

Making Changes

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Everything is ordinary

For many children learning experiences can be ordinary for most of the time. The experiences that are 'learned' are on the teachers terms. The secondary survey of schools by HMI found that large amounts of pupil's time is spent on writing, and that the more difficult a pupil found 'language' the more s/he wrote, and that much of it was copied.

Could it be that writing and words are considered important by teachers and their main stock in trade?

Other experiences of learning which children have at school are:— answering questions about 'other people's interests', and, guessing which answers are 'Right'.

Rhetoric is an important part of a teachers armoury. Questions, directions, instructions and exhortations form a substantial part of the educational experience of many children in schools.

Motivation is confused with compliance and learning is also confused with evidence of the ability to find out 'what the teacher wants'.

Thinking for yourself

The casual observer (interested parent) must feel that there are other areas of the school curriculum which are not like those described above.

For example: in the area of Arts, Craft and Design, it is generally thought that pupils should think for themselves and lessons should not be so directed and teacher centred. In practice, all too often, instruction and direction are evident in exercises involving image, object and system making. When designing and making, the 'problems' to be solved can still too easily be identified with the concerns of teachers.

The issues, ideas, interests and events which are part of the child's life and living are seldom brought into the purview of school and education, and we are reminded that school is not part of, or a preparation for, the 'real world'. In this world there is an interaction of 'self' with others, place, community and culture.

These are needs which are to be met in practical ways if this situation is not to continue. Children also need to listen and observe, to discuss and negotiate, especially meanings, purposes and ideas. There are many starting points for

learning and the enrichment of children's experience.

Making in a changing context

Making 'subjects' have a skill and process orientated philosophy which isolate them within subject centered activity consequently they are merely 'practical' options that may or may not be offered to children (5 to 16). They are generally a single skill/single material/one media/double period experience with much time devoted to 'getting out', 'putting away' and 'long and tedious confrontations with the physical world' explored through 'filing', 'glasspapering' and 'shading'.

Children and parents are opting out and the managers of schools react accordingly.

Generally making activity:—

- attempts to simulate the concerns of 'designers' and in doing so, is only concerned with the designers who specialize in object making in a narrow 'manufacturing industry' context. Little emphasis is placed on 'fashion design' and none on designers of 'holidays', 'foods' and 'liquids', or 'leisure'
- is about wood/metal (and sometimes) plastics it is *not* usually associated with textiles, glass, ceramics, etc. Course content is product orientated but will not for example, allow for the submission of 'a pond' or 'an inflatable' as a valid outcome of a design and make process.
- still presents parents, teachers and children with tedious activity and rigid resistive materials (that robots now handle in 'industry') and the factory atmosphere and ethos provides a haven for (male) 'experts' and a no go area for male and female 'non experts'.
- investigates its own nature and its own 'mysteries' that have been protected by guilds and unions for hundreds of years. The subject boundaries are areas of demarcation and create barriers that stop 'learning through making' developing across the curriculum. (Recent 'initiatives' in GCSE have in fact given subjects a more secure and 'fenced in' position in the curriculum).
- it does not respond with sensitivity to

'special needs' and there is no research and development in hand that aims to improve the situation.

- it is not a response to the developing child in a changing context.

Deciding what to leave out

A shift from a subject centred philosophy to a child centred curriculum will integrate subjects that now individually offer discreet elements of learning through making, doing, and using activity and this will encourage all teachers to provide an opportunity for children to respond to areas of study with more 'practical outcomes'.

While there might be need for specialists in some aspects of making technique in schools associated with specialist areas and equipment — everybody has the potential to involve themselves in making, doing and using in school as they do in life. Once we de-mystify making and give all children and teachers access to planning, and opportunity to negotiate modes of delivery and evaluation we have the beginning of a new future.

A new approach to integrated studies must be considered to provide a more balanced programme of expressive experience with studies that explore problems and issues in our material culture. While teachers are obliged to introduce 'new' approaches and techniques they must also decide what to leave out. The world is bigger and more dynamic than the curriculum and it is inevitable that matters of some importance must be excluded to make way for more immediate issues. It must be assumed that decisions on curriculum content are based on priorities for the child and his/her future. It should be possible to identify trivia and irrelevance in a 'subject syllabus' and argue for change on behalf of children.

Confronting Issues

In the future our children will find that 'industry' and 'commerce' will only need people until 'they' can find a better alternative. If people will not be directly involved in 'making' to 'make a living' — is it now time to close down practical areas in schools, or are they there for another reason?

Could it be that making is essentially human and is a powerful expression of our humanity?

Do we *need* 'direct experience of materials and tools' to affect the quality of life for self and others? Is it 'important' for children to have this experience?

How much do we know about 'sensory deprivation'? or, the contribution that 'capability' or 'usefulness' can *make* to successful human relationships?

What do we get from a relationship and what do we give to it? Do we 'have to' continually contribute in practical ways to our family, society and our culture? In what ways?

What happens to individuals and groups and their relationships when they are doing 'nothing'?

If making — doing and using is essentially a human activity then lack of contact with it (and the relationships that derive from it) will have very noticeable and detrimental impacts on the human condition. The 'work ethic' is not just an adult concern with employment it is a concern for personal enrichment and for the potential to be 'useful' in relationships. If the intention is to establish ultimate comfort and convenience — with nothing to 'do' — this will shorten life and remove quality in living. Things to be done — must be *necessary* in the eyes of the doer — necessary to *gain approval* and *respect* not just for 'who you are' and 'what you are' but also for the chance to demonstrate what you can achieve in a tangible form. What you can do *is part of* 'who you are' in the eyes of others. It has cultural value and the image of self is important. It is described as 'self respect'. While it is important to develop making as a contribution to self-culture and relationships — it is also important to consider the child's need to develop through practical experience and much needs to be said on this very central theme.

The role and potential of making must emphasise a number of interactive contexts that range beyond the limits of manufacturing industry to also encompass textiles — fashion — tourism — media and advertising — banking, etc. Children may not perceive and understand the practical aspects of local government — medicine and

surgery — policing — landscaping — etc., and the role of images, objects, systems and things in ceremony, customs, leisure, entertainment. Concentration on a narrow prevocational emphasis in syllabuses diverts attention away from our cultural heritage as it is expressed in the built environment. Thus the 'core' of practical activity will be 'people making for people' — since making is essentially *human* and is a response to human needs and motivations.

In a future curriculum 'subjects' will be too limiting. Important ideas — issues and experiences transcend the subject based curriculum. We can, however, look forward to an active learning programme that operates across the curriculum that will derive from good practice. This may mean that ultimately it will not be possible to use subject titles. Given that 'the future starts now' — we must consider an alternative role for 'modelling' and 'action' in the curriculum at school.

Making changes in the City of Manchester: The Concept Base Pilot Study

The following is a digest of selected key information that has been used as a reference for teachers in working parties, in-service courses and in schools. A pilot study has used these materials to establish a new strategy for teaching and learning that responds to a collective need to improve curriculum content in practical areas.

The extracts that are presented here are taken from papers that are now being 'evoked' as the initiative develops and changes.

Contributions have been made by men and women who have had equal influence over the direction and content of the study. Working parties have also included teachers from a number of subject areas. Heads of departments have endorsed the materials that have been used to establish a submission to the NEA which is a 'Mode III — GCSE-CDT Integrated Studies, examination Syllabus. Content for this examination also derive from the ideas that are described in the pilot study materials.

A Shift to child centred thinking

The debate about a subject is only of interest to those who are dedicated to

maintaining the integrity of the subject. 'The Child' should be on the agenda of all subjects and subject teachers. This is a natural and important area of concern which will bring together subject teachers to engage in a dialogue. There is now opportunity to build new teams from across subjects to work together with a common purpose.

In the City of Manchester, Art teachers and CDT teachers have found they can both identify with child centred teaching and learning strategies, and teachers from humanities, home economics and other subjects have also been associated with the pilot study. It is, therefore, possible to consider new practical outcomes to teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Teachers from a range of subjects have made important contributions to the development of this initiative. The following statement is an example:

Child Centred Approaches to Learning

An extract from a presentation to teachers engaged in the Concept Base Pilot Study. This paper (by Keith Gentle) sets out some ideas about the development of children in relation to Action Based Learning and about the different kinds of learning which take place and how these change. The relationship between media and different forms of communication is discussed and the nature and the role of image and object making during adolescence is also explored.

The development of children in relation to: Making, doing, and using, as learning

Young children learn about the world around them through direct sensory experience and their need for sensory stimulation is as strong as their need for food. Babies not only search for sensory stimulation but begin, from an early age, to order and control their responses to it. Patterns formed in the mind become the basis for future action and are the foundation for much of their understanding. These developments are clearly registered in children's drawings and mark making, and organisation of materials — objects and things.

Two fundamental modes of learning can be distinguished at this early stage which remain significant forms of learning

throughout our lives, namely the exploratory and the controlling. To explore is to travel for the sake of discovery. The energies used here seek to find out, to reach beyond, to analyse and investigate. To control is to order, arrange, check, test and verify. The energies used here form patterns, arrange and assimilate, organise and reflect on experience. Both modes of learning are essential but can contradict or complement each other as, for example, when children seek to do something their own way which differs from the way a teacher may have shown them. This example is evident in all making activity which use media to explore ideas and personal responses yet control the forms in which this is done.

Change in children's development. The experience of young children is ego-centric; centred on themselves, their immediate needs and responses and their direct experience of the world. Their knowing and understanding derives directly from their immediate experience. The drawings of young children reveal this way of learning coupled with a spontaneous delight in handling materials and media through which they express themselves. The visual language of young children gradually becomes more differentiated, complex and varied as is the case with their verbal language, with which there is a close parallel.

Around seven years old a significant change takes place in the way children see and understand the world, namely, that of being able to form concepts independently from direct experience. We see this change graphically portrayed in children's art and in their play. Children draw things they know rather than see directly, have concepts about sides of things, scale, distance overlapping and so on. They play games to rules, copy and collaborate. Here the distinction between logical, sequential forms of thought and thinking through images, relationships and wholes becomes apparent. After seven years old, children want to know about things differently, how they work, what makes them real, how they fit together and what they mean to adults. Children will invent ideas and images, devise functions and fantasise in order to make the increasingly complex and

unexplained world more manageable and personal. Children's creative work reflects these changes.

The separation between the uncompromising reality of the world around and the private and personal realities created in the mind and imagination become intense at this time. Children will adopt techniques, practice idiosyncratic skills, copy ideas and come up with ideas to manage realness in their own way. Personal and imaginative ideas become significant agents in children's learning at this time but these are fragile and shifting touch stones with which they come to know the world and themselves. If children's ideas are ignored, brushed aside and swamped by teacher-directed learning, their confidence and capacity to continue learning creatively can be seriously impaired.

There is much evidence for this happening in children's education in the junior and lower secondary phases.

Ideas are important because they are the means whereby children interpret their experience and invest it with personal meaning. This *applies generally to any learning.* Ideas arise at the intersection of outer and inner reality. When children attempt to communicate their sense of reality the most obvious approach seems to be to copy or describe it; correct shape, detail and exactness seem to be the norms with which to judge the success of the practical statements we make. However, there is far more to the way we see and feel reality than the mere representation of appearances. We make choices; see things in peculiar ways and are selective in our responses. The way in which media behave and our levels of skill and technique make it virtually impossible to represent reality exactly even if this were the function and intention of the activity. Understanding how action interprets our experience of reality is fundamental to communicating through action and a major concern of education.

Adolescence is a period of development in young people when they question the values and realities of the world around them. Their own search for personal identity and meaning in life is an essential part of their growth. The

conflicts and tensions which accompany this search for identity are resolved in many ways, some violent, some passive and some creatively. It must be part of the education of young people to give them the means to explore identity and self image with all that this means in developing capacities to observe and reflect, innovate and appraise and question and discuss. The visual and practical arts are a powerful means whereby they can do this.

Active learning through image and object making can handle the forms and images which arise from the deepest experiences, whether these are identified through local environment or culture or embedded in historical or racial origins. Teachers working at this level have a responsibility to widen the context in which young people conceive their understanding of themselves and others and come to recognise the functions and opportunities in education through creating their own practice responses.

The range of scope of what young people can achieve through education at this time expands enormously from technical and analytical forms of investigation and discovery to highly evolved and imaginative interpretations of their experience.

Some aims for Education

- i) To heighten children's awareness to the world around them and develop their sensory enjoyment of it through first hand experience.
- ii) To increase our care and sensitivity in offering children opportunity to handle media and communicate through their own visual forms.
- iii) to encourage children to appreciate and enjoy the work done by others and develop ways of talking about and sharing it.
- iv) To give children confidence to use images and construction to interpret their experience and courage to pursue their ideas through critical appraisal and discussion.
- v) To help children and young people realise their own potential and to handle their own creative and inventive processes with sensitivity, discrimination and honesty.

The pilot study is a patchwork of elements — they are all interactive — one subsumed in another to create the whole curriculum proposal — it is, however, necessary to describe specific aspects of the programme as separate elements in order that they can be considered and evaluated.

Keith Gentle's contribution to the thinking about a new initiative has served as an important aide memoir to help the teachers engaged in developing their ideas on the new curriculum content to give full consideration to the needs of children.

Other contributions to the patchwork (by Tony Rogers) have provided some more thoughts and suggestions that have provided a basis for development — namely extracts from:

1. *A philosophy* for making, doing and using action
2. *Future Predictions*: as a basis for curriculum planning
3. *Cultural Anthropology* to provide a context for our way of life
4. *Imagineering*: to anticipate the child's imagination in practical ways
5. *The Concept Base*: the core study for the whole initiative
6. *Starting Point Search*: looking for 'good' and relevant ideas
7. *Problems not tackled or problems not solved*: there is always more to do!

1. PHILOSOPHY

To enable children to become *aware* of and *improve* the *quality of life* — through making, doing and using action.

Ideas Orientation

A new strategy for 'making, doing and using' as a way to learn and to experience memorable knowing.

Awareness:

Related to full use of senses — to recognise and identify the needs and motivations of self and others: the interacting components of our environments and the way we relate to them and each other.

Improve

To recognise situations which fall short of perfection — or need maintenance to retain perfection: analyse the causes of

difficulties: contribute to an attempted improvement. Continuously review the situation — is there improvement? Any unexpected 'spin-offs'.

FOR EVERY GAIN THERE IS A LOSS!!

The Quality of Life

- Human Life
- The Human Condition
- Life Forces, in the content of:— a natural setting, in human habitats and in time and space, which is influenced by changing elemental forces — invention + philosophies etc. — and, also — the potential of making, doing and using action to 'control', 'change', and 'modify' our cultural identity and our ultimate destiny (for better or worse!!)

What qualities are we striving for in practical terms?

Are we all striving for the same quality of life?

Peace? Security? Comfort? Convenience? Ownership? Companionship? Status? Respect? Capability? Acceptability? Pleasant Surroundings? 'Interesting' and Stimulating Mental and Physical Activity? Privacy?

— And successful interaction with others and the environment?

Do we agree on what quality is and how to achieve it? Would you have additional or different aims?

2. FUTURE PREDICTIONS

— It is possible to predict the future — in general terms.

— It is possible to teach and learn in response to predicted futures.

— the curriculum should be a preparation for the future.

The curriculum should therefore be adjusted to this — here for example is one prediction.

— 'We will inherit an energy crisis' — How can we respond to this in schools now?

Suggestions:

1. Learning how to 'do without' — (recycling) etc.
2. Preserving and maintaining what we now have — conservation.
3. Cheap sources of energy — alternative technology — self sufficiency, use of natural sources of energy — (the outcomes to be practical).

More Predictions for the Future

- Never-ending change in time and space — changes in self and others — environments — other life forms, ideology etc.
- Man will encroach on nature — and nature will also encroach on man.
- We will look into inner space (Micro) and outer space (Macro) and initially misinterpret what we see and realise how little we know. Thus the more we know — the more there will be to know.
- There will be three dimensional mistakes!!
- We can expect the unexpected and we will have to try and explain the unexplainable.
- More pressures on marriage — families — community and society.
- We will consume: waste: pollute: vandalise.
- We will inherit an energy crisis — more 'built in obsolescence' and material shortage.
- There will be prejudice — exploitation — crime and war.
- There will be disability: pain and stress.
- There will be a demand for comfort and convenience and this will create more problems!
- Boredom — isolation — unemployment: lack of privacy — thought control and propaganda — over-crowding.
- There will be fewer who really know — (they will be the haves) those who don't know the things that really matter (will be the have nots) — the 'haves' will manipulate the 'have nots'.
- We will want — things to do — places to go and people to see.
- New possibilities will be exploited to discover all potential — 'good' and 'bad' — we will be offered opportunities that go beyond 'real needs' — to contrived needs and desires.

This is all *bad* news — is there any *good* news?

KEY CONCEPT — CHANGE

Preparation for the Future

Adaptability — self sufficiency — the opportunity to take Action (in a 'useful' context) and to then rest.

Conservation — restraint — quality — education — caring and sharing.

Group co-operation — understand human needs and motivations — (including motives for — conflict).

Continuity — family units? truth — good practice — respect for 'difference' — 'good people' with 'good' ideas, ingenuity, craftsmanship.

Know what to do — when to do it (and when to do nothing)

FUTURE EXPORTS: people — ideas — education.

How can we: respond to these issues — NOW?

FUTURE (ACTION NOW)

Making:—

Is by and for people (it is not about 'ART' or 'CDT' or 'Design Process') It is 'child centred' not 'subject centred'

Subject = Limitations of teacher

It is concept based — (idea orientated not skill orientated)

The teacher is the agent for change — (not the DES — Exam. Boards — Headmasters — Industry)

Teachers should be responsible for children — (not wood or TD or Pottery)

Avoid subject barriers — in school — in college — in life.

There are holes in the curriculum — and important experiences are not on offer. Project ideas should derive from other areas of the curriculum e.g. — Why are places different!!!? — (instead of — coat hooks or plant drawing).

Develop the pastoral role — that derives naturally from practical activity, be — 'the best parent they ever had'.

Research and develop the diagnostic role of making.

Develop simulation — develop therapy — develop intellectual stimulus — develop — cultural anthropology to maintain links with our heritage.

Demonstrate through 'Hands on' experience — that image and object making (including systems) can be applied to situations in order to avoid problems — partially solve problems — and — create problems.

Doing nothing is a decision that can create and solve problems.

We must also consider — Situation Design:— i.e. plan to change attitudes through personal relationships.

AND AIM: TO WIN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF CHILDREN!!

Let us begin to look at the way making, doing and using is a contribution to 'culture' — so we can consider —

3. CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

It is too early to say that this is understood and is having any impact on teaching — it could be that we do not know how to recognise the culture we are in since it is obvious that 'cultural' action — is — habitual — instinctive and very much a 'normal routine' — it is only others who have cultures and behave in ways we think are — quaint — extreme — or? (how do we categorise other cultures?). Different!!

Teachers and Parents hand on cultural values and attitudes — even though they do not fully understand the derivation and significance of the language — actions and images and objects that are used.

KEY CONCEPT — CULTURE

If we are sensitive to the potential of action based learning across the curriculum then children will benefit from the exploration of:—

Cultural Anthropology

Defined as:

- The significance given to images — objects, systems and things by a tribe-clan-society-nation — (past, present and future).
- Ways that have been devised by women and men to cope with their natural setting.
- How bodies of custom are learned — retained and handed down (traditions) What are traditions?
- The way the culture achieves a given end through making, doing and using
- Organising family (and Community) relationships — being useful — contributing positively — through action.
- Hand down ways of making — the craft tradition, as exemplified in our language i.e., 'Tenterhooks', 'Catching the Thames on Fire'.
- Systems as a cultural tradition
 - queueing
 - driving on the left
 - money and barter
 - guilds — clubs and unions
 - family groups
 - sets and subsets in society
 - hierarchy
 - law, etc.

- 'Make ways to account for — 'the creation of the world' — to adjust to the business of living and preparing for the next life — consider 'ways' that different cultures do this.
- Consider difference and learn what it might be like to be someone else — KEY CONCEPT — *EMPATHY*.
- Consider how an individual born into a society *Absorbs* — *uses* and influences — customs that are contributions to the cultural heritage. KEY CONCEPT — *CONTEXT*.
- Combine varied materials into an integrated attack on the problems of human experiences —
 - particularly —
 - those aspects which form a functioning system — which adapts to the cultural setting.

What is our 'culture' as reflected in 'schooling'?

We are locked into our culture.

Why do we 'do' things?

or

Why do we 'do' things — the way we do things?

We can live in many dimensions of time and space — in our imagination and in actual events — we move in space (which itself is changing) — the natural environment and the human habitat exerts a never ending influence on us, — and we change and control events — and survive.

We exist in time — we have a past and a sense of imaginary futures —

— We carry out activities as a member of society — caring and sharing — contributing — and if we seek approval and get it — we are accepted — we can *belong* — we belong to a group and have the security of group identity.

KEY CONCEPT — *CAPABILITY*.

- We can co-operate in maintaining the group and assuring continuity.
- Those that do not belong must join another group.
- Each group must be distinctive and have a reason to exist.
- All too often they exist and give themselves identity by opposing attitudes and values that are represented in other groups.
- Since we all individually and collectively have strong territorial instincts in a crowded landscape —

we compete for space and we have different ways of personalising and using space — this helps to consolidate difference — but we can be too close together and have to enter 'no go' areas. Conflict can be sparked off when — Borders — boundaries, 'no go' areas — public and private space — are invaded.

- How does a given way of achieving a given end vary from one culture to another? This can help our adjustment to 'making' a living.
- It can be difficult to reach out of our own 'background' and understand our own motivations — attitudes and values.

KEY CONCEPT — *BELONGING*

- We have to be decision makers.
- We do not accept the environment we change it. We can bring about change and control events — the changes we have to cope with will vary according to the specific environment and climate we are in. We are still caught out by extreme conditions within a situation and crop failure can contribute to our misery. There are many examples of the consequences of being unprepared for extreme and unusual conditions.
- We have to balance opposing impulses and sometimes conflicting demands on us. We do not always have solutions to suit all concerned.

Could it be that:

- what we are — can be seen in — what we make
- while —
- what we make reflects and influences who we are?

4. IMAGINEERING

- anticipating imaginary futures in practical ways.
- This to relate to the child and what it is like to be a child now.
- Thus we seek to help the child make sense of 'now' and 'self' and the world they perceive and those they attempt to interact with or avoid.
- The starting points need to appeal to the child and provide good reason for making — and give significance to action — and the role and meaning and potential of made artefacts and imagery.
- The world was there when eyes first

opened and received stimulus when hands first touched. Images — object systems and things were then as ordinary as sky — ground — air etc.

KEY CONCEPT — *SIGNIFICANCE!!*

So — everything is ordinary — and we can reinforce this by giving an ordinary performance, and justify a project proposal with — 'I am the teacher — you are the pupil' — or 'its in the syllabus and is the next exercise' — 'its in the examination course', etc.

- We need to tap into the interests and imagination of children — and 'plug them in' to their context through awareness — experience — sensitivity — knowing and understanding.
- While much emphasis has been given to skill, accuracy and 'fit' in construction *Craft* — and thinking processes exemplified in the *Design* process — now there is an interest in the dynamics of mechanism, energy and power etc. *Technology*. This should be interactive with surface form and the recognition that surface quality is not arbitrary but a functioning contribution to the whole.

This would cause us to consider colour — texture — shape and form (sculpture). Expressive responses to 'nice pretty nature' — does not go far enough — we must investigate the life cycles, dynamics and interactive functions in nature in time and space — we must relate these to human needs and motivations that cause us to take action' and allow this to be interpreted by children to meet their own interests and involvements in their real and imaginary world.

- To allow and encourage fantasy and imagining within a broad programme that also provides opportunity to confront contemporary issues and our heritage — to become more and more human and give 'life' meaning.

5. THE CONCEPT BASE:

INTRODUCTION

The Concept Base is in effect '*concepts* that underpin the human condition, and, are therefore *basic*'. We have tried to establish a complete network of basic concepts which interact to represent a total range of *fundamental concerns* which relate to *human needs and motivations*. The Concept base derives

from a core study of people. Making is by and for people and it follows that we should be moving from the subject base to child centred approach to teaching. We would therefore, prefer to engage children in image making and modelling as a means to explore aspects of the human condition that derive from the concept base. Theory can be abstract and appeal to a minority. Through direct experience of 'theory in action' we hope to offer a more memorable knowing.

The concept base provides a framework for action based teaching and learning and since the concepts that are explored underpin many existing subject areas we can also promote more practical approaches to learning across the curriculum. While this approach is the outcome of reaction to current practice in secondary schools — it is compatible with primary school curriculum and infant and nursery stages. Pilot studies in further and higher education have demonstrated that the quality of teaching and learning is enhanced at all levels; if the study emphasises — attitudes and values.

The teaching and learning environment will need to be less 'workshop/factory' orientated and more a 'studio' facility. But adapted existing facility is very usable for much that we propose. Rooms would be multi media studios — with multi role potential allowing each room to be used for drawing, writing, discussion, slide presentation and the making of models and prototypes. There will be less fixed machinery in larger rooms with secure store rooms (large and flexible enough to accommodate trolleys of tools and equipment) — with storage for materials and work in progress.

It is important to note:— that changes in technology and economy will always invalidate an existing skill based course. The concept base represents fundamental ideas that are less likely to be affected by changes in techniques or cash flow. The course continues to explore the potential of changing techniques and constraints of economy on the human condition.

THE CONCEPT BASE

The following headings indicate 'concept bases' that are to be regarded as

representing a 'whole' — the human condition in the context of 'making'.

Each base can be 'expanded' to demonstrate the 'ideas' that are generated in a complex and changing situation.

- **Images of Self**
- **Reaching out to people**
- **Awareness of time and place**
- **Motives for action**
- **The human capacity to take action**
- **Ways of taking action.**

Thus we have:

- Reasons for taking action
- Ways of Acting
- Outcomes derived from Action (expected or unexpected)
- The Advantages and Disadvantages of Making
- Knowing when to act
- Knowing when to 'do' nothing
- The consequences of failure
- The consequences of apathy and inertia
- Thus we can discover that action is of central and peripheral importance in society and therefore —
THE CURRICULUM

CONCEPT BASED ACTION

These concept bases are considered as representations of 'basic' concepts that generate or facilitate all making, doing and using action. They also generate discussion and some areas of exploration may not be easy to express in 'practical' terms — not all ideas are suitably expressed in tangible form — but these ideas can be 'expressed' — 'explored' and 'encouraged' by ACTION in its broadest context.

These concepts may, or may not, be basic to all school subjects — some do relate to other concepts and other subject areas in some proportion — are perhaps 'basic' to some and peripheral to others.

The headings listed seem to be exclusive, but this is not necessarily the case — it is unusual to find any concept or issue that has only one context — thus the 'headings' are to some degree 'interactive'. For instance all are interactive in terms of a study of the human condition — and this was intended!!

Each base should be thought of as a source of many STARTING POINTS which

can be generated for a practical education — also the interactive potential of the bases are such that possibilities multiply — we therefore have an 'EXPLOSION' of ideas for teaching.

We are no longer able to say — I cannot 'think' what to 'do'!! — Instead we have to be selective to identify the most relevant issues and then 'Face Up' to generating new teaching materials.

From the point of view of the teacher — the move from restrictive practice to concept-based education is problematical in that:

1. 'Skill orientation' limited by time must be replaced by this approach which challenges the existing system of timetabling — changes in teaching strategies — demolition of subject boundaries — reorganisation of departments' teams and job designations — need to revamp examining and assessment procedures etc. this implies taking on the system!!
2. There are no resources or existing courses to refer to — and since the concept base is flexible to change — there may be little that can be regarded as being relevant for too long — thus this approach to 'lesson planning' gives the teacher a flexible approach to changing issues and ideas.
3. Ideas are also a great deal harder to evaluate than skills. These are design problems — but also represent an opportunity to be CREATIVE. This also means 'taking responsibility' and 'making mistakes'. This is always the case when involved in curriculum innovation — at the sharp end of change.

An introduction to:

6. STARTING POINT SEARCH

Each concept base is a fundamental source of many ideas, issues and situations. If we seek 'Starting Points' we reveal an 'explosion of ideas' and most have the potential to become course content within an Action Based Curriculum.

The human 'condition' is complex and not entirely understood — the concept 'bases' are an attempt to simplify this complexity for the purposes of planning and preparing

teaching and learning situations for children.

Each base is labelled with a basic idea/concept — but this heading represents a wide range of possibility — to select a starting point for study —

Examples: of SUBSETS of the concept base

MOTIVES FOR ACTION

: consuming — spacial behaviour — buying and selling — and owning

Examples: of SUBSETS of the concept base

AWARENESS OF TIME + PLACE

: landscape — life cycles — temperature

Examples: of SUBSETS of the concept base — IMAGES OF SELF

: difference — religion — and cultural identity.

It is also true that 'Spacial Behaviour' could derive from all three concept bases that are given in this example. While 'Consuming' could be justified in a similar way.

This helps to establish that all the concept bases are *interactive* within the human condition (in time/place/space). They are only simplified to allow access to aspects of the 'whole' and to provide a logic and a structure to encourage a positive approach which might otherwise be thought to be impossible because the issues are 'abstract' or 'theoretical'.

Another way to consider the starting point search is to structure the approach thus:—

CONCEPT BASE — Motives for action.

LIST SUBSETS: that come to mind in discussion and brain storming — one might be Owning.

LIST SUBSETS of Owning — one might be Defensible Space
Consider SUBSETS of defensible space:

- Locking
- Burglar Alarms
- Security Forces
- Fences/Walls/Boundaries
- Customs & Excise
- Castles
- The British Square
- Personalised Space
- (& Many More)

From this list choose — personalised space. Consider SUBSETS of personalised space:
— Painting and Decorating

- Individualising Gardens
- Public & Private Space
- No Go Areas
- Totems
- (& Many More!!)

While this can obviously 'go on for ever' — particularly if we tried to develop all the bases and subsets this way — we must remember that we are involved in a starting point search to find — a viable and relevant teaching and learning situation (with a practical outcome) for children and having found a suitable project bearing in mind the needs of the children — their ability, age etc., then you need look no further!!

Here — 'Totem' is identified as a possible study — but not selected as justification for practice of woodwork skills — but as a study of owning in another culture. Looking back over the process that led to 'Totem' — let us go back to Defensible Space — there — we included — 'locking' — this also has potential.

While 'burglar alarms' is a starting point that has a possible Electronic/Control Technology potential. Look again at the subsets not developed from those listed — do they have similar potential? — Also note that the lists could have been longer and perhaps more imaginative and may have produced some very good practical projects. Try it!! The starting point search can be a very valuable exercise to do with other teachers — in a brain

storming session or in some other less structured way. This produces fresh ideas and perspectives on the situation — particularly if those contributing have different backgrounds from which to derive experience and ideas, and, of course, team work at the starting point which could lead to teamwork in the teaching situation!!

A concept based approach to the presentation of a project to children include certain strategies that cannot be described here but it should be noted that the introduction of totems as a study of 'owning in another culture' has a different intention to the 'skill based' reason for a totem project (to practice use of a wood chisel).

7. PROBLEMS NOT TACKLED AND PROBLEMS NOT SOLVED

- A co-ordinated development of new resources for 'lead lessons' etc.
- Negotiated learning within the context of active learning — (implies liaison with the Alternative Curriculum Strategy Programme) and further study of the 'Gallery' as a resource base.
- Methods of Evaluation and Assessment — (suggests that we need to link with the Manchester Assessment Project).
- An agreed curriculum model for the programme — some suggestions have been considered but not yet adopted — this is now a priority.
- Special needs — while there has been

some success in developing this study within a special school CDT department — more needs to be done to provide a diagnostic/therapeutic programme and a learning programme based on research and development.

- Equal opportunities: an encouraging start here — but more needs to be done.
- Learning environments and learning resources — changes should be identified and tested.
- More and more development in field work — leading to a BIG TIME, BIG SPACE project.
- The scheme needs to be validated at secondary level with a suitable examination course, i.e. the Mode III GCSE CDT Integrated Studies — NEA.

In academic year 1986/87 The Concept Base Pilot Study will continue with associated in-service courses and we hope to have an agreed examination syllabus to offer 4th and 5th year pupils.

It is hoped that many of the problems will be resolved and that the initiative will attract more and more teachers to the pilot study.

There is much to do and these notes only serve as background to the early thinking. We expect the project to change and grow and the content and philosophy to become more organised, logical and sequential.

You have now seen the preliminary ideas.

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