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General Certificate of Education

Design and Technology: Product Design (Textiles) 1561

TEXT2 Learning Through Designing and
Making (Coursework)

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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General

It has been another successful year and this popular specification continues to attract new centres. The interpretation of the specification, the standard of work, the presentation of design folders and the application of the assessment criteria has been impressive across the ability range.

Many centres have now adopted a portfolio approach, selecting the best examples of work from a number of projects to satisfy each of the five criteria and putting these together into a single folder. This is not the only way to generate appropriate design and make evidence but it can help to provide a suitably varied experience for students in the first year of the course. The portfolio approach to the coursework was impressive though candidates do need to guard against presenting too much unnecessary evidence. In some cases they presented 2-3 folders of work – one folder of 40 sides is ample to show the candidates abilities.

There has been a significant increase in the range of work included in the portfolios, with the addition of many short activities including the development of ideas for accessory, home furnishing, wall hangings, educational products and toy design.

Administration

There were many new centres and moderators reported that administration procedures were adhered to effectively with mark sheets and folders arriving promptly so that the process could begin on time.

In general, centres' administration was excellent, following the instructions and advice given correctly.

Candidate Record Forms (CRFs)

The teachers supporting statements on the Candidate Record Form were generally excellent and a strong feature of centre assessments. Candidates had also taken this task very seriously and identified precisely where supporting evidence could be found.

Applying the Standard

- the majority of centres have referred to AQA exemplar materials when applying the standard and this has proved successful;
- centres who adopted the portfolio approach appeared to have more difficulty assessing the work and applying the standard with many under rewarding candidates;
- some centres are marking low ability candidates severely;

Presentation of work for moderation

A variety of methods were used by candidates to present their work: Windows Power Point presentations, A3 plastic flip folders and sketchbooks proved most popular.

The portfolio approach was popular with varying degrees of success. Portfolio folders should be cohesive and require an introduction/contents page with detail of the individual tasks. Some teachers advised candidates to sort their work under the criterion headings which made it very difficult to understand the tasks completed. Work should be presented as individual tasks with clear annotation as to the criterion it is meeting. In most cases the portfolio included one or two design and make projects plus additional activities which were added to fulfil all areas of the assessment criteria.

A number of centres that produced a single project also included sample/sketchbooks to supplement their work. These were interesting to look at and a valuable resource for the candidates' future use.

Centres submitting work on disc was done well and should be considered by all in the future. The almost exclusive use of Windows Power Point presentations presented few problems; however, they should include contents list, page/slide numbers and headings.

A3 plastic flip folders are ideal and used to good effect. They had an influence upon the quantity of pages selected and presented for moderation. It is unnecessary for candidates to provide two, 40 page folders of evidence. The work that illustrates the best achievement in each of the assessment criteria was included in the final folder of work.

Although photographic evidence in folders is not an AQA requirement there was excellent use of photographs with many images included during the development stage and in a making diary.

Meeting the assessment criteria

Criterion 1. Investigation and Clarification of Problems

This criterion was generally met very well with candidates carrying out sufficient research and investigation to inspire them in the early stages of designing. Some candidates continue to present too much material.

Candidates performed well when:

- research was comprehensive, focused and organised in a logical way;
- a wide range of sources of information was used not just secondary information especially when downloaded from the internet or cut out from magazines;
- they provided analytic annotation for their findings rather than descriptive;
- they included relevant practical investigations using modern fabrics and available technologies;
- customer profiles including their needs/choices/ideas featured at the start of the work and were then referred to when ideas were evaluated;

- mood boards and trend forecasts featured as an early part of research and the ideas took account of current trends;
- existing designs and inspirational material were given a relevance when analysed or explained;
- candidates showed clear understanding and were able to extract criteria which were presented in focused specifications;
- further research and experimentation is presented as the ideas are developed towards a final product;

Criterion 2. Development of Design Proposal

Success in this criterion varied greatly across centres with some candidates failing to understand that the objective is to develop ideas and produce original designs. This was most marked when candidates worked to a single brief designing either fashion tops or special occasion dresses. Some were highly creative and showed originality whereas others were copies of existing products. Many relied on class activities of technique testing and toiles that were simply practise runs of making an item. However strong centres showed highly complex development with pattern making and a wide variety of both decorative and construction techniques tested that were appropriate for the designs.

Candidates performed well when:

- they took risks in the initial stages of designing and moved away from copying existing designs;
- they developed their own individual style and route through the design process;
- ideas were annotated with more than simple descriptive notes;
- a range of fabrics were considered and experimentation with modern material combinations, methods of production and construction took place;
- initial ideas took the form of quick pencil sketches which were sometimes presented effectively in sketchbooks;
- they took inspiration from another fashion designer, artist or design movement;
- a full explanation of all decisions made was given at every stage as the ideas developed;
- a range of more challenging decorative techniques were explored including manipulation techniques and were relevant to the design specification rather than a random collection of test pieces;
- developing a products style and shape through sketching, paper modelling and prototyping;
- candidates drafted their own paper patterns or modified commercial ones

- commercial pattern were used wisely with adaptation, testing and modification in place and a full explanation of the work carried out given;
- toile's were made as part of the development of original products and not just to test out the final choice of commercial pattern
- discussed and shared their review of ideas with others;
- a comprehensive and detailed plan of making including relevant modifications, industrial practice, quality control and health and safety issues was included
- industrial aspects and wider issues such as sustainability were integrated throughout folder and influenced the designing

Criterion 3. Making / Modelling

This was a well met criterion with some very exciting made outcomes using modern equipment and techniques. On occasions some centres over marked simple work that was well executed; this was the main area for adjustments to be recommended. Some failed to recognise that challenging, complex products with a high level of demand are expected to be made at this level. Some candidates produced a simple make up bag which clearly had insufficient skill employed whilst others made wedding dresses which went way beyond expectations at AS level.

This is particularly relevant where centres submitted single items rather than a portfolio of skills. Photo diaries of making were very popular and on the whole were very well executed, incorporating quality checks and evaluative comments into the narrative.

Candidates performed well when:

- products made had the level of complexity and challenge expected at this level;
- a range of appropriate, high level making skills were employed;
- fabric pieces were joined accurately using the correct techniques;
- products were neatly finished with excess fabric trimmed and seams finished appropriately;
- correct techniques were used and were suitable for the fabrics chosen and the end product use;
- a varied range of materials and components were chosen and used effectively;
- confidence and an ability to adapt the original ideas was shown;
- quality control checks were applied throughout and machines used effectively and safely;

Criterion 4. Evaluation and Testing

This was a surprising area of weakness this year with many centres overvaluing the evaluation and testing that had been completed. The most competent candidates met the criteria fully using evaluation and testing throughout the portfolios. Final evaluations were sometimes descriptions of the work carried out and not the critical or analytical evaluation which is expected at this level. Most candidates provided excellent photographs of the final products in use.

Candidates performed well when:

- detailed and comprehensive testing strategy applied throughout the project with results used to inform the designing and refine any modifications;
- all aspects of the final prototype or product were tested and evaluated against the specification;
- comments of others used appropriately to develop the prototype or product to improve the effectiveness of the final outcome;
- formative evaluations were recordings of decisions made and ran throughout the folder work giving reasons for the choices they have made along the way;
- user trials were performed;
- products were compared with successful textile products currently available in the shops;
- public opinion on the final product was surveyed and suggestions for modifications taken on board;
- fabrics are tested for a reason to establish qualities that have not been highlighted in the fabric specification;

Criterion 5. Communication and Presentation

Candidates do well at meeting this criterion not just because they present their work originally, with flair but also because they choose appropriate methods to communicate their thinking. However some centres appear to be encouraging candidates to over present work with an increase in the amount of double mounting and the use of heavy card.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Please see the following link:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>