

Lenses on the Bay

FE: Art and Design

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Specialist knowledge for teachers

Coastal environments are rich sites in which to conduct critical research in art and design. A direct engagement with coastal environment is a great way to challenge learners to think critically about place, its human and non-human inhabitants, and the multiple futures that can be shaped through the interaction of nature with human made infrastructure. However, learners doing fieldwork on coastal environments are often put off drawing and note taking by wind, sand and uneven surfaces to sit or lean on, and use their phone to take reference pictures and notes to use at a later time. An over-reliance on mobile technologies can generate distance between learners and their surroundings and skew the perceptive experience towards one that is mediated by technology.

This resource provides learners and educators with a set of customizable tools to support the act of noticing and the direct engagement with the entanglements and complexities of coastal environments. These resources are inspired by pedagogies of environmental care (Goralnik, 2012), which focus on direct experience of nature and creative place-based interventions that encourage different ways of expression.

Learning (or re-learning) to notice is a first important step in pedagogies of environmental care, and the tools designed in this pack seek to engage learners with playful inquiry and meaning making activities and challenge immediate conceptualization of place.

In this resource pack we have provided a list of prompts for playful drawing activities to choose from (or expand on), and the template for building a Flexagon Notebook to use as a logbook during the fieldwork.



The Flexagon Notebook is a folded paper notebook that reveals hidden pages when turned inside out. It is a playful tool for structuring prompts so that learners will discover them one at the time. By responding to simple instructions, learners are encouraged to observe, discover, and engage with the environment without worrying about the quality or the subject of their drawings.

Drawing then becomes a process of discovery, and, to use a quote by Berger (2008, p3) 'each mark you make on the paper is a stepping stone' until you find 'you have crossed your subject as though it were a river'. The process itself of conducting observations during fieldwork, can help to capture the changeable, non-modular, and unbounded nature of the landscape (Fekete and van den Toorn, 2021) in an embodied way which encourages multisensorial experience beyond the visual aspects (Ingold, 2010). Each learner's Flexagon Notebook (or set of postcards, for a simplified alternative) will capture their individual experience

Curriculum aims and objectives

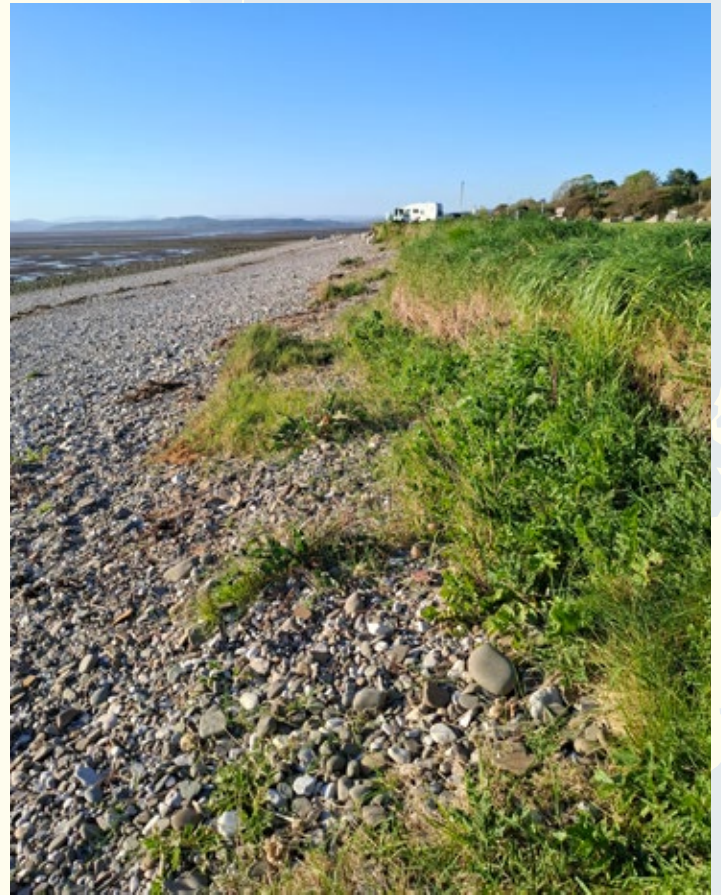
This resource is designed for Art and Design FE students on Level 3 vocational courses such as the UAL Awarding Body Level 3 Diploma/Extended Diploma in Creative Practice: Art, Design and Communication. The research activities within this resource could also be adapted for other Level 3 Art and Design qualifications including A-Level and BTEC qualifications.

This resource encourages learners to engage with coastal locations, potentially developing their knowledge and understanding of related sustainability themes through a series of research tasks to inform their own creative development. This links to the Sustainability aims of the UAL Level 3 Diploma/Extended Diploma Creative Practice.

The resource directly links to the following unit/learning objectives of the above qualifications.

- UNIT 1 The Creative Process:
- LO3 Understand the role of research within the creative process
- LO7 Understand methods for generating ideas within a brief

This resource also links to the personal research and idea generation elements of Units 3 Responding to a Set brief and Unit 6 Specialist Creative Outcome.



Head

Learners will develop their knowledge of Morecambe Bay coastal landscapes including man-made features, nature and wildlife, tidal and coastal changes. through a series of activities designed to develop their creative research skills for an Art and Design project. From their initial investigations on the field trip, to their further research back in the studios, they will be encouraged to make explore further research into related themes including social history, sustainability, biodiversity, and effects of climate change, using these themes as starting points to develop further artwork.

Heart

The activities in this resource are designed to encourage learners to notice details and engage with the coastal landscape through a series of playful and creative prompts. Through engaging in creative activities on a field trip and in the studio, learners will develop stronger connections with the Morecambe Bay coastal environment.

Hands

Learners will develop their practical art and design skills through a series of hands-on activities including drawing on location and using a range of materials and processes back in the studio to produce a creative presentation of their research.

Examples in practice

Outline of sessions: Introduction

This is a series of three sessions designed to be used at the start of a longer creative project, to help develop research and collaborative presentation skills in the context of an investigation into the coastal landscapes of Morecambe Bay. These sessions are designed for 16–18 FE learners on vocational art and design courses such as the UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative Practice: Art, Design and Communication.

Session 1

Field Trip to Morecambe Bay coastal location to collect primary source research including drawings, photographs and notes based on a series of prompts. The prompts will encourage learners to investigate the location in different ways. The prompts will be presented to the learners using the Flexagon Notebook: a folding paper tool to promote a sense of discovery and play. Alternatively, the prompts could be printed on postcards and distributed in envelopes, to provide an element of surprise! Learners could record their findings in the Flexagon Notebooks or postcards so they would become visual documents storytelling the engagement of the learner with place.

Resources/preparation:

Learners to assemble paper tools before the trip. They could select 4 prompts at random to include in the tools. The tools could then be redistributed between the learners when on the field trip.

- Alternative option: prompts could be printed as cards and placed in envelopes
- Drawing materials and sketchbooks
- Cameras/phones
- Bags or wallets for collecting small artefacts such as plastic waste or natural materials where appropriate



Installation of research by architect Tuiyoshi Tane

Session 2

Collaborative presentation of collected data from the field trip.

- Learners to be introduced to different creative ways of presenting research including creating art installations, maps, zines, and infographics.
- Learners work in groups to collate and present their research in visually effective formats using available studio spaces and resources.
- Learners discuss possible questions that could be posed, to further their investigation of their coastal location. How could these questions be incorporated into their presentations?



Possible outcomes:

Visual and creative presentation of research for example: art installation in studio space incorporating projections of images, recreation of coastal landscape using cardboard and other repurposed materials, giant maps, collection of individual drawings and photographs combined together to create a larger piece, large infographic posters combining images and text, group collection of mini books or zines

Resources/preparation:

- Learners to be given time to print out photographs taken on field trip
- Studio space including wall and floor space to allow learners to create installations
- Technology if available, e.g. access to photocopier, over head or digital projectors
- Scrap cardboard/paper, repurposed materials such as textiles, wood, packaging, string
- Large sheets of paper, sticky notes, studio materials such as markers, masking tape, scissors, staplers, drawing materials
- Presentation/learner handout: creative presentation of research

Session 3

During the final session, learners will evaluate their research and plan possible next steps. How could they develop their research into an individual creative project? What further information do they need to make their research stronger to enable them to develop effective and meaningful outcomes? The evaluation could incorporate written responses to questions and group discussion. This session could also include time for individual research and practical exploration around their chosen themes.

Possible outcomes: sketchbook pages, written evaluation, practical experimentation linking to individual theme/specialism

Resources/preparation

- Sheets of paper/flipcharts/sticky notes/markers for group discussion
- Learner handout: evaluation of research
- Access to computers/printers for further research
- Access to art and design materials for practical experimentation
- Learner handout: ideas for further activities linking to specialist creative practice



Adaptations to extend impact

This project can be undertaken in any coastal area where there is safe access to the shore for students engaging in fieldwork. The prompts can be customised to the specific location and unit requirements.

This resource can be used as part of a shorter stand-alone project or be integrated into the early stages of a longer creative investigation.

These activities can be adapted to suit different stages of learning. Younger or less experienced learners might benefit from more prescriptive instructions, with the activity lead designing the creative presentation to fit the ability of the groups, while more mature learners could use the resources as a starting point to develop their own practice. For example, the Power Point with ideas for creative presentations could be used as an inspiration for developing artworks or public presentation of work.

