

Contextual Studies

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Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 545 words

Task 2: Manifesto Writing = 549 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 544 words

Task 1: Observational Writing

For this task, Saussure's theory will be used to analyse the KFC's 2018 temporary closure advertisement by advertising brand 'Mother'.. This advert was selected as it uses a variety of techniques to create humour out of a bad situation. The background, the "FCK" bucket, and the anchoring text below it will be the three signs analysed.

(Trayner, 2018) (Thibault, 1997)

The first sign is the background. Its signifier is red with scratches and crumbs on it to resemble KFC tables. This sign is emphasised by the casually discarded empty chicken bucket laying on its side



Figure 1 KFC temporary closure advert (Trayner, 2018)

on the table. This suggests that the tables are well used and could imply that it was popularity caused the scratches. It also suggests imperfection. This makes them more relatable and disarms any hostility. This reinforces the KFC brand identity, as their main colours are red and white. Red has many polysemic meanings, however, in this instance it has been interpreted as an arbitrary sign of being a warning colour. Therefore, it is signified that this poster is going to be a warning as well as an apology to their customers and hints at the lack of chicken by the use of the crumbs.

The next sign was the "FCK" bucket in the centre. The automatic response to this that "FCK" means "Fuck" as this is popular slang culture used by their target audience. "FCK" is missing a letter, which furthers the idea of a mistake being made. It creates humour, with an element of shock. It questions the true meaning since they do not actually use the word. It is meant ironically, and not meant to be

taken seriously. It is meant to give the feeling that they have been a little naughty in a humorous way whilst avoiding upset. There is the myth that we should never swear, especially in advertisement. It is a delicate technique, where time and place are important. So, this being used automatically draws the viewer in to read more, making them wonder what has happened that they would defy the myth of not being able to swear. However, this is polysemic, as it could also just be their brand “KFC” with its letters rearranged. This furthers the connotation that there is a mistake being made.

(Academy of Marketing Science, 2006)

This anchorage text decodes the image above, explaining any previous signifiers. It helps to fix their overall message for the poster, as the image alone would leave the reader confused.

It acts as a polysemic sign, as it explains their issue of not having chicken, but with short humourful statements such as “It’s not ideal.”, and then moves on to thank their employees and customers for being supportive, even though they as customers haven’t done anything yet. It creates a code, that with some encoding means ‘You are going to support us through this, so thank you’.

(Crow, 2010)

To conclude, this advertisement is designed to apologise and warn their target audience of their mistake, but in a humourful way so that it feels light-hearted, and thus damage controls the effect of their mistakes. This indicates to their customers that it is not a significant or long-term problem, and that it will be resolved soon.

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Figure 1. Trayner, D. (2018). *FOWL-MOUTHED KFC apologises over chicken shortage with cheeky ad – and Twitter LOVES it*. The Sun. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5649831/kfc-advert-chicken-shortage-apology-twitter/> (Accessed: 01.11.2020)

Task 2: Manifesto Writing

1. Take pride in every step of the process
2. Embrace your differences
3. Think once, twice, again and again
4. Answer yes, think later
5. Getting something wrong is doing it right.
6. Question them, question yourself
7. Be kind to everyone you meet
8. Take everyone's opinion into consideration, it may influence your opinion but do not let it become your opinion.

3 areas of exploration:

This manifesto is called 'The beginners guide to creativity' and aimed at people looking to work in the creative industry to build on their confidence to believe in themselves. This could be shared in a handout leaflet to people starting creative courses, in a book, or maybe in a blog. It is easy to become shy or even disheartened by 'lesser' ideas. This manifesto is aimed to overcome this and promote the notion that every idea is a worthwhile idea.

Similar to the style of "Work Hard and Be nice to people" by Anthony Burrill. (Burrill, 2020).

This leads me into my first principle, “Take pride in every step of the process”. Sometimes rough ideas can be overlooked. However, it is these ideas that really stretch the imagination. It is those ideas that make you unique. It is important to embrace the errors we make and acknowledge that this is how we grow and develop. “Regret is worse than embarrassment.” (Trott, 2015). It is better to make a mistake, than to never try at all, as mistakes are part of learning.

For example, the political stunt by Banksy. The message was still there, and his work was still ‘ruined’ as it was meant to be, even if it did not go as planned. (Sky News, 2018)



Figure 2 . Banksy reveals he meant to shred the entire 1m girl with balloon painting. (Sky News, 2018)

This leads me into my principle “Think once, Twice, again and again”. It is also important not to settle for the first one that springs to mind. The first idea is commonly one that many people will have, and not always the best. Be motivated to push ideas further, and persistent in doing so.



Figure 3 Jacinda Ardern (Sullivan, 2020)

Becoming content with the first idea is easy, but by pushing past the initial standard ideas can lead to things only you as an individual can imagine. Consider how your influences, experiences, and knowledge can influence the idea like nobody else can. This makes it a

stronger idea. (Sternberg, 1999). A good example of someone who does this is Jacinda Arden, the prime minister of New Zealand, and her response to COVID-19, resulting in 2,128 cases, 2,054 recovered, and only 25 deaths as of 26th December 2020. She thought carefully before reacting and resulted in saving the lives of thousands. (Sullivan 2020) (Ministry of health 2020)

Finally, the last principle I would like to expand on is “Be kind to everyone you meet”. (Burrill, 2020). This goes for any industry, any profession, any place. It comes down to two people needing to meet a common goal, and it is important to remember that during difficult times. It is impossible to know what is going on with the other person, they could just be going through a tough time. Politeness can go a long way; it is better to be known for your kindness than for your stubbornness. Let them remember you for your creative, kind, understanding qualities. Otherwise treating them negatively will overshadow this. For example, following some Mohandas Ghandi’s main values, we should ensure our actions are not violent or selfish. Even his protests for basic rights were peaceful and respectful.



Figure 4 Ghandi's salt march protest (Nanda, n.d.)

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Figure 3. Sullivan, R. (2020). New Zealand stamps out coronavirus- again. Independent. Accessed at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/new-zealand-coronavirus-auckland-restrictions-lockdown-jacinda-ardern-b885851.html> (Accessed 26.12.20)

Figure 4. Nanda, B (n.d.) Resistance and Results. Britannica. Accessed at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mahatma-Gandhi/Emergence-as-nationalist-leader> (Accessed: 26.12.20)

Task 3: Reflective Writing

For this task, I will be using reflective writing to analyse how I could respond better to my work. Using Kolb's experiential learning theory of this concrete experience, making this piece of work, I will make a reflective observation, and conceptualize how this will improve my learning in the future. (Dennison, 2010).

This was one of my draft photomontages from my work on how the media is synthetic and untrue, which I created during my foundation year. It was a mix of photos from *Vogue* magazine, one where the girl is fuelling her car, and a snake from another page. I was trying to convey that the media portrays unrealistic expectations that many people fail to meet, and thus affects our self-confidence. I thought that the contrary here though, is that we fuel the media, as we continue to watch and read their advice, we end up advocating for it. Hence why the girl is holding a gas pump, with a 'venomous' snake coming out of it. I was about to work on how



Figure 5 Photomontage (Roberts, 2020).

I could represent the media the snake would leach into, when someone said it looked like a lady with male genitals, and I abandoned the work piece entirely.

Looking back at this, I acted a lot on emotion. I was proud of this piece, and when nobody could see my point of view, I threw it away as I was hurt. I was confused since I could not understand how my photomontage could be interpreted so crudely. My initial reflection was that because someone saw it differently, I needed to try a whole new approach. This was like an internal protest to a relatively minor problem.

With hindsight, I would have found comfort in further research. Dada was an art movement



Figure 6 Warning
(Kennard, 1983)

that I have recently learnt about which focuses on photomontage used to express political disagreement. (Tate, n.d.) Peter Kennard was a famous artist known for his political photomontages.



Figure 7 Media Game (Kennard, 1990)

He covered a variety of areas, including poverty, capitalism and media. His work on the media was the same message I wanted to portray. His piece, “Warning”, 1983, and “Media Game”, 1990, could have been influential on my work. I could have developed my idea, and used the snake coming out of a TV, or a model from vogue in the tv with a snake watching. I would have been able to push my idea further, rather than shy away from it. (Kennard, n.d.)

To conclude, if I was to do this task again, I would carry out more research into this topic. I would try to look at the bigger picture and conduct reflections more often. From this concrete experience, I can improve my future learning. Through abstract conceptualization, I aim to seek criticisms more often. Rather than abandon my ideas when I get negative responses, I will seek research into how I can push ideas further. This will include more research into the topic, rather than abandoning the idea and not learning from the

experience. Where this stunted my development previously, it will push me further in the future as I actively experiment with this learning experience. (J, Hargreaves and L, Page, 2013)

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Figure 6. Kennard, P (1983). *Warning*. Circa1983. Accessed from: <https://www.peterkennard.com/photomontage#/media-1/> (Accessed 22.12.20)

Figure 7. Kennard, P (1990). *Media Game*. The Guardian. Accessed from:

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