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Applied Art and Design (Double Award) 3811

3810/3 Working to project briefs

Report on the Examination

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Unit 3 – Working to Project Briefs

General

There was increased uptake by centres as teachers become aware of the possibilities of sitting Unit 3 in the autumn term. Most centres are now familiar with the vocational requirements of the specification and provided sound evidence of this. In this unit candidates learn to understand and use the creative process to meet a set brief in art, craft or design. Assessment is designed to confirm candidates' understanding of the set brief, and the working methods and resources needed to fulfil it. Moderators look to the assessment evidence grid to ensure that evidence is complete. The grid has two components; the line across the top of the grid which indicates the type of evidence that must be produced eg research and developmental work to meet the brief, a design proposal, suitably presented, that meets the requirements of the brief, and a short written evaluation of the design proposal, and secondly; the columns that give the quality indicators contained within the evidence. Teachers need to ensure that underpinning knowledge and guidance on the practicalities of working to a brief are covered through sufficient relevant vocationally related activities. These could be in the form of smaller briefs and assignments, to allow the required evidence to be generated. Candidates should be encouraged to adopt a professional approach through planning, recording and evaluating their progress throughout the project.

Response to the project brief

The question paper was well received in centres. The responses to the briefs based on the theme of a Chinese New Year Festival were generally very good, and some vibrant, confident, ambitious and exciting work was seen. Candidates who fully embraced the theme and sought to develop ideas which were both creative and marketable were most successful, proposing some innovative and appropriate design solutions. There were a number of responses to three of the five briefs, and popular choices were the design for a mobile billboard, which would advertise the 'Taste of China' food festival, textile banners to be hung at the entrance to the oriental market, and the design for a poster to advertise the Chinese New Year Festival. Although not as popular, there were some innovative and well researched responses to the brief to design a lantern to lead the parade, and the brief for a sculptural kite to be used to advertise kite-making workshops. In some cases insufficient note had been made of the constraints identified in the brief and the set text had not always been used as required. Scale was not often evident in the work and the method of production of the final piece of work had not been given due consideration. A final finished piece to scale is not required, but the work presented must be of a standard and scale suitable to present to the client.

At the research stage, there was some difficulty in collecting information from primary and secondary sources, and although some candidates visited local Chinatowns and museums to study artefacts from China, the majority used photographs to record their visit and there was a lack of drawing from first-hand sources. Take-away menus and information and packaging gathered from shops was sometimes the main reference material. Although there was evidence of research and analysis of the visual elements of the work of traditional Chinese artists, there was very little understanding of their working methods and the work of others, especially contemporary artists and designers. Research and analysis was not well recorded in preparatory work, or used in a meaningful way to develop ideas and often lacked vocational contextualisation to directly influence the work. There were some where ICT and other technological media were used very successfully, particularly in producing visualisations of the mobile billboard designs in situ, and the use of the internet for research was better used to obtain relevant information. The requirement for the equivalent of at least two and not more than four, A1 sheets of preparatory work (or a sketchbook or other suitable form) was well met. Effective sketchbooks often included information, exploration and ideas that led to exciting and successful design proposals.

In most cases a range of appropriate, different alternatives were lacking and this was a weakness in the design process. Experimentation with a broad range of appropriate materials was not always explored, especially where a 3D proposal was selected. There was a lack of 3D prototypes or samples presented and many candidates appeared to have decided, at a very early stage, on a single route to achieve their final outcome. Most final proposals were suitably presented, and some were outstanding and very professional. Candidates had clearly enjoyed the process of development and production, although they often failed to identify suitable scale, health and safety considerations, and materials best suited to the final design. In some cases it was clear that candidates had worked within a set structure and consequently did not submit an individual, personal response.

Brief 1 Mobile Billboard

The first brief was the design for a painting or print to be reproduced as a mobile billboard, which was to be used to advertise the 'Taste of China' food festival. Generally, candidates worked within the constraints, but some forgot that the theme was based on the food festival, and although the imagery was Chinese, it was not relevant to the specified Chinese food. Text was often added as an afterthought, and was not an integral part of the design process. The most successful candidates explored the theme well and used recognisable imagery to inform a sophisticated, personal response. Less successful candidates struggled to produce convincing designs which illustrated the food festival in a successful way. Designs were often simple and few candidates researched or analysed billboard production, manufacture and printing processes in a vocational context. Candidates who used ICT to superimpose their designs on to the sides of trucks often produced the most convincing outcomes.

Brief 2 Sculptural Kite

The second brief was to design a sculptural kite to advertise the kite-making workshops which could be freestanding or designed to fly. Not many candidates attempted this brief, which allowed tremendous scope in 3D design and all the associated problem solving and experimentation with media. The most successful candidates explored the theme well and used a variety of media and techniques to produce unique and exciting work. However, in other designs it was difficult to decide if they were sculptural or designed to fly, and intentions were not well explained. Those candidates who had a clear understanding of the impact and potential of kites and had done research into the work of kite-makers, produced striking and successful outcomes and used materials and techniques well.

Brief 3 Lantern to lead parade

The third brief to design a lantern to lead the parade inspired by Chinese music, was the least popular brief, but a few pleasing outcomes were seen. Candidates were most successful when suitable materials and techniques were explored and used with confidence. Often the theme of Chinese music was not well interpreted and led to some very tenuous links within the final design proposal.

Brief 4 Chinese New Year Poster

The designs for a poster for the Chinese New Year Festival, were popular. Some candidates produced designs which used images of dragons exclusively, and did not embrace the events and activities listed in the scenario. Text was not always well incorporated into the design and some candidates failed to include the slogan correctly. Some work lacked a suitably professional finish, however, where ICT had been integral to the design process, ideas were presented more successfully and many aesthetically pleasing compositions were seen.

Brief 5 Single-sided textile banner

The final brief to design a single-sided textile banner to be hung at the entrance to the oriental market resulted in some successful responses, with the motifs and images of items found in the market being used to influence the designs, and the stated colours of red and gold being used particularly effectively. Research into relevant artists was often not well recorded and in some cases, the designs were basic and lacked development, with some candidates not understanding the textile techniques required to produce their design convincingly, and they struggled with scale.

Evaluation

The requirement to produce a short written evaluation of the final idea was responded to well in many cases and well annotated records of initial ideas and developments informed these successful comments. A clear understanding of the design process and the constraints and considerations of the brief was evident in the work of the most successful candidates, with an acknowledgement of why their idea was fit for purpose being clearly explained. Less successful candidates only managed to explain their work in a more descriptive format, and the level of comment was weak, tending to be generally a potted history rather than a focus on the final idea and how it was fit for purpose. There was no mention of any possible improvements that could be made and candidates did not review the work and intentions, or show understanding (particularly of the work of others) of the constraints and considerations of the brief. Candidates should be given guidance on form and content since it is particularly important that when annotation is used it is relevant and has evaluative formative and summative, content.

Assessment

Assessment varied, with marking outside the standard being mainly lenient at the top of the mark range. The actual numerical mark awarded by the assessor within a particular level should reflect not only that the candidate has achieved the necessary criteria, but also the quality of the work undertaken in meeting the criteria. At the higher levels candidates must demonstrate an independent approach, and exhibit a high order of ability and understanding. There were instances where insufficient regard had been given to the requirements of the assessment evidence grids in the allocation of marks, although accuracy of assessment in centres is improving as teachers become more familiar with the assessment criteria.

Administrative efficiency

Generally the administration in centres was good with very few problems and most centres provided the appropriate paperwork as required, with candidate record forms which were signed. Teacher comments on candidate record sheets are still not well used. Better explanation here would help visiting moderators understand how marks had been awarded. The majority of centres provided the required sample and realised that the work of all the candidates should be accessible to the moderator if needed. In some

centres there was an issue with the provision of a quiet room in which to moderate, without interruptions. It is not necessary to display the work as an exhibition, but all pieces must be accessible and it must be easy to read any written comments.

Recommendations

Centre specific issues will have been identified in the visiting moderator's report. There remain general issues that may have relevance to centres which can be summarised as follows:

- ensure candidates state which brief they have chosen, are clear about the requirements of the brief and understand and adhere to the constraints
- candidates should collect and make effective use of primary and secondary source material to inform and develop ideas.
- encourage the development of ideas to include a range of possible responses and **different** potential alternatives
- links made to the work of others, especially vocational contextualisation, should directly influence ideas and development
- ensure a broad range of appropriate materials are explored, especially in 3D design proposals, and health and safety issues must be referenced where appropriate
- inclusion of relevant industrial processes and methods of production should be evident in candidates' work, where appropriate
- improve the level of focus and time given to annotation and evaluations which should focus on the final idea and how it is fit for purpose, with possible improvements that could be made, and the strengths and weaknesses of both the ideas and the design proposal.