

One of the central reasons for the existence of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* is to open up for discussion not only issues concerning the practice but also the planning and organisation of design education. On many occasions, we have explored the ways in which the various component activities and understandings of design education can contribute to a fuller appreciation of the modern world, not only to its science and technology but also to its social and cultural activities in homes, communities, work and leisure. The Front Door Project of Pimlico School described in the last issue and further illustrated in this offers a notable example. In such ways design studies genuinely offer a heightened understanding of life. Such an understanding may be described in a meaningful way as one that is 'integrated'. Yet we have advocated caution in the use of the term integration on more than one occasion, emphasising that integration only makes sense if there are coherent things to integrate and that the situation in which they are brought together is appropriate.

Yet such cautions have not always been heeded; the integrated design department has not infrequently been set up on grounds of administrative expediency rather than educational advantage. In *Studies in Design Education and Craft*, 6-2, we printed Clement's sharp critique of some of the unhappy consequences of such unhappy developments. In this issue Hilary Cameron contributes a further critique of the problem of the less well conceived design departments:

'Whilst in these departments there was commendable art and craft work being achieved, there was also a disturbing paucity of conceptual understanding as to the original intentions of developing an integrated art/craft department in schools, of the possibilities of curricular development in the department, of the diversity of possible teaching methods, and of the diversities in the nature of learning and

the development of appreciation in the arts, crafts and design'.

She goes on to comment:

'The experience of looking at several Design Departments, of reading pertinent literature about what is intended for design education and of observing it in practice seems analogously similar to being in an operating theatre where the surgeon, attendant doctors and nurses all have differing opinions as to what should be actually happening, where such opinions are founded upon insufficient knowledge of medical fact, and where the combined ignorance and lack of the essential mutual understanding for the team co-operation results in a massacred death'.

Cameron's fear — that such abuses may lead design education to be condemned as a component of the curriculum — is one that haunts many educationalists particularly at a time when, rightly, a closer examination of educational standards is being put in train.

How may we best respond to these criticisms? Essentially the way must lie through well conceived, meaningful work in schools and colleges; work that is accompanied by a clear understanding of purpose and sound evaluation. *Studies in Design Education and Craft* consistently endeavours to further such work. In the present issue two projects are discussed in which a well considered problem is seen to respond to a genuine design approach which leads not only to an effective solution but also to an unmistakable contribution to the general education of participants.

In the first, Merrett and Stewart describe a typical design project — the production of toys for autistic children. Though easily identified, the problem called for considerable investigation and solutions were by no means easy to achieve. Yet though complex, the project led to no spurious integration; no naive collection of synthetic answers. Much the same quality is apparent in the Design

and Build Project reported by Wicks — a project with a self evident educational justification that can be accepted without argument.

One of the ways to ensure the legitimacy of design activity is to ensure that appropriate problems are explored. In a lively and provocative article, Jacques and Talbot consider this central issue. They argue for an explicit process of problem identification within which the context not only of the solution but also the educational activity is defined. Dutton contributes a related article on the development of technological awareness through craft work. He shows the reinforcing nature of the design process, indicating how the experience of practical activity can enhance technological awareness that guides not only problem identification but also achievement and evaluation of solutions. In such a discussion, the educational contribution of skill cannot be ignored and Kimbell adds to our understanding of this important component of design education in an article entitled 'Skills — A Question of Priorities'. Central to his argument is the view that consideration of the skills to be employed in the design course is an integral part of the overall aims of the course. It is a view that relates closely to that of Cameron. Design education is an activity that must never be less than fully justified not only in its parts but also in its whole.

An important feature of the development of design education is the debate amongst its practitioners: a debate that in this issue takes the form of Down's lively response to Allen's article on 'Craft as a Liberal Education' in the last issue.

This issue of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* concludes with the usual range of book reviews including a report on an important new book by Baynes on the nature and problems of design education. Also included are a range of notes and news items. The issue brings the ninth year of publication of *Studies in Design Education and Craft* to a

close. The next issue will constitute the tenth anniversary of the publication and will include not only a range of special articles but also a new and improved style of presentation which, it is hoped, will meet the approval of readers.

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