

Celebrating design and technology



in the North West

Now in its third successful year, The North West Design and Technology Festival 2010, having been previously hosted by Edge Hill University and the Bolton Science and Technology Innovation Centre, Dawne Bell and David Wooff from Edge Hill University review this year's unique event:

Earlier this year National and Regional Design and Technology (D&T), Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) organisations joined forces to present the North West Design and Technology Festival, a free conference for design and technology teachers.

Hosted by the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) at the Daresbury Laboratories, Warrington, the original event was the brainchild of Paul Abbot whose concept was to provide a forum where achievements of both students and teachers from across the North West could be recognised.

Teachers can attend alone or bring a handful of their students with them. Where examples of work are present the students are supervised throughout the event by trainee teachers, which leaves teaching staff free to enjoy the festival, share good practice and

participate fully within the CPD workshops and conference based activities. The event ends with an awards ceremony that celebrates the success, hard work and achievements of the students and the dedication of their teachers.

Taking advantage of the venue, this year's conference had a distinct STEM focus with staff from the laboratory supporting the event with talks, tours and hosting the very popular 'Star Lab'. In addition to the keynote, trade and schools exhibition, teacher CPD workshops, student challenges and competitions, this year teacher seminars and workshops aimed to highlight some of the key design and technology and STEM based support organisations from the region as well as providing a forum to discuss the future of design and technology and its place within STEM education and also to highlight, share and discuss good practice in design and technology.



Year on year the event has grown and as in previous years the technology trade exhibition played an integral part of the event allowing teachers to access the very latest equipment, materials and resources. National, regional and local teachers formed



the 'expert panel', which provided a forum for teachers to come together to pose questions, share ideas and address common concerns.

The children's activities were sponsored and organised by DTEP and a team of trainee teachers, handpicked from Edge Hill University, co-ordinated by Lead Mentor and final year Edge Hill University trainee Stuart Peet, who also acted as mentor to supervise students during the day.

The students clearly enjoyed the event and commented; "I love the competitions and

making things. It was good to see what other schools do" and "I hope my teacher had a look at some of the ideas because I'd like to try some of the things out".

But it isn't just the students who benefit from the event. Trainee teachers not only gain valuable transferable classroom skills, knowledge and understanding, they are able to attend some of the workshops and as a result of their engagement all have secured employment.

Year on year the organisers have worked to develop and increase the number of teacher workshops and each year feedback has been excellent. In addition to CPD workshops by Techsoft, OCR and Sainsbury's for the first time this year teachers were invited to deliver training workshops, one example being Traci Pierce who delivered a technological textiles workshop, she said:

"I was invited to run a textiles workshop for teachers at this year's event. I teach textiles and I'm a bit worried about how few schools around me seem to be offering textiles. There were twenty-eight delegates in our session, it was heavily oversubscribed, but the feedback was excellent. We introduced samples of some of the latest nano fabrics and as well as enjoying it I've made lots of new contacts and learnt a few things from some of the other delegates".

In the current climate it is increasingly difficult for teachers to get out of school and members of the organising group would like to thank the workshop providers and host sponsors for their support and in particular the very generous support of trade exhibitors without all of whom the event would not be completely free for teachers to attend.

Stakeholders involved in the collaboration include: NAAIDT, STEMNET, Edge Hill University, A&L Facilities, The Design and Technology Association, The Science Learning Centre (North West), The Bolton Science and Technology Innovation Centre, Manchester Metropolitan and Liverpool John Moores University.

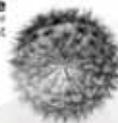


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Feedback from the event indicates very strongly that teachers value the opportunity to attend this regional event and specifically engage with the CPD workshops and colleagues:

"I've only been teaching for three years and things change so quickly...I'm lucky to have been able to attend...it's the only day I've been able to get out of school. I attended as many of the workshops as I could. I've learnt so much but things change so quickly with the curriculum and it's a really valuable way of making sure I keep up-to-date with new developments".

"The first event was good – and the one at Edge Hill was even better. This year I think having a theme was an excellent idea, we're being pushed at school to introduce STEM but we aren't really given any ideas or resources to be able to do it. The event has improved ever year, it's really good, and its free!"

"The textiles workshop was excellent and next year I'd like to see more ideas we can take and try out in the classroom ourselves".