

Primary design and technology: *What do teachers do?*



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Research context

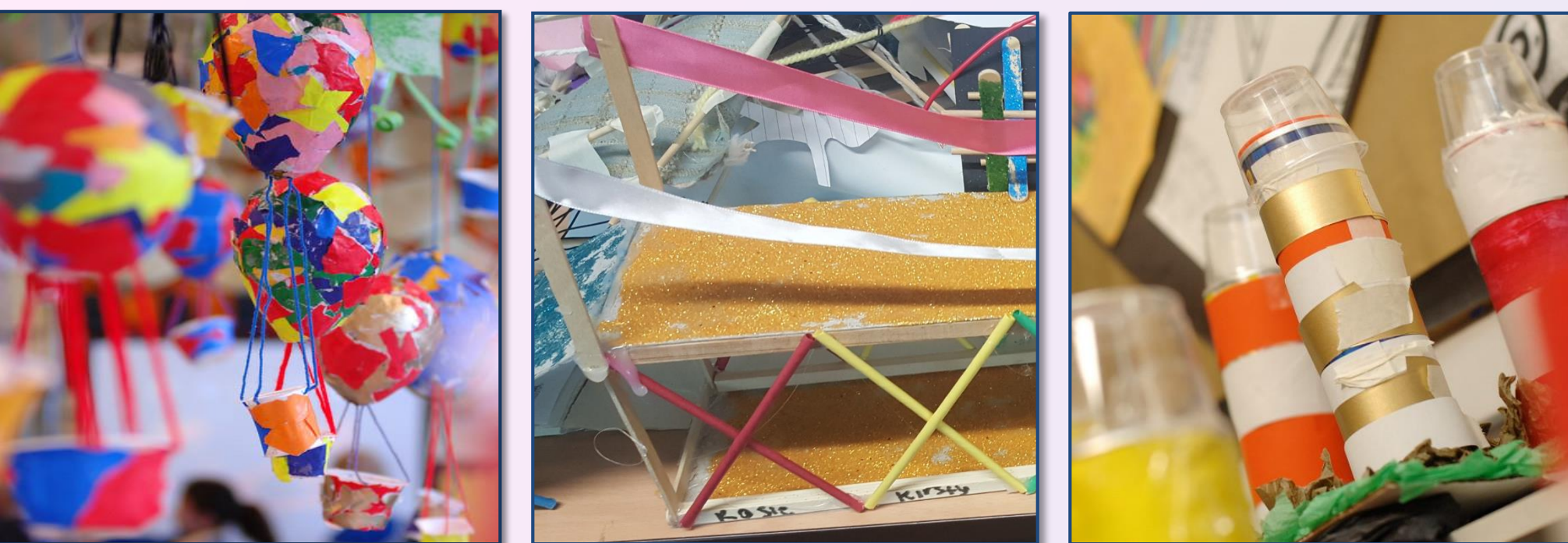
Amid concerns that primary school teachers are insufficiently trained to teach design and technology (D&TA 2015, Benson 2011) this work presents the preliminary findings from the first phase of a larger research project.

Design and technology is a valuable subject that makes a unique contribution to a child's education, yet in the countries where the subject was conceived, it faces a constant challenge, battling to position itself as a subject of worth within the curriculum.

Set within the context of the English and Welsh primary school curriculum, presented here are findings from initial phase research work which sought to establish the depth, breadth and range of design and technology work currently being undertaken in primary age phase settings.

It's a real shame to think that 20 years ago, my classroom had a workbench and simple tools. There is no such facility in any primary school that I have worked in/visited as a professional.

Participant Four



Methods and Methodology

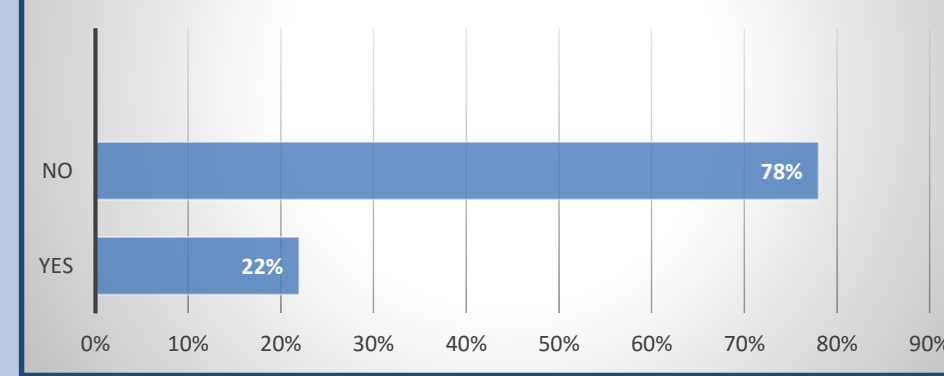
The adopted research method for this study was constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), with qualitative and quantitative data being collected using a combination of online survey and semi-structured interviews from both serving and trainee teachers from primary age phase settings located across England and Wales.

Data was gathered to explore the perceptions of primary school teachers and teachers in training, and preliminary analysis of this initial phase data suggests there whilst there are pockets of excellent practice, in the majority of instances findings would suggest that a restricted primary design and technology curriculum is in operation.



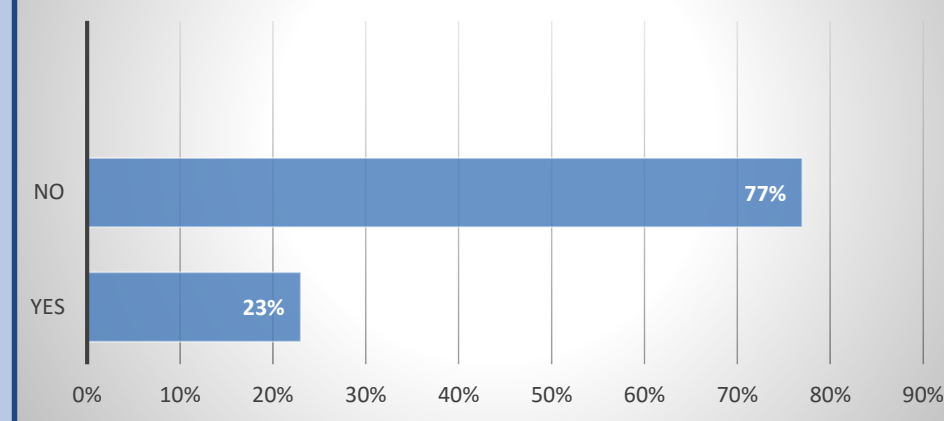
First phase findings

Have you undertaken any specific training to support you to deliver design and technology?



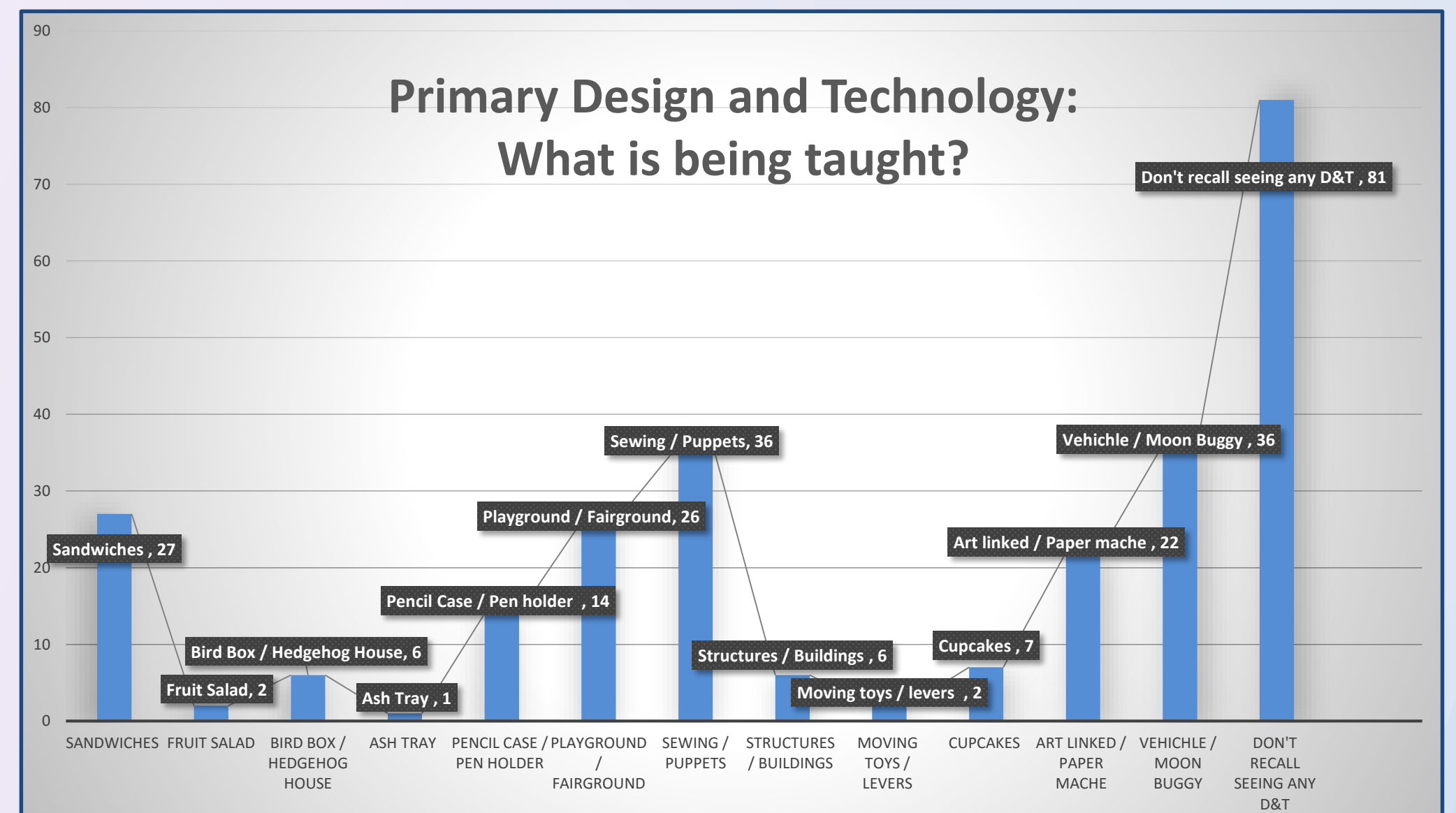
When asked if they had received any specific design and technology training only 22% of participants indicated that they had. This data correlated directly with emergent data that related to teacher confidence. When asked if they felt confident to plan and deliver design and technology lessons 77% indicated they did not.

Do you feel confident to plan and teach design and technology?



The majority of participants (72%) revealed that within their settings design and technology activity took place during whole days for no more one or two times per year, with only 16% indicating that the subject was taught within the scheduled curriculum for one lesson per week.

Primary Design and Technology: What is being taught?



I find schools do D&T as a treat at the end of a unit of work if applicable and it is not respected as a stand alone subject in the curriculum.

Participant Eighteen



Conclusions and next steps

In second phase work these findings will be discussed in relation to design and technology's purpose and value within the primary curriculum, where the authors seek to explore further teacher perceptions in order to establish if participants perceive that their individual levels of pedagogical subject knowledge has a direct impact upon the depth, breadth and quality of work undertaken in primary design and technology lessons.

References

- BENSON, C. and LUNT, J., 2011. *International Handbook of Primary Technology Education: Reviewing the Past Twenty Years*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- CHARMAZ, K., 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis (Introducing Qualitative Methods Series)*.
- D&TA, 2015. *What are the Issues? Critical shortage of qualified D&T teachers*, <https://www.data.org.uk/campaign/what-are-the-issues/> Last accessed 22nd May 2016.

