

The ITEA Conference in Minneapolis

Minnesota
21-26 March 1992

Pauline Bottrill
Research Associate International Technology
Education Association

The conference of the International Technology Education Association is held annually in one of the contiguous states of the USA this year it was the turn of the Minnesota branch to host the conference and trade convention. The ITEA organisation has some 7000 members across the country and a few scattered around the world; to call it an international body is slightly misleading; fundamentally it supports the parochial needs of its members in the States. The inclusion of an international section has given the conference impetus in recent years through the networking of John Hutchinson of Trenton State College and Ron Todd of Drexel University. This has injected a substantial contribution to the range of academic debate. This year approximately 2850 people attended the conference or visited the trade show, perhaps 100 of this number were international representatives, half of which were Canadians who had driven over the border and around 20 from the UK. There were some Dutch and German and Chinese delegates.

The international section is almost a conference within a conference. Until last year the international proceedings were bolted on one day prior to the general session, subsequently no presenters had much chance of hearing what others were doing. This year there was a marked improvement with some presentations timetabled for each day. It wasn't without problems: Peter Sellwood found that 150 people wanted to hear his presentation on 'Constructing a Framework of Progression' in a room which only held 80!; others had a problem competing in a programme packed with more than 20 options. By the last day when Richard Kimbell and Kay Stables gave their review of the Assessment of Performance research many delegates had headed for home, an important opportunity for professionals concerned with holistic assessment was missed. There is some way to go to achieve a fully integrated international programme.

The main issue for ITEA is to wean members away from their traditional 'shop' approach with its vocational orientation and to focus on a broader and more relevant Technology Education approach. Also, they have a need to educate people who believe that educational technology equals Technology Education rather than a tool to support doing and learning. There was evidence in the trade exhibition of many canned and packaged teaching schemes that seduce the unwary into believing that these alone will deliver Technology Education. The curriculum in the USA is predominantly knowledge and content based and tends to be equipment rather than learner driven. There were more than 100 enthusiastic suppliers displaying their wares and doing good trade, a sign that recession is behind us. There is still a notion that the more 'high tech' the equipment the greater level of educational excellence in the schools.

It is hard to understand that for the average technology teacher in the United States the United Kingdom National Curriculum developments are at most a passing interest and are not a pivotal consideration (I have come across college educators that have never heard of The National Curriculum!). Through offering the international presentation ITEA has been making its members aware of developments however there is a portion of industrial arts/technology educators outside ITEA who are members of in the

Technology Education Division of the American Vocational Association (AVA) oriented to the vocational approach. There are no plans to publish conference papers giving the curriculum developments a wider audience in the USA.

The technology education community has become more diverse in the UK in the last three years as reflected in the DATER 91 conference. There is much to be done here to reach other professionals who contribute to Design and Technology education: business studies, home economists, industrial designers, architects, art and design specialists, apart from environmentalists, science, mathematics and language educators. Each group is still compartmentalised in their own organisations.

Within ITEA there is a respectful acknowledgement that the UK is making a considerable contribution to the development of technology education in schools and is several years ahead of the US in this field (a range of 5-25 years is quoted). The focus on the knowledge base does give the US an edge in the sphere of knowledge content.

Vic Green HMI who was the international luncheon speaker at the conference identified two concerns for the UK: the need to define the content of technology education and the need to develop the notion of progression.

The quality of the presentation at such large gathering was varied, with such a packed programme there is a need for careful selection, it is quite a gamble at times especially for a visitor to the United States to know what is 'hot'. Always a draw at ITEA is the revered Donald Maley, Professor Emeritus at University of Maryland; his presentation, 'Making Problem Solving a Reality: Some Characteristics of Effective Procedures and Concerns for Implementation' was a true reflection of the maturity and experience that Maley has brought to the profession over the years.

The challenge for the US is to get more state and county school board recognition of technology education not only at middle and high school level but also in the elementary sector; and to get the funding to support these developments. Some of the US presentations outlined the way that outcome based education was being introduced for example in New York State and Michigan which is set to deliver attainment levels similar to ATs and are likely to require a more holistic assessment procedure. Other presentations demonstrated projects in progress but several of them are funded by the National Science Foundation or NASA with its orientation towards improving Science and Mathematics. One positive development for the future from ITEA was the announcement given at the conference dinner of the establishment of a foundation to support the development of curriculum research and development projects in the United States.

The next ITEA Conference will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina, April 18-21, 1993. See you there. Ya'll have a good time!

Pauline Bottrill, Research Associate ITEA may be contacted at 5607 Newington Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20816.

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION



12th-14th NOVEMBER '92
N.E.C. BIRMINGHAM

The theme for this year's show **"A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE"**

EUROPE'S PREMIER EXHIBITION FOR
ALL INVOLVED WITH DESIGN &
TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION.

200 Companies combine to offer
everything needed to teach
Design & Technology.

Open 9.30 to 5.30 (5pm Saturday).

Easily accessible by road (just off
the M42) or by train (the N.E.C. has
its own station - Birmingham
International).

Free Admission. Free Car Parking.

All aspects of the subject
represented. Art and Design,
Business Studies, C.D.T., Home
Economics, Information
Technology.

School and L.E.A. demonstrations
areas will cover all aspects of
D & T in the National Curriculum
from Primary to Secondary and
Higher Education.

Comprehensive programme of
daily seminars.

Maurice Brown memorial lecture
given by Professor John Eggleston,
6pm Thursday 12th November.
Write or phone for free tickets,
including light refreshments.

General School parties NOT
admitted.

Small groups of sixth formers
permitted by PRIOR ARRANGEMENT
ONLY

Further details from I.C.H.F. Ltd., Dominic House, Seaton Road,
Highcliffe, Dorset BH23 5HW. Tel 0425 272711. Fax 0425 279369