

EDUCATION ASSISTANTS

Education Assistants took a new turn last year when Stockport College started providing distance-learning awards accredited by NCFE.

The courses available last

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year were Initial Training for Classroom Assistants and Special Needs Assistants certificate. EAs from ESF schools, plus others from schools in Hong Kong took the courses and most will have successfully completed by the end of June.

In order to try to develop the relationship between ESF and the college three people came out to Hong Kong again in January 2001. Liz Shercliff spoke at our annual conference for Education Assistants and there was a conference on the Saturday too. Tutorial sessions were held with students and almost everyone managed to spend some time talking through their work and asking questions. The feedback at meetings with students was very good. Everyone following a programme of study commented that they had found it interesting and it had developed their professional skills and knowledge.

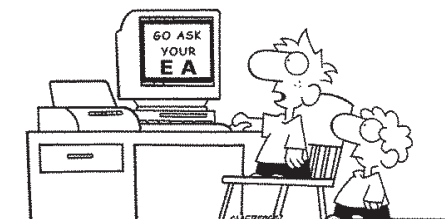
NCFE, the awarding body for these programmes recently became one of the first to gain accreditation by the UK government under their new system and the first to get awards on the new framework. This means that ESF Education Assistants are gaining certificates from one of the key awarding bodies.

This year the college aims to provide training for pre-school workers along similar lines to the other programmes, and it is expected that members of the college staff will be in Hong Kong again during the Autumn Term.

The annual EA Conference is currently being planned for 8th November and we hope as always that it is a great success. Thank you to all EAs and mentors within our schools.

Congratulations to two of our EAs from ESF schools who have managed to have EA's study every year so far!

Julie Shroff / SJS



"I went to Ask Jeeves to find out where babies come from."



ONLINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING

It's arrived, it's no more than just an option for the future but it's available here and now, and it is worrying a lot of people. Most of us have been educated in a system where the responsibility for learning was not the students but the teachers. It

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was the teachers that took responsibility for providing the incentives for the student to learn, some positive and some not so positive.

The age of 'Lifelong Learning' is here and students are going to have to become more responsible for their own learning at an earlier age if they hope to survive in tertiary education and in the working world.

This page highlights a few of the developments you might like to look at or investigate further, not only for our students but for all members of the ESF community.

Finding Online Courses

One of the problems is to not only find but also evaluate the worth of online offerings. On 'Shambles' there is an area to relevant sites at <www.shambles.net/webpages/teachandss/>. you will find several heading to choose from not only 'finding and developing online course's but also looking at 'online environments' that allow users to set up their own course.

If you have never tried one of these courses then start off your experience by looking at the sample lecture at <http://www.boxmind.com/>, although it might be asked if the video is really necessary in this case.

The UK DfEE, although I guess they have become the DfES by the time you read this, have published a consultation document entitled "Curriculum Online" at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/curriculumonline/curriculumonline.pdf where it states their position clearly "we want there to be online materials that teachers can use to support the teaching of every subject for every age group"

University of Maryland University College

<http://www.umuc.edu/>

In 2000-2001 the ESF had discussion with staff from this University, which was voted the top online provider in the USA in 2000 by Forbes. Not only is the option of ESF staff having access to the courses but also students. Giving ESF students the opportunity to do University online courses while still being in the sixth form is a possibility, successful completion would give them university credits. The University is very positive about allowing this but schools and students need to consider more the relevance and effects on the work they are already doing in school and especially the time demands.

This is an initiative that will become clearer through this year.

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

In September 2000 a course was established at the HK University of Science and Technology by Dr T C Pong with the purpose of allowing HK students the opportunity to take University credited courses while still at school.

These 12 week courses mainly consist of online learning using the internet and video conferencing between the University and schools, there are also onsite Saturday meetings at the Clearwater Bay campus.

In this first year the modules offered are in programming C++ and introductory IT but it is planned to extend these to cover other areas including Physics, Maths and Business Studies.

The course is primarily funded by the HK Curriculum Development Fund with an additional fee paid by students of HK\$1,000 for a module.

In May 2001 staff from KGV and WIS visited T C Pong at the University to find out more details and determine the relevance for ESF students.

For more details email Chris Smith csmith@esf.edu.hk or talk with the staff in the photograph or visit

<http://www.courseware.ust.hk/english/content.htm>

<http://www.hkwebsym.org.hk/2001/tcpong.ppt>



I mentioned that a lot of people were worried by these developments. It is encouraging to end with the acknowledgement that a lot of people are also very excited about them. Technology is allowing learning strategies that just did not exist even five years ago and, fortunately we are also now realising that it is not the computers and the internet that are the important aspects but what we do with them.

Chris Smith / JCSRC

