

*Modus*

Issue 6.2004

## Special Education Needs in Design and Technology

D&T's role in the learning  
of pupils with SEN

## Chinese Stir-Frenzy

Multicultural food technology  
in a Liverpool High School

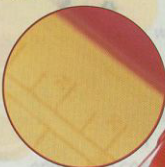
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Sample CD



Julie Boyd Lutterworth Grammar School and Community College  
Dr Mark Bradshaw De Montfort University

# The iNTX project

In Modus 2.2004, Julie Boyd outlined a new project that was aimed at encouraging boys to take up textiles at GCSE and beyond. Project FTX looked to challenge the stereotyped opinion that many boys held of textiles, to highlight the growth of the industry in recent times and to educate boys about the dynamic and exciting opportunities textiles can offer. The project (now renamed iNTX) is now into its second successful year. We hear from Julie and Dr Mark Bradshaw from De Montfort University who worked in collaboration with her on the project, as well as from one of the Year 8 students at Lutterworth Grammar School who took part.

## Julie Boyd

The textiles industry is a major employer in this country and across the world. Unfortunately, as the nature of the industry changes, press coverage tends to focus on areas of bad news, such as the closure of manufacturing units and the growth of manufacturing abroad. Like many industries, textiles is changing and moving forward, reflecting the progress of modern technology. In many cases, the industry is leading the way with textile materials that are stronger than metal and developments in "intelligent" fabrics with the ability to combat fire, chemicals and the elements.

Developments in textile technology will play an important part in all our futures and it is therefore important that the subject is able to attract a range of high calibre, technically minded students that can carry this research forward. At present, many boys are discouraged from considering textiles as an area for further study as a result of its stereotypical image. In response to this, the school set up a three-day project called iNTX (boys iNTO Textiles) specifically aimed at giving Year 8 boys hands-on experience in the areas of industrial and technical textiles. The project is co-ordinated

by the school in conjunction with De Montfort University, where Dr Mark Bradshaw lectures in the department of fashion and textiles.

## Dr Mark Bradshaw

Over recent years the number of students wanting to study BSc Textiles at De Montfort has fallen dramatically, together with a steady gender shift which resulted in women making up the large majority of the student body on our courses. As we looked into redressing this problem, a national picture emerged. BA Fashion courses were thriving, with an excess of 90 courses available, a stark contrast to the dwindling numbers on the BSc courses. We began visiting schools and colleges throughout the country, presenting our picture of textiles and the BSc courses to A' Level textiles students or those taking Art Foundation courses. To our amazement, everywhere we went we recruited students and they all said the same thing: "No one told us textiles was like this." We soon realised that the falling numbers of students for BSc courses was largely because their knowledge of textiles did not extend beyond fashion and interiors - they knew nothing of fabric technology, product performance or modern developments.

As an efficient method for disseminating the information about BSc textiles courses to potential students, we established a one-day course for teachers and course leaders, the first of which ran in 2000. The course consisted of workshops supported by lectures and was based at De Montfort University. Topics included: globalisation, textile materials, fabric design and production, colouration and finishing, garment design and production. One of the delegates on the first course was Julie Boyd. We discussed the problems she had encountered with gender imbalance in textile study and three years later in 2003 Project FTX (later renamed iNTX) was born.



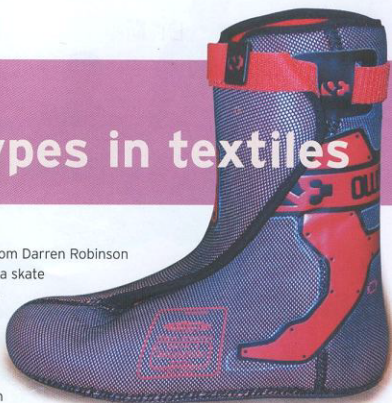


## - combating stereotypes in textiles

### The INTX project

The INTX project aims to educate and enthuse boys about the nature of the modern textile industry so that stereotypes can be challenged at classroom level. The boys undertake a range of activities, lectures and visits linked to technical and industrial textiles, with the final day culminating in students making presentations to invited guests and parents. Highlights of the project over the past two years have included a brilliant lecture from Professor Gary Savage from BAR racing (Jenson Button's team) on the use of carbon fibre on Formula One racing cars; a visit to an army research base in Bicester; and

a demonstration from Darren Robinson of A4 Distribution, a skate footwear company, showing the boys specialist skate footwear and explaining why the sport required such modern technology. As an added bonus, the boys were competing against each other for chance to win daily "star" prizes. This year's star prize winner of a pair of skate shoes from A4 gives his view of the project below.



"I feel that if the whole world experienced a course like this one, I know that the image of textiles would be totally different."



## A student's view



"As soon as we entered De Montfort University we knew that this course had more in it than what appeared at first sight."

Textiles is one of those subjects that has always had a very definite stereotype. The first thing that you instantly associate with it is sewing, fashion and clothes and you think that it will appeal to females rather than males. I must admit that when I found out that the D&T course I was about to do was for textiles rather than resistant materials, I was slightly disappointed until I had been told what it was truly about.

The INTX project offered a great opportunity to the selected students to explore and look into the industry that is textiles. As soon as we entered De Montfort University we knew that this course had more in it than what appeared at first sight.

We had been given the target to produce a presentation, in our groups, at the end of the three-day course about a selected fibre, in my case, Kevlar. We were told to research into the material and ask as many questions as we could think to find out as much information as possible.

Our first day at the University was a real introduction to the course and what it was about. We were given a lecture about how to do an interesting and effective presentation (which came in very useful!), which was then followed by a practical session in one of the laboratories looking into the strength of different materials. Measured rectangles of the selected material were clamped into a machine and then were ripped apart until they snapped.

After this we sat down and investigated into the future of textiles. Here, we saw what ideas and inventions people were coming up with. One of the most breathtaking designs was a perfect camouflage suit that made the wearer invisible.

Probably the highlight of day one came last. A man from a skateboarding company named "A4" talked about the big effect textiles has on skateboarders. It is surprising how much research, effort and money is put into making one pair of trainers.

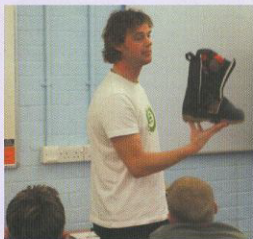
The next day we planned to drive down to Bicester army camp where we found that textiles is an essential part of the military. We were told about what the army uses textiles for and why it is so critical. As we looked around the camp, we could see that this is an extremely important industry. The machines used to check the clothes' quality in the various laboratories cost tens of thousands of pounds. Our guide told us that if the clothing is not up to the right standard, soldier's lives are immediately put at risk.

The third day of the course was the day where all of our work, research, and ideas came together as we prepared to do our presentation in the afternoon. However, before our frantic morning of finishing off our presentation, we were taken to a skateboarding display at one of the indoor parks in Leicester. Here we saw directly how durable skate wear has to be... and also how crazy you have to be to do it!

The time of the presentation arrived and everybody's nerves began to jingle as the parents entered the hall. Group by group, the talks took place. And in all honesty, I actually enjoyed doing it!

I feel that if the whole world experienced a course like this one, I know that the image of textiles would be totally different.





"It is surprising how much research, effort and money is put into making one pair of trainers."



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"Group by group, the talks took place. And in all honesty, I actually enjoyed doing it!"

### The Future

As you can see from the views expressed here, the boys' response to the project each year has been excellent. The project is now well established both on Lutterworth's and De Montfort's annual calendar and there has already been an increase in the number of boys opting in at GCSE. The future of the project looks very positive and it is hoped that it can now be extended to other schools in order for this message to be spread further.

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