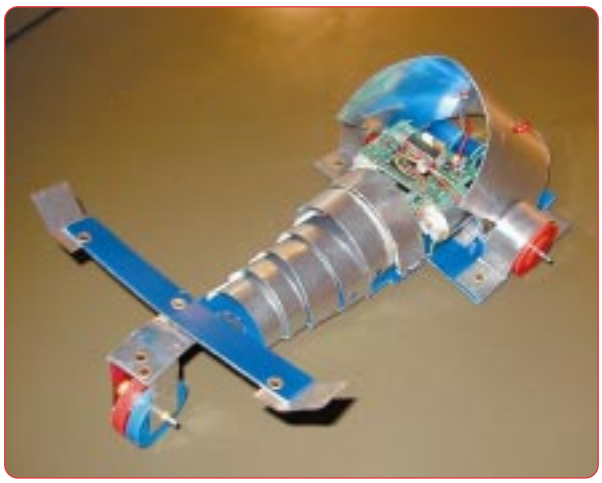
Summer schools update

Around the UK this summer, pupils and their teachers homed in on some great 'Away Day' activities supported by TEP. Very often, staff find it impossible to get out of school for INSET, so one popular new model is bringing the pupils with you to a TEP summer school!

This summer, over 250 pupils took part in the TEP scheme at 5 centres across the country. They ranged from Years 6 to 11 and represented a wide variety of abilities and backgrounds, including Excellence in the City and Education Action Zone. The use of TEP resources to make radios, rockets, Jitterbugs and robots has had a major impact on pupils taking part. TEP is grateful for the input of more than 50 tutors drawn from teachers, technicians, trainees, graduates, advisors and sixth form students who helped make this summer one to remember.

Bob Cater, advisor for Technology with Education Support and Inspection Service (ESIS), a TEP fellowship centre, ran the TEP Easter A level Design & Technology course at Bangor University. Students came from schools across North Wales for 3 days and undertook a concentrated course involving practical work and lectures to improve their performance in the AS/A level examination. Pro/DESKTOP was used to produce presentation drawings of products, and although most students had not used the software before, they quickly learned some of the basic skills and produced very good drawings in a short space of time.



The second project based on TEP resources required students to design and build a vehicle controlled by the IQ programmable controller that has 3 programmable outputs. Power was provided by 2 solar motors, leaving a third output to drive light emitting diodes or buzzers to add interest to the vehicles.

The design of such a vehicle presented new challenges to many of the students. The project developed an understanding of mechanisms, sheet metal construction techniques and an introduction to microprocessor control. The students were also given some instruction on the basic electronics associated with the IQ to understand how it functions. Students were challenged to programme each vehicle to negotiate a test track in the fastest time. The group produced interesting and varied solutions to the problem.

The students worked very hard for a concentrated period of time and were surprised by the quality and amount of work they achieved. Visitors to the course were also surprised by the commitment displayed by the students during their holidays. For their effort, students were rewarded with new skills, knowledge and understanding, and as a bonus had work to submit as coursework for the examination. The course has been a great success!