

## Annual Conference 1994, Keele, Management of Change: Challenges and Opportunities

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A successful conference has four key ingredients. Firstly, it must be clear why you're there: what are its aims and what sort of outcomes can be expected? Secondly, good, useful information must be conveyed, advice given and ideas exchanged. Thirdly, a convergence of views should take place on which headway can be made and routes identified. Lastly — and by no means least — it should be enjoyable.

The DATA Annual Conference and AGM, held at Keele University at the end of June (thanks to the hard work of the organisers and the support of the DFE, OST and Unilever, and the positive attitude of the delegates and contributors) was remarkably successful on all four counts.

The aims of the 'Management of Change: challenges and opportunities' conference were:

- to consider the numerous support initiatives and the perception of parties interested in the field of D&T, and devise a strategy for maximising collaboration between them to the benefit of the profession
- to illustrate 'quality' and suggest ways to further enhance and value this attribute.

Information concerning current initiatives came from papers given by some dozen agencies, including HMI, SCSST, UBI, BA, Nuffield, SCIP, RCA and TEP. Further details of schemes and initiatives were made available throughout the conference from a large number of exhibitors representing almost all of the major players. SCAA presented two papers concerning Proposals for Change (KS1 & 2 and KS3 & 4) and OFSTED gave valuable advice on preparing for, and getting value from, inspection.

The disturbing facts which have emerged from the two major DATA Research Papers published recently (*Survey of Capitation Allowances for D&T in Primary and Secondary Schools* and *Survey of Qualifications and Training Needs of D&T teachers in Secondary Schools*) were put forward as another contribution to the conference information pool.

With so much information, knowledge and analysis in our heads, the process of synthesising strategy and actions had now to start. Keynote papers on 'The Way Ahead' by Mike Ive HMI and 'An Active Role for

Industry and Commerce in Developing a Professional Teaching Force' by Alan George of Unilever set the scene for delegates to attempt in discussion groups to synthesise the strategy and actions we would like to see adopted.

One of the most satisfying aspects of the discussions which took place in discussion groups was the convergence of views concerning the most important issues in our profession and the actions which were therefore necessary. They were to:

- establish a clear and shared *vision* of D&T
- develop some *quality assurance* codes of practice
- develop an effective *national medium of communication* to all teachers, agencies and producers.

(The details of these agreed action points are shown below.)

It was rewarding to find that in spite of the wide range of interested parties participating in the conference, there was a consensus that DATA should play a major part as 'honest broker' in co-ordinating the actions to make these things happen. DATA's Executive Committee has taken these proposals on board and significant progress has already been initiated. Members will see an announcement of a project addressing the first of the action points in the next few weeks.

Another major part of the conference concerned the information exchange and discussion which took place in the 22 primary and secondary 'streamed' sessions on classroom/school activities and in the workshops held. It was here that quality in practice and outcome was most clearly evident and these sessions were widely acclaimed for their value to practitioners.

The conference was structured flexibly so that people could attend sessions which were most useful to them and as a result some 380 attendances were recorded over the three days. The setting, facilities and accommodation for the conference and exhibition were ideal, and Keele University is to be congratulated.

Lastly, with delegates representing so many facets of D&T, the support for DATA and the constructive atmosphere of enthusiasm, interest, co-operation, enjoyment and 'buzz' which pervaded the whole conference was very



encouraging and augurs well for the future of the subject and the focus which DATA can provide to assist all those who are interested in the effective teaching of design & technology.

## ■ 1994 DATA Conference — Action Points

As a result of structured discussion within five groups, the following summary of action points was presented to the conference under these headings:

- Vision
- Quality assurance
- Communication

### Vision

- *DATA should co-ordinate moves to produce a statement expressing the shared vision of design & technology as a defined area within the National Curriculum*
  - There is an urgent need to produce a DATA-Co-ordinated statement which seeks to end the confusion in understanding between education and its partners and also within each group

### Action

Bring together sponsors and agencies to reflect on that statement; amend as agreed, but be prepared to 'stand up and be counted'

### Action

Based upon that agreed vision, produce a set of targets for action and achievement

### Quality Assurance

- *DATA should develop Codes of Practice, with consumer and teacher input, reflecting the original vision and targets. The codes of practice should be applied to:*
  - curriculum materials and support resources (human, technical and other)

- INSET provision
- agencies and support organisations

There was general support for some form of 'kite mark': consumers (both teachers and students) need guidance on quality assurance, given the plethora of initiatives and materials in existence.

DATA's *Good Technology Guide* was a most welcome innovation, but now needs developing with supplementary services as listed above, and relying significantly on the view of teachers.

### Communication

- *A nationally effective medium of communication is needed to reach all teachers, agencies and producers.*

A vision and targets need to be owned by as wide an audience as possible; there is a great need for DATA to be proactive in promoting itself, its services and its influence.

### Action

Set up a 'one-stop shop' telephone answering service: this needs to be accessible to teachers and provide users with information about support organisations and activities in schools; where direct information could not be provided, information on other contracts could be supplied.

### Action

Develop local access to advice and support: this needs to be genuinely 'local' since the decline of LEA teacher centres is removing expertise and access to resources.

### Action

Produce a simple flow-chart for schools, helping them to find pathways to developing the curriculum, discovering about initiatives and resources; this needs to include those factors which are important in decision-making and also provide information such as contact telephone numbers and addresses.

### Action

Apply the vision, targets and codes of practice to a school-created initiative and promote these in the same way.



# Design Technology



The CSS is Birmingham LEA's principal provider of Curriculum and Professional Development Support for teachers. Detailed below are two examples of our many courses in the field of D & T.

**PRIMARY**

**SECONDARY**

**Assessing Design and Technology Activities within Key Stage 2**  
9.00 - 3.30 - Tuesday 4th October 1994

**Designing with Key Stage 3 and 4 Pupils**  
9.00 - 3.30 - Friday 25th November 1994

For application details & information regarding other courses please contact:  
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