

Collaborative Curriculum Development Through the CDT Support Through Change Project

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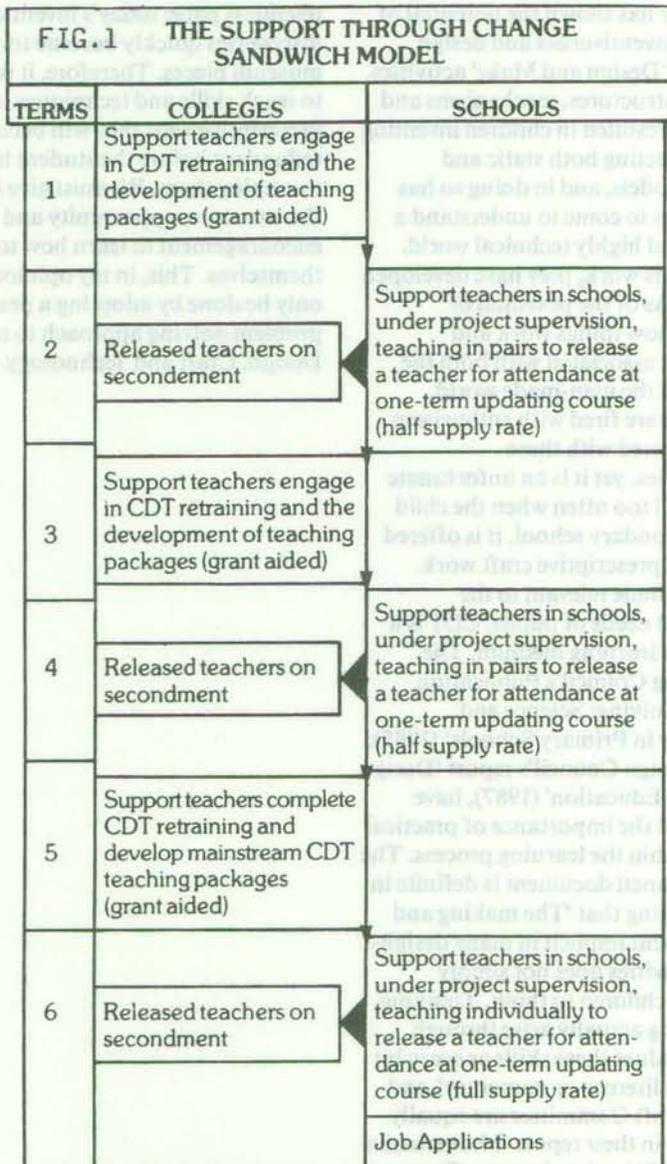
The 'CDT Support Through Change' Project was established in 1986 to recruit and, in co-operation with Higher Education, re-train teachers from a variety of subject backgrounds as CDT teachers.

The two-year retraining course follows an unusual pattern in that the teachers involved spend alternate terms working in schools teaching CDT as 'Support Teachers' who can offer CDT supply cover, and terms in college developing their own CDT skills. (See Figure 1). The participating colleges are Crewe and Alsager, De La Salle and Edge Hill.

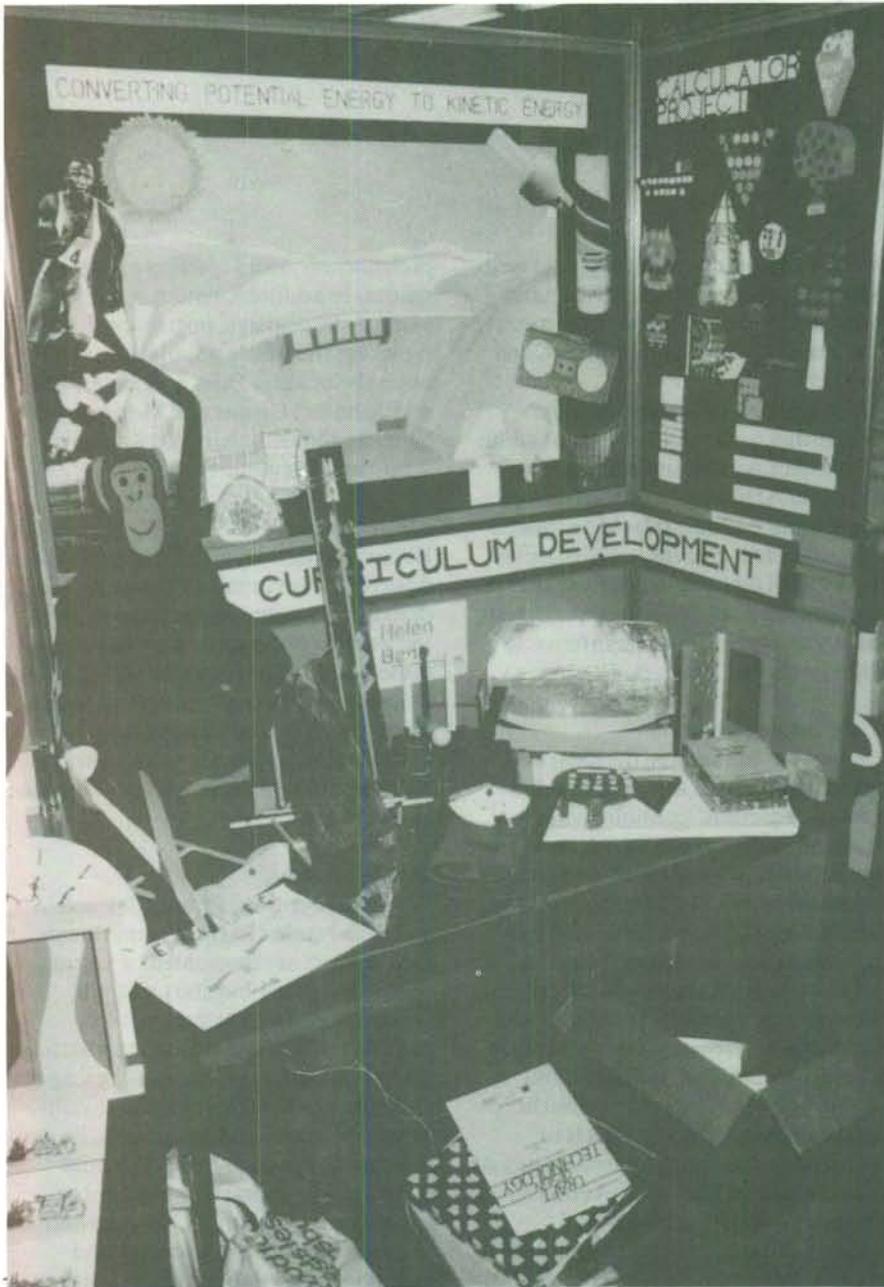
The intention behind this model of training was to allow craft teachers to be updated, and curriculum development to be supported in schools, whilst at the same time providing an intensely practical preparation for a CDT teaching career. The Support Teachers, 40% of whom are women, have now spent two terms working in a wide range of schools throughout the North West, and it is becoming possible to tentatively assess the impact they and the project as a whole have had on the curriculum of participating schools.

Curriculum Development in School Placements

A sizeable majority of the schools involved in the project has reported satisfaction with Support Teachers and the CDT work that the pupils have completed. Much of this success is directly linked to the 'package' approach adopted by the project, whereby a number of short CDT projects were developed co-operatively by the Support Teachers. The 'packages', which have included teachers' notes, pupils' handouts and visual aids, have been rehearsed and polished in college before delivery in school. The materials and equipment which allowed these 'packages' to be directly transferred into a wide range of departments, was provided by the CDT Support Through Change Project and funded partly by the Manpower Services Commission. This enabled Support Teachers, for example, to introduce 'Technology' or 'Graphics' projects into departments where the lack of materials or equipment had limited these developments. 'Packages' used in this way have enabled teachers with limited CDT experience to deliver sound CDT experiences to pupils, and have had a significant impact upon most departments. Heads of Department, Headteachers and Advisers have commented on how 'well prepared' the Support Teachers were, and on the 'range of imaginative, colourful work from pupils'. Our concern that Support Teachers' original subject skills may become lost in the CDT 'packages' has proven not to be the case. Art trained teachers have had a particularly strong impact in the classroom, but in almost every case, elements of previous experience have been built into CDT practice. One Support Teacher who worked previously in Primary Education has established CDT-based 'interest' displays that have offered starting points for design work, demonstrated a design process, or displayed pupils' projects in an attractive way. Another Support Teacher who trained originally as an architect has developed work with an environmental theme linking graphics and model making to produce very professional housing projects.



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Some examples of the work developed within the CDT Support through Change Project.

been substantially involved in curriculum development work. This has taken place in the colleges and university, where the team has helped develop the teaching packages and taught on the retraining courses, and also in schools, where the Teacher Advisers have worked with the Support Teachers to assist them, particularly with examination groups, but also to generally help in the transition from college to school. A number of short in-service courses has been organised from Salford University by the project, and it has also been able to offer substantial support to the fledgling Greater Manchester DesTech group. This has enabled DesTech to establish a calendar of activities and working groups culminating in this CDT Curriculum Development Conference at Salford which attracted nearly 500 delegates.

The Potential for Further Curriculum Development

As the project nears its completion, the networks of contacts and experience gained of working across the region to bring about curriculum development, will hopefully remain, offering the potential for further change. The qualified Support Teachers with the experience of a year's work in schools will be available to teach CDT in an exciting way. The project team will hope to carry on with CDT development in the Greater Manchester area, whilst schools may wish to develop further the materials and approaches established by the project.

Curriculum development appears to have actually taken place in a substantial way, and those of us involved in the project feel it has demonstrated again that, given the resources, CDT can offer an amazingly stimulating learning experience, and that this can best be developed when teachers gather in groups and collaborate professionally to take their subject forwards.

Reference

1. A Survey of CDT INSET Needs: Bolton, Bury and Salford. 1987. Peter Goulden, Salford University.

Frequently, departments have awarded the ultimate accolade to the Support Teachers by adopting their projects and incorporating them into the school's foundation courses.

A number of CDT departments involved in the scheme have reported that having women CDT teachers working in what has previously been a male-dominated subject area has been a useful aid to re-assessing the range of projects offered to girls, whilst also offering the girls a role model that encourages involvement in the technical areas of the subjects.

Curriculum Development Supported by Supply Cover from the Project

Over 40 schools have been able to take advantage of the cover provided by Support Teachers to enable them to release CDT teachers for INSET and development.

Recent research into CDT INSET by a member of the project team,¹ highlighted the lack of suitably qualified cover as a major constraint in developing the CDT curriculum. With this cover now available on a year-round basis, many departments have been able to release staff for further training. The Manchester LEA, for example, recently utilized this approach to release six Heads of Department to develop CDT course materials as a city-wide project. Curriculum development has clearly been supported by the provision of cover that the project offers.

Curriculum Development Through the Project Team

The project team of three Teacher Advisers, each based at one of the participating Colleges of Higher Education and the Project Director, based at Salford University, has also