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As every month passes the progress of design education becomes more evident. Ever increasing numbers of schools up and down the country are reappraising and redeveloping their curricula in terms of a design approach. As the work of the recently completed projects in design education become widely available throughout schools and form a basis for a multitude of new developments, so the initiative for further development is being taken still further forward by the Royal College of Art's Design in General Education Project which promises to explore further important areas such as the linking educators more closely with designers. The recent conference on the project at the Royal College of Art was striking not only for the number but also the range of participants. The contents of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* will continue to reflect the progress of these important developments not only in the work of the Royal College of Art but also in schools up and down the country.

In the present issue, pride of place goes to the exploration of new approaches in design education in schools written by the teachers who are developing and implementing them. An impressive and effective project on play equipment for handicapped children at Linksfield Academy, Aberdeen, displays many of the salient features of a sound design project and also the desirable consequences for the whole school and the local community that may spring from it. Mason and Hopkinson report on an interesting and perceptive development at Manshead School, Dunstable, where a thoroughgoing attempt was made to explore the demand for A-level work in the design field by prospective employers, university admissions tutors and others. In the light of this the work for A-level entries was re-appraised. The results show a particularly interesting strategy for developing the content and approach of design education in the sixth form. Writing from yet another fundamen-

tally different school context, Ainsworth describes an impressive project on interior design conducted with pupils at the Yorkshire School for the Deaf. Not only does the project reaffirm the need to consider the consequences of handicap in the design process, it also indicates the remarkable way in which pupils with the handicap of deafness are still able to participate in and derive benefit from work in the design field.

Douglas of Orangefield School, Belfast, explores yet another direction for the development of design studies. This is the school-based production unit in which design can play an important part in helping young people to understand industrial processes in which they are likely to spend a substantial part of their adult life. In so doing they are more likely to find themselves in a position of comprehension and of participation rather than passively in decision making.

These important articles on the development of practice are followed by an equally important series of contributions on the developing theoretical understanding of design education. Brazil offers an account of what has come to be called 'graphicacy'; a new concept of fundamental importance to design educators of a fundamental nature parallel to that of numeracy and literacy. It is essentially the ability to think and structure thought in visual/spacial terms in order to communicate ideas and concepts to others. Originating in the study of geography and the work of Balchin and Coleman the concept has been explored in a series of conferences and discussions where its widespread relevance has been readily recognised. But as Brazil points out, much of the original concept of graphicacy may be seen to date from at least the writings of Bertrand Russell: "Those who have a relatively direct vision of facts are often incapable of translating their visions into words, while those who possess the words have usually lost the vision. It is partly for this reason that the

highest philosophical capacity is so rare; it requires a combination of vision with abstract words which is hard to achieve and too quickly lost in the few who have, for a moment, achieved it." Here in the words of Russell we are taken not only to the heart of design education but also to the vision of what may spring from it. It is to be hoped that the developments plans for the study of graphicacy, springing from the Schools Council Art Committee, may yet reach fruition.

Brazil is followed by Hinks-Edwards who looks perceptively at the development of Home Economics and draws attention to the predominance of the study of the home in this area. He asks, in a challenging way that is likely to meet with a lively response from Home Economists, whether this emphasis on the home is still a necessary or even a desirable focus for much of our present work. Zanker also questions some of the 'conventional wisdom' of our times by asking, in the first of two articles how far the development of design education goes beyond the mere relabelling and repackaging of existing knowledge and practice. Cannon takes theoretical discussion further with his exploration of the extent to which we can call design and craft studies properly 'a form of knowledge' in the sense used by contemporary philosophers of education such as Paul Hirst. Like Zanker he explores the extent to which design studies can be seen to satisfy many of the criteria for such an identifiable and distinct area. Sayer takes us into a further area of legitimate study for design education that has an important historical dimension; the study of organ construction in a paper aptly entitled "Audible Technology".

As always the issue contains a range of reviews of recent books in the design and craft field. Even though the publishing industry is facing many problems it is quite clear that the demand for books in the emergent field of design education is such

that publishers still see this as an area of major importance even within substantially reduced budgets.

The contents of this issue of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* show that the journal continues to provide an important and needed service in the development of the field. This is widely recognised by an ever growing readership and also by a growing body of advertisers who find it essential to use the pages of the journal to reach the new and enthusiastic band of teachers and others who are involved in this field. Without this remarkable growth of demand there is no question that the price of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* would have to have risen once again as has the price of almost every other journal in the past year. Happily, the increased revenue from new readers and advertisers coupled with our policy of providing an attractive and informative journal at the lowest cost, makes it unnecessary to announce a rise in price. The extent to which such an announcement can be delayed is, however, almost wholly dependent on our existing readers. If they are able to encourage colleagues to take out subscriptions and still further augment readership and also are able to respond to the advertisers who purchase space, then it is likely that there will be an extended period of price stability of the journal. We very much hope that all our readers will join with us in helping to achieve this desirable state of affairs.

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