



General Certificate of Education

Design and Technology: Product Design (Textiles) 1561

TEXT2 Learning Through Designing and
Making (Coursework)

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – June series

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General

It has been a very successful first year and this popular specification has attracted many new centres. The hard work, which teachers and candidates have put into this advanced course, must be recognised. The level of challenge and the quality of work seen in many centres showed a progressive and demanding approach with many preparing themselves for the challenges of delivering the A2 Coursework Unit 3 next year. 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.

Moderators report seeing superb, innovative work, which met the assessment criteria in original and exciting ways. 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.

Some moderators reported seeing a limited range of work, with the focus upon fashion garments with an absence of accessories, home furnishing, wall hangings, educational products and toys. Candidates who presented a portfolio of work tended to cover the full range of products.

Over the year centres have made good use of the coursework advisers who have answered a wide range of enquiries on coursework from individual centres and have provided guidance on suitable Coursework tasks.

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.

It was particularly helpful when:

- Centre Mark Sheets arrived early;
- Centres with fifteen or fewer candidates sent the folders of all of their candidates with the Centre Mark Sheets to the moderator early;
- The sample requested from the moderator arrived promptly;
- Telephone calls to centres received prompt action;
- Schools gave helpful information re parking, access and travel to centres;
- There were no interruptions during the moderation visit;
- Centres who required a visit set out the work accordingly;

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.

Annotation provided by the teacher was particularly helpful when it:

- Identified individual help given beyond that of the teaching group as a whole;
- Commented on any aspect of the work, which could not be seen by the moderator;
- Provided evidence about the quality and quantity of practical work produced over the period of their project work;
- Referenced how candidates had used processes, methods and investigations;
- Explained the marks awarded by the centre;
- Used phrases, bullet points and notes to highlight strengths and weaknesses rather than used copied statements from the assessment criteria;

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 applying the standard;
- Some centres are marking low ability candidates severely;
- Centres marking appeared to be either within the tolerance or way out and marks had to be adjusted both upwards and downwards showing a misinterpretation of the assessment criteria in both instances;

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. 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. It was clear that teachers were teaching the specification content through this approach. The best were clear and well annotated and gave a real sense that candidates were gaining skills for A2.

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 is increasing and AQA will be producing additional guidelines on what format to use. The almost exclusive use of Windows Power Point presentations presented few problems; however, they should include contents list, page/slide numbers and headings.

Centres should advise AQA Manchester that they are submitting work in a CD format. Candidates work should be grouped together on to as few discs as possible to assist the moderator in loading work.

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.

The quality of the presentation of work was excellent. Most candidates are using the space on the design sheets effectively and their thought processes are well documented.

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. This is welcome practice!

Meeting the Assessment Criteria

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 presented too much material and its value was questionable.

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 resulting 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;

Development of Design Proposal

This criterion was perhaps the most impressively covered with many candidates developing a range of very imaginative and feasible ideas.

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 taking 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.

Making / Modelling

There was a huge disparity between centres in meeting this criterion with many candidates failing 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.

The practical outcomes in centres visited revealed that the making component was less well assessed than the designing. Some teacher assessments were harsh and others far too lenient with them failing to take into account the complexity and challenge involved.

Some moderators commented that there appeared to be an increase in the number of teachers who do not have the background skills to enable them to teach the correct procedures for constructing textile products.

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;

Evaluation and Testing

Meeting this criterion varied from centre to centre. Final evaluations were sometimes descriptions of the work carried out and not the critical or analytical evaluation which is expected at this level.

For many centres testing and evaluation was covered well. Candidates compared final products with existing ones and sort client and public opinion well. Evaluation reports were very detailed and focused on the product and how it could be improved.

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;

Communication and Presentation

Textile students appear to excel 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.

Candidates performed well when:

- They used appropriate technical design and textiles technology language;
- Ideas were expressed fluently by using the most appropriate materials, techniques and media;
- The good practice techniques used by textile designers were employed;

- Their thoughts were shown in a structured and relevant way;
- There were few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling;
- Available software, equipment and machinery showed appropriate use of CAD and CAM;
- Design programs were used to reduce time spent on such activities as exploring different colour ways;

Conclusion

Teachers approached this new specification with enthusiasm and appeared to have done a great deal of planning prior to the course in order to achieve this level of success. All concerned are to be congratulated and AQA look forward to this continued success as candidates embark on the new A2 coursework unit.