

At the heart of Design Education there is one simple objective – that it is to be of benefit to the children and students who experience it. The debate about such matters as design processes, problem solving strategies and subject integration, though important, is only about the means whereby the central objective may be identified and achieved more fully. It is not enough, for Design Education to develop peoples awareness to the material world, their feelings and sensitivity have to develop too if their awareness is to be of any value. The point is well put in the recently published Schools Council Working Paper *Art and the Adolescent*:—

“Secondary schools are relatively successful in promoting our understanding of and competence in the world of objects – indeed the bulk of the curriculum is geared to that purpose. However, much less is known about the way we order subject experience – still less of the way the individual can be helped to build a coherent world of personal feelings.

Those whose feelings are unintelligible to them are as assuredly handicapped in the regulating of their lives as those others who are unable to think coherently and who can make little sense of the world they share with other men”.

In this issue of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* we print a group of articles that focus on the experience of children and students in Design Education and set out ways in which their experience may be enhanced.

The issue begins with Maurice Copus and Cecil Hughes’ account of the work of the Creative Arts Department at Southfields School. They provide an illuminating example of a department in which the feelings and sensitivity of the children and the teachers is taken fully into account throughout the planning and practice of the curriculum. They write:—

“As often as possible after all these types of occasions, the pupils break up into

small groups and go with a member of staff to discuss ideas, material and presentation. We are critical and we expect and get positive criticism from the children. We have been forced to investigate the essential quality of teaching and its interest and efficiency factor. When we are in our classrooms, we can sometimes put the children in front of us and think: ‘Right: this is the lesson, good or bad, and you’ve got to take it’. When you treat education as part instruction, part investigation and part entertainment and the boys and girls participate in this way, you are very aware when boredom sets in. In discussion afterwards you soon learn that the thing was too long, there was too much of a certain material, it was badly presented or that there was not enough participation. We have discussed this very fully and it has certainly influenced our teaching methods”.

Kay in his article on Photography in Art and Design Education again emphasises the central nature of students sensitivity and expression and makes an impressive argument for the increased use of photography as a major component of design education precisely because it offers the student a direct and flexible opportunity to develop and explore his feelings.

Hilsum goes on to present the result of his recently completed study of the assessment of design based project work in which he offers some valuable advice on how to assess the emotional as well as the intellectual achievements that can spring from the experience of design education. Hilsum reminds us that it is not only important to offer valuable experiences to our students: we also have to be able to demonstrate that they are valuable. Earle in his second contribution to *Studies in Design Education and Craft* develops this theme in his critique of sixth form examinations in Art and Design and takes us centrally to the theme of this issue in his quotation from the Cambridge Syndicate Report on A level Art:—

"From the point of view of general education for which this examination caters, some evidence of imagination and feeling, of the power to observe visual effects and retain them in the memory of an appreciation of art and the instinct to create are of greater value in the papers that test drawing or painting objectively than the acquisition of facility in execution with some command often superficial of proportions and perspective".

The urgent social necessity of developing imagination and feeling is made clear in Elliott's article on the environment. In his description of a new environmental sciences degree he shows the parallels between the thinking of the designer and of the scientist and the contribution they can jointly make to the quality of life.

The quality of the students experience is further considered by McNeill in her perceptive account of adult classes at the Royal School of Needlework. The final article by Sherry presents a most important philosophical analysis of the whole process of Design Education bringing together the nature of designing, the individual experience of it and the societal and structural context in which it takes place. He raises a series of issues that are of the greatest concern to design educators. Thus in a discussion of teacher pupil relationships in Design Education he writes:-

"It may be the case that it is the job of teachers precisely to "manipulate" the learners with whom they work, and a greater or lesser degree of pre-determination by the teacher, is doubtless always necessary to the effective organisation of pedagogy. But if one is to follow through, in teaching, the practical requirements of design process, then the severe subordination of learner to teacher must be compromised to such a degree that the character of the teaching situation is recognisably transformed. Obviously, then, the nature of the relationships

which hold between the various members of a design team has to be identified and held alongside the tendency of teacher and taught to relate to each other in ways that are imposed upon them by the network of systematised practice in which they operate. If there is conflict between these two types of requirements, then we have another basis from which to formulate an account of what is problematic about the implementation of design processes within the school".

Sherry is currently conducting investigations of the practice of design education in the schools and will contribute a further paper on his findings to a future issue of *Studies in Design Education and Craft*.

As always the issue concludes with a wide range of reviews and news items which will assist in keeping readers up to date with the continuing spate of new developments in design education.

John Eggleston

Publisher's Announcement

Unfortunately it will be necessary to make a small increase to the price of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* from the next issue. The increase will be 50 pence per year and is almost wholly accounted for by the sharp increases in postage rates in the two years since the present price was established. However, subscription by bankers' order is available at £2 a year, so that subscribers who do not already pay by this method will be able to avoid the price increase by adopting this method of payment. With this small but vital addition to our finances we shall be able to continue to develop in size and scope of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* and finance the improvements in presentation planned for the next issue.

Sybil Wrigley