

***What Factors do Teachers of Design and Technology Feel may have Contributed to the Decline in England of GCSE Entries within this subject?***

## **Frequently Ask Questions**

### Who is the researcher?

This research project will be conducted by myself, Claire Vickery, who is the head of the Design and Technology department in a rural secondary school and subject specialist for the local teacher training consortium. Additionally, I am undertaking the final dissertation of my master's degree in education, which this research project forms the basis of.

### Why is this research important?

I have become increasingly aware that entries into the D&T GCSE have been declining locally. My observation prompted me to investigate this further and to undertake a comprehensive literature review which clearly identified that the decline in GCSE entries was not just a localised problem, but also a problem on a national scale. However, most of the literature available predated the current D&T GCSE specification (Department for Education, 2015) and was written by academics rather than teachers 'on the ground', whose insights and experiences may have led to additional considerations. To bridge this gap, I am conducting a research project which seeks to explore the experiences of D&T teachers within English secondary schools to determine whether their perspectives generally align with the literature or if additional considerations can be identified. This research will contribute to the education of D&T on a local level to help teachers and schools to minimise declines and also on a national level to contribute to the body of educational research which investigates design and technology within England.

### How will participants be used?

I understand that participants may feel more comfortable participating in some times of data collection methodologies than another and that the methodologies offered could be the difference between a teacher deciding to participate or not. Therefore, there are a variety of data collection methodologies which are available for participants to choose from. This is to ensure the project explores as many experiences and views as possible and that participants can freely decide how little or much they wish to contribute.

The participants will primarily be used as a source of data collection, which allows their voice to be heard. The data that is collected from participants will be drawn together for analysis and synthesized to identify current issues, inform further phases of research and to propose potential solutions.

## What are the aims of this research?

The aims of this research project are:

- To undertake a formative evaluation which seeks to diagnose factors which may have contributed to a decline in D&T GCSE entries within England.
- To gain an insider's perspective and to learn from the real-life experiences of D&T teachers within England.
- To consider solutions which could be implemented to increase D&T GCSE entries at a local level

## Where is the research taking place?

The initial research proposal was written at a time when restrictions were currently in place across England to minimise social interaction in a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we move forward, there is an uncertainty of how the situation will unfold and this has had to be considered to ensure that the research project can be conducted regardless. Therefore, a decision has been made that data collection will be gathered using online tools such as video communication, surveys and a private forum.

## Who has approved this project?

An initial proposal was written for this research project, which has been approved by the Buckingham University.

## What is the role of the researcher?

My role as the sole researcher and curator of this project is to ensure that I seek to investigate the research question. To achieve this I must co-ordinate the project to ensure this research is conducted appropriately and effectively, so that it contributes to the body of educational research in England, on both a local and national level.

I am a member of the British Educational Research Association, who follows the ethical guidelines outlined by the body. A copy of these guidelines can be found in the further information section of this document, however in summary, I will always:

- obtain informed consent from participants.
- act with respect and sensitivity towards my participants and those involved within the research project.
- act within the guidance of the Equality Act, (2010) and seek to ensure fairness for all.
- seek to communicate clearly and effectively.
- act with integrity.
- act with transparency and report my findings honestly and accurately.
- seek to act without an intended bias and reflect how my own beliefs, values and experiences may impact upon my role as the researcher.
- minimise the risk of harm to myself, participants and others.
- disseminate the findings of the research to participants and other interested parties.

## What is the role of a participant?

The role of the participant is very simple. Within this project all we ask for them is to speak of their experiences and to give their views in response to the stimuli or questioning presented by the researcher. Members of the private forum and group interview would also be expected to converse with fellow participants.

For this reason, all participants have a duty to ensure that they treat others with respect, even when they may not agree with an opinion, they must ensure their response is articulated appropriately and professionally so as not to cause offence to other participants.

Participation within this project is expected to encourage personal reflection which is deemed to generally support continued professional development. Participants may choose to continue their professional connection with others that they meet throughout group discussions or the private forum, which may contribute to professional development and further opportunities.

## How will my anonymity be kept?

Your name will not be identified on final reports. Those participating in an individual interview will only be known to the interviewer. However, it would be impossible to promise anonymity for those who are participating in group interviews and the private forum, as others may establish who you are from your interactions with them. For example, they may have the ability to see your face or hear your voice during group interviews or glean information from the profile that you use to communicate within the private forum.

School will not be identified and only generalised location from North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East and South West will be sought on participant profile sheets.

## How will my data be stored?

Data will be stored in line with GDPR regulations and only kept for the purposes that it is required. When it is no longer required, it will be securely disposed of. Sensitive documents will be encrypted and password protected.

## What data will you collect from me?

Participants will be asked to share their experiences, perspectives, thoughts, value, opinions. Interviews and the private forum are semi-structured so that the researcher

can be responsive to the discussion, allowing the participants thoughts to be followed and explored further.

## How will my data be used?

The information shared by participants will be analysed and synthesised along with data from other sources to form a final report that will be submitted to Buckingham University and shared with interested parties.

## Who owns the data that is collected?

The final body of research that the data collection cumulates in will be the ownership of Claire Vickery, as the researcher. However, she acknowledges that sources have been used throughout the research, which has helped her to create the final body of research and that not all of the data collected resemble her own experiences, beliefs or values, but that which the participants have kindly shared and contributed.

## What risk could there be to participants?

An assessment of the possible risks that are posed from participation within this project has been carried out, however as such, there are minimal risks to participants as they are merely giving their own thoughts and opinions related to their personal experiences. Participants are asked to always interact with others appropriately and respectfully to ensure all participants feel they can talk freely in a safe and secure environment. To help with this, participants are also asked not to identify fellow participants externally or to discuss the interactions of their group.

## Do you always promise to keep my identity a secret?

Despite not intending to identify participants, an exception may occur for safeguarding purposes. In this exceptional circumstance, I may need to disclose

information to an appropriate and professional support service to minimise the risk of harm to the participant or others.

## Can I change my mind to participate after I give my informed consent?

Participants can withdraw at any point within the project and without reason, by emailing [claire@sonderandmeraki.co.uk](mailto:claire@sonderandmeraki.co.uk)

Any data collected from the participant until their withdrawal may be used. If a participant wishes to retract information they have previously given, they must state this in their withdrawal email. However, unfortunately it will be impossible to withdraw information which has been submitted anonymously.

## Where can I find further information?

**Decline in D&T Research Project :** [www.sonderandmeraki.co.uk](http://www.sonderandmeraki.co.uk)

**Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research :** [Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, fourth edition \(2018\) | BERA](#)

**Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation :** [guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr-1-0.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

For further information on this research project, please do not hesitate to contact [claire@sonderandmeraki.co.uk](mailto:claire@sonderandmeraki.co.uk)