by Employer 1 for a lot of the realistic drawings they did internally or commissioned:

For storyboards, we use a renderer, who probably can't work in illustrator or CS 4. However, it's still important for the illustrator to be able to scan an image and get it in some digital format; a PDF or a JPG and then we just drop it into our presentation (Employer 1).

5.2.3 Object: the ideal employed or freelance illustrator - standard of work

The workplace data, with regard to the ideal employed or freelance illustrator in meeting the standard of work required by industry, is now analysed. There are nine sub-sections that consist of the creative/art director understanding of their need for preparation for industry and lastly the standard of work produced.

Defining the ideal characteristics of an employed or freelance illustrator

The workplace requires illustrators who are able to: interpret and add value to a brief, to work to a deadline, ability to work with different software, versatile with time management skills, business skills, good interpersonal skills such as good communication and a passion for illustrating.

The ability to interpret and work accurately on a brief, "to discuss it in depth and really clarify what the client wants" was cited as essential by Employer 3 and by Employer 1 "to work to a deadline; under extreme circumstances". Within this demanding environment, Employer 2 said, "I think someone who can really interpret the brief, who can add value to the brief and be technically competent in their style". Essentially, employers want employees who have the

flexibility and adaptability to respond, pre-empt and ultimately lead change (Harvey, 2000). This is confirmed by Donnelly (2004) who says employers are looking for creative innovators and problem solvers where creativity is the ability to make sense out of complexity in an environment where the creator is often working with multiple, often conflicting factors, pressures, interests and constraints such as budgets and time.

Freelancer 1 said:

Being able to cope with different briefs, work in different programmes, versatility is definitely important, time management skills and to have an idea of how the business side of things work...Social skills are definitely important and having a passion for illustrating and a passion for art is very important (Freelancer 1).

A range of important attributes such as "good interpersonal skills, easy to work with" was stressed by Employer 1 which was echoed by Employer 2 who said:

I think someone who can communicate easily anything that needs to be communicated around the timing of the brief or the costing or anything like that. Reliability, trustworthy; if they say they are going to get back to me by five o'clock today, they do and I don't spend two day running after them (Employer 2).

To be able to manage in an unpredictable work environment Ball (2003) feels that a range of skills such as communication, interpersonal and teamwork attributes are essential.

Defining illustration: a narrow or broad interpretation?

In the workplace, within a broad interpretation, illustration is defined as any imagery generated for a specific client or unspecified purposes where the line between fine art and illustration is no longer defined.

Illustration was seen within a broad interpretation, where Employer 2 said, "it means so many things; all applies...from making patterns for a living to detailed, very specific covers for magazine covers...it's about finding your niche and sticking to it" and added that there was a fine balance between specializing and being versatile. Employer 4 said:

It's very broad. When I studied, it was very industry orientated artwork, done for a specific purpose. Nowadays, the fine line between fine art and illustration, there isn't really anymore; our illustration is anything (Employer 4).

The above view on illustration is confirmed by Zeegen (2008) who says that the market place has had its fill of Photoshop collages and cold, clinically finished vector based illustration; the market now seems wider, where there is no house style, and anything goes.

Fig 5.1 – fig 5.5 below demonstrate some of the diversity in illustration mentioned above. 5.1 is a hand painted editorial illustration that has leanings toward a fine art style including 5.2, a pencil drawing, which has been executed in a loose expressive style. The newspaper or magazine illustration in Fig 5.3 is an example of a digitally generated repetitive style, in contrast to Fig 5.4, which demonstrates the subtleties of a hand-generated drawing. Fig 5.5 is a digital illustration that is stylistically more clinical than Fig 5.6, a combined hand and computer generated illustration where the illustrator has attempted to imprint a unique style into her work. However both styles are stylistically appropriate and relevant to the respective Images.



Figure 5.1: Editorial Illustration
Hand illustration.
Illustrator: Mary Grande Pre



Figure 5.2:
Expressive Charcoal drawing.
Hand illustration
Illustrator: Emily Bartsch



Figure 5.3: Newspaper/magazine Illustration
Combined hand and digital illustration
Illustrator: Clay Butler

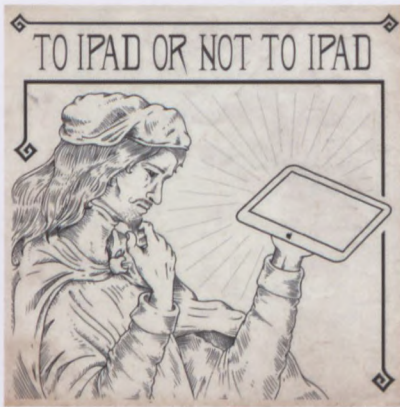


Figure 5.4:
Editorial Illustration:
To iPad or not to iPad

Hand Illustration

**1 horse town
 illustration studio**



Figure 5.5:
Editorial Illustration: Boxer

Digital Illustration

1 horse town illustration



Figure 5.6:
Editorial illustration

**Combined hand and digital
 illustration**

Illustrator: Shelly Wood

Commissioning or receiving illustration commissions: a broad spectrum

The type of illustration commissioned to illustrators or received as commissions was broad with regard to the types of artwork done and was defined as: “mostly for renderings for presentations, illustrations for T-shirts...we do little in-house jobs as well” (Employer 1). Employer 3 said it was completely across the board with a lot of advertising and publishing and corporate work; “basically, our job is marketing illustrators and contracting them with the client and then the admin side and follow up”. Freelancer 1 said it was mostly advertising, editorial and poster work, which was job dependent and consisted of some hand illustration and a lot of vector stuff with textures and quite a lot of typography based work, adding, “We don’t use our digital tablet much”.

Grannell (2008) says that illustration is booming again, after years when photography was a more popular choice with art directors. He stresses that until fairly recently, the world of illustration was looking very unstable because photography had taken over from the drawn, painted or rendered image in advertising or editorial. In spite of the wide range of technology available to illustrators, work that looks too obviously computer generated is becoming less and less sought after (Grannell, 2008). He says that because of the increasingly visually aware consumers, art directors are looking for more unique, dynamic visuals that aren’t necessarily highly finished in execution. This development has resulted in briefs becoming less prescriptive, giving illustrators more opportunity to be creative and experimental.

Wiggins (2008) says that although traditional imagery is definitely experiencing a revival, those who work in other areas such as vector-based illustration needn't worry as long as they put their own imprint and character into their work, which suggests imagery generated using a combination of hand and digital illustration.

Drawing as an industry requirement and the value of well-executed scamps in the workplace
Overall, drawing is an essential part of the process of conceptualizing and presenting ideas in the form of scamps within the graphic design, advertising studio and in an illustration context, where in spite of numerous opportunities to trace, an understanding of drawing and anatomy give one the competitive edge.

Link Schenk (1998), many creative directors stress that the initial thinking, brainstorming stages should be conducted outside the digital environment. All employers and freelancer said scamps and roughs were important. Freelancer 1 said:

The client will often ask for scamps...for magazines we'll give them an idea in words; in advertising you'll have to put scamps and roughs through to get signed before going on [to the next stage] (Freelancer 1).

The scamp to final artwork process is demonstrated in figures 5.7 and 5.8 respectively.

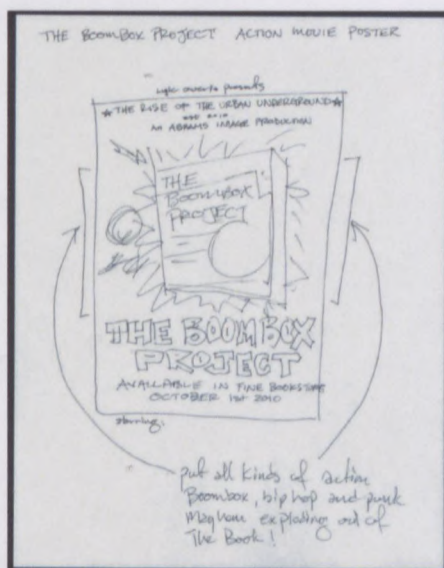


Figure 5.7: Scamp for Boombox project



Figure 5.8: Final artwork for Boombox project

1 horse town illustration studio

However, Employer 2 said that drawing was informally done and they normally start drawing on paper before they get onto the computer. "Not everyone does do that though...less and less; it's not a compulsory part of the traffic or project management process". This is partly countered by Schenk (2005) who says that the ease and spontaneity of the traditional

drawing systems are still valuable, if not vital in early planning stages of a design project. However, a weakness in traditional drawing skills could be compensated for satisfactorily by working in a digital environment when presenting ideas and preparing for production. Generally computers are used in the development and refinement of design solutions for presentations and final production (Schenk, 2005).

The illustration studios and freelancer who deal mostly with graphic design studios and advertising agencies emphasized the importance of drawing, which was seen as giving them the competitive edge. "The more you draw, it filters into everything else you do; for conceptualizing, it's good to have a good foundation in drawing" (Employer 4). Savima (2008), an illustrator cited in *Computer Arts* magazine, says that sketching allows his thoughts to evolve and is a way of finding new ways to express himself. He determines that with this visual diary, because of the usual tight deadlines, when he gets a brief from a client, he is able to consult with his sketchbook/gallery and pick up ideas, various elements and inspiration. Freelancer 1 observed that some illustrators did more collage work:

With digital there are a lot of opportunities to get by with tracing things...having an understanding of drawing and anatomy is essential in terms of making it as a commercial illustrator (Freelancer 1).

Researching national and international trends: Keeping up-to-date and setting new benchmarks, ensuring uniqueness

The Internet was cited by most of the interviewees as an important means of keeping up-to-date and remaining relevant. "There are a lot of image based sites; they're constantly getting uploaded with really good stuff" (Freelancer 1), which was echoed by Employer 1 who said, 'There are so many amazing web-sites and they receive and email out interesting things they find' on a daily basis". Apart from people surfing the net everyday, Employer 4 saw it as a means "to post your stuff on there and get comments from other people". The continued relevance of illustration lies in the intelligence applied to picture making and in the ability to embrace continuing change; being conversant with digital technology, email and the Web should be as common use of the fax and telephone (Rees, 2000). Freelancer 1 said there was a lot of sharing among the illustrator community:

I think the Web has created an easy avenue for people to keep up to date with what's happening...I think people can get a bit lazy with it, but there is an interest that you generate from working in this kind of environment. I think it's very important in terms of making sure you're doing something relatively unique (Freelancer 1).

Any creative was only as good as his research according to Employer 2 who felt that it should be kept diverse, which could be through “movies, books, magazines, the Internet – everything; there's a world of access out there, that's readily available...don't just stay in one track”. Putting illustrators into contact with a children's book society and encouraging them to go to book stores was seen by Employer 3 as a way of “seeing what publishers are bring out; what sort of illustration and styles”.

Business skills: negotiating and charging skills

Knowing how to quote and what to charge for a job based on an hourly rate and how long the job was going to take was seen by the employers as essential. Added to this Employer 3 said, “Knowing how to negotiate with clients and invoicing”. In general, Employer 4 didn't feel that the newly graduated students were prepared for running the business side of their freelance business. “They feel intimidated...they would step back and say ‘what are you willing to give me’...they won't drive a hard bargain”. Heller & Fernandes (1995) confirm this stressing that in a field where clients some-times take advantage of artists, it is imperative for the graduated student to know the tips on how to survive in the real world. These survival skills are defined by Hodgeson (2010) who says designers and illustrators need business communication skills that can be categorized as: very good verbal, negotiation, presentation and listening skills including excellent writing skills.

Having business skills was seen by Freelancer 1 as essential especially if freelancing or doing ones own thing [running ones own studio] emphasising “it would have been great if someone like me now could have come in when I was in third year and spoken about the business side of things”.

Good updated portfolios: a means of securing new clients

Illustrators need to be more visible and quite vigorous in their marketing. Ball (2003) says whether employed or working as freelancers, illustrators need to promote themselves effectively to find work and develop professional networks. A good portfolio, in both online and book form, was seen by Employer 1 as an essential part of an illustrators marketing tool, which should be “updated regularly”. With a view to seeing recent work, Employer 3 said, “It must be organised and presented well”. “Especially when breaking into the market it [the portfolio] needs to contain more quality than quantity and having a range of work to show you can answer various briefs” (Freelancer 1). Employer B emphasised:

I just think that illustrators need to be more visible. And, they need to put their illustrations in context, to show how they would be used and what they would eventually be used for. Also, in terms of subject matter, they should give some

thought on how best to display it. A flash program, slide show or even a power point presentation would work, with some relevant descriptors about the pieces of artwork to give added value. And if there is an interesting piece with textures, then bring in the original piece because a lot of the time, a photograph or scan doesn't do justice to the artwork (Employer B).

Employer A stressed the need for marketing skills:

My suggestion is for them to be quite vigorous in their marketing. It's a common mistake to be too soft. I think if someone asked me to look at their illustration portfolio, I might decline for them to come here because I wouldn't have the time to see them. They need to have a very good electronic portfolio of their work, which they send out to design, advertising agencies (Employer A).

An interesting point was made by Employer 4 that they liked to see sketch books that showed "the thought making process, not just the final stuff", which was emphasised as an important area for teaching and mentoring the conceptual stage. Employer 2 stressed that it always depended on the brief and because they had a good network of people, "unless I need to do something radically different, I normally stick with those people because I know they can deliver".

A matter of style: focusing on one or a range of styles

The general consensus is that although an agency or client chooses an illustrator with a specific style that fulfils the requirements of a brief, to be versatile and offset stagnation and becoming out-dated by changing trends, it's important to have a range of styles or evolve and grow ones specific style.

There were mixed responses with regard to whether illustrators should focus on one or a range of styles, but the general consensus was that some illustrators specialise and "are generally renowned for their styles and if we conceptualise something with a certain thing in mind, an illustrator with a certain style will pop to mind. We become attached to people because of their styles" (Employer 1). This specialisation of style was seen by Freelancer 1 as a style often:

In the form of one technique; I think, having more than one style can be an advantage; I think it's also an advantage to build a strong individual style, but that can include other styles...so like an identity within your styles...Can make it in one style but great to have a varied portfolio (Freelancer 1).

Heller and Fernandes (1995) stress that the most effective illustrators have not only mastered skills or developed certain styles, but have confidently and appropriately used symbol and metaphor in their work.

Employer 3 felt that because the South African market was small and “a unique style might become a flavour of the month or for a while, it was best to have your unique style and others to turn to” adding that it was important for designers to have some illustration skills. Because some trends come and go quickly, some commissioning editors warn that illustrators must be aware of what’s no longer in vogue, to avoid creating work that is seen as dated rather than breaking new ground (Grannell, 2008).

Employer 4 felt strongly that the more styles one had, the more valuable one became in an illustration studio context; “the more projects you can work on the better for you than to be able to work on just 50% of a project. We want change all the time...be unique”. The market place has had it’s fill of Photoshop collages and cold, clinically finished vector based illustration; the market now seems wider, where there is no house style, and anything goes (Zeegen, 2008). Employer 2 felt if one had a particular style, one should stay with it and be inspired conceptually and the continuity could help evolve and grow ones style, thinking and initiate new projects:

It can be beneficial to be someone who has something very distinct that people want...at the same time one needs to versatile enough to evolve ones style and don't get too stagnant in one thing because one can find oneself out-dated in five or ten years time so and finding work really struggling so it's a real fine balance (Employer 2).

From Employer A's perspective:

There's a shift towards an *Art Nouveau* trend, in that there are a lot more decorative elements coming into illustrations and I mostly refer to both digital and more traditional type illustration, there's almost an anti computer, anti minimalist phase we are going into. The market is dictating that the richness of design and illustration be brought back. Rich lettering and rich elaborate illustrations are the in thing at the moment. This decorativeness is good for illustrators at the moment because we are favouring illustration above a minimalist, digital approach. Examples are Coca Cola, Cell phone companies and so on. A trend is universal whether it is animation or as a

print advert. It influences everything, for example, I can see it in typefaces as well; the old 70s typefaces are coming back (Employer A).

Because some trends come and go quickly, the literature suggests that some commissioning editors warn illustrators to be aware of what's no longer in vogue, to avoid creating work that is seen as dated rather than breaking new ground (Grannell, 2008).

Standard of work

The artwork of in-house and freelance illustrators in the visual communications industry is analysed with regard to: (Subjects) Overall proficiency of Illustration skills, (Tools) use of black and white or colour (quality of tonal variation, contrast, spot colour or contrasting, complementary colour); quality of application of hand, digital or combined generated artwork, (Object) creativity, conceptual skills; communication of concept through drawing, proportion, distortion. The selection of artwork was made randomly from graphic design, advertising and illustration studios and freelance illustrators. (Artwork Rubric – See appendix C to Appendix I for examples of the artworks and the Rubrics that accompany them.)

In terms of skills, the workplace illustration demonstrates a high level of proficiency. In Figures 5.9 to figures 5.12, the in-house and freelance illustrators demonstrate an excellent understanding and appropriate use of colour, both subtle and contrasting (complementary). In Fig9, for example as vector illustrations, Figure 5.9 and 5.12, demonstrate a high level of sophistication with regard to the clearly defined shapes and appropriate use of complementary colours or colours to depict the coldness and mood of winter. This high level sophistication is also reflected in the combined hand and digital images in Fig 10, where the emphasis is on creating a clear, informative advertisement using equally definitive shapes and appropriate, striking complementary colours. In Fig 11, the energy and eclectic mood of the CTIJF jazz festival is enhanced through broken, energetic brushstrokes and a wide range of striking complementary colours.



Figure 5.9: Car advert. Digital illustration - Am I collective illustration studio

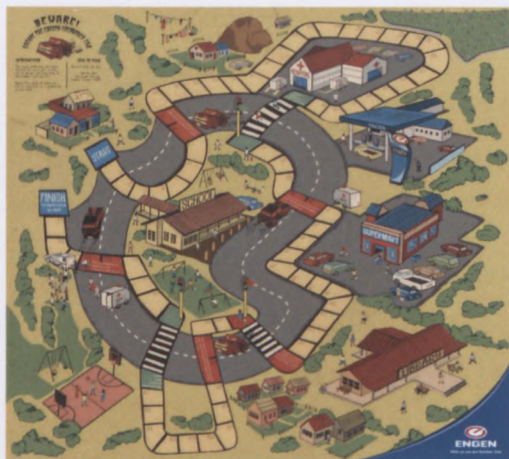


Figure 5.10: Engen advertisement.

Digital illustration

1 Horse town illustration studio



Figure 5.12: Editorial Illustration: Winter

Hand and digital Illustration

McFaul studios



Figure 5.11: CTIJF – CapeTown International Jazz festival Poster
Hand illustration

Figures 5.13 to Figure 5.17 are generally unique with excellent communication of concepts. The concepts are clearly conveyed in ways appropriate to the intended mood and designated period of the image. Each image is enhanced by the excellent use of colour, either subtle or complementary. For example, the serious imagery of a woman with a cut throat and face and the wording of the text itself in the 5.13 CD cover is enhanced by a limited palette of dark black, and dull green and blue, and plain background, which gives it a sombre quality. This is in contrast to the playfulness of the text, the busy, surreal imagery, organic and geometric shapes and a wide range of bright colours in Figure 5.14. In the posters, Figures 5.13 to 5.17, are portrayed through appropriate imagery, colour, and importantly the stylistic treatment appropriate to both the mood and intended period. This difference in the stylistic

treatment is pronounced in Fig 5.16 and 5.17 where the former has been done in a realistic manner with a range of objects combined with a portrait that symbolise the wide range of options hinted at in the headline “Be anything you want to be”, which is further, emphasised though a range of, subtle, complementary colour. The busy, broken stylistic treatment of the imagery in 5.17 enhances the headline text, “The Warriors” which is further emphasised by the contrasting use of black and one other colour.



Figure 5.13: CD cover. Cut Throat Hand and digital illustration
1 Horse town illustration studio



Figure 5.14: CD cover. Mika Hand and digital illustration
Yasmine Penniman



Figure 5.15: Boombbox Poster
Digital illustration
1 Horse town illustration studio



Figure 5.16: Be anything you want to be Poster
Hand and digital illustration
Am I collective illustration studio



Figure: 5.17: Poster. The Warriors.
Hand and digital illustration
1 Horse town illustration studio

Versatile drawing skills

The intended concepts are clearly communicated through excellent drawing skills.

Fig 5.18 is a storyboard where drawing communicates emotion in a pronounced manner and the use of contrasting grey scale tones adds to the focus of the varying moods between a calm expectancy and an anger that develops into mayhem. Fig 5.19 and 5.20 are leaflets where drawing has been used to accurately portray a sense of hopelessness with the purpose of enticing the viewer to use the services of the advertised tax consultant. Other factors are the use of composition, text, pose, expression, balance and all aspects of design principles. The use of colour is limited and contrasting to further emphasise the crisis portrayed.



Figure 5.18: Storyboard
Hand Illustration
Storyboards inc

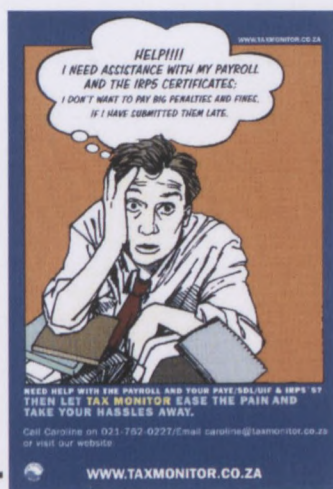


Figure 5.19: Tax leaflet 1



Figure 5.20: Tax leaflet 2

Hand and digital illustration
Graphic designer JJ FU

5.2.4 Division of labour: Where do illustrators fit in the hierarchy?

The graphic design and advertising hierarchy: an illustrator's role

Depending on the design studio or advertising agency, the freelancer goes in for the briefing and deals with an art buyer, or an art or creative director and, in some cases when working independently, directly with the client.

Apart from limited job opportunities for illustrators in an illustration studio, and some in design studios and advertising agencies, the majority were said to work as freelancers. This is confirmed by Ball (2003) who says that generally, in the creative industries, many designers and illustrators are involved in short-term contracts, employment in smaller enterprises, further study and part-time and freelance work rather than a predictable career progression.

Employer 1 explained they did not have a full-time illustrator as they were considered a medium-sized agency, but said:

What I do have are very competent designers who can illustrate; versatility is important. I wouldn't have enough illustration jobs to keep an illustrator busy five days a week or four weeks in a month, but design and illustration in combination, I would have enough work to keep them busy...illustrators show portfolios to the art buyer who then shows them to the creative team for approval (Employer 1).

Employer 2 said the freelancer showed work to the creative director or client commissioning work and in a magazine publisher or agency, to the creative director for final approval, which Employer 3 confirmed as the process for agencies where the art directors or creative directors would let the art buyers know who they wanted, but stressed that although the process was similar in the book publishing industry, the terminologies were a bit different.

Freelancer 1 said they usually dealt with the art director or art buyer and usually went in for the briefing or the briefs were emailed to them. In the case of magazines, it was usually the picture editor they dealt with and dealing directly with clients there wasn't an agency structure. Hodgson (2010) says there is strong evidence for the need to have excellent writing skills and to engage in on going concise and effective verbal, email and written communication with clients. Employer B determined that apart from sending in electronic samples of work, illustrators need to also go to an agency with their portfolios and meet the art directors and copywriters:

We have an art buyer who sources for us. For instance, we'll say that we need a particular illustration style and then they go onto the website to take a look. I think that illustrators need to physically come into the agency a lot more with their portfolio (digital or book) to meet the creatives (art directors and copywriters). The creatives are the ones who make the commissions. Contact the art directors first and the art buyers (Employer B).

5.2.5 Community of practice: Internal and external collaboration

The environment in which the artwork is generated is now analysed, which is influenced by the scheduling and atmosphere of briefings, deadlines, communication between the studio or agency and illustrators and collaboration between the workplace and institutions.

The environment during briefings: formal or informal?

"Informal, the whole advertising industry is informal, except for the client presentations; those we try and keep light...they're not formal...it's very relaxed" (Employer 1), who clarified that it was a group effort when commissioning illustration between the art director, the designer's vision and illustrator's vision in an environment that was light and relaxed.

In this creative, informal environment, Employer 3 said, "It's a bunch of creatives getting together; sometimes it will be a clear brief, sometimes there will be a lot of kicking around ideas and brainstorming". Artists are being given a greater level of intellectual responsibility to interpret briefs in an individual manner; most revel in the creative freedom of taking ownership of the concept, producing a more engaging personal response, while also feeling like an intrinsic part of the creative team (Cox, 2008).

Freelancer 1 said initially there was a formality to the briefing; "it gets a little more informal as you get to know them and build a client relationship". "Some of the less creative, more business orientated places might pull out contracts that you have to sign that you've got to deliver" (Employer 2).

Collaboration between industry and tertiary institutions: a matter of time and a need to close any existing gaps

There was unanimous agreement that collaboration between industry and tertiary institutions is important. Employer 1 said:

I think industry people are very willing to get involved, but obviously our time is very pressured, but I think there is a bit of a gap between what happens in schools and what happens in industry...It's in both of our interests to close that gap as much as possible (Employer 1).

The need for collaboration and links between creative enterprises and higher education in research and development is echoed by Ball (2003) who says that because of the small size of the enterprises available to many graduates, the possibilities for placements and work experience are limited. By involving these entrepreneurs in student projects, student awareness of the potential and needs of industry is increased.

Internships were cited by Employer 2 and 4 as beneficial and a means of job shadowing where the students sometimes end up working there at the agency. Freelancer 1 cited having had the experience at college of doing live briefs [industry generated briefs]:

For me when I was in third year, we had a couple of live briefs, which were design briefs, and I went a very illustration route and understanding that that was viable was a big push for me in terms of doing what I'm doing now...I think it should happen more...it happens quite a lot on an advertising level but it would be cool if it happened on an illustration level...at college it was very important to work with and receive feedback from a client; not only from your lecturers. Being at college and seeing your work in print can be a huge boost to the students. I think it's already a good way to start putting your mark on the illustration map so to speak (Freelancer 1).

5.2.6 Design studio rules: Enforcement or accountability

Professional data with regard to the rules of behaviour in the graphic design, advertising, and freelance illustrators work environment is analysed, namely: work ethic, absenteeism, punctuality, communication and delivery of artwork on time.

What is the expected behaviour of a professional illustrator in the work environment?

Working to deadlines and meeting them through taking responsibility, good time management skills and professionalism was cited by the employers as very important. "I expect people to know and understand their responsibilities in terms of the delivery of the work, from the most junior to the most senior person; we're not going to chase them" [the employees] (Employer 1). Employer 2 said, "It really depends on the job...it's expected that they can deliver and do what they say they can do and communicate any issues clearly along the way". Acting professionally and communicating well during contracts was also seen by Employer 3 as a way of clearing up any misunderstandings or dissatisfaction. Employer 4 explained:

I think one thing we expect here is self-regulation (motivation). There are no work hours here...everyone who comes here is on their own mission; they are self-regulated. The brief goes in, it's project managed by themselves; they know what the deadline is, they know what the standard is. Everyone here is self-motivated, independent; there is a very relaxed vibe...it's all about the outcome (Employer 4).

Freelancer 1 said that although the design industry was not as formal as business, to a certain extent:

You still need to go into it with a business mentality...unless you know them personally...you have to have a certain professionalism and a sense of respect...keep available for communication with the client via email. Constant communication comes with the territory; there will be a constant dialogue with you

and the client, sending each other stuff with feedback especially in advertising situations, they're having reviews every couple days, you're always sending them work in progress (Freelancer 1).

Ball (2003) confirms the above saying graduates who enter workplace working as employees or freelancers have to manage their time and plan their work with minimum supervision, work flexibly with good communication and interpersonal skills and be able to take responsibility early on.

5.3 Individual interviews with illustrators in the publishing industry

5.3.1 Creative director, editor and freelancers' understanding of illustration needs in the publishing industry

Industry representatives' understanding of the requirements of an illustrator and their impressions of new graduates/entry level employees: technical and personal / interpersonal skills, creativity and attitudes

Technical skills: the skills required of graduated students in the visual communications industry

The ability to interpret or follow a brief precisely and draw or create an image using mixed media or digitally within a deadline was seen as essential by Employer 1. Within the process a "sound knowledge of post production processes" was also important. Employer 2 emphasised that in magazines, if one did an illustration that fitted the brand then it didn't matter how one did it and said:

If you can't draw to save your life, but you know how to use computer drawing equipment then that's also acceptable, if it leads into the look of a brand (a magazine title; like FHM or a Cosmopolitan magazine). Computer skills you can get by more easily in magazines but in books, it seems like, to have the skill of drawing is still more in demand...because typically that market will cater for grade 1 to grade 3 where you want a hand drawn thing. You don't want a computer drawn thing because it's too edgy and street wise where obviously magazine life is more up market and more sophisticated, so therefore the computer generated drawing sells (Employer 2).

Freelancer 2 said in book publishing one needed to have a fairly good idea of your market, likes and dislikes... "The main thing is to be able to interpret a brief; that is number one...The number one skill is to be able to draw and in particular in educational publishing, the ability to draw people". Also with specific reference to educational publishing, Employer 1 said one

needed a high-level of character development according the narrative, emphasising the importance of character continuity.

The industries impression of new graduates was generally consistent with regard to style, medium specific skills and technical ability, which were mostly seen as good. However, “knowledge of reproduction & print was very poor and knowledge of [the] bookmaking process, was often lacking” Employer 1. Wands (2000) says that because of rapid advances in technology, an illustrator must be familiar with the latest software and be up-to-date with the knowledge of the factors that govern the final results. Freelancer 2 said:

In educational publishing, they tend to stick with the artists they've built up a relationship with over the years. If graduates come through, its primarily digital work interested in, not so much hand drawn artwork (Freelancer 2).

Personal / Interpersonal skills: time management; meeting deadlines and the ability to multi task

Within the process of completing the assignments using good time management, multi tasking and communication skills, an illustrator needs to be flexible, able to accept criticism, persevere or renegotiate when changes are requested by the client. Employer 1 said:

One needs high level verbal and textual assimilation skills to interpret verbal feedback and resolve text, image relationships with exceptional technical skill, individual style and unique voice/vision, with time management and acute problem solving capabilities (Employer 1).

Employers are looking for creative innovators and problem solvers where creativity is the ability to make sense out of complexity in an environment where the creator is often working with multiple, often conflicting factors, pressures, interests and constraints such as budgets and time (Donnelly, 2004).

Employer 2 said Interpersonal skills were “entirely dependent on the individual”, which was interpreted as “young people generally coming across as more laid back with an easy going attitude” where some of them struggled in the beginning to be assertive because “they’re still learning and they’re shy”.

Because illustrators were generally commissioned as freelancers rather than employed full-time, Freelancer 2 emphasised:

Time management is pretty much on a par with your creativity...it helps to actually have a daily routine of starting and ending the work day and to be open to burning the midnight oil to complete certain jobs...Quite often you have two or three jobs running concurrently (Freelancer 2).

Employer 1 said:

Time management skills are particularly necessary in the educational sector, which is subject to unpredictable National Submission terms and huge output volumes in short periods of time (Employer 1).

The need for multi-tasking skills applied to anyone in publishing as far as Employer 2 was concerned. "If you can't multi-task or communicate well you're going to lose work". To be able to manage in an unpredictable work environment, Ball (2003) says one has to have a range of communication, interpersonal skills with the ability to be flexible, adaptable and able to solve problems.

Like Rees (2000), who stresses that the means by which artists mutate and find solutions to problems depends on their personal flexibility and ingenuity, the employers and freelancer said, the ability to be flexible and make changes requested by the publisher was important. Employer 2 emphasized that an illustrator, who often came in at end of cycle when the projects were already behind deadline, was "seen as a plug in person and one didn't want hassles from them", citing flexibility as essential. Freelancer 2 stressed:

You've got to be quite thick skinned...When you've worked on a project and it actually hasn't hit the right note, you've got to be able to change direction, if that's what the publisher wants...they're the guys who are paying, so you have to be quite flexible (Freelancer 2).

Creativity: a requirement of an illustrator in industry; are new graduates meeting the clients' needs

Creativity is essential for an illustrator, irrespective if the work required is highly conceptual or literal in content. "Even commissions requiring highly accurate, scientific visual solutions require creative problem solving" (Employer 1). Employer 2 echoed this saying:

In certain areas of book publishing, like grade R, you typically would draw something that has to say exactly what the words say. I don't know if it means less creative, probably more left-brain. You still have to be very creative in terms of crafting it, but in magazine trades, you often produce illustration that is quite laterally juxtaposed or runs parallel comfortably or dovetails with the text, so there you've got to be more right brained as well (Employer 2).

Freelancer 2 explained:

The commissioning editor relies on the illustrator to come up with a new angle, to visually portray text in an exciting and appealing way and it helps to be creative and able to conceptualize right there and then at the meeting...have to be creative (Freelancer 2).

Creative problems are by nature divergent and allow for achieving a certain aim in radically dissimilar ways and what matters in some cases is to arrive at not only one goal, but a whole series of goals which fulfil the specified criteria, which reflect that from this perspective, it is the 'nature of the problem' that is creative and whether the problem allows for different conclusions and solutions (Marvszewski, 1995, cited in Reid & Solomonides, 2007: 28).

Employer 2 said:

Creativity among new entry graduates is high, but because their confidence is low it seems like creativity is low because they're not confident to express ideas and they're usually not good at matching their creativity to the brand (Employer 2).

Employer 1 made an interesting observation concerning creativity, saying:

[Traditional] University graduates work on a very high conceptual level. They are able to problem solve, offer creative solutions, build on the artwork brief, do not work on a purely literal level...language skills and brief interpretation stronger from University graduates. Tech [University of technology] students have a slightly less highbrow approach where the work is often more literal, commercially rooted, less holistic approach to interpretation and treatment of artwork briefs (Employer 1).

However, Employer 1 stressed that both approaches had validity and added value to commissions and were "dependent on the bent of the project".

Attitudes: the importance of taking criticism and working with it constructively

The ability of graduates to accept critical feedback is essential to their success over and above enthusiasm and an eagerness to learn. Employer 1 observed:

The new graduates are generally very enthusiastic and eager to learn [but] do not always accept critical feedback with ease. They need to be able to discern between useful and constructive feedback and subjective feedback (Employer 1).

Employer 2 felt that although it was important to accept criticism, it was acceptable to renegotiate if one had to do a job over or make changes, but one could not say no:

There's nothing wrong with having a proper debate about it, but illustrators have to slot into a bigger picture...there's usually a tight deadline plus the magazine team usually have a very clear idea of what they want so the brief is very tight (Employer 2).

Freelancer 2 explained that:

Quite often when involved with the project, very closely, you can miss very obvious mistakes; it helps to have some else to have a look. I rely hugely on their input and I can take criticism (Freelancer 2).

Working within the parameters of a brief or with open ended briefs: client and job dependent: a matter of understanding through good communication and language skills

The amount of experience an illustrator had and the type of project commissioned were cited as important influences on whether the brief was tight or more open ended. "Generally, the more experienced illustrators are given more open ended briefs whereas with the new ones, the briefs are very tight, very well defined" (Freelancer 2). Employer 1 said:

There are very few titles where an artist is given carte blanche...in terms of artwork briefs, nearly all commissions have an artwork brief conceptualised by the publisher pre commissioning stage (Employer 1).

In the magazine trade, Employer 2 emphasised that open-ended briefs were given to the illustrator, where the text was provided:

You'll often leave it up to them to come up with a great idea or you'll give them a rough idea; they have to be very into culture, trends and into sub cultures and very

exposed to media and their social history has to be very strong, for example, who's Andy Warol. That social history has to be incredibly strong (Employer 2).

Successful cutting-edge illustrators need to be educated, socially and culturally aware communicators utilising both intellectual and practical skills (Tselentis, 2006). A broad understanding of history provides a foundation of social, cultural and political knowledge that is frequently required in illustration briefs (Heller & Fernandes, 1995).

The ability to communicate well was seen as essential part of the briefing process to the extent that Employer 2 stressed "if you can't communicate well, you're going to loose work", which apart from verbal skills was also seen as doing the basics such as responding to emails. Freelancer 2 stressed the need for "constant communication to give the publisher updates on where one was in the project or if one was struggling with the dead line; also letting people know you're out there because it's quite an isolated line of work".

Employer 1 explained:

An illustrator often needs to pitch concepts, motivate visual decisions proposed or executed, engage in verbal problem solving and conceptualisation processes with the publisher from the origination of the artwork brief to the final execution of the finished illustration. If there are language barriers, this disadvantage affects both the conceptual nature of the work and the technical specs (Employer 1).

Hodgeson (2010) says designers and illustrators need business communication skills that can be categorized as: very good verbal, negotiation, presentation and listening skills including excellent writing skills.

5.3.2 Tools: Hand and digital illustration

With regard to the tools used by illustrators in the creation of illustration, hand-generated and digital, there are two sub-sections. 1) The creative director, editor and freelancers' understanding of the hand and digital tools required by the publishing industry and 2) The importance of being able to work in a wide range of mediums in black and white and colour.

The hand and digital tools required of industry: a life long journey of keeping up-to-date

Adobe Creative Suite, which is used by most production units, was emphasized as the software of choice "if working digitally" by Employer 1 who said:

Both hand and digital illustration are equally relevant and equally in demand depending on the market and the look and feel of the series, publication (Employer 1).

Good paper and brushes were seen as essential by Freelancer 2, who felt that one could then even use slightly sub-standard paints and determined "it helps to experiment with different media, so illustrators generally have an arsenal of different materials, paints" adding they quite often stuck with the medium they were most comfortable with, which in that case were water colour inks because of intensity of colour.

Keeping up with continuous changes with the latest technology used in image generation, reproduction and printing were emphasized by Employer 1 as a way of "enabling the illustrator to work smart and achieve the best result from artwork generation to the final printed product". Employer 2 said:

I get really nervous when people say to me, I can't draw but I can illustrate, so even though that can work, I kind of expect them to be a brilliant artist and a brilliant technical person and if I get a sense that they aren't either of those, I start to feel nervous, because I feel like I can use some else who is more of an expert" (Employer 2).

Employer 2 added that with smaller budgets they used less experienced illustrators, but with larger budgets they wanted to be sure the person being commissioned was well versed in a number of programmes and styles and flexible between producing hand and digital illustration. Castells (2001) says in terms of person-power in modern workplaces, there is an increasing demand for individuals who can work with flexibility in response to rapid knowledge and technology transformation and changes, be self-motivated and disciplined and work within complex network systems.

According to Employer 1:

Because the printing industry advances daily as do the forms and the contexts in which illustrations are used and placed, it is necessary to upgrade skills throughout ones working life. The digital realm is fast becoming the staple accompaniment to any printed book (Employer 1).

An illustrator must be familiar with the latest software and be up-to-date with the knowledge of the factors that govern the final results. The shift to the digital screen away from printed material makes it imperative for illustrators to stay abreast of new technologies, which will impact how they create and how audiences perceive their digital work (Wands, 2000). Employer 2 said that when there was anything technically related, the pressure was on and

illustrators were expected to go to the Design Indaba “because someone who's going to be setting trends, you want those trends to flow into your design”.

Use of mediums in black and white or colour: personal preference or job dependent

Job dependency was cited as a reason for choosing between black and white or colour, but colour was quoted by Employer 2 as being used mostly in magazine and book publishing, especially:

In magazines it's usually always in colour...grades R to 3 that's colour because you're basically teaching colour still, but obviously the higher grades, high school, I imagine there are many text books that are black and white only (Employer 2).

Freelancer 2 further clarified that:

Black and white with workbooks would be just line work; no ink wash at all so you have to have a very strong sense of line and then if you do work with black and white wash, tonally, you've got to make sure it's not all the same tone, that you've got good contrast there (Freelancer 2).

Employer 1 observed that it was good to have a general knowledge of how various styles and mediums will resize and reproduce. “Illustrators should know how to get the best out of their particular specialisation, as well as the limitations of their style & medium”. Wands (2000) emphasises that it is important for an illustrator to have a general knowledge of reproduction processes. For example, if a corporate logo is to appear in print, on television and on the Internet, the illustrator needs to be conversant with all the requirements of these different media for the logo to be completely successful.

5.3.3 Object: the ideal employed or freelance illustrator - standard of work

I now present and analyse workplace data with regard to the ideal employed or freelance illustrator in meeting the standard of work required by industry. There are eight sub-sections that consist of the creative director, editor and freelancers' understanding of the needs of the publishing industry and lastly the standard of work produced.

Defining the ideal characteristics of an employed or freelance illustrator

“A willingness to connect with the needs of the target audience on a practical and meaningful level” (Employer 1): “To understand that the work is not ultimately for you; you have to produce a product that the client is going to be happy with” (Freelancer 2). These were the essential foundation criteria on which other characteristics were quoted as ideal. A

willingness to fully understand the brief and find creative solutions to represent the brand were emphasised by Employer 2 who added, because of the inherent pressures of the magazine environment, an easy going flexibility was important; "You kind of rely on the illustrator to be the cherry on the top that's going to make life easy for you". Employers are looking for creative innovators and problem solvers where in a complex environment, which is pressured and constrained by budgets and time, the creator is still able to thrive and find creative solutions (Donnelly, 2004).

With specific reference to educational publishing, high-level character development [maintaining the character] through a narrative story and the ability to make constructive visual decisions / revisions based on review by committee style feedback were cited by Employer 1 as essential characteristics. "The ability to work alone, to persevere and have a fairly thick skin with regard to [criticism of] your work and good time management skills" was seen as very important by (Freelancer 2).

Commissioning or receiving illustration commissions: a broad spectrum

The work commissioned by Employer 1 (book publisher) covers a wide range of illustration from foundation phase picture books to intermediate phase novels, readers, technical and scientific diagrams for FET level and digital assets for e-books. "Artwork can range from full-colour high-end productions to naïve style black & white pattern work for spec borders" (Employer 1). Employer 2 commissioned work mostly for magazines and defined the type of work as "more line drawings and some computer generated stuff...both outline and tonal...simple, urban and edgy...putting forward a simple idea to enhance a text". "In terms of educational, my work is primarily with the younger grades; it's a lot of full colour work" (Freelancer 2).

Drawing as an industry requirement and the value of well-executed scamps in the workplace

Drawing was defined as a mostly essential requirement for an illustrator both for final art work and creating scamps and roughs: "90% of the artwork commissioned for the South African & African educational markets requires superb drafting skills. This is in part largely due to the low literacy levels in the various countries" (Employer 1) who added that strong figurative work was done for both rough and finished artwork and technical drawing for content subjects, that was created in both hand generated and digital formats. If ones work is not underpinned by convincing drawing then no matter how many techniques one develops, there is the danger that it will become mannered or bland (Salisbury, 2004). Employer 2 emphasised that artwork for magazines was more conceptual than in book publishing:

You show someone the story and they actually go away and come up with an idea, which you then approve or disapprove [and ask for a few adjustments]...very often in magazines, you'll just give them the words, the concept. So you'll give them the text and they'll go away and do something in their style...there's a faster turnaround in magazines (Employer 2).

Freelancer 2 said drawing as part of the process was done in the form of pencil roughs, which were expected to be quite final. "Nowadays we scan those and email to publisher; they get circulated within publishing house and sent to author...come back to you with comments. From there take to final".

The ease and spontaneity of the traditional drawing systems are still valuable, if not vital in early planning stages of a design project (Schenk, 2005).

Researching national and international trends: keeping up-to-date, setting new benchmarks and researching reference material

A suggested way for illustrators' to prevent their work becoming derivative and remaining relevant was keeping up with national and international trends. A myriad of methods of researching were cited by Employer 1:

Studying publications in both the trade and educational sectors, locally and internationally; attending conferences, workshops, exhibitions and book fairs; entering and following local and international annual illustration competitions; subscribing to local and international illustration and artists' guilds and subscribing to international design and illustration publications, both print and Web-based (Employer 1).

Other ways of researching national and international trends were:

Continually engaging with all forms of current media from theatre through to blogs / illustration compliments and supplements, current affairs, visual trends and additionally, a sound knowledge of illustration as an art form and trade through history to the present will keep illustrators from becoming derivative and to remain relevant (Employer 1).

Being visually literate is not simply a matter of using some shapes to represent others, but assimilating, synthesizing and translating human knowledge and experience into visual terms (Heller & Fernandes, 1995). Viva (1995) echoes this saying, internationally, there is a rich

illustration and design heritage that, if understood by more practitioners, could enrich their work and help put current modes into perspective. Employer 2 suggested that in terms of researching Illustration:

Belonging to the usual overseeing bodies, like professional editors group or South African freelancers association just to see what your peers are doing...I imagine Design Indaba, the fair trades are very important. There are societies you can belong to...get periodicals from them...have a book fair every year; greatest time to catch up on what's happening in the rest of the world (Employer 2).

Freelancer 2 explained:

Within the projects that we do, quite often we're required to do a fair bit of research just in terms of reference...in the early days, post 94, quite often it was part of the publishes job to provide you with a fair bit of reference, but over the years that's changed slightly. Now it's up to the illustrator and often the commissioning editor to do that type of research so it takes me time (Freelancer 2).

Employer 2 added that:

In magazines, there would definitely be a reference. In fact references are over used in magazines; the editor will often say I want the shoot to look exactly like that and they'll show you an Australian magazine or they'll say, I want a drawing that looks like that. It's because they're trying to save time and they want no miscommunication, so the creativity can become very little [limited], often, if the reference work is very, very strong, and it often is. I've never ever worked on a magazine where the editor didn't have reference material and a strong idea, like; I want that page to look like that page (Employer 2).

Business skills: negotiating and charging skills

The essential business skills for an illustrator were an awareness of what the market related rates were, being able to negotiate the fee proposed by the publisher and determine whether or not it's worth the time required to complete the project. Employer 2 said, "You want someone to say to you, my rate is so much per hour or my rate is so much per drawing and that's the preferable one, so much per drawing, then you can budget" and added, illustrators were seen as artsy people who shied away from the business side and were not good at marketing. Employer 1 emphasised:

Illustrators must be well aware of their own capabilities and judge if a proposed fee is worth: the time to be invested for the completion of the commission; the level of detail required by the artwork brief; the technical skill or expertise required to complete the project and so forth (Employer 1).

The need to be thorough in the negotiating stage was echoed by Freelancer 2 including renegotiating the terms of the fee in relation to the specifications of the work required if necessary:

You have to look at a brief even before you've started and have an idea of how long it's going to take you. And then you can access the budget; you've got to work out there and then whether it's appropriate or not or whether you need to ask for more because asking for more at the end of a project is not the done thing (Freelancer 2).

In a field where clients sometimes take advantage of artists, it is imperative for the graduated student to know the tips on how to survive in the real world (Heller & Fernandes, 1995).

Good updated portfolios: a means of securing new clients

There were mixed opinions as to whether a portfolio should be in electronic form, book form or both. Employer 1 emphasised, "An updated portfolio that showcases the illustrator's current strengths and interests, is contemporary in look and feel and gives a publisher confidence". However, employer 2 said:

Most people still like to see a paper portfolio because they actually like to touch and page over it [because of it's aesthetic quality]...lots of people have it electronically as well...if you want to go into the boardroom and convince your boss to spend money, sometimes it's nice to whip out that persons portfolio that's so impressive (Employer 2).

Freelancer 2 emphasised it wasn't important to have a physical portfolio:

As you hand a job in it's a good idea to make a scan of that artwork and so what you do is every year contact the publishers and then you just send them a folder of your recent works in PDF format with medium resolution to reminding them you're still out there and what you're doing and how you're improving (Freelancer 2).

Ball (2003) says whether employed or working as freelancers, illustrators need to promote themselves effectively to find work and develop professional networks.

A matter of style: focusing on one or a range of styles

Illustrators are generally chosen for their styles and capabilities using different media and unless informing the commissioning editor upfront of changes to their style, the illustrator is expected to generate artwork in the style and medium specified. Having two or three styles [to offer publishers] is determined an advantage. In terms of focusing on one or a range of styles Employer 1 determined:

The publishing sector, particularly educational publishing, calls for an incredibly wide breadth of styles and mediums; the most successful illustrators specialise in a particular style, medium or subject, however, there are a handful of illustrators who are able to cover a wide range of media and subject matter with equal ability (Employer 1).

Employer 2 said, "Illustration has become fine artish, so people like to be known by a style", but determined that people with one style generally weren't only illustrators but had other careers as well while those who were only illustrators, tended to have varied styles. Freelancer 2 said Illustrators tended to stick to their styles and were often chosen based on that:

They [the publishers] don't like too many surprises because of working to such strict deadlines...one has to tell them upfront if one wants to change style. Changing your style is important because you have to remain fresh and keep your interest up as well; it's very advantageous to have two or three styles [to offer different publishers] (Freelancer 2).

Standard of work

An analysis is now made of the artwork of freelance illustrators in the publishing industry with regard to: (Subjects) Overall proficiency of Illustration skills, (Tools) use of black and white or colour (quality of tonal variation, contrast, spot colour or contrasting, complementary colour); quality of application of hand, digital or combined generated artwork, (Object) creativity, conceptual skills; communication of concept through drawing, proportion, distortion. The selection of artwork was made randomly from the book and magazine publishing industry.

In terms of skills, the workplace artwork is highly proficient. In Figures 5.21 and 5.22, the illustrators' artwork demonstrates an excellent understanding and appropriate use of colour, both subtle and contrasting (complementary). In terms of the quality of application of media

used in hand generated illustration, the artwork is excellent and reflects a consistency of sophistication. In Fig 5.21, the choice of warm engaging colour and calm, smooth brushwork enhances the text whereas in Fig 5.22 the image of a communist dictator is strengthened by the use of textured brushstrokes, strong contrasting complementary colours, highlights and shadows, including the controlled use of running red paint to emphasis the ruthlessness of the leader.

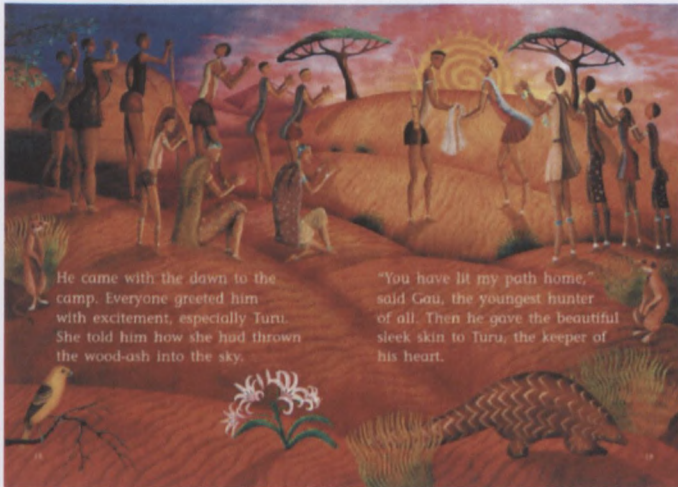


Figure 5.21: Book illustration
Hand Illustration
Illustrator: Karen Ahlschager



Figure 5.22: Magazine illustration
Hand Illustration
Newsweek
Illustrator: Hung Liu

The artwork is unique in conceptual/lateral thinking, excellent communication of concept. In Figure 5.23, the concept of women waiting until they are in their mid-30s and 40s to have babies is executed through the excellent drawing skills that have been applied, for example, in terms of the stylised face connecting the eyes of the woman looking at a suspended ball swaying in front of her and the strong use of tonal variation, contrasting colour and volume. Fig 5.24 demonstrates an ability to use metaphor in terms of the use of an image of man with flowers in place of hair, which serves to enhance the text, emphasising the abstract concept of growing ones mind.



Figure 5.23: Magazine illustration
Hand illustration
 Illustrator: Mary Grand Pre



Figure 5.24: Magazine cover illustration
Hand and digital illustration
 Illustrator: Milton Glaser

Versatile drawing skills

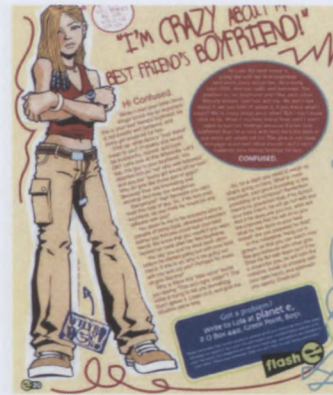
Excellent communication of concepts through excellent drawing skills. In Fig 5.25 below, the realism of the portrait of a woman is further enhanced by the excellent use of the pencil as a medium in the creation of contrasting tonal work and textures by implementing strong directional line work. In Fig 5.26, the drawing and digital brushwork accurately captures the dynamic movement of an African traditional dancer, which is further enhanced by the highlights and shadow areas. This advanced drawing ability is also reflected in Fig 5.27 where the angular viewpoint and resultant foreshortening enhances the message contained within the text, highlighting the difficult choices that young adults are confronted with.



Figure 5.25: Magazine illustration
Hand illustration
 Illustrator: Dean Kelly



**Figure 5.26: Children's book cover
Hand and Digital Illustration**
Illustrator: Karen Ahlschlager
Publisher: Oxford University Press



**Figure 5.27: Editorial illustration
Hand and digital Illustration**
Illustrator: Rial de Wet

5.3.4 Division of labour: Where do illustrators fit in the hierarchy?

The publishing industry hierarchy: an illustrator's role

There was unanimous agreement that in the publishing world, illustrators are not employed on a full-time basis, but are commissioned to do a wide range of artwork to specification. Freelancer 2 observed that in the book publishing world, illustrators were now referred to as suppliers and said:

On the whole, the commissioning editor (or freelance editor) will do the briefing or the project manager. In fact we're very rarely brief directly by the publisher themselves; quite often, briefings don't even take place in a physical sense; they actually happen via email (Freelancer 2).

Employer 1 said that only company approved illustrators, sourced from a freelance database were commissioned and the creative director, creative co-ordinator or editor briefed the artists. "The artist will communicate with the editor regarding content related matter and technical & style related issues will be directed toward the creative co-ordinator". In the magazine publishing world, Employer 2 said the creative or art director would commission and negotiate with the illustrator.

5.3.5 Community of practice: Internal and external collaboration

In this section, I present and analyse workplace data with regard to the environment in which the work takes place. The environment is influenced by the scheduling and atmosphere of briefings, deadlines, communication between the publisher and illustrators and collaboration between the industry and tertiary institutions.

The environment during briefings: formal or informal

The atmosphere at briefings in book publishing is described as a mixture of formal or informal, depending on the person commissioning the artwork and the time constraints involved. However, the publishing environment was seen by Employer 3 as more formal than the graphic design, advertising industry; "tasks are often less creative, more utilitarian...sometimes given creative rein".

There was a mixed response from Employer 1 and Freelancer 2 where the former said the environment during briefings was formal and professional and the latter felt they were mostly informal. Freelancer 2 stressed:

It can be extremely quick, where in fact; they don't even go through the artwork lists at all. But the better briefing sessions actually involve at least three people, so they'll involve someone from the in-house design studio, the commissioning editor and possibly the publisher and then it will be a brainstorming session. That definitely works best, but with time constraints, that often doesn't happen (Freelancer 2).

Employer 2 said, "Magazines generally have quite an informal way of doing things, which I think they believe it leads to higher creativity". Mclean (2005) says a culture that supports and encourages control will result in diminished creativity and innovation. The primary reason for this is that control negatively affects intrinsic motivation. Conversely, when an environment of open debate and discussion is in place, and when trust exists among employees, especially with management, employees can feel more open to take risks and put forth creative ideas (Mclean, 2005).

Collaboration between industry and tertiary institutions: a matter of time and a need to close any existing gaps

Although agreeing on the benefits to both parties, time constraints were cited by both employers as a factor restricting collaboration between higher institutions and publishers. "With time constraints, deadlines and schedules, the larger industry based institution is often not able to offer the time and attention required by the educational institution" (Employer 1) who added that "students also require high-level conceptual development, whereas the industry would tend toward a more pragmatic approach; this form of collaboration is only suited to senior students". Winberg (2004) emphasises the fact that there is a need to ensure that our research, our learning, and our partnerships are grounded in real world matters. Employer 2 emphasised that in terms giving real world tasks, they would if someone from the institution was overseeing and quality checking the work. "If a student comes to you on his

own with no mentor backing then he wouldn't get a real world task because you're going to have fix it". By involving entrepreneurs in student projects through collaboration, student awareness of the potential and needs of industry is increased (Ball, 2003).

5.3.6 Design studio rules: enforcement or accountability

What is the expected behaviour of a professional illustrator in the work environment?

A professional approach to work was cited as essential to obtaining work: these included "respect for deadlines, communication via email or on the phone, good time management and punctuality, controlling your temper, emotions; going the extra mile ensures more work" (Employer 2). Employer 1 stressed:

Deviating from professional practice will result in commission cancellation and further commissions will not be forthcoming. Publishing is a small industry and reputations are based on performance and recommendation (Employer 1).

Freelancer 2 emphasised that one built up a reputation because it's a small industry:

If you are tardy with regard to deadlines you won't get work. You only hurt yourself if you don't live up to your expectations, your own work ethics and very, very quickly, if you don't deliver on time, if you produce tardy work, you won't get work in this industry (Freelancer 2).

Professional behaviour according to Hodgeson (2010) is being ethical and respectful, responsible and reliable, and by pursuing a strong work ethic and high standards, being punctual with regard to meeting deadlines and attending meetings.

5.4 Summary of workplace findings

The workplace data analysis is summarized in table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 Summary of workplace findings

Subjects-professionals
Industry representatives feel that new employees require:
Hand & Digital drawing skills
Both hand and digital drawing skills. Good drawing skills give an illustrator the competitive edge.
Knowledge of the world of work
A good understanding of where and how design and illustration fit into the commercial, communications and/or publishing world; Knowledge of graphic design principles.
Respecting and responding to the brief
The ability to interpret a brief precisely or when necessary add to it.

The importance of creativity
Meet all creative requirements.
Motivation, perseverance
Energized, motivated individuals who have perseverance.
Verbal, Textual interpretive ability
High-level verbal and textual assimilation skills to interpret verbal feedback and resolve text, image relationships. Able to accept criticism, negotiate.
Time management skills
Time management skills (in particular meeting deadlines).
Business and employability basics
Business skills (e.g., negotiate the fee, calculate viability of proposal).
Tools
Tools for learning and practicing visual communication
For a digital illustrator, keeping up-to-date with the latest software such as Photoshop, Illustrator and In Design or within one or two of the most recent upgrades essential. For someone doing hand-generated illustration, basic computer skills required. Both hand and digital illustration equally relevant and equally in demand.
Keeping up with new technology – Resources
Keeping up with continuous changes with the latest technology used in image generation, reproduction and printing throughout one's working life. The digital realm is becoming the staple accompaniment to any printed book. Illustrators expected to go to design shows to update themselves on technically related trends.
Variety of media
Knowledge of colour theory, the printing processes and how colours work when they're printed or on the Web. Self-development essential. Good paper and brushes essential.
Object – Standard of work
Basics
Highly proficient.
Colour
Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting.
Design sophistication and consistency
Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand/digitally generated media.
Originality
Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept.
Versatile drawing skills
Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept.
Object - needs of the workplace
Remaining relevant
Remaining relevant; keeping up with national and international trends.

Engaging with all forms of current media.
Visual culture and art theory and art history
Having a sound knowledge of illustration as an art form and trade through history to the present.
Importance of drawing
The need for initial pencil roughs (e.g. to show the commissioning editor).
Division of Labour
Limited full-time job opportunities; majority of illustrators work as freelancers. The freelancer either goes in for the briefing or sometimes briefs are sent and negotiated via email or over the telephone.
Community of Practice
Informal or informal environment
The environment at briefings described as formal or informal, depending on the relationship with person commissioning the artwork.
Creative Buzz
Informality believed to lead to higher creativity. Sometimes, a clear brief given to the illustrator, and other times, a lot of brainstorming takes place during meetings and is a group effort.
Collaboration with industry: Benefits and time constraints
Benefits of collaboration between the workplace and higher institutions, because of a perceived gap between the two; time constraints for industry people due to work pressures. With reference to the curriculum, a factor was cited that students require high-level conceptual development, whereas industry tends toward a more pragmatic approach.
Design studio rules
Industry representatives feel that: There should be professionalism with regard to meeting deadlines. Good time management and punctuality skills. Communicating any issues with the client via email or phone. An easy going temperament. Openness to going the extra mile would also ensure further work. Able to deliver a professionally finished artwork as negotiated at the commissioning stage.

5.5 Conclusion

The data shows that industry representatives require graduates who have a broad range of digital and hand skills that can be applied to specific areas of the visual communications industry, for example in a design, advertising or publishing context. Added to this practical knowledge is an understanding of how illustration and design fit into the commercial, communications or publishing world.

The new graduates should demonstrate an ability to interpret a brief accurately or add to it thus meeting all creative requirements from a unique viewpoint where necessary. Importantly, they should be motivated, energized and able to persevere and accept criticism in a demanding environment of multitasking and deadlines. As freelancers, they should also be able to negotiate the fee offered by the client after calculating the viability of a proposal.

In terms of the tools for learning and practicing visual communication, both hand and digital illustration were equally relevant and in demand. Someone doing hand illustration was still required to have good basic computer skills for scanning artwork to send in a digital format to the client. For others doing digital illustration it was essential they kept up with advances in computer software including reproduction and printing which governed the final results. Illustrators were also expected to keep up with current trends both visual and technical. Both hand and digital illustration required self-development and experimentation using up-to date computer equipment, and quality brushes and paper.

The standard of the analysed workplace illustration was generally excellent with regard to uniqueness of concepts and sophisticated execution. Strong factors evident were the excellent communication of concepts through the application of strong drawing skills.

With regard to the needs of the workplace, remaining relevant by keeping up with national and international trends was emphasized. Added to this was a sound knowledge of the history of illustration and the importance of drawing skills in the initial concept stage (scamping) and creating character continuity for storybooks and storyboards.

There were limited full-time opportunities for illustrators and most were said to work as freelancers. As company approved illustrators, the freelancers go in for briefings or briefs are sent and negotiated over email or the telephone.

The environment in which the briefings took place was said to formal or informal depending on the factors involved at the commissioning stage such as relationships and the negotiating and brainstorming taking place. Collaboration between industry and higher education institutions was seen as important because of the perceived gap between the two, but it was limited because of industry time constraints.

Professionalism was defined as delivering an artwork on time as negotiated at the commissioning stage, and if necessary negotiating any issues with the client via email or phone. Punctuality and flexibility was also emphasized as important.

In the next chapter, the final chapter, the data from the higher education and workplace sites are compared, with a view to understanding the alignment between the activity of higher education and workplaces in illustration-based fields.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ALIGNMENT OF ACTIVITY SYSTEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

6.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter synthesises the findings from the analysis of data from the higher education and workplace activity systems. In the second section of this chapter, recommendations emanate from the third research question: How can the higher education and professional activity systems be aligned for their mutual benefit? In chapter 4 and 5, activity systems in the training of illustrators in higher education and the professional practice of illustrators in the workplace were identified and analysed respectively. These findings are drawn on for the synthesis that is presented in the following sections.

6.2 Synthesis of higher education and workplace findings

The trends and patterns that emerge across both the academic and workplace findings are synthesised under the activity categories: Subject, Tools, Object, Division of Labour, Community of Practice and Studio rules.

6.2.1 Subject: employable students

Issues of alignment between the higher education and workplace findings are first discussed in this section, followed by issues where there is a lack of alignment.

Alignment: Hand and digital drawing skills

Within both the higher education and workplace contexts, there was agreement that students need both specialised and broad exposure to hand and digital skills. Drawing still plays an important role in communicating the initial concept between the designer and art director in most graphic design studios and advertising agencies. In the publishing industry it still has an essential role, where pencil roughs on paper are created to present the concept to the commissioning editor. In higher education, some students couldn't draw well but could illustrate well in contrast to the workplace where good drawing skills give an illustrator the competitive edge.

With specific reference to educational publishing, the ability to draw people, with high-level character development skills maintaining character continuity was determined essential, which adds to an illustrator's range of capabilities thus furthering his or her marketability. In higher education, some students couldn't draw well but could illustrate well in contrast to the workplace where good drawing skills give an illustrator the competitive edge through access

to a broad range of illustration commissions. This is especially in the case of digital illustration where illustrators trace images and photographs in Photoshop. Essentially, digital illustrators need to ensure that their artwork is unique in character. Despite variation in student ability, there was agreement on the importance of drawing ability for success both academically and in the workplace.

Knowledge of the world of work

A graduate student entering the workplace requires a good understanding of where and how design and illustration fit into the commercial, communications and/or publishing world. This understanding forms an important foundation for both a freelance illustrator entering the workplace and a graduate seeking employment. There was consensus that over and above having both hand and digital drawing skills, an understanding of the world of illustration beyond the university is important.

At the individual level, the data indicated that students were able to align both the world of higher education, in which they were developing skills, with the need to have an understanding of the world of illustration as a professional practice. For example, one student indicated that one of the outcomes of the attending the course was an understanding of when illustration can or can't apply to some pieces of design; this indicates he or she has a professional approach to the field and practice of illustration as well as knowledge of the principles of graphic design.

Respecting and responding to the brief

On both sites, there was alignment with regard to the need for adhering closely to the brief or adding to it if necessary; the approach adopted would depend on whether the brief was closed or open and on the clients' levels of experience of working in or dealing with the visual communications industry.

The importance of creativity

Within an environment where professional illustrators are expected to meet all creative requirements, most students felt they were encouraged to explore their creativity which is evident in lecturers' encouragement of students to experiment with a variety of mediums and styles, both hand and digital, which is a requirement of industry. Some students felt their creativity was stifled by their lecturers' perceived subjectivity, which would create an environment where they would feel unsafe to experiment and push their boundaries and their creative abilities would therefore be unaligned to a broad range of future creative needs in industry. However, despite individual differences in students' experiences, there was agreement across both contexts of the importance of creativity.

Lack of alignment

While there was considerable alignment across both sets of findings, there were some areas where there was little or no alignment.

Motivation

The visual communications industry, because of the great demands placed on full time employees and freelancers, needs energised, motivated individuals who will attend to a wide variety of briefs with the same energy and professionalism irrespective of content and personal preferences. Some students are motivated by having to pass or by their personal interest in the project at hand, which reflects a lack of awareness of the workplace environment and/or a lack of caring and professionalism.

Verbal ability and textual assimilation skills

The workplace requires high-level verbal and textual assimilation skills to interpret verbal feedback and resolve text, image relationships with advanced technical skills, individual style, and unique voice, vision. In higher education, although there is a general understanding of briefs, some students (e.g., second language speakers) have a tendency to misinterpret briefs leading to the submission of incorrect artwork. It seems that illustration students thus do not always appreciate the need for verbal ability. Misinterpretation of the brief is also the result of more insecure students who are less able to work with criticism and because of low self-esteem, require spoon feeding and generally lack self motivation. This is contrary to the needs of industry which are: one must be able to adhere to a brief when required and where necessary, when changes are requested, be flexible, able to accept criticism and ultimately through the ability to persevere, complete the job within the deadline and to the client's specifications.

Because of the demands placed on designers and illustrators in the visual communications industry in terms of the need to multi-task between a number of projects, good time management skills are required to meet the deadlines. In industry, these deadlines are mostly immovable because of the nature of the timelines between the different stages: from the briefing stage, completion of the illustration, to the insertion of the artwork into the document by the design, advertising or publishing studio and final implementation in the form of a printed or Web-based document and submission to the client. Some lecturers always extend deadlines because the students on the whole can't manage their time properly. The lapsing of deadlines for those students' not coping demotivates students who meet deadlines and creates an environment none aligned to the time constraints of industry.

Business and employability basics

In the professional freelance illustration environment, the illustrator is confronted by a need for basic business skills such as how to negotiate, charge and invoice clients, or find a job and set up a CV. These skills also include being able to read a brief and judge the viability of the proposed fee for an artwork specified by a client. He or she must have the skills and confidence to negotiate or renegotiate the fee, if necessary. Generally, exposure to the subject professional practice or industrial psychology had not prepared the students for running their own business or for operating as a freelancer. This lack of knowledge on how to charge and invoice clients, or find a job and set up a CV is an area in higher education illustration which is generally out of alignment with workplace practices and needs.

6.2.2 Tools for learning and practicing visual communication

In this section, the alignment of the tools used by the graduating students and professionals for generating illustration and the non-alignment of resources available to the students and professionals is discussed.

Alignment

In the visual communications industry, tools for both hand and digital illustration are equally relevant. Both higher education and workplaces generally concur that exposure to tools and media for both hand and digital illustration should be equal – although there were some imbalances due to student preferences. Even though there were differences in opinion as to whether or not students were ready for the world of work (e.g., one lecturer felt that some students were insufficiently equipped for industry, while most students, however, were confident their digital skills were ready for industry) – there was agreement that readiness for work entailed experience with a variety of tools and media.

Some differences were noted, such as some higher education sites and some work sites specialized in hand tool and media. In such workplaces, for someone doing hand generated illustration, basic computer skills such as scanning images or researching the Internet, and getting the final artwork into some digital format are important to remain relevant and marketable. Illustrators working by hand generally have an arsenal of different materials, including good paper and brushes; they experiment with different media, but often stick with the medium they are most comfortable with. For a digital illustrator, keeping up-to-date with the latest software such as Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign or within one or two of the most recent upgrades is essential. For both hand and digital illustration, it was agreed that self-development and 'life-long learning' was essential.

Keeping up with new technology

Equally important for the student in higher education and the illustrator in the workplace is keeping up with continuous changes with the latest technology used in image generation, reproduction and printing as a way of achieving the best results from artwork generation to the final printed product. Added to this is a sound knowledge of post production processes. Because of continual advances in the printing industry influencing the forms and contexts in which illustrations are used and placed, it's necessary for illustrators to upgrade skills throughout their working life. Through the advancement of technology, the book publishing industry is experiencing a major shift where digital books are fast becoming the staple accompaniment to any printed book. Illustrators are expected to go to design shows to update themselves on technically related trends.

In magazine publishing, when there are smaller budgets, less experienced illustrators are used; with larger budgets, the person being commissioned must be well versed in a number of programmes and styles and flexible between producing hand and digital illustration.

Lack of alignment: Resources

The resources available to higher education and workplaces are not the same. At some higher education institutions, financial considerations are a limitation in keeping the students up-to-date with technology. This continual need to upgrade makes it difficult for places of higher education to align with the workplace and could limit the graduating students' potential to be competitive in gaining employment both full-time and as free lancers.

Variety of media

In general, higher education is restricted in terms of the variety of media (e.g., expenses associated with colour printing). In industry, knowledge of colour theory, the printing processes and how colours work when they're printed or on the Web is important. The need to work in colour or black or white is job or budget dependent. In higher education there was general emphasis on the importance of being able to work in both. A lecturer, however, stressed that third and fourth year level briefs shouldn't specify either black and white or colour. Student preference of working in black and white or colour was also expressed. Because of the diverse range of tasks in industry such as full colour artwork for advertising, design and publishing or black and white illustration for newspapers and educational publishing, limiting oneself to either would ultimately impede the range of artwork one could confidently market in ones portfolio. These limitations could impact on an illustrator's ability to survive in a highly competitive environment.

6.2.3 Object: achieving a professional standard of work

The higher education and workplace illustration is now analysed with a view to establishing areas of alignment or non-alignment between the illustration that is generated on the two sites.

6.2.3.1 Alignment

With regard to the standard of work produced by higher education and industry, there is little or no alignment.

Basics

It was generally agreed that students leaving the higher education system have the basic illustration skills needed by the world of work. However, as new employees, or self-employed freelancers, there is much development and professionalisation that is needed. In terms of skills, the workplace artwork is highly proficient in comparison to the good level of proficiency in higher education. Thus even when students' artwork is 'above average' in the higher education context, it falls short of the workplace average. The following is the artwork rubric with combined averages of 7 illustration categories in the workplace and higher education. The 7 combined artwork rubric categories are: 1) Book, magazine cover illustration 2) Book, Educational illustration 3) CD cover illustration 4) Magazine editorial illustration 5) Information graphics illustration 6) Poster illustration 7) Promotional illustration (Please refer to Appendix C To Appendix I for Rubrics 1-7).

Artwork Rubric: Combined averages of 7 illustration categories: Workplace and HED

	Assessment criteria				Level	
	1	2	3	4	Mean	
					Work place	HED
Illustration Skills	Low level of proficiency	Reasonable proficiency	Good level of proficiency	Highly proficient	4	3
Tools	Poor understanding of the use of black and white (tonalities/contrast) or colour (complementary/contrasting)	Average understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	4	3
Quality of application of	Unsophisticated application of	Average quality of application of	Good application of hand, digital or	Sophisticated application of	4	3

media used in hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated artwork	hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	hand, digital or combined hand / generated media	combined hand / digital generated media	hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media		
Object Creativity/lateral thinking – communication of concept	Artwork shows limited originality in concept/ lateral thinking – Poor communication of concept	Artwork demonstrates some originality of concept/lateral thinking – partly communicates concept	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept	4	3
Communication of concept through drawing – proportion/distortion	Weak drawing ability, poor communication of concept	Average drawing ability, partly communicates concept	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept	4	3
				Total	20	15

Figure 6.1: Combined averages of 7 illustration categories

Colour

An area of alignment is the students' use of colour, which is comparable to the use of colour in professional illustration.

Visual culture and art theory and art history

Both higher education and the workplace agree that there is a need to keep up to date with national and international trends in both design and illustration. There is a mutual awareness across both contexts of how art theory and art history are linked to visual culture, which serves to enhance an illustrator's conceptual ability.

Lack of Alignment: Design sophistication and consistency

In terms of quality of application of media used in hand, digital or a combination of both, the artwork produced by final year students is competent. In the promotional illustration analysis, the students generally demonstrate a sophistication in their use of chosen media which is in direct contrast to a CD cover and pizza box illustration that were unsophisticated and not at the level required by industry. Versatility and consistency of application are important factors determining the successful career of an illustrator. Professional illustration reflects this consistency of sophistication in contrast to the inconsistency of higher education.

Originality

In contrast to the consistent originality of professional artwork, the student artwork is mostly average (with some exceptions such as poster illustration that reflected uniqueness in approach).

Versatile drawing skills

Versatile drawing skills are essential to the process of communicating concepts, both hand or digitally or a combination of both. An illustrator working digitally, apart from the ability to trace images using software, needs to have excellent drawing skills so he or she can confidently add character to the drawings or heighten tonalities, for example. The high standard of artwork in workplace samples demonstrates this competence throughout. Although the drawing skills of the higher education samples are generally good and communicate the intended concept well, there are areas of average ability, which are not aligned with the expected level in the workplace.

Visual culture and art theory and art history

In higher education, art history is often taught in modules with subject matter that is partially related or unrelated to other subject areas such as communications design, design techniques or drawing and illustration. As a result, the students don't develop a broad sense of what and how each subject area applies to the graphic design, advertising and publishing community as a whole, thus limiting an aligned sense of purpose and outcomes.

6.2.4 Division of labour

The way in which the work of illustration is allocated in higher education and in the world of work is generally not aligned, with some exceptions.

Alignment: Simulation of employer, employee and client relationships

In some ways the academic studio is a simulation of the art/design studio that is common in workplaces that employ illustrators. Within this simulated space lecturers often act a dual role as 'clients' (who present the brief) and as 'employers' who give feedback and ultimately assess the quality of students' work. The division of labour within the academic studio is thus partially aligned to workplace practices.

Non-alignment: limited simulation of the freelance work environment

In terms of the division of labour, one of the areas that lacks alignment is the simulation of freelance work. In the workplace there are limited full-time job opportunities for illustrators; the majority therefore work as freelancers. In some cases illustration lecturers (in their role as 'clients') generally create the brief and assesses the final artwork, whereas in other cases,

the students create own brief relating to the organization they're dealing with; the lecturer facilitates and assesses. In the case of collaboration with industry, the brief is sometimes generated by an art director in a design studio, who also presents it to the students at a briefing. Generally, because of industry time constraints, collaboration with industry is limited. The lecturer concerned would then oversee the project by giving assistance with regard to adjustments to scamps and assisting with the final artwork if necessary. After the lectures assessment, the project would be moderated by industry.

In the workplace, the illustrators are commissioned as company approved illustrators sourced from a freelance database and either go in for the briefing or sometimes briefs are sent and negotiated via email or over the telephone.

6.2.5 Community of practice

The environment in which the artwork is generated in both higher education and the workplace is now analysed with a view to ascertaining areas of alignment or non-alignment. These environments are influenced by the scheduling and atmosphere of briefings, deadlines, communication between lecturers and students, communication between the client, graphic design studio, advertising agency, publisher and freelance illustrators and finally through collaboration between the workplace and higher education institutions.

Alignment: A safe creative space

The culture that develops in both the higher education drawing studio and the workplace is often one in which peers and/or colleagues can receive 'crits' and other feedback in a 'safe' creative environment. A respectful, non-hierarchical relationship between lecturers and students, which creates an interactive environment with unity of purpose, is aligned to the formal or informal environment at workplace briefings that are dependent on mutually respectful work relationships. Artwork that is commissioned via email is also done (or should be done) in an environment where there is respectful communication between the illustrator and the person commissioning the artwork. Within this respectful workplace environment, informality at the briefing was cited as leading to higher creativity, which is especially relevant when intensive brainstorming takes place during meetings between client, creative director and illustrator.

A creative buzz

In an industry that is driven by deadlines, full-time or freelance designers and illustrators often work with multiple projects running at the same time. The conflicting time constraints were a factor that motivated a drawing lecturer to create a similar environment in the design studio; however, these concerns were partly countered by another lecturer who determined a relaxed comfortable studio environment enhances creativity. In most cases in institutions,

graphic design students are faced with conflicting deadlines from different disciplines on a daily or weekly basis. These pressures are often manageable if the students apply good time management skills, prioritizing the tasks at hand.

Non-alignment

Sometimes, due to a lack of consultation between lecturers from the various disciplines, overlapping deadlines create unreasonable time constraints that either lead to artwork that is inferior or the lecturers having to extend deadlines.

6.2.6 Studio rules

Alignment: Meeting deadlines and punctuality

In both the higher education and workplace contexts, there is a need for professionalism in the form of punctuality and meeting deadlines through good time management skills, resulting in the ability to submit assignments on time, attend classes punctually – or in the world of work, deliver a professionally finished artwork as negotiated at the commissioning stage. As a result of any complications arising in the process, communicating any issues with the client via email or phone is essential; similarly it is necessary to address difficulties with lecturers if deadlines cannot be met. These complications could result in minor or major changes in the artwork, which would require the illustrator to go the extra mile, or if necessary, to renegotiate the original fee – or in the case of students – they might be penalised in terms of marks awarded. Thus in both contexts there are consequences for neglect of the 'rules' (or contractual obligations).

In higher education, accountability and self-motivation should be automatic in third and fourth year or the graduating students would struggle to cope in the work environment above and therefore out of alignment with the work ethic required. However, a lecturer felt there was a need for balance between a relaxed, flexible studio atmosphere and accountability with respect for deadlines and punctuality. This balance was echoed by another lecturer who emphasized that over managing leads to institutionalized students who lack creative edge. Thus there can be conflicting deadlines that students need to negotiate. In both contexts there is therefore some flexibility/adaptability that would confirm to the lecturer or employer the commitment of the illustrator in ultimately delivering a professionally finished artwork regardless of complications, therefore ensuring further work.

Non-alignment: Time management

Generally workplace illustrators tend to have better or more advanced skills in time management.

6.3 Comparative summary of higher education and workplace findings

Table 6.1 below is a comparative summary of higher education and workplace findings from which recommendations and a conclusion are made. The main findings under the categories: subjects, tools, object, division of labour, community of practice and design studio rules confirm areas where there is general alignment and non-alignment between the two sites.

Table 6.1 Comparative summary of Higher education and workplace findings

Subjects	Students, academic staff	Professionals
	Students and academic staff members feel that students:	Industry representatives feel that new employees require:
	Hand & Digital drawing skills	
	Have had some exposure to hand and digital drawing skills conventional and unconventional materials.	Both hand and digital drawing skills.
	Some couldn't draw well but could illustrate well.	Good drawing skills give an illustrator the competitive edge.
	Knowledge of the world of work	
	Understanding of appropriateness of using illustration in specific design contexts.	A good understanding of where and how design and illustration fit into the commercial, communications and/or publishing world.
		Knowledge of graphic design principles.
	Respecting and responding to the brief	
	Must adhere closely to a client's brief important; in some circumstances, add to it.	The ability to interpret a brief precisely or when necessary add to it.
	The importance of creativity	
	Most encouraged to explore their creativity; some stifled by lecturers perceived subjectivity.	Meet all creative requirements
	Most students experimented with a variety of mediums and styles, both hand and digital.	
	Motivation, perseverance	
	Some are motivated by having to pass or by their personal interest in the project at hand Generally able to persevere; some have low self esteem, require spoon feeding, lack self motivation, professionalism	Energized, motivated individuals Perseverance (e.g., when changes are requested by the client).
	Verbal, Textual interpretive ability	
	General understanding of briefs; some misinterpretation of briefs by second language speakers leads to submission of incorrect artwork. ESL issues.	High level verbal and textual assimilation skills to interpret verbal feedback and resolve text, image relationships.
	Important to be able to accept criticism and work constructively with it; more	Able to accept criticism

	<p>insecure students less able to work with criticism.</p> <p>Negotiating skills to discuss brief with lecturer and future art director, important.</p> <p>Communication skills taught through feedback at critiques.</p>	
Time management skills		
	<p>Some lecturers always extended deadlines because the students on the whole couldn't manage their time properly.</p> <p>Adjusting deadlines demotivates students who work hard to meet deadlines.</p>	Time management skills (in particular meeting deadlines).
Business and employability basics		
	<p>Professionalism and business know-how are important. Generally, students not prepared for running their own business or for operating as a freelancer.</p>	Business skills (e.g., negotiate the fee, calculate viability of proposal).
Tools	Tools for learning and practicing visual communication	
	<p>Most students confident their digital skills ready for industry; Some more advanced in hand skills.</p> <p>Exposure to both hand and digital illustration should be equal: some imbalances due to student preferences.</p> <p>Some students insufficiently equipped for industry.</p>	<p>For a digital illustrator, keeping up-to-date with the latest software such as Photoshop, illustrator and In Design or within one or two of the most recent upgrades essential.</p> <p>For someone doing hand generated illustration, basic computer skills required.</p> <p>Both hand and digital illustration equally relevant and equally in demand.</p>
Keeping up with new technology - Resources		
	<p>Student recognition of the need for keeping up-to-date with the changes and trends in both design and illustration.</p> <p>Financial considerations expressed as a limitation in keeping the students up-to-date with technology.</p>	<p>Keeping up with continuous changes with the latest technology used in image generation, reproduction and printing throughout ones working life.</p> <p>Illustrators were expected to go to design shows to update themselves on technically related trends.</p>
Variety of media		
	<p>Working in black and white and colour in a range of mediums important; emphasis on versatility.</p> <p>Student preference of working in black and white or colour.</p> <p>Third and fourth year level briefs shouldn't specify either</p>	<p>Knowledge of colour theory, the printing processes and how colours work when they're printed or on the Web. Self-development essential. Good paper and brushes essential.</p>

	black and white.	
Object	Standard of work	
	Basics	
	Good level of proficiency.	Highly proficient.
	Colour	
	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting
	Design sophistication and consistency	
	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand/digitally generated media.	Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand/digitally generated media.
	Originality	
	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well.	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept.
	Versatile drawing skills	
	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well.	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept.
Object	Needs of the workplace	
	Keeping up-to-date - Remaining relevant	
	Keeping up-to-date with the changes and trends in both design and illustration.	Remaining relevant; keeping up with national and international trends.
	Experience with different techniques, subject matter and a developed style could be applied in different ways to different designs and illustrations.	Engaging with all forms of current media.
	Visual culture and art theory and art history	
	Improved conceptual ability due to greater awareness of how art theory, art history are linked to visual culture and how that theory base opens one to new ways of seeing.	Having a sound knowledge of illustration as an art form and trade through history to the present.
	Importance of drawing	
	Drawing is an important means of communication between designer, illustrator and the client.	The need for initial pencil roughs (e.g., to show the commissioning editor).
Division of Labour	Roles undertaken in the illustration studio	
	In third year, the illustration lecturers generally create the brief and assess the final artwork.	Limited full-time job opportunities; majority of illustrators work as freelancers.
	Collaboration with industry- the brief is sometimes generated by an art director from a design studio, who also presents it to the students at a briefing.	The freelancer either goes in for the briefing or sometimes briefs are sent and negotiated via email or over the telephone.
	Generally, because of industry time constraints, lecturers assess the project which is moderated by industry.	Commissioned as company approved illustrators sourced from a freelance database.
	In fourth year at the traditional	

	university, students create own brief relating to organization they're dealing with; Lecturer facilitates and assesses.	
Community of Practice	The creative studio and briefing environment	
	A respectful, Informal or informal environment	
	A respectful non-hierarchical relationship between the lecturer and students creates an interactive environment with unity of purpose.	Environment at briefings described as formal or informal, depending on the relationship with person commissioning the artwork.
	Creative Buzz	
	Importance of creating a taste of a real work environment with multiple projects running at the same time; partly countered by another lecturer who determined that a relaxed, comfortable studio environment enhanced creativity.	Informality believed to lead to higher creativity.
	Meetings between lecturers to coordinate the curriculum, discuss problem areas are important. Insufficient time allocated to these meetings results in overlapping deadlines from different subjects, which result in extensions.	Sometimes, a clear brief given to the illustrator, and other times, a lot of brainstorming takes place during meetings and is a group effort.
	Collaboration with industry: Benefits and time constraints	
	Collaboration with industry took the form of industry generated live briefs, internships or competitions. Industry time constraints	Benefits of collaboration between the workplace and higher institutions, because of perceived gap between the two; time constraints for industry people due to work pressures.
	Emphasis on the benefit of the drawing/illustration course in relation to the context of the whole graphic design programme.	With reference to the curriculum, a factor was cited that students require high-level conceptual development, whereas industry tends toward a more pragmatic approach.
	Communication in the studio between lecturers and students a two way process	
	Lecturers who were good role models were said to instil a good work ethic in the students.	
Design studio rules	Accountability and professionalism	
	A need for balance between a relaxed, flexible studio atmosphere and student accountability with respect for deadlines, punctuality.	Professionalism with regard to meeting deadlines, good time management and punctuality skills. Communicating any issues with the client via email or phone. An easygoing temperament.
	Accountability and self	Openness to going the extra mile

	motivation should be automatic in third and fourth year or students would struggle to cope in the work environment.	would also ensure further work.
	Over managing leads to institutionalized students who lack creative edge.	Able to deliver a professionally finished artwork as negotiated at the commissioning stage.

6.4 Conclusions and recommendations for the production of alignment of higher education and workplace practices in illustrators' world

By conducting in-depth interviews in both higher education and workplace sites and applying the findings to activity theory, a theoretical framework for the analysis and the comparison between the two sites has been developed. Although the two sites are essentially different, the findings have revealed areas where there is alignment and non-alignment between them. This research has highlighted areas where transfer of learning from higher education to the workplace is taking place and other areas, which can, through productive alignment, benefit both student learning and the productivity of new graduates entering the workplace. The recommendations made should have a positive effect on student learning and the transfer of this knowledge to the visual communications industry therefore improving the alignment between the sites.

The focus of this research was a comparison of the activity systems related to third year illustration training in higher education and illustration as a professional practice in the workplace, using comparative methods. The comparative study drew on observational and interview data across a variety of higher education and professional sites.

The education of illustrators and the professional practice of illustrators can be understood as two interlinked activity systems. The main way in which the activity systems are linked is that the objectives of the higher education system are the skilled illustrators that are able to enter the professional illustration world as skilled subjects. The two systems are necessarily different as they have different objectives. However, there are many ways in which the two systems could achieve better alignment, for the purpose of improving practices in illustration education for the benefit of both higher education programmes and the industries that employ illustrators.

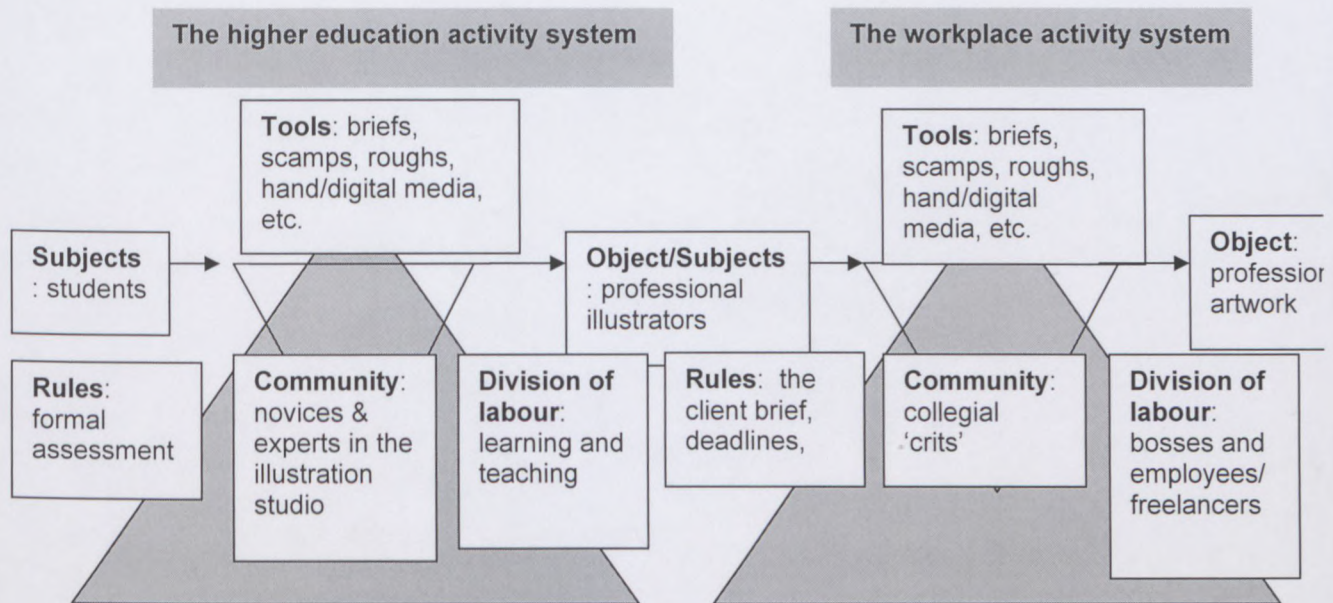


Figure 6.2: Interlinked activity systems: illustration practice in higher education and in the visual communications industry

A high proportion of projects between subject disciplines such as communications design, design techniques, illustration and history could be better aligned to give students a good understanding of where and how design and illustration fit into the commercial, communications and/or publishing world. This deeper awareness of the diverse needs of the workplace could encourage those students who are predominantly motivated by having to pass, or by their personal interest in the project at hand to look, through exposure to a wide range of briefs, beyond their self-imposed limitations. Directly and indirectly, drawing and illustration should enhance the quality of student understanding of the elements of design and techniques and visa versa. Joint projects are advantageous to all parties concerned.

By ensuring that the students are exposed to the same terminology used in briefs in the workplace and through the students' own research of the terminology used and lecturer assistance where necessary, English second language students will be less insecure and able to accept criticism of their work. This will in turn lead to a more confident, self-motivated graduate student who is able to find things out and solve problems. The critic, in providing feedback to the student, not only helps the students to understand the principles of design, but also provides clues as to the terminology used by designers (Alshare, Lane & Miller 2011).

Because there is a lack of alignment between the business skills taught in higher education and those required by freelance illustrators in the workplace, students need to be exposed to real world situations involving briefings and negotiations where they learn how to determine how much to charge the client having read a brief and to negotiate the fee if necessary. This could be in the form of students taking the role of client and freelance illustrator where the client proposes the brief and fee, and the freelance illustrator determines the complexity and

timeframes of the proposed task. If the fee is inadequate, the illustrator then renegotiates it. Role-play situations would familiarise the students with real world negotiations and they would enter the workplace with a foundation of terminology and skills and therefore be able to determine the validity of a proposal by a client. Real world presentations by visiting art directors and freelance illustrators would further inform the students about the business skills required.

Financial limitations make it difficult for some higher education institutions to keep up with technology used in the workplace. By keeping up-to-date to within one or two of the most recent upgrades the students will have a solid foundation on which to build:

If you can keep within one or two of the most recent one [upgrade] from my experience you can sort of get by (Freelancer 1).

By ensuring students are equipped with a broad range of hand and digital skills and encouraging them to combine both hand and digital skills in specified assignments, on entering the workplace, they will offer a broad range of skills beyond the confines of the digital realm and in turn increase their marketability in an environment that demands flexibility and adaptability.

Students, rather than lecturers, should decide on the relevance of using either colour or black and white depending on the intended outcome of the assignment. In briefs generated by the lecturer, the students should be exposed to working in black and white and colour in different contexts such as full colour magazine or storybook illustration, black and white newspaper or educational illustration and a combination of both for the Web. A strong sense of colour empowers the students with the tools necessary to use, mix, adjust and transform a desired colour and therefore enhances their ability to decide quickly on making the correct choice. This informed decision-making is particularly important in assisting the students in meeting illustration and design deadlines as students and ultimately as employees or freelancers.

Versatility and consistency of application are important factors determining the successful career of an illustrator. In order to attain a similar level of sophistication and consistency, higher education generally needs to focus on preparing the students to be versatile between applications (hand and digital). This would align their skills and increase their general marketability to receive commissions for a wide range of illustration in graphic design, advertising and publishing.

To ensure the graduates enter the workplace with marketable skills in the form of the ability to create highly original artwork, the illustration programmes should demonstrate a balance between closed, semi-closed and open briefs. The open briefs should be designed by the

students themselves, which maximizes involvement, creativity and encourages uniqueness. Open-ended and student-led projects are used to increase students' intrinsic motivation and allow for personal engagement (Dineen, Samuel & Livesey 2005).

Graduating students should be encouraged to develop portfolios that include some of the initial thumbnail sketches (scamps) with the final illustrations, thereby revealing the creative brainstorming process, which further demonstrates their creativity. The graduating students should have been exposed to a range of drawing assignments both perceptual and conceptual. Attention needs to be given to creating opportunities for exit level students to apply their already advanced drawing ability to character development that can be used in storyboards in advertising, the film industry or storybook and educational workbooks in publishing including comic books.

Equipped with advanced drawing skills, the digital illustrator will be able to ensure his or her artwork is relevant and unique in character with regard to mark making and appropriate use of tonalities, both heightened and subtle, depending on the requirements of the brief. This competitive edge in a highly competitive industry essentially gives an illustrator access to a broad range of illustration commissions that require more than tracing images and photographs in Photoshop, namely the ability to add character to digitally generated artwork. This deeper understanding of the application and skills involved in drawing could be used in the future if the graduated student on entering visual communications industry is given the responsibility of commissioning an illustrator to create a drawing or illustration within a particular design or publishing context. There is a link between visual culture, art theory and art history and increased conceptual ability.

By closely aligning art theory or history to the different subject areas, the students have a broader sense of what and how each subject area applies to the graphic design, advertising and publishing community as a whole, thus creating an aligned sense of purpose and outcomes. This awareness of the world of work, current trends, social issues and a deeper understanding of history and cultural studies enhances one's ability to conceptualise according to the requirements of a wide variety of briefs or to add to them when necessary. Aligning certain illustration briefs to history and communications design, the students research a period and its main characteristics and create packaging illustration that is both conceptually and stylistically strong and relevant to the period. The illustration is then applied to their graphic design packaging assignment.

By giving the students real world tasks that are briefed and critiqued by a actual art director (rather than a lecturer playing this role), the students would be exposed to both the

terminology used in the workplace in briefs and negotiations and to current national and international trends. This valuable process gives the students the opportunity to learn how to negotiate as a freelance illustrator in terms of the brief in simulated real world situations and reaffirms the importance of good communication skills. Generally, because of industry time constraints, collaboration with industry is limited. The lecturer concerned would then oversee the project by giving assistance with regard to adjustments to scamps and assisting with the final artwork if necessary. After the lectures assessment, the project would, if possible, be moderated by industry.

The students should be made aware of the need for an illustrator to sometimes take on multiple tasks but also the need for him or her to be able to gauge the overall workload in relation to his or her strengths and determine if the deadlines are possible to attain. If not, it's better for an illustrator to turn down some of the work on offer rather than miss deadlines, which invariably results in an end to receiving commissions from the clients concerned.

Deadlines should be set carefully in order to create a delicate balance of preparing students for industry, nurturing a creative spirit and creating a solid framework where students are able to use time management skills for planning a project from start to finish. To limit the need to adjust the deadlines, lecturers from different subject areas should consult one another with regard to the deadlines they have set in order to prevent situations where a convergence of deadlines exists and the situation becomes impossible for the students to cope with, which in turns has a negative impact on quality of artwork. During the artwork generation process, from scamps to the final product, the students should be encouraged and feel safe enough to request assistance if they are failing to cope. With these preventative measures in place, the students who fail to meet the deadline due to lack of commitment and accountability should be penalized. This coordinated environment is one that is balanced between maximizing creativity, and through realistic time frames, encourages the development of good time management skills and ultimately a higher standard of artwork.

Handing a high portion of responsibility of learning to the students in the form of student generated briefs would create a work environment that reflects that of the freelancer who has to have a strong sense of accountability, creativity and self motivation. This accountability would ensure a higher level of professionalism in the form of creativity, punctuality and meeting deadlines through good time management skills, therefore the ability, on entering the workplace, to deliver a professionally finished artwork as negotiated at the commissioning stage. Within this studio work environment, there is a need for balance between a relaxed, flexible studio atmosphere and accountability with respect for attending briefings, crits, deadlines and punctuality.

6.5 Contribution of this research

The theoretical and practical contribution of this research is described below:

6.5.1 Theoretical knowledge contribution

The theoretical knowledge framework that has been developed outlines what academics and practitioners of illustration theorise are the current trends in both hand and digital illustration curricula in higher education and the current trends and needs of digital and hand illustration in the visual communication industry. The findings of the research show areas where there is alignment and non-alignment between the two sites. In broad terms, there is alignment with regard to technical skills and the tools used and non-alignment with regard to knowledge and preparation for the workplace and self employment; for example, time management, interpersonal skills and acceptance of criticism. With regard to employability, work experience, and an ability to utilize softer business-related skills and abilities is vital (Andrews & Higson, 2008).

6.5.2 Practical contribution

The practical knowledge contribution is in the form of recommendations to curricula, which when applied should better prepare graduates with the practical skills required of illustrators in the unpredictable, demanding world of work, which they encounter on leaving their academic institutions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Third year questionnaire

The alignment of higher education practices and the visual communications industry

Dear third year student,

I am a Masters student investigating the alignment between practices in higher education in the Illustration course, and the requirements of visual communications industry. I hope that the outcomes of my study will enable me to develop an improved curriculum and teaching approach, and will be thus be beneficial to students, particular with regard to employability. Please note that **your responses are confidential, and you are not required to put your name on this form.**

SECTION A: YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE

1. Please rate your skills by making an X in the relevant box below:

	Skills	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Not great...
a.	My hand illustration is...				
b.	My digital illustration is...				
c.	My object drawing is...				
d.	My figure drawing is...				
e.	My ability to brainstorm and conceptualize is...				
f.	My ability to produce quick well executed scamps is...				
g.	My skills in storyboarding/editorial illustration are...				
h.	My communication skills are...				
i.	My multi-tasking ability (i.e., ability to work on more than one project at time) is....				
j.	My time management skills (including ability to meet deadlines) are...				
k.	My ability to meet each deadline is...				
l.	My ability to research reference material, imagery and illustrators' styles is...				
m.	My ability to work in more than one style is...				
n.	My ability to crit and evaluate my own work is...				
o.	My ability to crit and evaluate the work of members of my class is...				
p.	My ability to experiment and explore using various mediums and techniques is...				
q.	My ability to adapt and be flexible is...				

2. Please indicate whether you agree, disagree, etc with the statements that follow by making an X in the relevant box:

a) "I have progressively improved from Foundation/First year through to Third Year, reaching a deeper understanding of drawing and illustration."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

b) "The ability to create scamps is an important part of the creative process"

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

c) "Researching other artists' work has helped me to understand the required standard for my own work."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

d) "I feel confident using different illustration techniques."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

SECTION B: SOFTWARE AND OTHER ILLUSTRATION EQUIPMENT

1. Please make an X in each of the boxes (or write in the spaces provided) indicating software or other illustration equipment that you have used:

Illustrator	Microsoft Office	In Design	Flash	Wacom tablet
Photoshop	MS Word	MS PowerPoint	MS Excel	
If you have used other software, please indicate:				

2. Please indicate whether you agree, disagree, etc with the statements that follow by making an X in the relevant box below:

a) "I am stimulated by the continuous changes in software development (e.g., Illustrator and Photoshop.)"

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

b) "I am confident about working in different media in black-and-white."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

c) "I am confident about working in different media in colour."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

SECTION C: YOUR FUTURE

1. Please make an X in each of the boxes (or write in the spaces provided) indicating the different types of illustration that you have done for your portfolio:

a) Hand-generated:

Design	Advertising	Editorial	Publishing	Drawing
Packaging	Advertisement	Newspaper	Children's book	Object
CD cover	Storyboard	Magazine	Text book	figure
Menu cover	Poster		Comic book	Animation
If you have done other types of hand illustration, please indicate:				

b) Computer-generated:

Design	Advertising	Editorial	Publishing	Drawing
Packaging	Advertisement	Newspaper	Children's book	Object
CD cover	Storyboard	Magazine	Text book	Figure
Menu cover	Poster		Comic book	Animation
If you have done other types of computer-generated illustration, please indicate:				

c) Hand and Computer combined:

Design	Advertising	Editorial	Publishing	Drawing
Packaging	Advertisement	Newspaper	Children's book	Object
CD cover	Storyboard	Magazine	Text book	Figure
Menu cover	Poster		Comic book	Animation
Other (please indicate):				

1. Please indicate whether you agree, disagree, etc with the statements that follow by making an X in the relevant box below:

a) "I feel that I have been provided with up-to-date knowledge and skills for the graphic design, advertising and publishing industries."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

b) The graphic design course has benefited me because I have knowledge of the industry and feel prepared for what is required."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

c) "Good basic skills (e.g., in figure and object drawing) are essential for my future employment."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- c) "Researching the artworks of professional illustrators is a way to prepare myself for the standards required by industry."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- d) "I have sufficient knowledge of where and how to source freelance illustration work when I complete my qualification."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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- f) "I accept that, to keep abreast of continuous developments in industry, my education will continue throughout my working life."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- g) "I intend specializing in illustration when I complete my studies"

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

SECTION D: YOUR LECTURERS

1. Please indicate whether you agree, disagree, etc with the statements that follow by making an X in the relevant box below:

- a) "I can accept constructive feedback in a crit by my lecturer."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- b) "My lecturer has encouraged me to explore different illustration techniques."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- c) "We are sometimes given illustration projects that are linked to the other disciplines such as communications design, design techniques and history of art"

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- d) "I am unable to cope when the lecturers give too many deadlines within the same or similar time period."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- e) "The lecturers should meet regularly to discuss what deadlines they have planned to ensure that the work required by them is not all due on the same day or within a few days."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

SECTION E: YOUR PEERS

1. Please indicate whether you agree, disagree, etc with the statements that follow by making an X in the relevant box below:

- a) "Some students work harder than others in the drawing studio."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- b) "There is a lot of joking and laughing when we are in drawing class."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

- c) "The students, who miss lectures often and talk and laugh in class, most of the time, are unsuccessful"

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

d) "Not all students have the same level of drawing skills."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

e) "The students who are committed to their work and persevere are successful and meet their deadlines"

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

f) "There are drawing assignments and brainstorming sessions that involve group work".

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

g) "I benefit from group work".

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

SECTION F: CLASSROOM RULES

1. Please indicate whether you agree, disagree, etc with the statements that follow by making an X in the relevant box below:

a) "Everyone treats each other with respect in the drawing studio".

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

b) "When I crit other's work, I always give constructive criticism."

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

c) "We have to hand in projects on time, or face penalties".

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

d) "Late coming is not tolerated in the drawing class".

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

e) "No-one is allowed to just wander in and out of the studio during drawing class".

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	-----------	----------	-------------------

SECTION G: PLEASE ADD ANY COMMENTS THAT YOU FEEL ARE RELEVANT TO MY INVESTIGATION

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Prompt:

Does it refer only to high end conceptual imagery to be printed in magazines or animation or does it have more subtle purposes, for example in scamping (brainstorming ideas) or the creation of textures, background patterns and general mark making?

Question 2

With regard to the graphic design and advertising and publishing industry, what do you consider important in the teaching of illustration at third-year level?

Question 3

Should drawing be a requirement in the education of a graphic designer? [Why? Why not?]

Question 4

Do you think that the drawing / illustration skills the third year students have progressively learnt, from foundation to third year, have sufficiently equipped them to be able to confidently create quick scamps that immediately convey the message to you as lecturer or a future art director?

Question 5

Should the students be taught that the creation of well-executed scamps (quick sketches) is an important part of the creative process? [Why? Why not?]

Question 6

Have the students been encouraged to express their creativity? [In which ways?...Why?Why not?]

Question 7

Do you feel that their exposure to different types of illustration has been limited or constricted in any way? [In which ways?... why? why not?]

Prompt:

Do you feel that they have had enough opportunity to experiment by doing a wide variety of work?

Question 8

How are the students kept up-to-date with national and international graphic design, advertising and publishing trends in illustration?

Prompt:

Do you present lectures with slides of current illustration to view and discuss and/or do you encourage them to do their own research?

Question 9

At third year level, are the students exposed to both hand-made and digital illustration?

Question 10

Are you confident their hand and digital illustration skills are suitable for employment in industry? [Why? or Why not?]

Prompt: In which areas are they more confident – hand or digital?

Prompt: Which do you think is more important for their future in the industry?

Question 11

In what way are the students taught good communication skills?

Question 12

Do you think that good time management skills are important? [why? Why not]

Prompt:

Do you sometimes give them more than one project at a time to develop their ability to multi task and therefore also develop their time-management skills?

Question 13

Do you think it's important for the students to work within the parameters of a brief? [Why? Why not?]

Prompt:

Do you think that it's also important for them to be given open-ended briefs where they are allowed to experiment and push beyond their boundaries and come up with creative, highly original ideas?

Question 14

Do you think the subject "Professional Practice" prepares them for running their own graphic design business and/or freelance work? [Why?why not? In which ways..?]

Question 15

Are the students able to persevere when things are not going right with what they are doing? [Why? Why not?]

Prompt: Do they loose interest easily?

Tools

Question 1

Are the students taught how to work in black and white? [why?why not?]

Question 2

Are they confident working in a wide range of mediums in colour? [Why? Why not?]

Question 3

Have they managed to keep up with the continuous changes that are taking place in software development such as illustrator and Photoshop? [Why? Why not?]

Future

Question 1

Do you think it will be necessary for the students to continue upgrading knowledge and skills throughout their working life? [Why? Why not?]

Question 2

Are the graduating third year students who intend specializing in illustration taught how to prepare good illustration portfolios relevant to the respective graphic design, advertising and publishing industries?

Question 3

Are the students who intend specializing in illustration given good references on where to source freelance illustration work?

Question 4

As the third year illustration lecturer, do you create projects for the students that assist them in developing more than one style that can be presented in their portfolios?

Prompt:

Do you explain how the various styles can be used in order to accurately capture the mood required in different images?

Community of Practice

Question 1

Do you think it's important that the lecturer, because of the multi-lingual dynamics within the class, ensures that all students understand all the vocabulary in the briefs they are given for each task?

Prompt:

How do you present each brief?

Question 2

Do you think it's important for the students to be able to accept criticism of their work by the lecturer or future art director? [Why? Why not?]

Question 3

As a lecturer, do you think you have enabled them to understand and explore different illustration techniques? [Why? Why not?]

Question 4

Do you think the illustration classes are small enough for you to be able to give enough attention or advice to the students?

Question 5

In the execution of illustration for various projects, do you encourage the students to research the artworks of professional illustrators? [Why? Why not?]

Prompt:

...with a view to becoming inspired by an appropriate style used in order to accurately capture the mood required in their chosen image?

Question 6

Do you think the research of other artists' works has helped the students meet the required standard in the execution of applying various techniques and has motivated them in setting new benchmarks for themselves?

Question 7

Do you think that it is important for both subject lecturers – communication design and drawing/illustration- to collaborate and work closely together?

Prompt:

How do you ensure that the two subjects are not seen as segregated but inclusive?

Prompt: Would you say joint projects between subject disciplines are an important part of preparing the students for industry because they expose them to working on illustration projects that are put in context, for example, a packaging design or advert.

Question 8

Do you think that the communications design, design techniques, history of art and drawing lecturers should meet regularly to discuss problem areas in the third year programme? [Why? Why not?]

Prompt

with regard to why the students are meeting or not meeting deadlines (perhaps too many deadlines within a few days or week, problem students who are not coping with the work load and general absenteeism.

Question 9

Have you encouraged joint collaboration between the industry and the institution by giving the students a real world task? [Why? Why not?]

Prompt

This could be in the form of an illustration for a packaging label or community based editorial illustration.

Question 10

Currently, at the end of third year, what are the desired outcomes of the illustration programme?

Studio Rules

Question 1

Do you think rules of behaviour are important in the graphic design studio? [Why? Why not?]

Question 2

Do you think the rules at CPUT are different to those in the working environment? [Which are similar/which are different?]

Prompt:

-work ethic
-absenteeism-
-punctuality

- deadlines – penalties
- respect for lecturers, fellow students

**Appendix C: Artwork Rubric 1: Book, magazine cover illustration analysis:
Workplace and HED**

	Assessment criteria	Level
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					Mean	HED
	1	2	3	4	Work place	
Illustration Skills	Low level of proficiency	Reasonable proficiency	Good level of proficiency	Highly proficient	4	3
Tools	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	3	3

Understanding of B&W and or use of colour (Complementary / contrasting)	understanding of the use of black and white (tonalities/contrast) or colour (complementary/contrasting)	understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting		
Quality of application of media used in hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated artwork	Unsophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Average quality of application of hand, digital or combined hand / generated media	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	4	3
Object Creativity/lateral thinking – communication of concept	Artwork shows limited originality in concept/ lateral thinking – Poor communication of concept	Artwork demonstrates some originality of concept/lateral thinking – partly communicates concept	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept	3	3
Communication of concept through drawing – proportion/distortion	Weak drawing ability, poor communication of concept	Average drawing ability, partly communicates concept	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept	4	3
				Total	18	15

Appendix D: Artwork Rubric 2: Book, Educational illustration analysis: Workplace and HED

	Assessment criteria	Level
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					Mean	
	1	2	3	4	Work place	HED
Illustration Skills	Low level of proficiency	Reasonable proficiency	Good level of proficiency	Highly proficient	4	3

Tools Understanding of B&W and or use of colour (Complementary / contrasting)	Poor understanding of the use of black and white (tonalities/contrast) or colour (complementary/contrasting)	Average understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	4	3
Quality of application of media used in hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated artwork	Unsophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Average quality of application of hand, digital or combined hand / generated media	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	4	3
Object Creativity/lateral thinking – communication of concept	Artwork shows limited originality in concept/lateral thinking – Poor communication of concept	Artwork demonstrates some originality of concept/lateral thinking – partly communicates concept	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept	4	3
Communication of concept through drawing – proportion/distortion	Weak drawing ability, poor communication of concept	Average drawing ability, partly communicates concept	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept	4	3
				Total	20	15

**Appendix E: Artwork Rubric 3: CD cover illustration analysis:
Workplace and HED**

	Assessment criteria	Level
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					Mean	
	1	2	3	4	Work place	HED
Illustration Skills	Low level of proficiency	Reasonable proficiency	Good level of proficiency	Highly proficient	4	2

Tools Understanding of B&W and or use of colour (Complementary / contrasting)	Poor understanding of the use of black and white (tonalities/contrast) or colour (complementary/contrasting)	Average understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	4	3
Quality of application of media used in hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated artwork	Unsophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Average quality of application of hand, digital or combined hand / generated media	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	4	2
Object Creativity/lateral thinking – communication of concept	Artwork shows limited originality in concept/ lateral thinking – Poor communication of concept	Artwork demonstrates some originality of concept/lateral thinking – partly communicates concept	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept	4	3
Communication of concept through drawing – proportion/distortion	Weak drawing ability, poor communication of concept	Average drawing ability, partly communicates concept	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept	4	3
				Total	20	13

Appendix F: Artwork Rubric 4: Magazine editorial illustration Analysis: Workplace and HED

	Assessment criteria	Level
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					Mean	
	1	2	3	4	Design/ Publishing	HED

Illustration Skills	Low level of proficiency	Reasonable proficiency	Good level of proficiency	Highly proficient	4	3
Tools Understanding of B&W and or use of colour (Complementary / contrasting)	Poor understanding of the use of black and white (tonalities/contrast) or colour (complementary/contrasting)	Average understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	4	3
Quality of application of media used in hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated artwork	Unsophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Average quality of application of hand, digital or combined hand / generated media	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	4	3
Object Creativity/lateral thinking – communication of concept	Artwork shows limited originality in concept/lateral thinking – Poor communication of concept	Artwork demonstrates some originality of concept/lateral thinking – partly communicates concept	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept	4	3
Communication of concept through drawing – proportion/distortion	Weak drawing ability, poor communication of concept	Average drawing ability, partly communicates concept	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept	4	3
				Total	20	15

Appendix G: Artwork Rubric 5: Information graphics illustration analysis: Workplace and HED

	Assessment criteria	Level
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					Mean	
	1	2	3	4	Workplace	HED
Illustration Skills	Low level of proficiency	Reasonable proficiency	Good level of proficiency	Highly proficient	4	2

Tools	Poor understanding of the use of black and white (tonalities/contrast) or colour (complementary/contrasting)	Average understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	3	3
Quality of application of media used in hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated artwork	Unsophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Average quality of application of hand, digital or combined hand / generated media	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	4	3
Object Creativity/lateral thinking – communication of concept	Artwork shows limited originality in concept/ lateral thinking – Poor communication of concept	Artwork demonstrates some originality of concept/lateral thinking – partly communicates concept	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept	4	3
Communication of concept through drawing – proportion/distortion	Weak drawing ability, poor communication of concept	Average drawing ability, partly communicates concept	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept	4	2
				Total	19	13

Appendix H: Artwork Rubric 6: Poster illustration analysis: Workplace and HED

	Assessment criteria	Level
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					Mean	
	1	2	3	4	Workplace	HED
Illustration	Low level of proficiency	Reasonable proficiency	Good level of proficiency	Highly proficient	4	3

Skills						
Tools Understanding of B&W and or use of colour (Complementary / contrasting)	Poor understanding of the use of black and white (tonalities/contrast) or colour (complementary/contrasting)	Average understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	4	3
Quality of application of media used in hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated artwork	Unsophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Average quality of application of hand, digital or combined hand / generated media	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	4	3
Object Creativity/lateral thinking – communication of concept	Artwork shows limited originality in concept/lateral thinking – Poor communication of concept	Artwork demonstrates some originality of concept/lateral thinking – partly communicates concept	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept	3	4
Communication of concept through drawing – proportion/distortion	Weak drawing ability, poor communication of concept	Average drawing ability, partly communicates concept	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept	4	4
				Total	19	17

Appendix I: Artwork Rubric 7: Promotional illustration analysis: Workplace and HED

	Assessment criteria	Level
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					Mean	
	1	2	3	4	Work place	HED

Illustration Skills	Low level of proficiency	Reasonable proficiency	Good level of proficiency	Highly proficient	4	3
Tools Understanding of B&W and or use of colour (Complementary / contrasting)	Poor understanding of the use of black and white (tonalities/contrast) or colour (complementary/contrasting)	Average understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Good understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	Excellent understanding of the use of black and white or colour complementary/contrasting	4	3
Quality of application of media used in hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated artwork	Unsophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Average quality of application of hand, digital or combined hand / generated media	Good application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	Sophisticated application of hand, digital or combined hand / digital generated media	4	4
Object Creativity/lateral thinking – communication of concept	Artwork shows limited originality in concept/ lateral thinking – Poor communication of concept	Artwork demonstrates some originality of concept/lateral thinking – partly communicates concept	Artwork is original in concept/lateral thinking – communicates concept well	Artwork is unique in concept/lateral thinking – excellent communication of concept	3	3
Communication of concept through drawing – proportion/distortion	Weak drawing ability, poor communication of concept	Average drawing ability, partly communicates concept	Good drawing skills, communicates concept well	Excellent drawing skills, excellent communication of concept	4	3
				Total	19	16

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