

Social Issues as Starting Points for CDT

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Many Craft, Design and Technology courses have, to date, purported to meet the needs of the pupil but have failed by divorcing themselves from the true context and, as a result, have borne little resemblance to the real needs of the individual pupil.

This failure has been illustrated by projects like the designing and making of a tea-caddy spoon when most, if not all, pupils use tea bags, or the tap

lever/door handle for disabled or arthritic people without any research being given to the physical limitations caused by being disabled or arthritic.

Both the 'design brief' and 'problem-solving' approaches have been tried, usually unsuccessfully, to redress this area of concern, the lack of success being due to the common practice of basing the brief or problem on such things as an arbitrary theme, a surplus of a given material, a process or a technique.

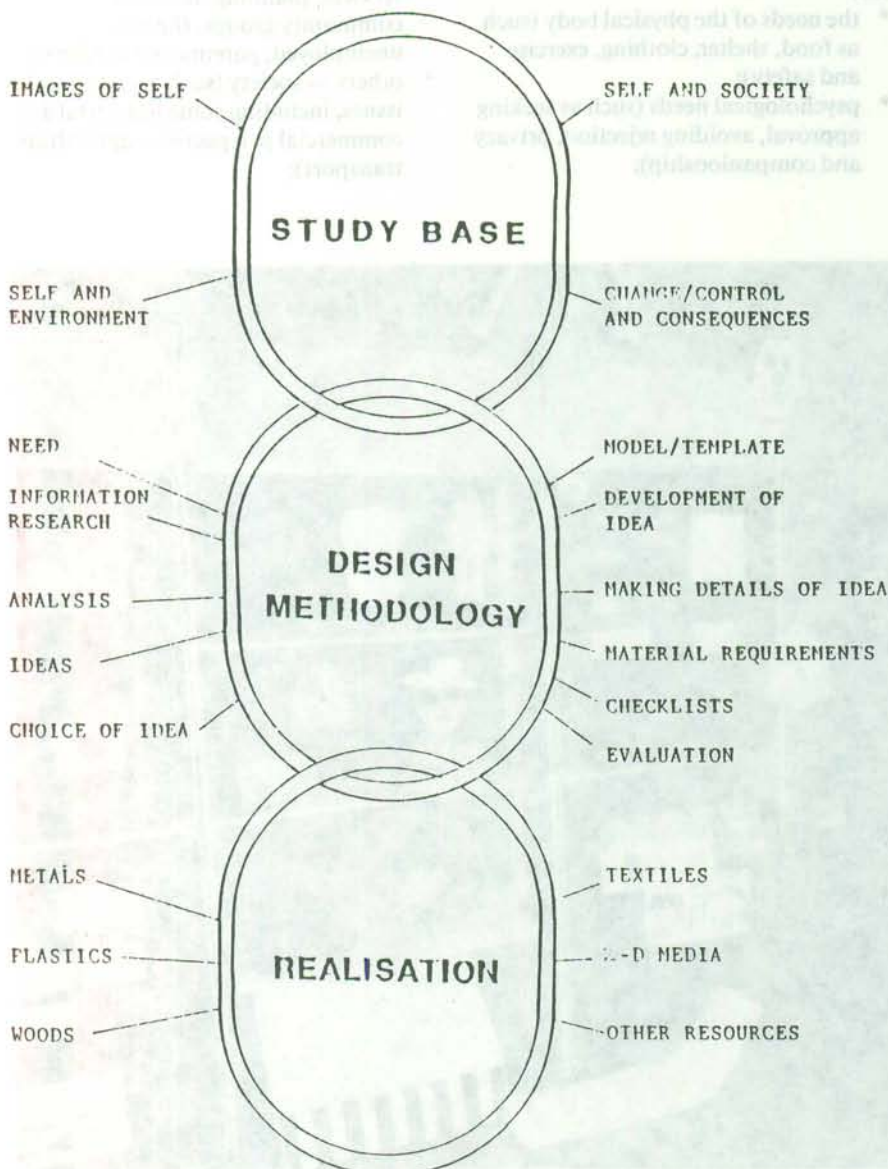
These approaches have ignored the needs of the individual and the human context and, as a result, have not provided meaningful experiences for the majority of pupils.

If the potential of Doing and Making as powerful ways of learning is to be realised, and if doing and making are to have any relevance for the individual pupil, then these activities must relate to all pupils, their needs and to the context within which they live.

These aims are met at Barlow RC High School by creating areas of experience for the pupils which underpin the human condition by putting Doing and Making into context.

The individual, his/her identity, needs, motivations, attitudes, values, emotions and expressions are central to this and form the first study base — IMAGES OF SELF. People are part of a larger human unit, whether it be the

TO FACILITATE THE EDUCATIONAL AIMS, ALL PROJECTS ARE DEVELOPED AND PRESENTED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY:



The study base generates discussion, areas of exploration, individual responses, provides starting points for child-centred active learning and enables each pupil to work within their own human context. Further, the Study Base encourages the pupils to investigate to gain a deeper understanding of themselves, helping them to see how they fit and in and relate to society, their environment, the pattern of continuous change and consequentially the varying needs for control.

The Methodology can provide varying degrees of guidance to enable pupil to develop individual responses to the chosen area of the Study Base.

It should be noted that the Methodology does not consist of a set number of stages through which all pupils work, but enables selection of those stages identified as being relevant to the pupils and the work in hand and that making can form an integral part of the Study Base as a model or means to further study.

Chosen ideas are realised in the most appropriate material(s) available. In some cases, particularly in year five, the pupil may provide some or all of the materials required.

The realisation of chosen ideas is supported by lead lessons, spot demonstrations and work/information sheets.

family or the community (local, national, European, social, religious) which forms the second study base — SELF AND SOCIETY. Humans, both singularly or collectively, live and move within a space or setting identified as environment and the third study base — SELF AND ENVIRONMENT.

The three study bases identified so far are all affected by change, for example, people grow older, society and cultures develop, and environments are altered by man or natural elements. We, as humans, have an inherent need to try and control such changes which, in turn, lead to certain consequences and the fourth study base — CHANGE/CONTROL and their CONSEQUENCES.

Each base should be considered as a source from which numerous STARTING POINTS can be generated for doing and making.

Some work produced by Manchester children, starting from social issues

Issues developed from the following Study Bases, in combination, represent one way of describing the human needs and motivations that drive and influence all aspects of CDT.

All projects developed by staff and pupils will use one of the issues as a starting point.

Whilst pupils will not have time to explore all possible issues, they will have studied several from each section and will, therefore, build a knowledge base in each of the areas. The four study bases give rise to many significant issues.

The Study Base 'IMAGES OF SELF: A group of issues which include concern for:

- * the needs of the physical body (such as food, shelter, clothing, exercise and safety);
- * psychological needs (such as seeking approval, avoiding rejection, privacy and companionship);

- * attitudes and values (such as the need to own, to personalise and to defend our possessions);
- * the need to express our emotions and our cultural identity through aesthetic and pragmatic action.

The Study Base 'SELF AND SOCIETY': A group of issues which include: concern for and empathy with:

- * others — in the family unit (such as roles, relationships and responsibilities past, present and future);
- * others — peer groups (such as conforming and non-conforming, style, fashion);
- * others — community (such as local services, planning, needs of community groups, the old, unemployed, parents and toddlers);
- * others — society (such as nationwide issues, including some industrial and commercial perspectives, agriculture, transport);



- * others — cultures — past, present and future (such as cultural identity, attitudes and values and different perspectives on the roles and significance of making, doing and using).

The Study Base '*SELF AND ENVIRONMENT*': A group of issues which include concern for:

- * environmental influences upon life forms (such as natural forces and phenomena as they influence habitats, societies, cultures and the artifacts and systems that we make and maintain);
- * human influences on life forms (such as conflicts of interest — like animals as pets, specimens, friends, food and clothing);
- * the fundamental components that combine to create natural and human habitats (such as the control of artificial habitats and environments like space suits, submarines, green houses, zoos, refrigerators, or nuclear waste dumps).

The Study Base '*CHANGE, CONTROL AND CONSEQUENCES*': A group of issues which include concern for:

- * human motives for action (such as physical, psychological, and emotional needs related to ourselves and others, and our inter-relationship with the environment);
- * the human capacity to take action (such as ergonomics, anthropometrics, individual and/or collective physical skills and 'special needs');

- * natural action and control (such as weather, wear, corrosion, life cycles, seasons, natural energy sources);
- * human action and control (such as the use and transformation of materials and other human resources using appropriate methods, robotics, circuits, automation);
- * consequences of action and control (such as changes in individual and group attitudes and values, the structures of groups, committies and cultures, respect/disrespect for the environment and other life forms).

THE GENERATION OF STARTING POINTS FOR DOING AND MAKING FROM THE STUDY BASE

Teams of teachers can very effectively generate starting points using the study bases.

The example below shows the ideas generated by one group, starting with Images of Self, using brainstorming. After a series of increasingly focused considerations of sub-sets, the project theme of 'Personalisation' was developed into a teachable project.

PROJECT TITLE — PERSONALISATION

Initial teacher led presentation

- Use of video, slides, photographs to show how people have personalised their belongings/possessions/environment;
- focus on such things as houses/cars/personal belongings;
- provide as a resource a number of commercially produced personalised items, eg. T-shirts, mugs/pencils with names on.

Initial work undertaken by pupils

Research — group work — direct observation, looking at classmates' uniform/form of dress, school bag, school books and their covers, pens, pencils.

From a number of collected items — can we find out who they belong to? Can we find out anything about the owner — the person?

Possible Design and Realisation Outcomes

Design and make a means of identifying a piece of personal property:

- a means of who sits where at the dinner table at home;
- a means of indicating which bedroom is yours to others — or which is the bathroom . . . the kitchen.

Possible Design and Communication Outcomes

Ways of personalising

- a piece of clothing, eg. T-shirt
- stationary
- corporate identity — for a local firm/retailer of imaginary firm/retailer/company

Possible Technology Outcomes

Personalised cat door — triggered by 'collar' worn by cat.

Garden ornaments — eg. windmill — bird scarer!

Exterior house number/light

Lighting system for Hi-fi or given room. Security systems.