

# Vision and Mission

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I don't need to tell you that Design and Technology is the best subject in the world. If we look at Dale's cone of learning we can see how easy it is for us to teach our subject in an active way which inherently results in students retaining and then unpacking far more than can be accessed from other curriculum areas. This is our USP, this is what makes us different.



I trained to teach Design and Technology in the 90s and have been teaching it ever since. Education has changed, governments have changed and so too have the expectations placed upon teachers and students. The challenges of COVID reminded me how resilient I am as I adapted to teaching online, networked with colleagues by moderating NEA samples via Zoom, and actively collaborated and supported the wider Design and Technology community.

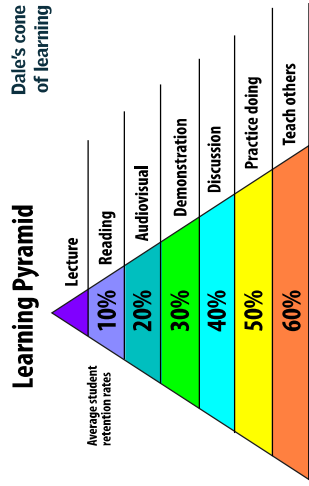
I recently moved to Bedfordshire for a fresh start and I arrived at Wixams Academy in September 2022, the academy's 6th year. As the very first head of department I had to make decisions immediately about how to lead the future and vision for the department.

## GCSE and A-Level Specifications

I don't intend to enter the debate here about the current GCSE and A-level specifications but they are what we have and I can see the positives and the negatives. The positives for me are a rigorous academic qualification drawing on several other subjects, which are taught well and applying that knowledge to real-life problems and situations. For example, I don't feel I need to teach fractional distillation but I do need to draw on the chemistry lessons so that the students understand polymers.

The craft background of our subject is a legacy we have to navigate. This has to start with educating not only the students but their parents too. "What are we making" has to change to "What are we learning".

The "they are good with their hands" brigade are undermining our subject as Design and Technology is now a clear and valid pathway for the more academic and engineering-minded of our cohort who could move to Product Design and Engineering qualifications down the line.



**Communication**

I began with talking to people in the Design and Technology community, former colleagues, mates from university still in the game as well as contacts and national organisations like the D&T Association.

My teaching MANTRA can be summarised by "Are they safe and have they learnt anything and how do they and I know that they have?"

With that in mind as my guiding principle, I put together the Department handbook with the necessary health and safety risk assessments, policy and procedures. I tied it into the school's policies on behaviour and rewards, then to the schemes of learning.

## Context-led curriculum

After attending the national conference session, I decided on a context-led curriculum that would give our students a feel for real-world problem-solving and appreciation of the product life cycle from raw materials to end of life. I selected Sustainability and Movement in KS3, Communication, Lighting and Sound in KS4 and Seating in KS5.

Like many we face budget constraints for materials the cost of which are spiralling. I have inherited some materials and have tried to utilise what we have.

## Two KS4 Pathways

A combination of factors led to me writing a proposal for two KS4 pathways. GCSE Engineering alongside GCSE Design and Technology. I feel very strongly that Design and Technology is an inclusive subject and all students can be successful. The outcomes for the NEA can be highly technical or really creative and occasionally both! This gives us the scope to nurture all talents by providing activities that access both halves

of the brain and thus enhancing meta cognition and critical thinking skills. In addition, we can foster both leadership, negotiation and confidence in problem-solving. But some students don't see it as suitable for them and therefore plan to introduce GCSE Engineering alongside GCSE Design and Technology from September 2023.

This is not without challenge as we have one temporary workshop with wood and plastic facilities. Luckily we have a three-year KS4 at the moment so Year 9 can focus on core skills; communication, CAD/CAM and modelling, then the new building should be ready with two workshops and two design studios. I have a vision of how the Engineering, Design and Technology Department should develop to enable us to produce designers, engineers and technologists well prepared to enter industry. My proposal setting out this vision has been fully supported and it seems I have found my place and my people.

I am not suggesting that this is the pathway for you all but I do know that the Design and Technology community may be small but it is mighty, we are stronger together. I urge you to be brave, set your own philosophy and share it.

Too often I speak to colleagues who are having policies forced upon them. We need to take back control, realise our power and our cohesive vision. I have set my vision and now this is my mission.