

The CDT support through change project

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For the next two academic years, Salford University will be co-ordinating a major North West Regional Initiative which has been designed to combat the national shortage of school teachers of design and technological subjects. The scheme involves collaboration between three Colleges of Higher Education (Crewe & Alsager, De La Salle and Edge Hill), six local education authorities (Bury, Bolton, Cheshire, Manchester, Salford and Stockport), the University, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, the Department of Education and Science and the Manpower Services Commission.

CDT is increasingly recognised as a vitally important area of both the primary and secondary school curriculum; however, there is a shortage of CDT teachers and also a pressing need to update the skills of existing CDT teachers.

A major barrier to retraining is the difficulty of recruiting specialist CDT supply teachers to cover for teachers released for retraining; the new scheme aims to overcome the problem.

The project, which has received initial funding of £85,000 through the TVEI Related In-Service Training (TRIST) scheme, will run for just over two years. The Project Director is based at the University of Salford. A teacher-adviser is also attached to the CDT department of each of the three Colleges of Higher Education. Staff of the colleges will be fully involved in retraining and will be supported by the teacher-adviser. CDT Advisers/Inspectors from each of the scheme's LEAs will also make major contributions.

Under the scheme, 36 qualified non-CDT teachers have been recruited between June and September 1986 to retrain as CDT teachers. They are from diverse backgrounds, including the primary sector, and women form a significant number. From late September, they will follow a six-term programme: each teacher will be based at one of the three colleges.

In term one, they will receive introductory training in CDT education in the colleges. In term two, they will work in pairs as 'Support Teachers' in schools from the Consortium LEAs. Each Support pair will release a CDT teacher who will then spend the term in College undertaking appropriate specialist updating. The support teams will teach CDT but will not initially need access to specialist workshop skills.

In term three, the Support Teachers will return to College for further training, followed by term four in different schools, again working in pairs to release individual CDT teachers for specialist CDT retraining. Terms five and six will follow a similar pattern, except that the Support Teachers will engage more in mainstream CDT activity, much of which will involve the use of machinery, equipment and tools, and in the final term they will work individually, teaching full classes and releasing CDT teachers on a 1:1 basis.

The following goals should be realised at the completion of the project in July 1988:

- 1) 36 newly qualified CDT teachers will be seeking employment.
- 2) 72 CDT teachers will have engaged in a one-term updating course.

- 3) A significant amount of new curriculum material will have been generated within the schools in which Support Teachers operate.
- 4) A bank of experience concerning the effects of institutional collaboration in tackling intractable teacher supply problems will be available for national use.

If all goes to plan, the radical approach underpinning the new scheme could be adopted to help solve teacher shortages in other subject areas such as business studies, mathematics and physics.

The project has been successfully launched and, to date, recruitment has been buoyant. The project team have experienced problems of communication within the scheme's complex cross-institutional structure, but most of these have been resolved. Courses began in late September with a conference hosted by the University.

The University has been extremely supportive throughout, and its flexible innovative ambience has proved to be an important factor in the project's early success. It is too early to draw significant conclusions about ways of enhancing institutional collaboration, but two problems are already apparent:

- 1) national needs, eg CDT teacher supply, can be easily obscured by the daily operational pressures of local government;
- 2) urgent action can be frustrated by institutional management systems which were designed for times of more leisurely change.

We hope to explore these and other issues further in the next two years.

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