

Developing and Introducing a Programme of Teacher Appraisal

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Appraisal of performance is soon to become a mandatory requirement for all schools within the state education system. The Government envisage making Regulations in Autumn 1989 which will require LEAs to introduce programmes of teacher appraisal over a four year period.

Currently six pilot programmes are in operation developing expertise and understanding in appraisal of performance. A recent statement from the Consortium of School Teacher Appraisal Schemes (1988) suggests that:

- (i) each teacher should be appraised by a single appraiser while each head teacher appraisee should be appraised by at least two appraisers;
- (ii) the frequency of the appraisal should be once a year for teachers and once every two or at the most three years for head teachers;
- (iii) an individual appraiser should not normally be involved in more than five appraisals in any one year.

The National framework for appraisal has not yet been published. However, it is likely to reflect the findings of the pilot programmes.

It is therefore clear that the introduction of teacher appraisal has enormous implications for those involved in managing and organising Design and Technological activity. In-service training will be essential if teachers of Design and Technology are to participate in the development and introduction of programmes of performance appraisal based upon National Guidelines.

This article has been developed from a management system entitled 'Appraisal of Performance — An Aid to Professional Development' published by NFER/NELSON (Mathias and Jones, 1989). It is based upon the principle that appraisal of performance is central to professional development and institutional growth. A programme of appraisal which actively involves both appraiser and appraisee has the potential to set free the creativity of teachers and so enhance the quality of service provided to pupils. It is through this approach that schools can best publicly illustrate their effectiveness. This is particularly important in the

rapidly changing area of Design and Technology.

It is not possible to take an appraisal programme 'off the shelf' and impose it upon the staff of a school. Careful planning and organisation are required in a number of key areas:

- (i) the introduction and management of the programme;
- (ii) the collection of data to provide evidence of performance;
- (iii) appraisal interviewing.

In this system, six key stages are put forward as being essential to the development of a sound programme of appraisal which is capable of satisfying the demands of public accountability through an approach which is focused clearly upon professional development. It is vital that all staff involved in the teaching of Design and Technology are aware of these procedures so that they can make a full contribution to the development and introduction of the appraisal process.

Stage 1 — Developing a Concept of Appraisal

The introduction of a formal system of teacher appraisal will have a number of implications for the teaching profession. It is tempting for schools to plunge straight in and grab for any available appraisal programmes which seem to relate to National Guidelines. This could have an adverse effect on the long-term benefits of teacher appraisal.

It is very important that each school considers very carefully the background, benefits and limitations of teacher appraisal before the introduction of the programme. Schools will need to develop a clear concept of appraisal which reflects the professional needs of the institution and which is also related to National Guidelines.

A number of issues will need to be debated within the school before a concept of appraisal can be articulated:

- Staff need to be aware of the background to appraisal, particularly the demands for greater public accountability in the last decade or so.
- The nature of appraisal needs to be discussed.

- The reasons for the introduction need to be made clear. The benefits and limitations of appraisal should be discussed.

It is only after the discussion of issues such as these will staff be in a position to develop a concept of appraisal based on the needs of the school in the current educational climate.

Stage 2 — Developing a Framework for Appraisal

The establishment of an effective appraisal system requires the commitment from all participants at whatever level within the school. However, this can only happen if all staff are clear about the structure of the appraisal programme. Those with responsibility for managing the school therefore have an obligation to make explicit the framework upon which the programme will be based. Ideally all staff would be consulted during this process. This could well form the basis for a departmental meeting.

A number of issues will need to be addressed as the appraisal framework is developed:

- Generating ground rules for appraisal — staff must be clear at the outset of the principles upon which the appraisal programme is to be based. The procedure to be followed, training requirements and method of reporting should all be made explicit.
- Organisational issues within the school — schools will need to consider what changes need to be made to the school's organisation in order to facilitate the introduction of a programme of teacher appraisal. The implications for the Design and Technology department will also need to be considered.
- Questions to be answered — there are likely to be a number of questions which have to be addressed during the development of an appraisal programme:
 - What is to be appraised?
 - Who is to be appraised?
 - Who appraises?
 - How much time will it take?
 - How often will appraisal occur?
 - Who will have oversight of the scheme?

How will the scheme be resourced?
Will it be fair?
Will findings be kept confidential?

- Selecting area to be appraised — within this programme we are suggesting that the key issues associated with appraisal focus around:
 - The curriculum
 - The classroom processes
 - The outcomes of the classroom processes
 - Wider school responsibilitiesIt is also suggested that the appraisal interview may offer the best opportunity for discussion of career aspirations and possible strategies for realising such aspirations.
- Deciding upon the instruments to be used — this programme is based upon the collection of data from a range of sources. Key instruments are provided for:
 - Job description
 - Pre-interview proforma
 - Appraisal interview proformaA range of supplementary instruments are provided to help both appraiser and appraisee collect information about performance in key areas.
- Deciding upon the format of the appraisal interview — the approach advocated in this programme views the process as three distinct but interrelated phases:
 - Pre-interview phase which is of paramount importance if both appraiser and appraisee are to be adequately prepared for the appraisal interview. The pre-interview proforma should be issued so that both parties can collect data to aid discussion at the appraisal interview. The date, timing and location of the interview also need to be discussed.
 - The format of the appraisal interview needs to be clear to both parties. The appraiser is likely to need training in conducting appraisal interviews.
 - The post-interview phase allows for the interview proforma to be completed and signed, if there is agreement of findings, by both parties.

Stage 3 — Putting the Appraisal programme into Action

Putting an appraisal programme into action is an aspect of the general management of any developing organisation. A number of issues are related to this implementation:

- A suitable climate for appraisal of performance has to be developed.
- The appraisers have to be selected. The Consortium of school Teacher Appraisal Schemes suggests that an individual appraiser should not normally be involved in more than five appraisals in any one year. The implications of this in terms of organisation, time and training have to be taken into account. In many schools, HODs will be involved both as appraisees and appraisers.
- A timescale for appraisal has to be developed. This will then have to be translated into an annual appraisal timetable.
- Training will need to be provided for appraisers and appraisees. The appraisal programme cannot be put into operation until this has happened. Skills will need to be developed in managing appraisal programmes, collecting data and conducting appraisal interviews. This has implications for all those involved in the teaching of Design and Technology.
- Central to any scheme of staff appraisal is the generation of job descriptions. This provides the basis against which performance can be judged.

Stage 4 — Collection of data (Appraiser and Appraisee)

This programme is based upon the principle that appraisal of performance linked to professional development depends upon the collection of data from a range of sources. This is very important if an objective view is to be made of the performance of individual teachers. It will allow an appraiser to collect and analyse data from the broad spectrum of areas which help to make up the complex process of teaching and learning. Discussion in the appraisal interview can be generated from this data and can allow both appraiser and

appraisee to look for ways of aiding professional performance.

Within 'Appraisal of Performance — An Aid to Professional Development', three key instruments form the basic mechanism for the collection of Data:

- Job description
- Pre-interview proforma
- Appraisal interview proforma

A range of supplementary instruments are provided which allow appraiser and appraisee to analyse some aspects in greater depth. The choice of supplementary appraisal instruments will depend upon the appraisal framework generated within the school:

- Curriculum review
- Classroom processes
- Pupil outcomes
- Wider school responsibilities
- Career aspirations
- Other performance indicators

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss in detail mechanisms for data collection. The main publication provides copyright free instruments and explanatory notes to aid this process. Instruments and notes related to appraisal interviewing are also provided.

Stage 5 — The appraisal interview

The appraisal interview provides a formal opportunity for the appraisee to discuss performance with the appraiser. The focus in this programme is to direct discussion towards some of the central issues embodied in the process of teaching young people.

This appraisal interview is seen as a RIGHT for all teachers and should actively encourage the involvement of appraisee and appraiser in professional dialogue. That is to say, the appraisal interview is a two-way process which is primarily aimed at providing opportunities for:

- Discussing performance in key areas
- Discussing career aspirations
- Setting targets and re-negotiating job roles within the school

In other words, the emphasis is heavily upon the professional development of the individual and hence the growth of the institution in which he or she works.

The success of the appraisal process will hinge upon the effectiveness of the actual interview. Therefore, a great deal

of care needs to go into its preparation, delivery and subsequent follow up. The skills of conducting an interview have to be acquired and developed through practice. Appraisers will also require in-service training in this area.

Stage 6 — Post-interview phase

For a staff appraisal strategy to enjoy any degree of credibility, the appraisal process will need to focus upon both performance and the professional development of staff. As such, the appraisal interview will need to be perceived not as the termination of the appraisal process, but the beginning of a cycle which establishes action plans and sets achievable targets. The interview should, therefore, conclude with a brief written agreement to this effect, highlighting the nature of the development needs and the proposed targets. As well as the need to be mutually agreed, the content of any statement will require the necessary back-up and support to be effected.

It is evident then that all appraisal should have some follow-up procedure, particularly when recommendations for action have been made during the interview procedure. An appraisal system which gives rise to targets and strategies for improvement and development which may then not be acted upon, not only reduces the value of the exercise, but is likely to lead to resentment, demotivation and a waste of human resources.

The issues are therefore clear. Those involved in the teaching of Design and Technology have a major responsibility to participate in the development of appraisal programmes within their institutions. Many HODs will have dual roles, both as appraisers and appraisees. Skills will have to be developed in:

- (i) managing appraisal programmes;
- (ii) data collection;
- (iii) appraisal interviewing.

Handled sensitively, performance appraisal has the potential to aid the development of Design and Technology teachers and enhance the growth of the departments in which they work. It can also provide a vehicle and structure which allows departments to respond effectively to current curriculum developments and other changes embodied in the Education Reform Act.

Handled insensitively, it can lead to frustration, self-justification and demotivation of teachers and departments, resulting in a service which does not meet the needs of its customers.

References

- Mathias, J.R. and Jones, J.L. (1989) 'Appraisal of Performance — An Aid to Professional Development' NFER/NELSON.
 Consortium of School Teacher Appraisal Schemes (1988) 'School Teacher Appraisal — Guidance for LEAs'.

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