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Realising a vision - a partnership approach to education capturing the enterprising spirit of the young people of North Tyneside

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Realising a vision - a partnership approach to education capturing the enterprising spirit of the young people of North Tyneside

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Abstract

This paper describes and explains how three separate initiatives, for linking education with business and industry, were integrated to give a model for action in widely different types of school. Each author worked on one initiative, and this model was then the outcome of combining their expertise and experience. The rationale and philosophy behind the following three initiatives was explored.

1. *Provision of training days for advisory staff on the potential use of the Banking Information Service multi-media resource "Financial Planning and Management of Design Technology Projects".*
2. *An interdisciplinary enquiry by the Advisory Team for Technology of North Tyneside Education Authority into the delivery of the National Curriculum within the context of a local initiative entitled "Schools Mean Business".*
3. *Commissions undertaken by student teachers in connection with the TVEI/Initial Teacher Training Programme of Newcastle Polytechnic.*

The outcome was the provision of a model for action, to be described fully in the paper, within five local authority schools; a first school, a middle school, two special schools and a comprehensive school. Each school established its own partnerships between one another, with higher education via student commissions, with local industry, with initiatives led by local councils, and in a number of other ways. Schools set up programmes of study using the process of technology, exploring the implementation of the National Curriculum beyond subject boundaries - programmes requiring trust, flexibility, and a vision of education as a whole.

The work done in the schools will also be illustrated in our poster presentations at the conference.

Where this is no vision the people perish", as the proverb goes, but realising a vision in an open ended way and communicating how it can be made concrete in action, is a crucial and difficult task.

In North Tyneside the vision is of collaboration between education and employers, a vision made explicit by Diane Greaves and the "Schools Mean Business" initiative (1). Through this initiative partnership between different phases of the education system and between education and employers have been encouraged to develop. The partnership approach extends today to communication about the projects, with the aim of encouraging information of new partnerships. The writing of this paper arises from the reflection upon one case study by three of the major participants.

The partnership approach has built on existing commitments and contacts. The case study which forms the example in this paper brought together three institutions, the Banking Information Service (BIS), the North Tyneside Education Authority/Schools Means Business Initiative, and the Newcastle Polytechnic Department of Education TVEI in ITT programme. Each contributed and formed part of the network that allowed student-led initiatives to flourish. Each of these initiatives has its own models or agenda for action and each contributed in a uniquely interactive way. It is the hope of the writers that both the process and the outcomes of their collaboration between education and employers, resulting in action being taken in other contexts and the dissemination of results.

"Schools Mean Business" is a partnership between North Tyneside Education Authority and local employers and takes as its rationale the conclusions of the Inter-disciplinary Enquiry (IDE) which began in 1989.

The IDE approach (2) sees five components to inter-disciplinary enquiries (fig 1), all of which were present in this case study in order to facilitate: "Opening the door to learning opportunities for children"

Thus, at the heart of this case study there are children, the pre-school children of Moor Edge First School and their need:

"For an early years unit which would provide nursery age children with a spacious, well-equipped and structured environment in which to work". (3)

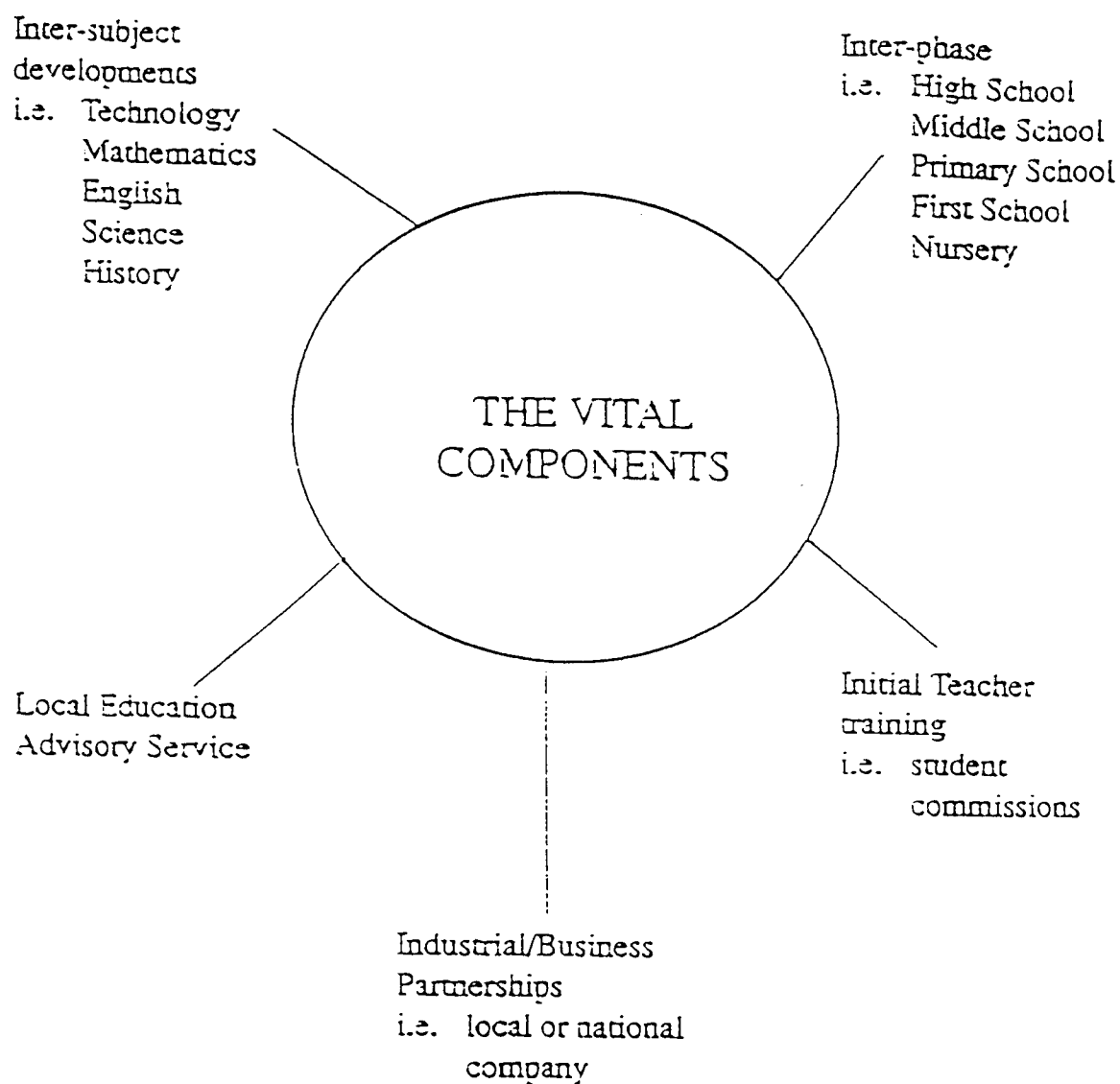
The LEA General Adviser, Diane Greaves, operating within the IDE framework, worked with the Head Teacher, Molly Irwin, to convert four existing classrooms into one interconnecting space and equip it. In addition, the brief stipulated that the space must be in tune with the needs of these very young children before they were required to be prepared for the National Curriculum.

A vital component of IDE is the encouragement of interphase partnerships in the school education system. One of the participating schools in the IDE programme was the George Stevenson Community High School. A group of year 10 students from there took on the Moor Edge First School brief as part of their design and technology work, and it became known as "Space for the Very Young". This involved them in forming a long term relationship with the very young children, working with them, observing the way they interacted with their environment, asking them about what they wanted and talking to the teachers. The High School pupils worked as a team and became highly self-motivated.

"Its great, we haven't done anything like this before, we worked as a group and got ideas from each other. We asked questions and got involved with everything the children did" (3).

The design process was at the centre of their work, which became increasingly cross-curricular, as they faced the design problems inherent in the brief. The

Inter-disciplinary Enquiries



ALL 5 COMPONENTS CREATE THE
PARTNERSHIP FOR
IDE

Fig 1.

final structural plans were drawn up by the Architects Department in North Tyneside, and work went ahead. Also involved were Community Industry, which provides experience of work for disadvantaged young people. Their Scheme Consultants acted as project advisers to the pupils, resulting in another partnership being set up.

Another vital component of IDE is the partnership with Initial Teacher Training. Bruce Gillham, Principal Lecturer in Education at Newcastle Polytechnic, sees it providing the opportunity for his students to become involved in interdisciplinary studies during their training, giving them the right kind of open-ended, relevant experience in a time when the school curriculum is changing so rapidly. Much of the valuable input of the TVEI in ITT work has been used to produce an assessment programme for students known as Enterprise Commissions (4). In the PGCE course students are expected to undertake a commission for a "client" school or company. They respond critically to the initial brief, negotiate the details, make a detailed proposal, make the necessary contacts, work collaboratively, schedule, prioritise and implement the programme, and engineer the agreed outcome.

The work is judged by the following criteria:

- * That it is educationally significant.
- * That it offers a benefit to the education service as a whole: it is considered essential that all parties to the agreed commission can make substantial gains from it.
- * That there will be a sufficient degree of professional development derived from undertaking it.
- * That personal and inter-personal skills are demonstrated at an appropriate level in pursuing the work.
- * That independence, penetration, originality, enterprise, enthusiasm, realism and pragmatism are shown in the development of the project.

In particular, students with a Home Economics background have found the inclusion of their subject under "Technology" a shock and the Department was looking especially for strategies for changing the orientation of the subject. It was one of the Home Economics students, Helen Quinn, who became involved with the "Space for the Very Young". She joined in a half day workshop organised by Diane Greaves, as IDE coordinator and Mary Priest representing BIS, as she was attracted to the idea of using an interdisciplinary enquiry approach as the framework for her Enterprise Commission. In effect she became part of the network team together with a teacher, Linda Bushell, staff development officer and Head of the Home Economics department from George Stevenson High School. Helen herself mapped out the network of

those involved (fig 2), and reflected on the opportunities that were opening up. She was particularly drawn to using the resource "Financial Planning and Management of Design Technology Projects" (6) produced by the Banking Information Service as a means of strengthening the links between industry and education.

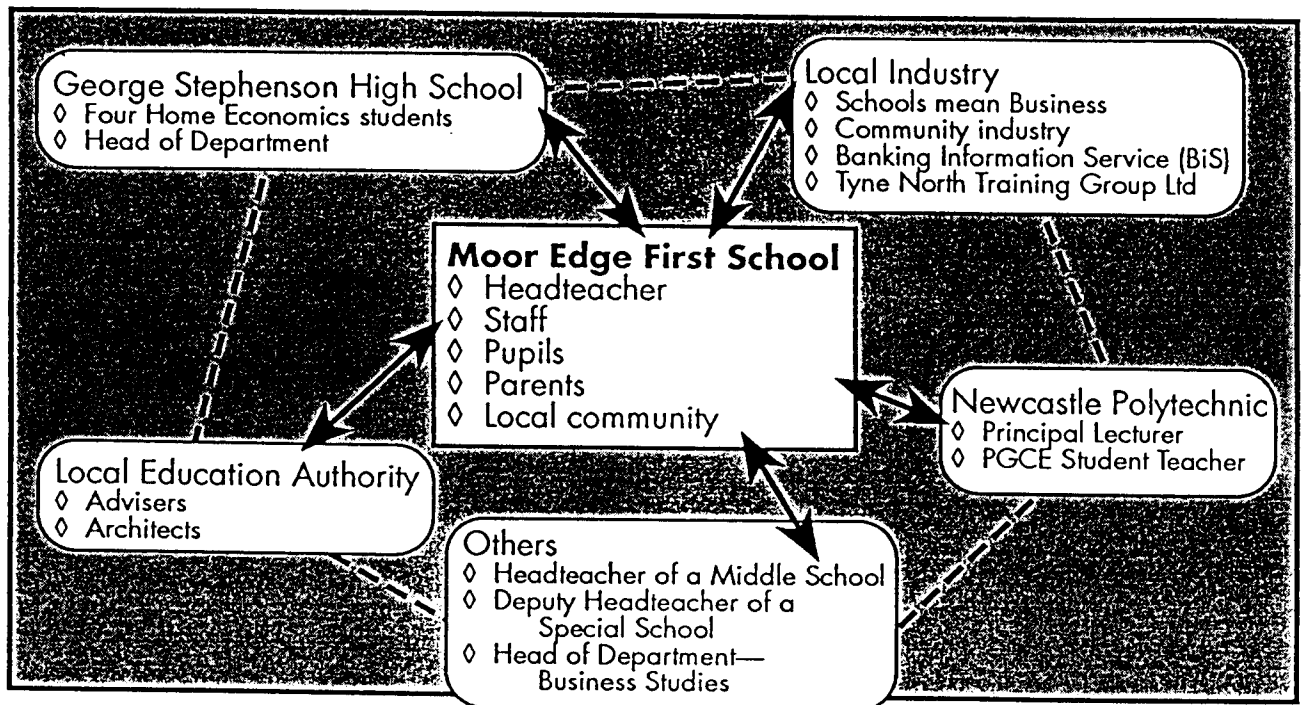


Fig 2.

The BIS perceived a need some five years ago for a resource that would not only promote economic awareness but one that could be used to support projects that were cross-curricular and which have as their focus the activity of designing. BIS sees itself as being proactive rather than reactive in the shift towards involving people at all levels in the development of quality in education. To this end BIS develops and supports strategies to enable the development of "a learning society", which is seen by many (5) as a major need for the year 2000. The multimedia pack "Financial Planning and Management of Design Technology Projects" contains a video composed of six modules which take each 'stage' of the design process within a variety of commercial contexts, a set of resource cards and a suite of costing software available on a number of computer formats.

The initial contact between Diane Greaves and Mary Priest as the representative of BIS was at a workshop organised by BIS for regional advisers at Durham. Here the pack was demonstrated and the philosophy of BIS (fig 4) made clear. From that point IDE and BIS remained in correspondence and from this contact three projects emerged, one of which was "Space for the Very Young". It was clear although the video was designed for the pupils, it also had a role to play in sharpening up teachers' ideas about the design process. Helen Quinn used the video with the year 10 pupils to assist their planning for the design of the classroom space:

BANKING INFORMATION SERVICE (BIS) POLICY STATEMENT

BIS is a specialist education unit, neither recruiting nor carrying out direct business transactions. Therefore its role is developmental in establishing partnerships between education and the banking industry to their mutual benefit.

The prime purpose of the banks' investment in BIS is that of a long - term, enlightened self - interest.

This self interest is based on the recognition of the interdependence of the banking industry and the community; which provides its customers and staff, The banks invest in BIS as a small, specialist education unit to support the work of the Education service in England, Scotland and Wales with the young people in that community.

BIS seeks to create both within the Education services and amongst these young people an even better understanding of the functions of banks within the economy and of what banks can do for them as private individuals and as future business people. At the same time, BIS seeks to inform those in the banks about relevant developments in the educational world and to represent the bank interests in the formulation of policy.

The overall aims of BIS are summarised as:

- * to create and maintain positive links between the banking community and its future customers and staff who are still in Education;
- * to develop, through the Careers Service and Bankers in Schools Service, a guidance and filtering system for future recruits;
- * to encourage the integration into the curriculum of provision for Economic and Industrial Understanding, and especially the management of personal and business finance

BIS seeks to meet these overall aims through the effective management of its services.

- * the Careers Service
- * the Bankers in Schools Service
- * the production of teaching materials
- * the role in policy development

These services are made more effective by working with Government Departments, Advisers, teachers and trainee teachers.

Fig 3

"It gave us inspiration and confidence because we could see now professionals worked" (3). The High school teacher used it within the school as part of her INSET programme -

"The BIS pack focused my thoughts on the processes involved ... it gave me an industrial perspective". In several ways therefore the BIS pack acted as a catalyst, giving a reason for the initial contacts, providing a focus for the training sessions and acting as a basis from which the pupils and teachers could work.

Community Industry compiled list of costings for the high school students and Helen put these costings into the TECHDATA database in readiness for the costing exercise.

The results of the partnership between BIS and Moor Edge First School project have been published as one of a series of eight case studies, three of which were the result of partnerships established in North Tyneside.

"SPACE FOR THE VERY YOUNG"

"HEADLINE: CHILDCARE: READ ALL ABOUT IT" and:

"WORKING AND PLAYING TOGETHER".

The series title is: "Technology, Opening New Doors, Ways to use the resource Financial Management and Planning of Design and Technology Projects".

Student-led initiatives certainly flourished. The Year 10 students, Helen the student teacher, and the pre-school children had been motivated by the commitments built up in a deliberate and active way by the partnerships we have discussed. The network which developed can be shown most easily as a diagram of relationships (Fig 4) which might be used to form the basis of a model for action in other contexts.

In conclusion it is important to consider the perceived gains of this kind of work. We would see gains at different levels.

For the high school pupil participants:

The recognition that they were engaged in a real exercise which benefitted the younger children they had come to know, has strengthened their commitment to working in the community and developing their learning as they solve the problem of design.

For IDE and "Schools Mean Business":

The project has shown the working out of the whole school approach, with remarkable collaboration between very young children, year 10 high school pupils, local education authority personnel, disadvantaged young people and local employers. It has shown the strength of the interdisciplinary approach for both pupils and staff and set it in a real context. It has provided truly cross-curricular work focussing on the design process.

For the Polytechnic:

It has provided the opportunity for using the Enterprise Commission model

THE "SPACE FOR THE VERY YOUNG " NETWORK.

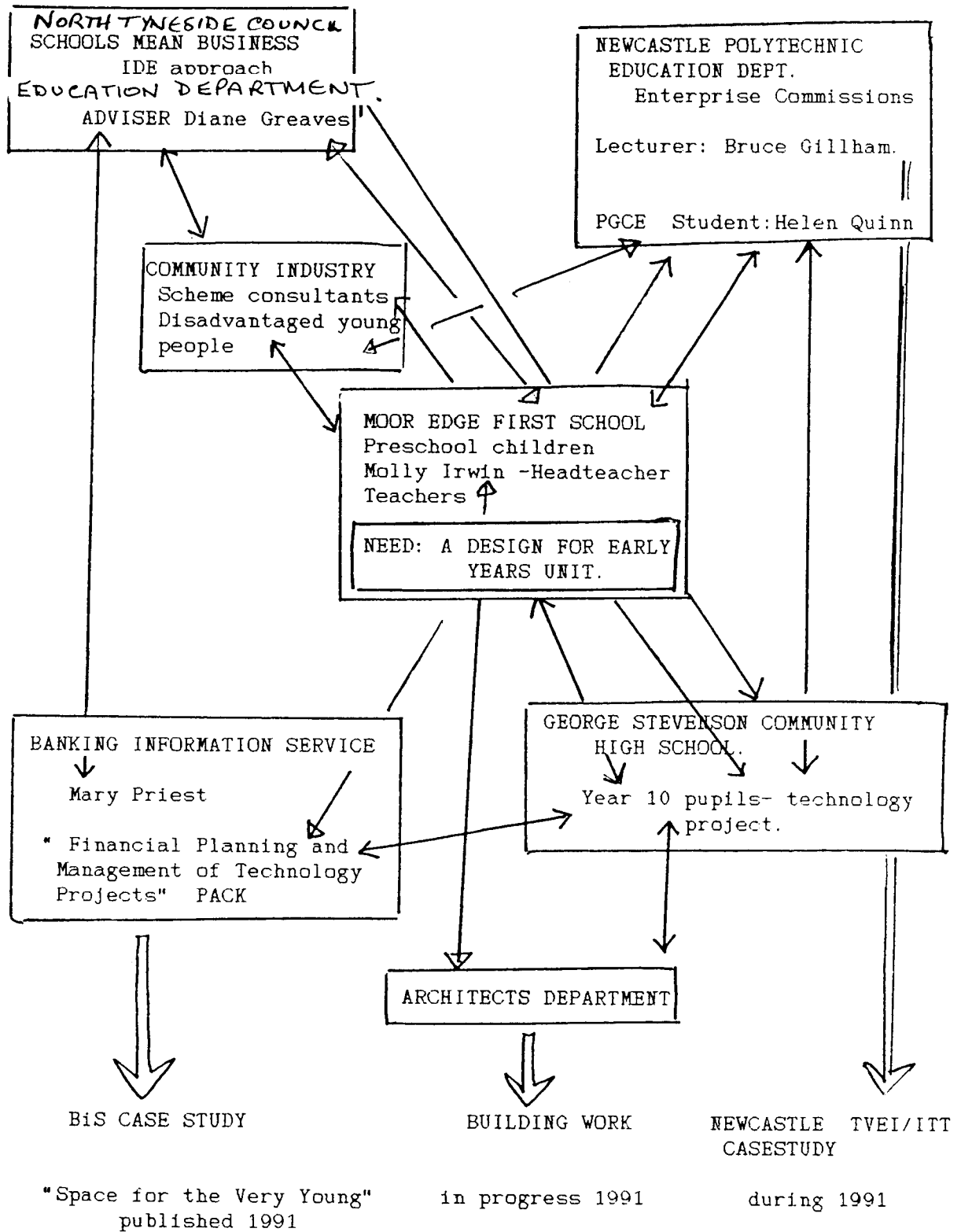


Fig 4

in the subject area of Home Economics and to work in it in an interdisciplinary manner. It also provided a means of shifting the emphasis away from subject knowledge towards a grater concern for transferable personal skills, competencies and professional capabilities, admirably demonstrated by Helen's work.

For Banking Information Services:

It has served as an environment for promoting greatly increased understanding and cooperation with the various levels of the education service and employers. It has led to the publication of a case study which the BIS hopes will encourage reflection and further the development of partnership links between education and business.

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