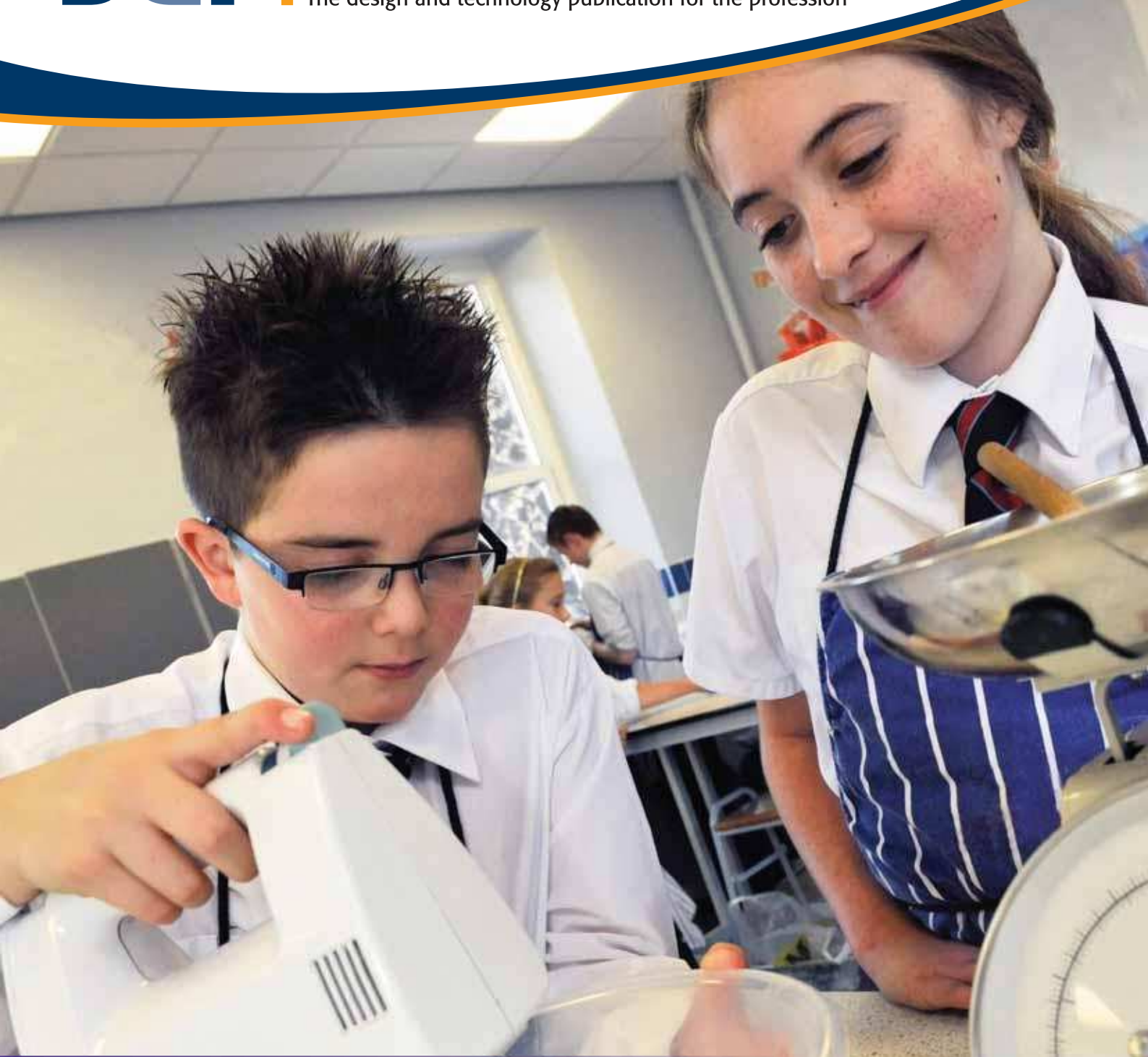


D&T practice

The design and technology publication for the profession



Sensory matters

April 2010 issue 3



Editor Neil Whitton
Editorial Team Roy Ballam
Paul Clewes
Louise T Davies
Gary Drabble
Richard Green
Gill Hope
Julie Messenger

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The D&T Association, 16 Wellesbourne House,
Walton Road, Wellesbourne, Warwickshire CV35 9JB
Tel: 01789 470007 Fax: 01789 841955

To advertise in D&T Practice contact:
Noreen Pleavin, 64 Endcliffe Hall Avenue,
Fullwood, Sheffield, S10 3EL
Phone and Fax: 0114 266 5377
Email: noreenpleavin@onetel.com

Editorial Note

D&T Practice is intended to update members on what is happening in design and technology and related areas of the curriculum. We welcome contributions highlighting the practical aspects of design and technology teaching, including case studies of good practice and resources used. Articles are typically approximately 1,000 to 1,500 words in length and accompanied by pictures illustrating the process described. Outline summaries, accompanied by sample pictures, should be sent in the first instance to the Editor, Neil Whitton e: Neil@data.org.uk.

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Copy deadlines 2010

Members and subscribers wishing to contribute to D&T Practice should provide completed articles and accompanying materials by the following dates. Due to the range of topics covered and quantity of materials received we cannot guarantee publication and articles may be delayed for an appropriate issue.

Issue	Copy deadline	Issue	Copy deadline
5.2010	25th June	1.2011	24th October
6.2010	13th August	2.2011	3rd December

in this issue

Getting real about education/business links 2

Developing enterprise and engineering skills and the search for a meaningful connection between the education system and the business world

Food in Focus 7

After a complete re-appraisal and re-development of the Food in Focus software, teachers and students from two Birmingham secondary schools were used for the trials and testing of the new Food in Focus2 software

From the UK to the USA and beyond 12

Owen McMeel and his amazing, creative journey through design and technology project work, which started with him winning a CREST Award

Cross-curricular Technology Days 15

Ideas, themes and activities at the end of year Technology Day at Hamilton Lodge School for Deaf Children

April's Pullout Poster – Sensory Matters 18

A look at how we evaluate food and the five basic tastes

Night lights 28

Developing new projects for systems and control

Reviews 33

Essentials GCSE Electronic Products Revision Guide
Fairtrade – Who benefits?
Volvo: Life Cycle Assessment

Celebrating British Food Fortnight 37

Students at Beaumont Hill School Technology and Vocational College celebrate British Food Fortnight with a range of farm visits and cooking challenges

Spotlight On... ISub (Education) 41

ISub (Education), the UK's leading supplier of dye sublimation technology to schools and colleges

Getting real about education/business links

'The skills they learn are what they will need for work. The enterprise projects are not something done in isolation, they count towards a skills passport which students show to employers when they leave school.' That is how Mike Garnock-Jones, School Enterprise Champion for Sheffield City Council (BIG: Make It your Business) describes the importance to young people of an enterprise programme supported by Cadbury. He adds, 'The Cadbury project is very successful and it's good for employers as well because the students are developing the skills that business will want in a rapidly changing world.'

Mike Garnock-Jones is based at Myers Grove School in the North West of Sheffield, although the programme involves a collaboration of schools at Bradfield, Wisewood and Stockbridge and is likely to be extended to other schools across the city. The aim is to develop enterprise and engineering skills, with each of the four schools able to continue using their own internal assessment frameworks, which has presented some

particular challenges. Mike Garnock-Jones comments: 'Like most corporates, Cadbury have their own criteria for employment in the business. Our own school focuses on twelve specific enterprise skills, but we had to find a way of showing how the skills being developed in each of the participating schools can be mapped onto the Cadbury's employability framework, which includes characteristics such as 'aggressive', 'adaptable' and 'forward thinking'.'

The search for a meaningful connection between the education system and the business world is nothing new. The established role of Education Business Partnerships, recent government funding for Enterprise Education, the statutory requirement for Work-related Learning in schools, the requirement for schools to demonstrate students' 'Economic Well-Being' and current initiatives by the UK Commission for Employment & Skills all make a contribution. What is significant about the work in Sheffield is the way it directly connects the development of



students' individual employability skills with the specific economic needs of a major employer.

The 'World of Work' programme is supported by the Cadbury Foundation, indicating the importance this company places on matching the output of schools with employers' actual requirements. Chairman Neil Makin says; 'With its long community heritage of helping raise standards in its local schools, the World of Work programme adds an exciting new dimension in bringing learning into a vocational setting. Cadbury's continuing contribution in the two great manufacturing cities of Sheffield and



Birmingham is helping shape not only a new and relevant curriculum, but a better awareness and preparation for the world of work and employability in today's tougher economic and business climate.'

The Sheffield programme is supported by a system powered by the 'Bright Sparks' web-based assessment tool. This allows young people to accumulate a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates their employability skills, to reflect on their individual profile and then use this to make decisions about their future direction. In this case, the system has been adapted to accommodate the different assessment frameworks in the participating schools, each of which is then mapped onto Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) – a common reference point for all schools and part of the new secondary curriculum. This, in turn, is mapped against Cadbury's Management Imperatives.

Driven by the local 14-19 education agenda, the system will be introduced to other schools and colleges before being rolled out across the district. Gary Drabble, Engineering and Manufacturing

co-ordinator, comments: 'We have a responsibility to ensure that young people come out of schools and colleges aware of their individual employability skills. The profile of each student will be quite distinctive and they need to discover this and reflect on this before they apply for employment. It's not something to be considered just before leaving school or when exams are out of the way. It should be an essential part of the learning journey.'

Gary Drabble recalls a situation where a small group of apprenticeship students failed to attend interviews at one local employer. When he asked why they had turned up at the company's building, but not gone inside, they said they were scared. 'This is the kind of problem we're trying to address. If young people can select the best evidence that promotes their strongest skills to put into their CVs, they are likely to be able to speak with real confidence about themselves. We have to give them the tools to discover what differentiates them from others and sells them into a highly competitive job market.'



Cadbury

Initially working with Cadbury, the programme is likely to extend into other business sectors. Reflecting the city's heritage in the steel industry, Gary's team is currently in discussion with NAMTEC, an umbrella organisation for the largest metal technology groups in the region. The Leitch Review of Skills published in 2006 revealed the national skills gap and its serious economic implications. Gary Drabble comments: 'The issue for metals companies like Corus and Siemens is the shortage of high level skills that will help them maintain their competitive edge in a fierce and volatile international market. But it is simply no longer good enough to show a handful of certificates. Employers want to meet young people who can demonstrate tangible evidence of the skills which they require.'

The work in Sheffield is being mirrored in Birmingham, where Cadbury has a major presence and has invested in a similar education programme. In Sheffield, the potential of Bright Sparks to support students with Special Education Needs (SEN) and those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is also being explored. The current development includes adaptation of the teacher area in Bright Sparks to support their own continuing professional development, as

Mike Garnock-Jones explains: 'The principle of building a portfolio of evidence of employability skills does not stop when a young person gets a job. Teachers are acutely aware of the need to manage their own CPD, whether they are a newly-qualified teacher or an advanced skills teacher. Since teachers need to play an active part in managing student portfolios and providing feedback, it is entirely logical to use the same system to support their own skills development.'

Students at Myers Grove are being encouraged to use their portfolio of skills to fulfill the requirements of an enterprise and employability qualification. Gary Drabble acknowledges that this may engage some headteachers in an education system that continues to be largely measured in terms of GCSE exam results, but believes that this should not be the driving force. 'Most of what happens in schools focuses on qualifications. We have to wake up to the fact that, although these are important stepping stones, they are not good at differentiating one student from another. We have to help teachers and students constantly consider what will be written on a CV and how this will change as they progress through school – and the rest of their lives.'

Additional information about Bright Sparks

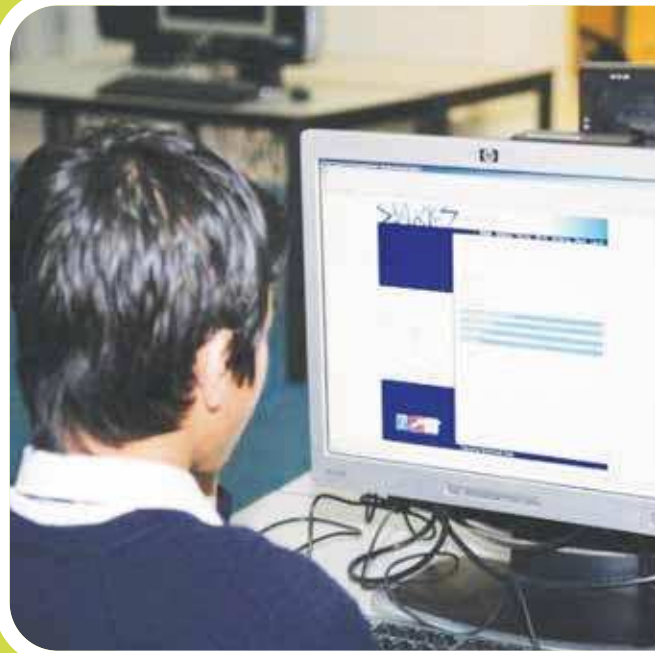


Life Beyond School probably has more experience than any other UK organisation in developing systems to assess employability skills. The company's Bright Sparks software tool was originally developed with DCSF funding and has provided the core for a range of client projects,

ranging from the assessment of the skills-based curriculum in Wales to the DCSF's 'PasSport' system, which connects sporting achievements with employability skills. Projects are driven by a proven collaborative user group process that ensures project objectives are addressed and solutions are 'owned' by key stakeholders:

Bright Sparks helps young people to capture evidence of their achievements and translate this into an individual skills profile. Built-in tools encourage personal reflection and decision-making about future direction, complementing other career support processes, web resources and CV builders.

In Sheffield, the system has been adapted to enable schools to continue using their own internal enterprise skills frameworks, each of which is mapped against Personal Learning & Thinking Skills (PLTS). At any time, students can see an at-a-glance 'radar' display of their individual skills profile, which can be set to show enterprise and/or PLTS. Students can also drill into their individual postings to reflect in more detail and adjust entries.



Features of Bright Sparks include:

- engaging social network-style display;
- quick and easy posting of achievements;
- including optional multi-media evidence;
- assisted 'translation' into employability skills;
- mobile posting using iPhone technology;
- tailored filtering of individual postings;
- easy update or enhancement of all posts;
- at-a-glance graphical skills profile;
- date-driven progression charts;
- 'invite-a-friend' peer comparison;
- feedback and reports from tutors;
- parent feedback and reports;
- output to CV or qualification criteria;
- using virtually any assessment framework;
- including multiple assessment frameworks;
- mapping onto 'reference' frameworks;
- overlaid with employers' skills requirements;
- class, school, district & regional reporting;
- flexible database analysis and reporting.

For information contact Adrian Jones at adrian.jones@lifebeyondschool.com or 07771 773 377