

Reviews

Introducing Craft Design and Technology.

A. Breckon and D. Prest
Thames/Hutchinson 1983, £2.95

There is no authoritative text that covers all the subject matter of CDT – for the very good reason that it is not really a subject at all but many different subjects that cover a vast breadth of human knowledge, feeling, expression, and action. It makes good sense therefore to write a series of books that taken together might attempt to cover this range of subject matter, and 'Introducing CDT' is (as the title suggests) the introductory book to such a series. To follow we are promised 'Handicrafts – study and teaching', 'Design – study and teaching' and 'Technology – study and teaching'.

'Introducing Craft Design and Technology' is therefore a very difficult book to write. It must touch on all the aspects of CDT so that they can be shown in their proper relationship to each other, but must allow for later elaboration in another text. In 100 pages of A4 format we are therefore presented with a kaliedoscope of concepts, facts, principles, images and ideas that to Breckon and Prest sum up the current state of play in CDT. The activity and stages of designing (including need-brief-research-development-planning-realisation-and evaluation) gets 4 pages; Graphics (including freehand-isometric-perspective-and orthographic) gets 10 pages; the visual elements of line-shape form and colour gets 10 pages; visual principles of balance-proportion-contrast-gets 10 pages; Technology with a particular look at structures-electronics-and mechanisms gets 10 pages; Materials (including the structure-selection-properties-and use of wood, metal and plastics) gets 22 pages. The book is rounded off with 24 design briefs that are chosen to cover the ground fairly evenly.

The book is extremely well designed, with far more than half the space devoted to photos, sketches, and cartoon figures describing the various activities. It is a very accessible and immediate presentation of the material that children should find both appealing and understandable. However the price paid for this visual and accessible text is in the space that it takes up, and when you only have such a little space to start with it is bound to result in extreme brevity. The problem inherent in this brevity is related to the use of the book by children. It is clearly intended to be used directly by children without mediation through the teacher, but if that is the intention there is not enough material in many of the sections to keep children going on their own. For example whilst the double page spread that is devoted to 2 point perspective drawing describes simply how to construct a good perspective view of a racing car, that is all there is room or time for. There is no extension work, no further examples to practice, and moreover no further reference to how or where

the children might meet or use the system in their own designing. As a result it is difficult to see how the teacher could use the book to do any more than introduce the principle of perspective, and once that is done then all further material will have to be supplied by the teacher or by another book. This weakness exists in several sections of the book – and is exacerbated by a lack of references to tell teachers where they might find the further material that will be required. This is one of the more extreme examples however, and there are sections (notably the introduction to electronics, structures and mechanisms) that are not quite so brief and dependent on further material.

CDT is a complex amalgam of activities and skills, all of which children must be capable of isolating and exercising if they are to improve their designing and making. Nevertheless there is also a great need to identify the common threads that run through these diverse areas of experience and that is what Breckon and Prest have attempted in this introductory volume. They have clearly been walking a tightrope with the risk of falling into the problems of either not identifying all the material that rightly exists in CDT or showing them all and thereby having no room to do them any justice individually. The result is a book that will be useful in any department of CDT principally because it identifies and introduces such a breadth of material. One is left in anticipation (and with high hopes) for the more specific volumes to come.

Richard Kimbell

The Design Process

The Design Council
Multi Media Pack £25

This is an imaginative attempt by the Design Council to produce a series of teaching aids and supports some of the recommendations implicit in their recent publication "Design Education at Secondary Level" (1980). It consists of six Audio-Visual presentations and each is accompanied by a teachers' booklet describing the material and suggesting a modest range of "follow-up" activities.

For those practitioners already working in the field with an ideological commitment to design-based educational activity there will be few surprises. The illustrations are well chosen and a fairly simple story is told in a rather didactic fashion. The use of background music may appear intrusive to some prospective users and the voice over commentary may not be regarded as making a vital contribution to the programme. Indeed, it could be argued that despite the clear and careful enunciation, emphasising "key words", teachers might prefer to provide their own commentary derived from the booklet. Thus in order to offer a more personal input and the opportunity for some

selection in terms of pedagogic involvement, perhaps the publishers might consider the "aids" without the tapes for those who prefer to use their own voices.

In the context of design activity in schools the "Design Process" (in this case called "The Design Loop"), is rapidly becoming an imperative. Although the notion is intended to establish a structured approach to this particular aspect of the curriculum it may, like many such notions, become a straight-jacket producing formalised responses. In such circumstances teaching aids designed to help teachers may, if used indiscriminately by the ill-informed, result in a prescribed recipe for passive rather than active learning. Specifically what may be questioned with regard to this series is the length of each programme — in some cases over seventy slides of 'over-kill'. There is the possibility that the span of attention of the average twelve year old pupil will be exhausted long before the last slide is projected. Rather than providing a stimulus such a lengthy 'picture show' might well serve as a soporific with the closing bars of music operating as an alarm.

The objective of the first programme in this series "What is Design", is to "develop a lively and critical interest in the design of everyday things", and aims to provide the beginnings of a design vocabulary. This is then elaborated in the second programme, 'Getting Ready to Design'. Both accomplish the task reasonably well although the discerning teacher will no doubt be highly selective in the subsequent use of individual slides to promote class discussion. Ideally it would be the point at which the subject teacher might feel the need to substitute subject-specific slides in order to focus attention and emphasise the subject contribution to design-based educational activity. The following four "Design and Make" programmes, under the general heading of the "Design Loop" are interesting case histories from particular schools, sometimes the teacher/pupil interaction appears to strain in order to stay within the stated criteria. The pupils' solutions don't always reflect the essential pre-planning fundamental to any design-orientated activity. The choice of tinned peas, Coca Cola, and peanut might make a few nutrients eyebrows raise with regard to the "Midday Meal", but the pupils had no qualms.

The series does, however, provide a very useful starting point and should encourage teachers not only to test the temperature of the water but to start swimming strongly.

R. Millett

Design Project No. 2 Heavy Plant

John Jeffrey and Nigel Billington
Cambridge 1983, £3.25 per pack.

There are twelve different design projects available in this series, "Heavy Plant" being Number Two. This package consists of four double-sided work cards, all being well illustrated with notes for pupils. The teacher's notes could be expanded considerably and a reference for further reading would be very useful.

The layout of the word cards is clear, simple and likely to appeal to a wide age range of secondary pupils, depending on their ability. For the more able pupil, the work cards will provide an invaluable source for individual research and investigation.

For the other pupils, further resource material would be needed to supplement this useful package.

Pupils are encouraged to generate design ideas, great emphasis being placed on design communication through the media of drawing and modelling techniques. These latter are a major part of the project, pupils being encouraged to make mock-ups of their intended design at every stage and to develop it, using a variety of materials (a suggested list is given). This model, or mock-up is constantly modified and refined until a final solution is reached, preferably in the form of a scale model.

Card Three introduces metalwork techniques which may be used in the project. These are somewhat basic and need some expansion in order to give the variety needed for a project of this type, as does the final card on 'finishing', which only deals with cleaning up the metal and painting, using enamel paints.

In conclusion, the 'Heavy Plant' cards provide an excellent starter package and would be a useful addition to the workshop resources.

R. Lightfoot

The Eighteenth Century Art, Design and Society, 1689 – 1789

Bernard Denvir
Longman 1982, £6.95.

"Taste was one of the major preoccupations of Georgian England". Thus Denvir, in the first of four volumes to be published on a documentary history of taste in this country, sets the scene for the rich depository of contemporary extracts. It was an age in which new wealth and new materials inspired both amateurs and experts in architecture, in the making of furniture, textiles and decorative ware. Pride in possession was expressed in portraiture, sculptures and landscape design.

Established families embraced the opportunities to the full. Newcomers emulated them, and for the

offspring of both the Grand Tour became an indispensable preliminary to the cultivation of patterns of taste. Collectors in their passion for antiquity sifted through classical artefacts and at home imitated so closely that it was said of Westminster Abbey that Socrates would be induced to fancy himself in the Pantheon of heathen Gods.

The wealth of contemporary materials provide a rich quarry for social historians and for students of art and design. The former will note, for example, such items as Wren's accounts for St Paul's with charges of £10,000 for cast iron fencing (charged at 6d a pound), in contrast to the modest £30. 0. 0 paid "To widows whose husbands were killed in the works". The latter will be struck by evidence of technological advance and of the varied skills and techniques which brought a new level of professional recognition. The volume, which includes a useful biographical index, can be best savoured at leisure and should appeal to all who are drawn to this age of elegance.

Marjoire A. Cruickshank

Industrial Design Requirements of Industry

C. Hayes and K. Dorsey
Design Council 1983, £7.50.

A previous Design Council document, the Carter Report, 'Industrial Design Education in the UK' (1977), found a mismatch between the output of the education system and the requirements of industry. It recommended that industrial design education should be brought closer to industry. The Design Council subsequently submitted to the Department of Education and Science proposals for research into various aspects of design education.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science agreed to support a programme of research into the industrial design aspects of industry. The object was 'to identify the range and levels of knowledge, skills and abilities required by industrial designers in manufacturing industry, and to ascertain the need and actual demand for industrial designers by industry'.

To guide and assist the researchers, a steering committee was set up, including representatives from the DES, The Design Council, Society of Industrial Artists and Designers, industry and education. Initially it was chaired by Brian Smith, professor of design management at the Royal College of Art; later, by Bernard Gay, a former schools inspector.

Approximately 300 individuals in 130 companies in the UK, France, West Germany, Italy, Scandinavia and the Netherlands were interviewed. The resulting information was evaluated numerically and is presented and discussed in the report.

B. Smith

Modern Design in Plastics

D. P. Greenwood
John Murray Ltd, 1983, £6-95.

This is a well chosen picture book of articles manufactured in a wide range of modern plastic. The photographs are divided into eight sections – Industry and Engineering, Building Accessories, Gardening, Leisure, Sport and Hobbies, Nursery Products and Toys, Furniture and Interiors, Household Items, Jewellery and Sculpture. The technical quality of photographs is fairly consistently high – but captions are brief and mainly limited to title, material and manufacturers.

There are two main disadvantages to widespread school use. The first is that by far the majority of articles are mass production items – far beyond the resources of the school workshop. The second is that, though the author emphasises the colour qualities of modern plastics, the photographs are all in black and white – including the cover.

J. Eggleston

Woodturning Projects for Dining

J. A. Sainsbury
Blandford Press, 1983, £6-95.

Wood Turning Music Boxes

J. A. Jacobson
Blandford Press, 1983, £7-95.

Both volumes emanate from North America where they are produced for the large population of 'hobbyists' with wood turning lathes in the home. Both are concerned with a limited range of traditional 'well loved' designs and offer detailed, well illustrated instructions on how to make them. Yet, though prescriptive, the books are not insensitive and offer modest suggestions which enable an alert reader to express himself, especially in his choice of technique and material. As sound 'self teaching' books they have a claim to shelf space in the school library – they offer an efficient route to more demanding and ambitious design activity.

J. Eggleston

Young Blood: Britain's Art and Design Schools Today and Tomorrow

Edited by Kate Baynes
Lund Humphries, 1983, £3.95.

"Young Blood" is an exhibition being held at the Barbican Centre from November 22nd 1983 to January 15th 1984 which for the first time brings together over two thousand examples of the work of students of art and design from sixty colleges and polytechnics in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. At that level it is a celebration of and a shop window for the many talents and skills to be found among those young people who will be the next generation of Britain's designers.

This companion volume includes interviews with and contributions by leading educationalists, industrialists, politicians and designers which highlight the positive and negative aspects of the present situation: quiet apart from the Government cuts which are already affecting institutions, the structure of and demand for art and design education is the subject of agonised and sometimes acrimonious discussion. Nineteenth century battles between fine and applied arts are still being fought. There seems to be some confusion between the needs of general visual education and education for those who are to become working designers; the supply of and demand for the latter sometimes seems to bear little relation to the true needs of industry. Moreover, although there is evidence that from the Prime Minister downwards many in influential circles recognise that if Britain is to survive and prosper as a trading nation, design has a crucial role to play, the precise terms of the great collaboration between designers and industry still have to be worked out.

This publication does not offer the last word on the subject but it does set out the agenda for the debate which must ensue at many different levels if education in design is to reflect and meet the needs of society.

A.E. Lambeth

**A Century of Art Education 1882-1982
Hornsey College of Art Centenary Book**

Clive Ashwin:
Middlesex Polytechnic, £3.

Middlesex Polytechnic has published the book *A Century of Art Education 1882-1982* to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the former Hornsey College of Art and to trace the history of art education in this country.

The book accompanies the exhibition of the same name mounted by Middlesex Polytechnic to mark the centenary of the former college which now forms the Faculty of Art and Design at the Polytechnic. The book's theme, linking the history of art and design education with the history of Hornsey College of Art, was devised by Dr Clive Ashwin, the polytechnic's assistant dean of Art and Design and an authority on the history of art and design education.

A Century of Art Education 1882-1982 traces the long tradition of art and design teaching at Hornsey in relation to the growth and development of art and design in this country. The history of art and design studies at Hornsey is shown through accounts of actual work of the period and highlighted by old photographs, printed material and memorabilia from the old college.

Sir Hugh Casson, President of the Royal Academy, in his foreword to the book emphasises the increasingly important contribution art schools and polytechnics have made to our cultural traditions and industrial achievements.

A Century of Art Education 1882-1982 serves as a counterpart to the centenary exhibition. It aims to record the historical element of the exhibition and is of interest and value to art and design historians, students and researchers.

Oberta de Joia