

The training of specialist art and design teachers

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Introduction

The training of specialist teachers of art and design has long held a unique position in English higher education. Until fairly recently, the Centres for Postgraduate Art and Design Teacher Education responsible for the initial teacher training courses were almost wholly separate from institutions training teachers of other subjects. This separation reflected and, to a large degree, was a consequence of the historical development of art schools and colleges as independent institutions of further and higher education. With the inclusion of many of the major art and design colleges in the establishment of polytechnics and other higher education institutions, the specialist Centres are now all part of larger multi-discipline institutions and some have become departments or sections of broader teacher education provision. Nevertheless, the Centres continue to have a large measure of philosophic, if not administrative, independence.

Below: Art & Design Education Workshop — Saturday mornings. PGCE (Art & Design Education)

Although developed independently of the rest of initial teacher education, the Centres have been and are very responsive, as well as contributory, to developments in education in the broadest sense. Indeed, they have been responsible for a number of initiatives and innovations which have been adopted subsequently by other sections of the teacher education system. They are characterised by high levels of professionalism and academic performance which has been facilitated in no small way by the particularly strong community of interest resulting from the concentration of relatively large numbers of staff and students within a single specialist subject field. The volume of research undertaken in the Centres continues to increase and the literature of art and design education is probably as extensive and sophisticated as that of any other subject field.

For a variety of reasons, the work of the Centres in the training of specialist teachers of art and design is not generally well known. Indeed, because of an agreement between the Centres,

which is a reflection of their corporate professional relationships, the Centres individually have not advertised their initial teacher training courses. This article describes some aspects of the work of the Centres but focusses on the initial training of specialist art and design teachers as these courses are the main work of the Centres. Some reference is made to other aspects of their provision and activities in order that the initial teacher training courses can be seen within a broader institutional context. The article is based on an unpublished response to a request for information about the courses of initial art and design teacher training from the Design Council's Secondary Education Committee. Some specific references are made to the initial teacher training course in the Leicester Polytechnic Centre for Postgraduate Studies in Education to illustrate more general points about the Centres.

The Specialist Centres

Postgraduate initial art and design teacher education for intending secondary school teachers is wholly





Above: Art & Design Education Workshop — Saturday mornings. PGCE (Art & Design Education)

provided in twelve specialist national centres (Appendix 1). Historically, the Centres were developed in conjunction with major colleges or departments of art and design, the majority of which have now become constituent parts of Polytechnics. The Centres' relationships to and links with main subject art and design departments are of importance although there are differences between Centres as to the ways and the extent to which they have been maintained and developed. At Leicester, for example, there are increasingly strong links at a number of levels, including shared teaching, between the Centre and all the Schools in the Art and Design Faculty, including the School of Performing Arts.

Because of the fall in the national need for new entrants to the profession and the rationalisation of providing institutions, over the last fifteen or so years the number of Centres has diminished and the number of student teachers in training in the Centres during that time has decreased from over 1600 to under 500 per year.

Apart from their institutional locations and academic cohesion, the initial teacher education courses offered by the Centres are unique in that applications for entry to the courses are processed through an independent Clearing House which crosses the binary line. The Centres maintain close

professional links in a variety of ways, such as through the Clearing House Management Committee, on which each Centre is represented, their own professional association and inter-Centre exchanges. The Centres have specific representation on a Teacher Education Board established by the National Society for Education in Art and Design.

The courses offered by the Centres were all originally titled 'Art Teachers Diploma' or 'Art Teachers Certificate' courses and were open to holders of the National Diploma in Design. The NDD with the ATD/ATC qualification gave holders graduate equivalent status as far as Burnham scale salaries were concerned. With the demise of the NDD and the subsequent development of, first, the Diploma in Art and Design (DipAD) and, later, Honours degree courses, the teacher education courses became essentially postgraduate. Seven of the courses are validated by the Council for National Academic Awards as Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses with specialist subject designations and the remaining five by universities. The titles ATD and/or ATC continue to be used by some as familiar designations for graduate art and design teachers.

The Centres do not provide initial training for intending primary school teachers. The majority of 'specialist' art and design teachers in primary schools will have taken art and design as a

'Main' subject in a B.Ed. (Primary) degree. However, a small number of art and design graduates each year undertake general PGCE (Primary) courses offered by institutions in both the university and maintained sectors. In Leicester the two systems are connected as the Centre provides the art and design education component of the University of Leicester School of Education PGCE (Primary) course under a reciprocal teaching arrangement.

Relationships with advanced inservice courses

As the PGCE/ATD courses have tended to be large, single subject courses with commensurate specialist staff teams, they have provided the basis for extensive developments in higher degree and other inservice work as well as research in art and design education. This has had an extremely beneficial effect on the initial teacher education courses and raised professional orientations and expectations, particularly when close links have been made between the different level courses.

Four of the centres offer CNA A master's degrees (Birmingham and Leicester full- and part-time courses; Brighton and Manchester part-time) and Cardiff and the University of London Institute of Education offer university validated master's degrees. Birmingham and Leicester are the main centres providing for CNA A research

degrees of M.Phil and Ph.D and the London Institute and Cardiff for university research degrees. The Centres have been responsible for over 700 completed research projects in art and design education, which are included in the definitive *Index of British Studies in Art and Design Education* (Allison, B., 1985. Gower Press).

International links

Some of the Centres have strong international connections. Leicester, for example, has hosted distinguished Visiting Academics from overseas countries almost continuously for a number of years and was, until recently, the headquarters of the International Society for Education through Art (INSEA). Very many overseas art and design educators coming to this country

visit Leicester and frequently contribute to both the initial and inservice teacher education courses as well as to the research work.

Entrants to teaching

The initial teacher education courses typically admit students from across the art and design degree specialisations — Fine Art, Graphic Design, Fashion and Textiles, Industrial Design. Some, such as Leicester, also admit graduates in Art History and Architecture although applicants from these fields are not numerous. About half of the applicants each year nationally are Fine Art graduates with Graphic Design and Fashion/Textile graduates being the next largest groups. Very few graduates from Industrial Design fields apply to enter teaching partly because of the relative

smallness of their numbers and partly because of the ease with which they find potentially more lucrative employment in industry. The majority of student teachers come directly from first degree courses but an increasing number are mature entrants who have had some kind of industrial experience. Some have already undertaken higher degree study in their specialist fields.

In addition to the requirements laid down by the Department of Education and Science (DES) for entry to any course of teacher education, such as those concerning academic qualifications and health, applicants to specialist art and design teacher education courses also require a certificate verifying normal colour vision.

Course Development and Approval

The courses differ to some extent in their emphases, provision and organisation but all fall within the specifications and requirements laid down by the DES, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) or universities and, now, by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE).

CNAA approval of courses is based, in the main, on the acceptability of the justifications put forward for course content, organisation and management. The CNAA Art and Design Panel of the Board of Education, which has now been discontinued, was responsible for the subject specialist consideration in the validation of PGCE art and design education courses as well as the art and design components in B.Ed. courses. The Panel, which was constituted of members with expertise representing the whole range of art and design disciplines including Design Technology, agreed on a specific set of requirements or expectations of courses which came within its consideration (Appendix 2).

The Panel resolved that the ITT courses within its purview should address the spectrum of concerns within the whole art and design field as representing the range of understandings prerequisite to being an effective teacher of art and design at either primary or secondary school levels. Whilst entrants to the courses



Left: Interviewing applicants. (PGCE (Art & Design Education))



Above: School-based studies (PGCE Art & Design Education)

invariably have specialist interests and expertise which, in the case of PGCE students, was to first degree level and often beyond, the courses would be expected to be designed so that the student teachers would develop a broad understanding of the whole field of art and design. In essence, the Panel asserted that an otherwise 'art' focussed course should address concerns within the 'design' end of the spectrum and vice versa. Furthermore, in order to describe more adequately these concerns, courses would need to be titled 'Art and Design Education', rather than the previously common titling such as 'Art' or, less frequently, 'Design'. The Panel identified a number of characteristics to be expected of CNA validated PGCE courses which specified a range of criteria relating to such matters as the development of classroom skills, curriculum development, evaluation and assessment techniques and enhancing the understanding of the multicultural nature of art and design. The Panel also addressed the particular and different problems of art and design

education in the training of primary school teachers and similarly identified a range of characteristics to be expected of B.Ed. courses (Appendix 3). It is interesting to note that the DES continues to group the courses under the single term 'Art' and places 'CDT' in a wholly different category.

National context of courses

The Centres' courses are national courses in that they draw students from degree courses in all parts of the country and their graduates subsequently teach in all parts of the country. The courses, therefore, recognise that the student teachers may teach in any local education authority (LEA) and tend not to focus the courses on the practices in a particular one, although the practices in the immediate LEA are obviously important. The content of the courses necessarily relates directly to the range of concerns characteristic of the curricula and practices in schools across the country. Fortunately, whilst the descriptive terminology used in schools and local authorities varies, there is, nevertheless, a great deal of homogeneity in the content of the

school programmes. For example, an 'Art Department' in one school in one part of the country may offer a very similar, if not identical, range of approaches and content to departments in other schools variously titled as 'Design Department', 'Art and Design Department', 'Visual Studies Department' or 'Creative Design Faculty'. In practice each department, and sometimes, each teacher gives particular but not exclusive emphasis to one aspect of art and design or another.

As an extension of the above, it may be relevant to note that the need for more appropriately descriptive terminology, as well as the identification of the breadth of concerns relevant to general education, was recognised in the agreed designation of the new GCSE examination as 'Art and Design'. The GCSE 'Art and Design', as an examination title, will replace the plethora of specialist art and design subject titles currently offered in the GCE and CSE examinations, although some sub-titling will still be used.



Above: School-based studies (PGCE (Art & Design Education))

The specialist experience of student teachers

As the student teachers entering the PGCE (Art and Design Education) courses have invariably focussed their degree level studies in a particular specialist field, it is elemental to the courses to build upon and extend the often deep and profound experience and understanding derived from those specialist studies to a broader understanding of the whole field of art and design. At Leicester, the student teachers are grouped both for course work and for placements in schools so that different degree specialisations can be brought together collectively and interactively in extending their specialist experience, developing curricula, planning lessons and teaching. In this way, the rich diversity of degree specialisation is capitalised upon within what is essentially a collaborative and interactive learning endeavour.

Workshop and studio activities are provided to extend the student teachers' ranges of practical skills and expertise not only because of their relevance to the

student teachers' work in schools but also to enhance the student teachers' understanding of the whole field of art and design. All student teachers at Leicester, for example, regardless of degree specialisation, pursue systematically workshop courses in computing, ceramics, photography and CDT and, additionally, are able to opt for specific short courses in a variety of other studio or workshop activities. Complementary to this work, emphasis is given within the course to developing the student teachers' understandings of art and design theory, criticism and history as contributors to the student teachers' appreciation of the meaning of art and design in contemporary cultures, including, of considerable importance, non-European cultures.

Relationships with schools

Typically, much of the course work in the providing institutions focusses on the various strategies for planning work in schools. This is placed in the broader practical and theoretical contexts of educational systems and curriculum development, although the Centres vary in how this is done. In Leicester, for

example, differing conceptions of curricula, such as 'art education', 'design education', 'visual education', 'craft education', 'CDT' and 'aesthetic education', and related practices are explored in considerable depth, partly because of their educational importance but also as a means by which the student teachers can arrive at a more holistic conception of 'art and design education'. These studies not only provide the student teachers with a range of appropriate models upon which to develop their own work in schools but also provide them with bases for understanding the range of different practices they will encounter during their student teaching experiences and in their subsequent careers in schools throughout the country. Practical experience, in schools as well as in the Centre, is given to related means and methods of assessment and evaluation, along with the various forms of examining, including the external examinations.



Above: School-based studies (PGCE (Art & Design Education))

Art and design education in a multicultural society

As alluded to earlier, great importance and significance is given to the student teachers' understanding of, on the one hand, the different conceptions of art and design held by different cultures throughout the world and, on the other, the priorities created by the multicultural nature of society in this country. The former is the most difficult to achieve because it is usually necessary to overcome the cultural constraints imposed by the essentially Euro-centric nature of the student teachers' undergraduate courses. The latter is more readily achievable in the Centres which are located in cities with high ethnic minority populations. In Leicester, for example, all student teachers spend a substantial amount of time specifically in schools which have large ethnic minority groups within their populations. For some children in these groups, western-European art and design images, forms, processes and technologies are the equivalent of a foreign language. Additionally,

opportunities are provided for the student teachers to experience and gain some understanding of the variety of social art and design forms, such as those in places of worship, community centres and shopping and domestic areas, which are characteristic of the multicultural community in Leicester. The student teachers' conceptions of the cultural nature of art and design was considerably expanded by work in the Centre by an externally funded non-European 'Artist in Residence'. The DES supported School Teacher Fellowships working specifically in the field of 'art and design in a multicultural society' are designed, amongst other things, to facilitate direct contributions by serving teachers to the PGCE course.

Developing teaching skills

The teaching methodologies particular to art and design education, along with class and resource organisation and management, constitute a major element in the specialist teacher education courses. This necessarily includes the development of the student teachers' skills in the organisation and management of various studio and

workshop practices and activities as well as the development of a wide range of teaching strategies and other implementary skills. The development of these skills is facilitated through a variety of teaching and learning situations including, for example, video-recorded micro-teaching by both student teachers and staff to allow subsequent analysis of method and practice. Additionally, in Leicester, the development of skills in organisation, management and teaching underpins the Saturday morning 'Art and Design Education Workshop' in which groups of student teachers each week are responsible for up to a hundred children of various ages and abilities in the Centre's specially equipped studios and workshops. The experienced teachers undertaking the MA (Art and Design Education) course attend the Workshop sessions to give practical and other kinds of support to the PGCE student teachers as well as, of course, to develop their own professional understandings and expertise.



Above: Computer Workshop. PGCE (Art & Design Education)

Experiences in schools

All PGCE student teachers are required (by the CATE) to spend almost half the course time in schools (minimum 75 days) although the pattern of school placement differs from Centre to Centre. In Leicester, for instance, the student teachers are in schools for variable amounts of time during each week for all except the last few weeks of the course. They are placed in schools in groups of three or four to engage in a variety of collaborative study, planning and teaching activities. During the School-based Studies element of the course, the student teachers work in at least three schools across the whole of the secondary school age range, with different size groups of pupils and in a number of different areas of the art and design curriculum, including but not exclusively in their own specialisation. Individual and group tutorial work in the schools and in the Polytechnic which focusses on the student teachers' experiences in schools is essential to the student teachers' professional development.

Working with experienced teachers

School experience is interactively related to other course work and there is an increasing involvement of school teachers in both these aspects of the teacher education courses. Experienced teachers, including headteachers, participate in the selection of applicants to the courses, supervise some aspects of the student teachers' work in schools and in the providing institutions and contribute to the student teachers' final assessments, particularly with regard to teaching performance. Reciprocally, tutorial staff work alongside the student teachers in schools and contribute to school curriculum development as well as undertaking some teaching. In Leicester, teachers and local authority advisers serve on the course Board of Study as well as on the Professional Committee (the CATE 'local' committee).

Responses to changing demands

Given their relatively short duration, the PGCE courses are consistently under pressure from a variety of sources to extend their ranges of concerns. It is essential that the student teachers are

familiar with the increasing variety of developments and initiatives affecting schools. As well as addressing specific matters such as the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (TVEI) and Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) and their relationships to course content and practice, it is recognised as being important, for example, for the teacher education courses to continue to strengthen their links with industry in order to provide the student teachers with the appropriate experiences to deal with the rapidly changing responsibilities of schools. Similarly, the teacher education courses necessarily have to address matters which are not specific to art and design education such as special educational needs, various social issues and problems, including drug abuse, and anti-racism.

To the extent to which it is possible, the student teachers are prepared to encounter the considerable and, often, conflicting, externally generated demands made on art and design teachers in schools, particularly when the demands exert a leverage on resource provision as well as curriculum content.

The initiatives put forward with substantial financial and other resource provision by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), for example, press an imperative on the art and design curriculum, particularly when it is complemented by declining financial support from other sources. Although they may be seen as separately contributing to a holistic conception of art and design education, somewhat different curriculum directions are urged by, respectively, the Design Council and the Arts Council of Great Britain, whilst the Craft Council is developing a further curriculum dimension which will be influential on schools. Competitions and awards schemes, which offer the possibility of securing much needed resources and sources of funding, frequently make conflicting demands on schools' programmes and, in some cases, seemingly become the *raison d'être* for a substantial part of pupil or student activity.

Preparing to enter the profession

The output of student teachers from the Centres approximates fairly closely to the recruitment needs of schools, although indications are that there are serious shortfalls in particular areas. Most of the Centres have high employment rates although the competition for posts is invariably strong. The Centres prepare the student teachers to present themselves for entry

into the profession in a variety of ways. At Leicester, which has a very high employment record, for example, the student teachers are given opportunities to develop their styles and forms of presentation in a number of ways as well as clarify their own professional purposes. As part of this process, all student teachers present themselves in mock interviews in schools conducted by Headteachers and senior staff.

Graduates from the Centres take up posts in schools and colleges with a wide variety of responsibilities. Whilst some are appointed to teach across the whole of the art and design curriculum, others are appointed to teach particular specialisations. It is interesting that several graduates from Leicester, for example, have been appointed to specifically identified CDT posts even though, as noted earlier, the DES continues to maintain 'Art' as being a separate subject category to 'CDT'.

It is important to note that a number of graduates from the Centres do not go directly into teaching in schools but take up posts in a variety of fields, such as in community and youth centres, hospitals and different branches of the media industry, for which their training is an appropriate and relevant preparation.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the strength and quality of the teaching profession relies, to large degree, on the ways the new entrants to the profession are trained to

take on the increasing and varied responsibilities for the education of the young. Teacher education courses, on both sides of the binary line, perhaps more than any other sector of the education system, are being required to be accountable and to respond to increasing pressure from a variety of sources. Faced with a heavy demand continually to re-examine, adjust and justify their purposes and practices at a time of diminishing resources, teacher education courses are wholly responding to the challenge created by a rapidly changing social and economic climate. The specialist Centres for Art and Design Teacher Education fully recognise their responsibilities to enable both potential and serving teachers to equip our future fellow citizens, who presently constitute the populations of schools, to be able to understand and contribute to the rapidly changing world of visual images and forms which are elemental to almost every aspect of human endeavour. The rich variety of ways the Centres meet these responsibilities cannot be adequately portrayed in a relatively short article but, nevertheless, it is hoped that it has gone some way to describing and illuminating some of the particular and, perhaps, unique contributions the Centres make as an interactive part of the broad educational provision in this country.



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