General Certificate of Education

Applied Art and Design (8511, 8513, 8516, 8517, 8519)

ADO3 – Working to a Brief

Report on the Examination

2011 examination - June series

ADO3 – Working to a Brief

The theme for ADO3 this year was about designs for a travelling resource kit known as 'Unbeastly Beasties' which has been put together by the Local Education Authority and a local museum. Candidates were required to select work from a choice of 5 set briefs covering 3D design, animation, pop-up paper sculpture, a design for a table and bookcase and a painting. Following initial research, candidates developed alternative ideas following the individual brief's constraints and produced a design proposal and summative evaluation during the 5 hours of supervised time.

The most popular choices were Brief 5, the roll-up painting and Brief 1, the 3D design for floor cushions or beanbags. There were also some attempts at the animation storyboard.

The theme of 'Unbeastly Beasties' was treated in rather a safe way by most candidates and interesting tropical beetles were, on the whole, ignored. There were some instances of poor quality copying from unsatisfactory illustrations of mini beasts. In a few worrying cases this was thought of as primary research. Good primary research included visiting a local museum and working with insect displays both through photography and first-hand drawing.

Candidates tended to show a lack of breadth in their research and this had the 'knock on' effect of limiting experimentation and development. The latter was not generally strong in this unit, and candidates should be wary of making leaps and leaving gaps between initial research and design proposals. Candidates could achieve better marks if they experimented with more combinations of media as well as using insights from their research to inform their response to the brief.

The tasks set out in the candidate guidance, whilst not being necessarily used in their entirety were followed by many of the candidates. It is important to consider all of the requirements of the chosen brief and some candidates had not addressed some of the constraints written in the individual briefs. Sometimes there was not enough evidence of early research and this resulted in a relatively narrow range of possibilities being explored in later stages of development and restrained the development of the whole project.

Candidates frequently moved too quickly from research to design proposal with very little development in between. A few candidates, who attempted a response to Brief 4 the table and bookcase, did not visualise their work satisfactorily, showing only the surface that they were designing and not how it worked with the whole bookcase or table. Responses to Brief 3 the pop-up paper sculpture produced variable results, from very weak basic work to sophisticated and ambitious work

There were some very good evaluations written in the 5 hours of supervised time, but many candidates still wrote descriptive evaluations of the process and the evaluations were not directed towards the client. Candidates should consider preparing the summative evaluation before beginning the 5 hours of supervised time. The use of a visually illustrated evaluation (as required in ADO9) was seen by some candidates which helped with the evaluative comments.

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