

The GCSE Textiles Rescue Programme:

Developing teaching and learning

Julie Boyd, Textiles Consultant



'The inspiration to do it better' is how Liz Hands from Walton Girls School, Grantham, describes the GCSE Textiles Rescue Programme run by the Design and Technology Association and sponsored by the All Saints Educational Trust. This positive feedback is mirrored by other delegates attending the one-day workshop, twilight regional sessions and online seminars that make up the programme.

Bloom's Taxonomy

As well as supporting the development of practical skills, the programme supports teachers to develop teaching and learning strategies that encourage pace and creativity in the classroom as well as ticking off those all important Ofsted boxes. A key teaching and learning strategy used in the programme has been Bloom's Taxonomy and resources have been developed to help teachers use Bloom's to structure learning objectives, questions and classroom activities. This helps teachers plan differentiation into learning as well as showing students how to access higher level thinking. Product analysis and designing resources have helped demonstrate how tasks can be divided into six levels using Bloom's language to make each task being more challenging than the last. Emma Norris, from Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College, Bedworth, is one of the teachers who has used Blooms for product analysis and designing since

attending the course and she described it as 'Fab! The students responded really well and it was a really enjoyable lesson.'

Speed Designing

Another strategy demonstrated as part of the programme is Speed Designing, a phrase used by Julie Boyd, one of the consultants on the programme, to explain a technique used to increase the pace and creativity of learning as well as being one that shows students how to use time in a SMART way. This strategy is particularly useful when doing design activities and Controlled Assessment where good use of time is particularly important. Speed Designing focuses on an activity being broken down into timed chunks, some as short as thirty seconds and others fifteen minutes or more. Timings are controlled by the teacher who models the activity on the board to prove the task can be completed in the time allowed and to show an example of how the activity might be

done. The focus is very much on the teacher being the pace setter and point of inspiration rather than them being the person giving all the answers. This technique encourages independent thinking and requires a shift in the way both the teacher and student works. It takes time to master but once the teacher and students are used to the concept the impact on learning can be significant.

When combined together, the use of Bloom's Taxonomy and Speed Designing can help produce more focused lessons that are engaging and fast paced and which work particularly well for boys and C/D borderline students. Many teachers were fired up by both of these strategies including Margaret Finnikin, from Joseph Leckie CTC, Walsall, who used them with a Year 7 group and said it was the best design lesson she had ever had at Key Stage 3.





As well as the use of Blooms Taxonomy and Speed Designing a number of other teaching and learning strategies have been demonstrated on the programme as well as tips on how best to structure schemes of work. A number of teachers including Margaret Finnikin have used this guidance and ideas to help them restructure schemes of work including those at Key Stage 3 even though the main focus of the programme is Key Stage 4.

Improving practical skills

Much of the feedback on the programme has praised the way theory and practical skills are linked together showing both strategies for improving practical skills and the quality of products along with tips and techniques on how to deliver related theory in an interesting way. Teachers commented on how the programme was an 'excellent course with immediate applications' and that each session had a 'huge amount of resources that we could use straight away and don't have time to make' as well as feeling it had helped them 'feel more confident about going back to school and making changes straight away or as soon as possible'. Jennifer Harper, from Sinfin Community School, Derby, felt the course had inspired her to produce more visual materials for her teaching as well as helping her update resources she already had. Liz Hands has also used a variety of the strategies from the programme including Bloom's Taxonomy, the use of word clouds using www.tagexdo.com, as well as a strategy involving the use of sticky notes that had resulted in a lesson with 'much hilarity and fun learning'.

Many teachers have found that the strategies introduced in the programme are relevant to other D&T areas including Claire Hill, from De Ferrers Academy, Burton, who has used Bloom's Taxonomy to structure a Food Technology lesson where her head teacher observed her formally. Not only did Claire achieve a 'good with outstanding features' for her observation but the head teacher was so impressed she shared Claire's ideas with other faculties. This shows the value for money the programme gives as not only does it include subject specific information but also tips and ideas that can be shared at faculty and whole school level.

Networking opportunities

The added bonus of the programme are the networking opportunities that are developing. Not only are the teachers learning new ideas and skills but there is an invaluable opportunity to share ideas and frustrations with others as part of a textiles community. Comments such as 'just glad to see I'm not the only one having these issues' and 'I feel a bit more like I know what I am doing now!' reflect the reduction in the feelings of isolation that some teachers previously had. Links between individuals are also developing with teachers swapping contact details and the three consultants on the programme also being available to support individuals informally between events.

Overall the feedback on the impact of the programme on teaching and learning has been extremely positive. Margaret Finnikin perhaps sums up much of the feedback when she says that 'attending the GCSE

Rescue Programme has given me the opportunity to reflect on my teaching' saying that it has given her 'the tools to introduce textiles in a new light'. Along a similar vein, Harpreet Kooner, from Kettering Science Academy, said she had benefited greatly from the course and feels that it has given her,

“ lots of ideas and a better understanding of what I have to do to make sure I have prepared for my GCSE courses. ”

With a number of events planned over the next year the programme is set to make a real difference to teaching and learning in textiles in schools across the country.

Download the supporting PowerPoint presentation from the members resource vault at: www.data.org.uk

More information on Bloom's Taxonomy can be found at <http://www.onlineuniversities.net/anderson-krathwohl>

For more information on using Bloom's Taxonomy in D&T, Speed Designing and innovative teaching and learning strategies contact julie@julieboyd.co.uk