Review of Technology Books for Upper Primary and Secondary Technology

These two books form part of a three book series of the new Technology Curriculum and Teaching Program (TCTP) developed by the Curriculum Corporation (for a review of the first book, I can make my robot dance: Technology for 3-8 year olds by Marilyn Fleer and Jane Sukroo, see Australian Educational Computing Journal, Vol 11, 1). Both these latest books are written by Susan Harriman who is Senior Curriculum Advisor, Technology Education, NSW Department of School Education.

Carrots, Kites and Traffic Lights

Carrots, kites and traffic lights is an upper primary technology program of five units of work for years 4 to 7. These units of work are titled:
- Changing Environments,
- Kites by Kids,
- Race Day,
- Vegie Patch and
- Water Works.

These units reflect the content and direction of the national technology curriculum given in the Curriculum Corporation documents: A statement on technology for Australian schools and Technology - a curriculum profile for Australian schools. Each unit has a theme or purpose for the technology related projects and gives a focus and starting point to stimulate children’s thinking. A clear summary is given at the beginning of each unit with a focus in terms of strands and strand organisers, assessment, work samples and relevant classroom practice.

Unit 1 Designing Spaces gives detailed classroom practice procedures such as time allocation, planning and what is needed in the classroom including the use of computers in the design process of housing needs. The unit of work is 7 weeks.

Unit 2 Focus on Food capitalises on and nurtures students’ abilities to use practical cooking activities as investigative and information-gathering tasks such as carrying out a survey over 10 weeks. A section is also provided on what is “quality” and the need for the use of folios in technology tasks.

Unit 3 Mass Production Systems goes through the process of designing and establishing a system for mass production of a given product over a 10 weeks.

Unit 4 Microfarming looks at the unit of work on agriculture technology involving the designing, making and operating a system of small-scale agriculture. The unit takes various times (mushrooms-3 weeks, herb seedlings-5 weeks, broilers-10 weeks, vegetables-8-15 weeks).

Unit 5 Newsletters is a great across the curriculum unit which can be done with other teachers in other learning areas. The 10 week unit is structured so the task of designing and creating a newsletter can be a springboard from which to investigate publishing in all its forms using both electric and non-electric techniques.

Unit 6 Safe Containers was planned as a long-term project (19 weeks) for students with some experience with technology. This section also includes a part on self evaluation.

Design it, Make it, Appraise it

Design it, Make it, Appraise it covers six units for teachers of lower secondary classes. The units are Designing Spaces, Focus on food, Making on mass, Microfarming, Newsletters and Safe Containers. Each unit has a summary of planned activities with a focus in terms of strands and strand organisers, assessment, work samples and relevant classroom practice.

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CARROTS, KITES & TRAFFIC LIGHTS: UPPER PRIMARY TECHNOLOGY
Susan Harriman
Price: $34.95
ISBN 1 86366 284 7

DESIGN IT, MAKE IT, APPRAISE IT: LOWER SECONDARY TECHNOLOGY
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