

The text of a lecture given on 31st October 1985 to commemorate the anniversary of Woodwork and Metalwork teaching at Bethoven Street School.

One hundred years ago, the teaching of craft design and technology (then manual training) began in the playground shed of a Paddington School. The instructor was the school caretaker, John Chenoweth, who happened to be a carpenter. The case for including practical subjects in the school curriculum had already been supported by a Royal Commission, but even so the Government refused grants and the City and Guilds of London Institute provided initial funding. Now in its anniversary year CDT seems to have everything going for it. After its years in the outer reaches of the curriculum — and often the school buildings — it has painfully fought its way out of the cold. CDT teachers, advisers, inspectors and teacher trainers have devoted decades of committed work to the struggle. With the assistance of the national projects of the 1960's and 1970's (which probably had more effect on CDT than on any other subject) they have achieved a new identity — from woodwork and metalwork to design and technology.

The subject now enjoys enhanced status enthusiastically accorded by the Department of Education and Science and H.M. Inspectorate with the accolade of warm approval from Sir Keith Joseph himself. The Manpower Services Commission through its TVEI and related in-service (TRIST) schemes is pumping large sums of money into CDT facilities and those who use them in schools in most Local Education Authorities. In many, CDT leads the TVEI programme with courses in electronics and control technology and other technical and vocational activities. British School Technology buses are now a familiar sight on the roads of Britain. A wide range of examination courses are attracting able students to the subject and the attention of the Universities and Polytechnics is slowly but surely being captured. The new grade-related criteria of the G.C.S.E. CDT syllabuses are already speeding further developments. The new DESTECH group for CDT has been established. Specialist journals, notably *Studies in Design Education Craft and Technology* enjoy rising circulations.

Girls are participating in the subject in growing numbers helped by the thrust of the GIST and the GATE projects. Most Local Education Authorities have women CDT teachers; women now comprise eight percent of London CDT teachers. In some schools, CDT is also playing a major role in increasing the opportunities for black young people.

New national contests for CDT related activities produce outstanding entries — for example the prize days of the Design Council awards, the Young Electronic Designer of the Year and the Granada Power Game provide impressive evidence of the dynamism/initiative of CDT departments throughout the land. CDT now has its own television programmes. Even in the primary schools — once the no-go area for CDT — the subject is achieving a major breakthrough.

Craft Design and Technology — The uncertain future

Is the rise of CDT unstoppable? Beyond the euphoria there are major hazards ahead. One is the risk that the pursuit of technology will distract and even eliminate much of the equally important emphasis on practical design. Design, associated with its concerns for the human environment, expression, identity and aesthetic considerations is an essential part of the liberal education of all children. It is, alas, not a necessary part of technology as 20th century history has demonstrated frequently. CDT in recent years has done much to revive and re-interpret this aspect of education in the lives of all children. Young people know this — for them technology is unacceptable without design — in motor cycles, hi-fi, dress and much more. Design must be enhanced not diminished and the content loaded courses that are frequently (but not necessarily) a feature of TVEI courses do not help. Paradoxically, design is an aspect of CDT teaching which is far better supported by the professional background of many if not most CDT teachers — hence the urgency of in-service training schemes such as TRIST.

Yet another problem is the unresolved distance and conflict between CDT and applied science. This remains unbridged and even unexplored in most schools. CDT teachers have been moving briskly into teaching electronics, control technology, computer assisted design and other aspects of technology and applied science. Despite crushing staff shortages, but with immense enthusiasm and in-service training, many have offered outstanding programmes in these areas. But science teachers are also teaching in these same areas under the leadership of the Association for Science Education. Yet, as H.M.I. have recently reported, in many schools there is little or no dialogue between science and CDT — in some there is a marked lack of awareness or recognition of the other's capability and contribution. This leaves a crucial fault into which school technology — and CDT with it — could fall disastrously.

Finally, there is a real risk that CDT and its teachers may fail to realise the magnitude of the task that they have accepted and may be unable to satisfy the often inflated expectations of employers, parents and politicians. CDT alone cannot solve the problems of British Industry, make all the young people employable or provide activities to occupy unemployed people fully. Yet implicit global expectations of these kinds surround CDT as its teachers try to respond to too many things at once.

How may these perils be averted?

One solution for CDT is through improved management. The management skills required to

run a CDT department are of the same level as a complex small business, yet there is virtually no provision for management training. Such training, if provided, would enable heads of CDT departments to use their limited staffing and resources more effectively and in a more focussed way. It could also help them to communicate better with parents, pupils, employers and admissions tutors. It would above all enable them to evaluate the work of the Department regularly and efficiently. In the latter the new initiative of the Department of Education and Science Assessment of Performance Unit in Design and Technology (based at Goldsmiths' College, London) is likely to be of long term significance.

If the management of CDT could be put on a sound and coherent footing with the aid of a new kind of inservice training then the present instability and apparent confusion of much of what is currently happening could be resolved and the subject placed on a far firmer foundation to face the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Such a management initiative could, in part, be funded by sensitive use of TRIST monies. But it would need the combined effort of M.S.C. and D.E.S. to ensure that both its direction and its strength were appropriate. Sensitivity and vision have always been major objectives of CDT teaching; they have never been more urgently needed by the subject itself.

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