

Design and Technology is Alive!

By Joanne Taylor

PATT40: A Teacher's Perspective

It is very easy to feel that design and technology is in decline. We read about recruitment issues on a daily basis. The fact is that fewer students are being entered for the GCSE and A level. GCSE entry numbers have dropped by 51.5% since 2009 and A-Level entries by 53% in the same time period.

[reimagining-design-and-technology-report.pdf \(designtechnology.org.uk\)](#)

The outlook seems bleak.

As a passionate design and technology teacher this is something I want to change. I believe that our subject is not only the best subject in the world but also has the power to positively impact young people and prepare them for the fast-changing world in which we live.

This is accomplished by combining knowledge from our subject and across the curriculum with critical thinking skills to solve real life problems.

I started to think;

How can I change the situation, just me in my classroom, or even as Head of Department? We all have an impact on a small or medium scale in our classrooms, schools, and trusts. But how do I effect change on a larger scale?

I started doing some research and reading. I realised that academic research would be a way to contribute to the future growth and development of our beloved subject. I made some initial enquiries about studying for a PhD and began talking to potential supervisors. Dr. Alison Hardy suggested I attend PATT40.

PATT40 is the 40th Pupils' Attitude Towards Technology conference, which was held in Liverpool last term. The conference series was started by Professor Marc de Vries in 1999 in Eindhoven, Netherlands.



the community brings together researchers, authors and teachers of design and technology from around the world” (from the PATT40 website)

The idea of being away from home and school for four days was my first thought. This year the conference is in Liverpool, and next year it is in China, therefore I took the approach that nothing ventured nothing gained. So, I asked leaders at Wixams Academy, where I was Head of Department, if I could attend. They agreed, and are very supportive of design and technology as part of the curriculum.



An international conference of research academics sounds exciting, but daunting too.

I arrived in Liverpool Lime Street station in the pouring rain, and took a cab to Blackburn house where the conference was being held.

The introduction from Matt McLain and Professor Marc de Fries was welcoming, funny and clear. They are passionate about design and technology education. Marc explained the ethos and purpose of PATT, and I felt at ease as he specifically highlighted inclusivity as a key feature.

The room was full and the atmosphere was one of excited anticipation, collegiality, and common purpose. I was quite excited and giddy.

The schedule for the first day was busy. The format is two rooms with talks every 25 minutes. The talks are from people presenting research papers which get published in the conference book, known as the proceedings.

The talk lasts 10 minutes followed by a period of time for discussion and questions.

Each room had a host who ensured that everything stayed on schedule and also facilitated the Q&A.





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Teacher Education: Exploring the gap.

Subject Knowledge in D&T Teacher Education: Exploring the gaps | The 40th International Pupils' Attitudes Towards Technology Conference Proceedings 2023 (ljmu.ac.uk) [LINK](#)

Rethinking Measures of Attitude Toward Technology in Technology Education, presented by K-C Yu and S Tzeng from Shih Hsin University and National Taiwan Normal University.

Rethinking Measures of Attitude Toward Technology in Technology Education | The 40th International Pupils' Attitudes Towards Technology Conference Proceedings 2023 (ljmu.ac.uk) [LINK](#)

My conclusion after day one was that **design and technology education is alive**. The national and international landscape is vibrant, valued, agile and dynamic.

The addition of biology and environment in Japan and Sweden showed not only the value of nature but the link to design and technology, not just biomimicry on a surface level of aesthetics inspiration but how it makes you feel, "inner strength",

Jun Moriyama, Hyogo University of Teacher Education

A New Framework of Technology and Engineering Education Proposed by the Japan Society of Technology Education | The 40th International Pupils' Attitudes Towards Technology Conference Proceedings 2023 (ljmu.ac.uk) [LINK](#)

Anne-Marie Cederqvist, Halmstad university & Per Högström, Halmstad university

Developing student teachers' PCK for teaching technology with a sustainability edge in primary school | The 40th International Pupils' Attitudes Towards Technology Conference Proceedings 2023 (ljmu.ac.uk) [LINK](#)

The presentation about Text to Image AI, from Oslo University, was fascinating on many levels but specifically I realised the importance and value of language in design and technology. The ability to articulate that picture in your head and communicate this comes in many forms, but words are fundamental.

AI Text-to-Image Generation in Art and Design Teacher Education: A Creative Tool or a Hindrance to Future Creativity? | The 40th International Pupils' Attitudes Towards Technology Conference Proceedings 2023 (ljmu.ac.uk) [LINK](#)

Emily Yoshikawa Ruesch from Utah State University shared a paper about mentoring early career teachers and how this was linked to retention.



Mentoring on Early-Career Technology and Engineering Teachers | The 40th International Pupils' Attitudes Towards Technology Conference Proceedings 2023 (ljmu.ac.uk) [LINK](#)



'Virginia from Virginia' shared a paper which showed that undergraduate students failed to connect the importance of social emotional skills, especially empathy and social awareness, with academic success.

Social Emotional Learning and its framework for Technology Education | The 40th International Pupils' Attitudes Towards Technology Conference Proceedings 2023 (ljmu.ac.uk) [LINK](#)



awe of people who are able to present papers in a language which is not their first but also take questions and respond to them.

It was also wonderful to be in the same space as some of my D&T heroes such as Kay Stables and HildaRuth Beaumont (formerly David Barlex). I was reading their work as an undergraduate in the 1990s and now they are asking me about what I want to research.

It was fascinating to listen to the emphasis slant from different countries, there is lots we can learn from others. It was also reassuring that D&T internationally has similar challenges to the UK, recruitment being one. The overwhelming feeling I had was that our subject is alive, it is needed and wanted, it is valued and valuable. In the UK we led the way as the first country to introduce D&T onto the national curriculum.

I hope this has inspired you to read some papers, to network but mainly to continue to champion the best subject in the world.

Maybe I will meet you at a future PATT conference!



Syyi Tzeng from Taiwan University and I at PATT40





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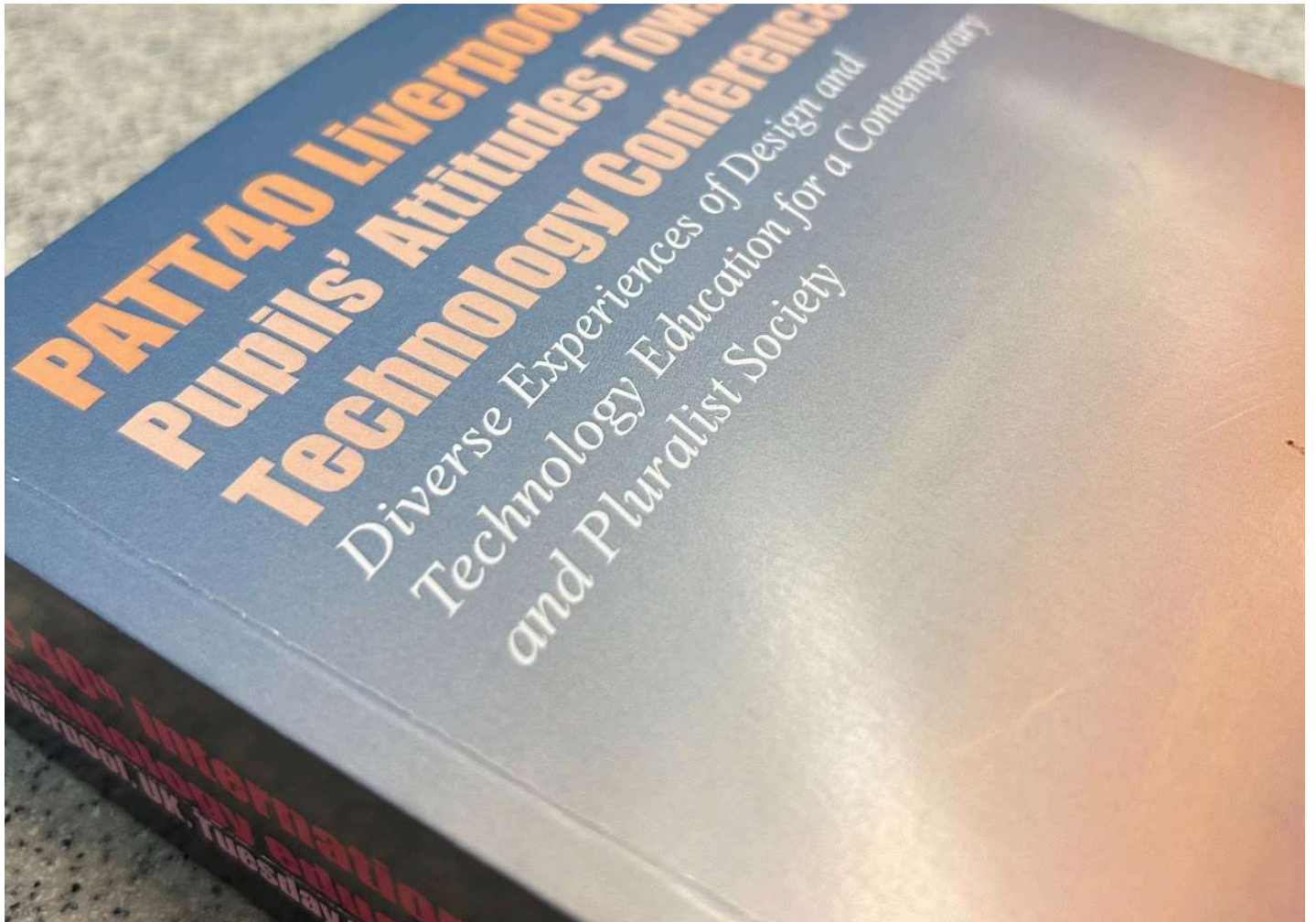
PATT40 PATT40 PATT40
 The 40th International Pupils' Attitudes Towards Technology research conference
 Liverpool, UK, Tuesday 31st October to Friday 3rd November 2023

Conference website <https://patt40liverpool.edublogs.org/>
 Conference email patt40liverpool@ljmu.ac.uk

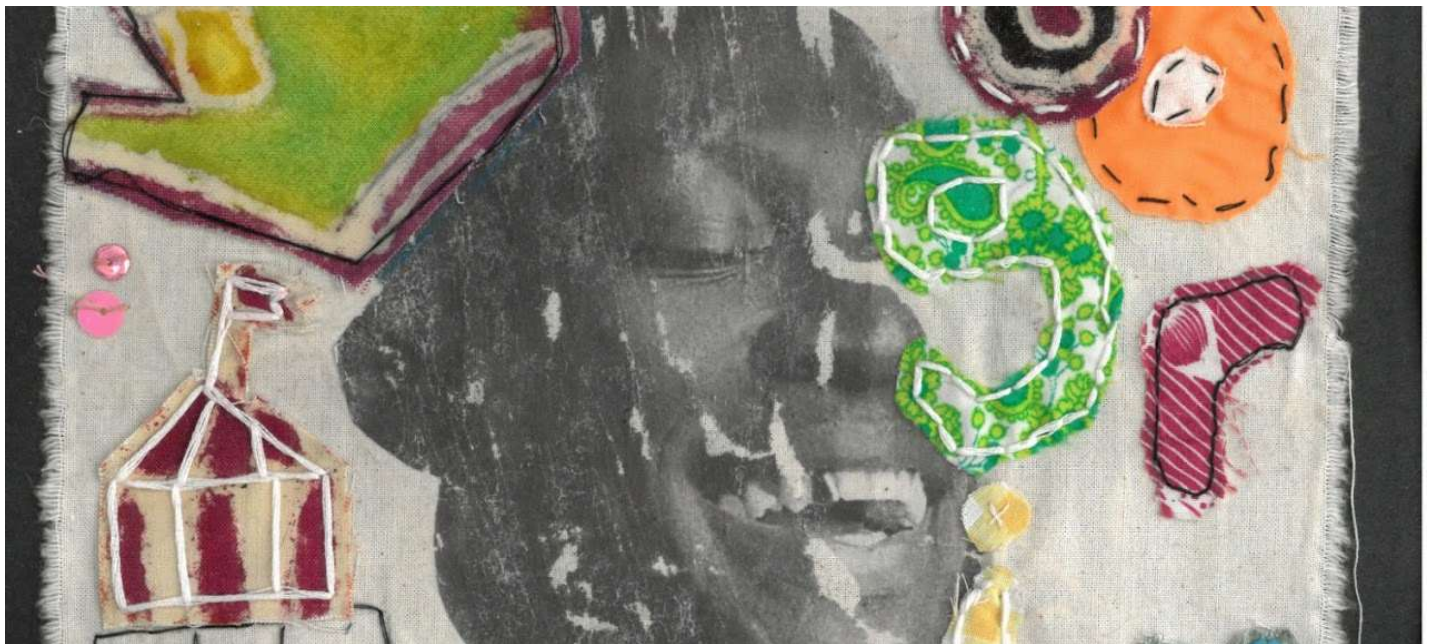
Pupils' Attitude Toward Technology (aka PATT) is an international community researchers whose mission is to generate and share knowledge about design, technology and engineering education. The annual meeting of the community is the PATT Conference, which brings together researchers, authors and teachers of design, technology and engineering from around the world.

- Conference Committee**
- Dr Matt McLain [conference chair], Liverpool John Moores University, UK
 - Dr Sarah Davies [editor-in-chief], Nottingham Trent University, UK
 - Dr Alison Hardy [communications director], Nottingham Trent University, UK
 - Dr David Morrison-Love [poster co-ordinator], Nottingham Trent University, UK
 - Bhav Prejapat [programme director], University of Glasgow, UK
 - Kal Richardson [activity co-ordinator], University of Brighton, UK
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 - Sarah Finnigan [activity co-ordinator], Upton Hall School, UK
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By Abi Elliot



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