

SuperNAACE to the rescue!

Do you know, there are about 6000 co-ordinators of IT in this country? They have been struggling for about 5 years to make sense of the National Curriculum, and to make the concept of *IT across the curriculum* work. That represents about 1,170,000 person days' worth of labour, and we still don't think we've got it right.

However, I am informed by "The Journal", published by NAACE, The National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education, that a small writing group composed of NAACE members spent a day (yes! a whole day!) developing a national strategy for IT in education.

Now, without even considering the results of their deliberations, doesn't this strike you as just a touch arrogant? I mean, why doesn't ACITT write a national strategy for advisory teachers in computer education? (Come to that, why don't we?)

This wouldn't have struck me as so arrogant had NAACE approached ACITT to ask for information from the people at the chalk face, to use a well-worn cliché. But they didn't. What about the actual content of the national strategy? In some respects, it isn't bad, because it includes a series of questions which need to be addressed, such as "How can schools continually adapt and change their expectations of

what pupils can achieve?", and "What are the training requirements for teachers (pre service and in service)?" However, for the most part it is confusing and vague, and doesn't go far enough.

The document proposes two aims for IT in education, these being:

"All pupils should develop a capability with IT which enables them to:

- a) make effective use of IT to manage and support the learning process;
- b) choose IT effectively and use IT appropriately to improve learning outcomes."

I'm not too sure what either of these really means, but maybe that's just me. However, the document as a whole seems to make exactly the same mistake about the use of the term IT as the SCAA documents do, namely that it is variously used as a synonym for computer hardware, computer software, and information technology.

The aims are broken down into 10 objectives which, when achieved, "will lead to the following outcomes:

- a) teachers and parents with the knowledge and understanding to enable pupils to make effective use of IT;
- b) schools and homes which provide an information rich environment;

c) flexible systems, responsive to changing opportunities and needs, which support the provision, management and evaluation of appropriate learning experiences for all pupils;

d) an education system in which all pupils develop and apply their IT capability to support all appropriate aspects of their learning."

This begs several questions. Do we think these outcomes are desirable? Are they, in reality, achievable? What is effective use of IT? What's an "information rich environment? What does "apply their IT capability to support all appropriate aspects of their learning." mean?

What should have happened, and what would have made this a far better document, is for NAACE members to have come out of their ivory towers for a long enough to consult with ACITT. We recognise NAACE as a repository of certain types of expertise. For example, NAACE members have each seen many schools. They've seen good practice, bad practice and mediocre practice at first hand. They have a good idea of what strategies work in which situations.

ACITT members have a different type of expertise. We've developed strategies for getting other HoDs to consider thinking about possibly taking a

class into the computer room. We know about INSET because we've developed courses for colleagues – and ways to persuade colleagues that they really ought to stay for an hour longer one day a week in order to learn how to use a word processor. Unfortunately, however, NAACE does not seem to acknowledge any of this or, to be more precise, the value of any of this. Had ACITT and NAACE worked together on a national strategy, we may have come up with a realistic basis on which to build practical strategies for the classroom. In short, NAACE has missed a great opportunity.

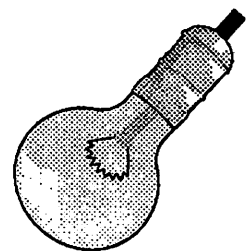
The reality of this last statement may be gleaned from the fact that NAACE's response to the Dearing proposals for IT are not altogether dissimilar to our own in some respects, and show a great deal of thought and insight. For example, they suggest that Non Statutory Guidance (NSG) is made available on CD-ROM and/or on-line. Also, they acknowledge that there is a very real danger that the proposed Level descriptors will be broken down into their component parts to facilitate a tick box approach to the assessment of IT delivered in a cross-curricular way – exactly the situation that the proposals

are intended to avoid!

Thus, although NAACE's views and those of ACITT may not entirely coincide, there is enough common ground, I should have thought, to make a dialogue profitable. It is to be hoped that the sentence in The Journal which begins: "In the near future we expect to be meeting representatives from ACITT..." presages a change in NAACE's somewhat haughty attitude to us.

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On the net (2)



Excerpt from:
kurt@tc.fluke.COM (Kurt
Guntheroth) JokesMessage-ID:
<5222@fluke.COM>Date: 19 Sep
88 05:42:57 GMTOrganization:

.Q: How many New Yorkers
does it take to screw in a light
bulb?A: None 'o yo' damn
business!

.Q: How many software people
does it take to screw in a light
bulb?A: None. That's a hard-
ware problem.A': Two. One
always leaves in the middle of
the project. Q: How many
hardware folks does it take to
change a light bulb?A: None.
That's a software problem.A':
None. They just have market-
ing portray the dead bulb as a
feature.

Q: How many Zen masters
does it take to screw in a light
bulb?A: A tree in a golden
forest.A': Two: one to change
the bulb and one not to change
it.A'': One to change and one

not to change is fake Zen. The
true Zen answer is Four. One to
change the bulb.Q:

Q: How many Vulcans does it
take to change a light bulb?A:
"Approximately
1.0000000000000000000200000"

Q How many members of the
U.S.S. Enterprise does it take to
change a light bulb?A: 7.
Scotty will report to Captain
Kirk that the light bulb in the
Engineering Section is burnt
out, to which Kirk will send
Bones to pronounce the bulb
dead. Scotty, after checking
around, notices that they have
no more new light bulbs, and
complains that he can't see in
the dark to tend to his engines.
Kirk must make an emergency
stop at the next uncharted
planet, Alpha Regula IV, to
procure a light bulb from the
natives. Kirk, Spock, Bones,
Sulu, and 3 red shirt security
officers beam down. The 3

security officers are promptly
killed by the natives, and the
rest of the landing party is
captured. Meanwhile, back in
orbit, Scotty notices a Klingon
ship approaching and must
warp out of orbit to escape
detection. Bones cures the
native king who is suffering
from the flu, and as a reward
the landing party is set free and
given all of the light bulbs
they can carry. Scotty cripples
the Klingon ship and warps
back to the planet just in time to
beam up Kirk et. al. The new
bulb is inserted, and the Enter-
prise continues with its five year
mission.

Q: How many dadaists does it
take to screw in a light bulb?A:
To get to the other side.

Q. How many Macintosh users
does it take to change a light
bulb?A: None. You have to
replace the whole motherboard.