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And they're off!
... to the Summer Conference at Dundee this year, of course
Photo courtesy of Neil Stanley.



From the Chair

Tony Fisher

Another term, another ITTE newsletter (still in the capable hands of Libby), and another missive 'from the chair'.

The committee met earlier in the term to discuss a full and varied agenda, including the forthcoming conference, relationships with other organisations, and the ITTE logo and web site. The committee will meet again in the New Year, and I encourage ITTE members to contact me if there are items you would like us to address. It was good to welcome new committee members and Babs Dore, who took the minutes at that meeting as our new Secretary.

ITTE is currently chairing the IT Network, in the capable and experienced person of Tim Denning. We had a meeting at Becta earlier in the term, now that things have stabilised again after the merger of Naace, CEG and MAPE, and we look forward to further positive and fruitful discussions with all organisations involved. Becta has been re-organised (again), so all too soon after she became our contact at Becta we bid farewell to Cathie Gibbens, who is leaving Becta to take up a position in the commercial sector. Our new contact at Becta is Janice Staines, and we look forward to working with Janice.

The IT Network/TTA project to create a web site and materials to support new ICT subject tutors in ITT continues to make excellent progress under the exemplary project management of Margaret Danby. Several ITTE members have played a major part in the development of a very useful resource.

Graham continues to do sterling work as Vice Chair, and we recently spent a day together at TASC on association business. We have also met with John Williams, HMI, to discuss a wide range of ICT/ITT-related issues. Some readers of this Newsletter may not be aware that Ofsted is being reorganised. In particular, there may no longer be subject specialist HMI assigned to areas of teacher education, as teacher education is being subsumed within the rest of Ofsted and HMI are likely to become more involved in school inspections. We are watching the situation with interest because of the possible implications for Ofsted's ability to report on ICT in ITT.

Just when you thought it was safe to talk about technologies being 'embedded', and of course we all thought we knew what it meant, now every darned thing is embedded and people glaze over at the sound. Another respectable word bites the dust through buzzy over-use! Graham and I will jointly present the ITTE seminar at BETT. We weren't going to talk about ICT use being, er... embedded in subject teaching, were we? Oh well.

Eid, Diwali, Christmas, Yule. Are there festivals in cyberspace? I suppose there are. Of course, computers can interact at an automatic level without us, but they have no sense of 'festival', which is a uniquely human thing - an expression of shared values. So, if there are festivals in cyberspace it is because of people: ICTs are socio-technical networks, not just 'pure' technology. Why, even those whacky folk at Google change the look of their site to reflect the popular conception of Halloween. Whichever festival/s you celebrate, or none, have a good winter break when it arrives. The solstice will soon be here and then the days start to get longer again - good news for SAD sufferers.

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Editorial

Libby Jared, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

I have not undertaken any data handling exercises recently, but I have the feeling that the modal 'word' in this newsletter is TTA. I intend to use it a few more times more in this editorial to ensure it is emphatically the winner.

I spent two Fridays, spanning the beginning and end of this term, at two excellent events organised by the TTA at a very nice hotel in Central London. The first was the Primary ITT 'Learning and teaching using ICT' conference. On the way down, in a packed commuter train my school teacher colleague and I 'setted' the Primary PGCE trainees, via their audit, into more and less experienced groups. We noticed a few funny looks as the A4 pieces of paper went back and forth between us. By the time the day was over we were able to arrange for said trainees to have access to a cuboid measuring (approximately) 19cm by 10cm by 14cm, the contents of which, 7 CDs, have some invaluable example materials from the Foundation Stage to Year 6. Current technology enabling video clips of practice does at least give all the trainees the chance to see some ICT in action (for, as we all know, seeing good ICT on placement can be a bit of a lottery) and updates my block lectures from using snippets from 'old' videos.

The second Friday, near enough to Christmas to see the lights in Regent Street, was the TTA's E-Learning Dissemination Conference where I heard some fascinating accounts of how institutions were using their hard won bid money to move forward various parts of their teacher training courses using e-learning resources. There are some real success stories (with some still in the making) and I was grateful to have the chance to hear what others were doing. Readers of this Newsletter have a chance to hear about some too, as Franc Potter and Richard Bennett have sent in accounts of their work. Add to these the other articles by John Woollard, Helena Gillespie and Tony Fisher and it is quite obvious the advances that can be made when not only having a mission (was ever thus) but now access to the resources.

However before we (or maybe it is just I) get carried away there are two other crucial points which came out of the E-Learning Dissemination Conference. Firstly - and this will come as no surprise - the sheer amount of additional work that tutors are willing to put in for 'free' in order for a project to succeed. Advances are not made because the government 'finds' additional money to fund the hardware. Advances are made because individuals are not prepared to be bean counters but sacrifice personal leisure time in order for others to benefit. There is no doubting that these people are the Professionals. Secondly, the exchange of information about these funded projects is essential as it will be pointless for the wheel to be re-invented by each institution for the many aspects that e-learning can be used for. I know that the TTA are keen to find ways for such exchanges to happen and indeed the conference was the first step to this.

The conferences also meant an extra chance of meeting up with ITTE friends and engaging in arm-twisting activities. Mike Richardson offered a piece on Alan November's book - though how Mike managed to focus on computers in toilets defeats me.

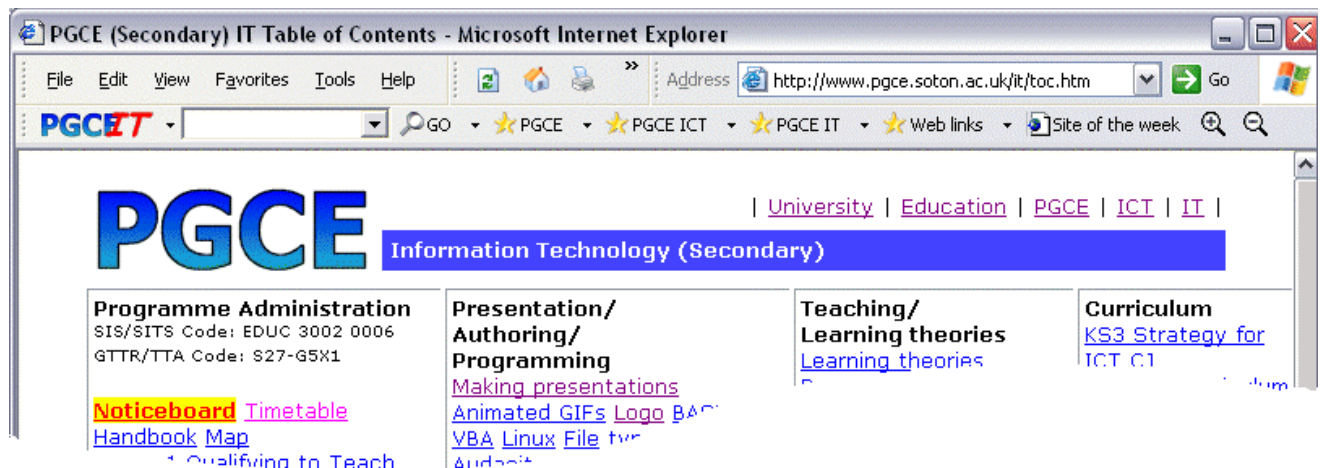
As we are at that time of year when it is the Review of This and the Review of That, I should like to hand out an award to Tim Tarrant and his team for all the hard work that they have been doing in supporting ICT in ITT. It is much appreciated.

PS If you want to know how I found the thought for the term, I am currently in the throes of moving room (100 yards to travel) and have to forsake my lovely, large Victorian office for a modern box, one-third of the size. If you need anyone to help you throw out those bits that have been gathering dust for a few years, hire me as I am at the height of my throwing out powers. By the way, I am NOT discarding any ITTE newsletters, past or present. Too precious by half!

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Toolbar for PGCE IT


John Woollard, University of Southampton



This year saw the introduction of a toolbar to support the PGCE IT trainees. The initiative has two motivations. First, we have a vision of creating an expert system associated with web browsing which would collate and analyse the web explorations of the 18 PGCE IT trainees and offer feedback to them and the tutors. That system is designed to come on-stream next summer. The toolbar is planned to be the interface. We needed to ensure that trainees' use of toolbars was acceptable to all parties in the process. The second motivation is that we wanted the trainees to have more ready access to our on-line resources. We have resisted transferring all of our resources into the University VLE and we are conscious that some aspects of exploring the web and course resources within the VLE were lost when using our "open" access system based upon a website (<http://www.pgce.soton.ac.uk/it/toc.htm>). The toolbar offers a consistency of presence similar to that of the Blackboard VLE.

<p>About IE Toolbar</p> <p>IE toolbar, Release 2.0, © 2002 Softomate. All rights reserved.</p> <p>PGCE IT Toolbar © 2004 jw7 All rights reserved.</p> <p>UntouchedMedia.com © 2004 All rights reserved</p>	<p>The toolbar was designed and communicated to the programmer via a spreadsheet - it simply had 6 treble columns representing the 6 drop down menus of the toolbar. The first column indicated the icon, the second the text of the menu option and the third the URL of the link. We also supplied the left hand icon and comments on the design of the update/install/uninstall web pages.</p> <p>The programmer purchased and used Softomate Internet explorer Toolbar software under licence. At a cost of about £80 for the software and £150 for the programming this appears to be a cost-effective use of resources.</p> <p>UntouchedMedia is at http://www.untouchedmedia.com</p>	
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<p>Clear Search History</p> <p>Reload toolbar</p> <p>Erase browser cookies</p> <p>Check for Update</p> <hr/> <p>Uninstall Toolbar</p> <p> About PGCE Toolbar</p>	<p>The first menu relates to the mechanism of the toolbar and has little option for change. It is possible to change the text of the "About PGCE Toolbar" and the precise wording of the menu items.</p> <p>The text entry box automatically uses Google search when enter is pressed. The second menu list gives the opportunity to restrict or specialise the search. We chose the University of Southampton site and .ac.uk sites. It is possible to specify other sites.</p>	<p> Google</p> <p> Southampton</p> <p> Academia</p> <p> Dictionary</p>
<p> School of Education</p> <p> Professional themes</p> <p> STAR document</p> <p> Partnership schools</p> <p> Qualifying to teach</p> <p> University home page</p> <p> TTA test centre</p> <p> Staff</p>	<p>The next three menus reflected the structures of the course. The first contained links to resources that would be of an interest to all PGCE trainees, the second focussed upon those related to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and the third being those specifically designed to support PGCE IT trainees.</p>	<p> Resources</p> <p> Message board</p> <p> Portfolios (EPS)</p> <p> Records (ERS)</p> <p> Blackboard</p> <p> Webmail</p> <p> WebCat</p> <p> Ejournals</p>
<p> Resources</p> <p> Timetable</p> <p> Noticeboard</p> <p> Journals</p> <p> Books</p> <p> Curriculum Mentors</p> <p> Colleagues</p> <p> No Entry</p>	<p>The toolbar ensured that trainees were just two clicks away from their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timetable and outline of the teaching sessions; • the Noticeboard and its useful information; • direct access to e-journals to support their Masters level writing; • recommended reading lists; • each others' websites. <p>There is a link for the school based mentors to their section of our website and a portal for the external examiner, OFSTED inspectors, mentors and tutors to password protected areas inaccessible to trainees and the "public".</p> <p>The final menu is a moveable feast of useful web links.</p>	<p> CanTeach</p> <p> DfES</p> <p> CEDP</p> <p> BECTa</p> <p> NGfL</p> <p> VTC</p> <p> TeacherNet</p> <p> OFSTED</p> <p> National Curriculum</p>

There are two very useful icons  which allow the web browser view to be enlarged to enable small text to be more easily read or the whole of web pages to be viewed. This has proved particularly useful in presentations and classroom teaching.

We have not yet formally assessed the value of toolbar but initial responses have been positive. We are analysing why some people prefer to use the Google toolbar and others run both simultaneously.

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Supporting the professional development of mentors with video through the North West Learning Grid

Richard Bennett, University College Chester

As with many Initial Teacher Education providers, we have been providing support for school-based mentors through an internet portal. However, the management and upkeep of such a portal can prove to be onerous, particularly maintaining log-ins for a shifting population of upwards of 500 schools at various stages of partnership.

When the first round of *e-learning communities project* funding was offered by the TTA, a decision was taken to explore the possibilities of making use of resources provided by our local Regional Broadband Consortium (RBC) to assist in the delivery of information and resources to our partnership schools. In addition, we saw the funding as an opportunity to enhance our approaches to the professional development of mentors through the use of video.

The North West Learning Grid (NWLG) provides online resources for LEAs and schools as part of the National Grid for Learning (NGfL). At present 18 of the 20 Local Education Authorities in the North West comprises the consortium, which not only manages the broadband connections for schools, but also it provides licensed access to commercial web-based learning resources, and locally produced teaching materials. There is also a virtual learning environment for the development and distribution resources and information within and between schools.

The TTA funding enabled us to buy into the NWLG and to purchase equipment needed to film and edit video clips of trainees teaching in classrooms. The intention was to have videos of lessons in classrooms from Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4. The project funded the filming of eight lessons – of which five have been filmed to date. Each lesson is edited into around half a dozen five minute clips showing key features of the lesson – for example, the introduction, a transition, part of the main activity, working with a focus group, the plenary and a critical incident.

The video material is presented in three ways.

Firstly, for the induction of mentors into partnership there are three video-based tutorials. New mentors are invited to watch clips of a preliminary discussion between a trainee and a mentor, part of a lesson and a post-lesson feedback discussion with the mentor. They are then expected to respond to interactive questions designed to focus their attention on key features of the mentoring process and provide them with a grounding in the skills and knowledge needed for becoming a mentor.

The second form of presentation allows mentors to browse through the clips of each lesson in sequence to gain an overview of a trainee's teaching, or they can select particular clips. Thus, a mentor who is concerned about the way their trainee is using the plenary session at the end of lessons might choose to view the plenaries of several trainees' lessons for comparison. To assist in this process of moderation, a running commentary of '*tutor's thoughts*' appears alongside the video clip highlighting examples of good practice in relation to the Standards, or indicating where support might be needed to enhance learning and teaching. At present, there is only one

commentary for each clip, but it is envisaged that eventually mentors will be able to choose from two complementary commentaries - a general commentary outlining strengths and weaknesses for formative purposes, or one detailing summative assessments against the Standards.

The third type of presentation allows mentors to search for particular clips using keywords. Thus, a mentor could search for clips to help guide her assessments or to focus support in, for example, giving explanations to Key Stage 1 children.

Each trainee's lesson plan, together with a reflective evaluation and the mentor's written feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson are made available alongside the clips for scrutiny and/or download.

Following a final evaluation by our partnership review group, the materials will be trialled in some of our focus schools with a view to incorporating them into our mentor training programme.

Further possibilities for enhancements and developments which have arisen from evaluations include:

- video sequences of lessons taught by advanced skills teachers with a running commentary as a voice over
- more videos of lessons – at present the majority of lessons are from primary schools – it is intended that eventually there will be at least eight lessons from primary and eight from secondary
- commentaries provided by subject specialist tutors focusing on aspects of subject knowledge
- aesthetic and presentational enhancements, possibly through the employment of a graphic designer

As the resource will be made available to schools through the NWLG, it is possible to make some features available for other training providers. However, this will depend on the legalities associated with the existing permissions we have gained from parents for the distribution of video images of their children.

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Thought for the term

How do you get a 386 computer working alongside a Research Machines 186 computer?

From Question Corner, ITTE Autumn 1993 Newsletter.

Using wireless laptops to establish and support an e-learning community in remote placements - a success story.

Franc Potter, Edge Hill College of Higher Education

One of our aims, as an ITT department, is to establish a WebCT portal for all our partner schools, in order to enhance communication within the partnership. The perception is that such a portal should in principle have a number of advantages.

- a. These would include simple and straightforward advantages such as mentors being able to download partnership documentation. Mentors who were unable to attend update

sessions could also have access to any relevant information quickly and easily, and in addition could also use email and/or discussion boards to ask questions. A reply to a query from one mentor could be placed on the discussion board, for the benefit of all.

- b. More importantly, such a portal could in principle allow the development of a partnership community, and open up avenues of communication between the professionals involved: including communication between partner schools, as well as between the schools and the college; and between the trainees, tutors and mentors.

Surely, the reasoning goes, a VLE must have some potential for enhancing communication in the partnership?

There is no doubt that the affordances are there, but that is not enough. One crucial factor is that this kind of portal has to compete with alternative and already established means of communication. All concerned are used to visiting web sites on the internet for accessing information, and all are used to using established email accounts. Any alternative, extra, channel of communication has to be perceived as offering a significant extra benefit for the extra 'cost' involved. The cost may seem minor – just a few clicks – but experience within the college is that this is a significant barrier. Whilst tutors and students regularly access their 'standard' email, they do not access WebCT in such a habitual manner. One reason is a tutor's standard email account will have messages from a wide variety of students, colleagues within and outside the college, including mentors, so it is a 'one-stop shop' for communication. Having to access another email account, which may have little traffic, is a barrier, and however small in reality, it seems to be a significant one. Moreover, with WebCT, for every additional WebCT portal there is an extra email account.

In relation to point (a) above, much the same could be achieved by placing information on the college web site and by normal email contact. One advantage of the WebCT portal might seem to be that a reply to any query from one mentor could be placed on the discussion board, for the benefit of all mentors. But almost the same could be achieved by placing FAQs on the website in response to individual email queries. How often would mentors want a discussion about a query?

In relation to point (b) above, to what extent is this sort of partnership *a* community? A tutor will tend to communicate with only a small section of the partnership – a Secondary Geography tutor will communicate with perhaps only some of the Geography subject mentors, a primary tutor will communicate with mentors in only some of the partner schools. In addition they already have established means of communication – usually phone and standard email. Moreover they normally only need communication one-to-one, and if they need to communicate to all their mentors they can create a group list in their standard email account. All Secondary PGCE tutors already have a WebCT portal for their students, and some already include their mentors in that VLE. It is more likely that this is the kind of virtual community that will develop, rather than one WebCT portal for all partner schools. In relation to communication between mentors and trainees, this will tend to take place face-to-face. Where it does not, the standard email channels and telephone will tend to be satisfactory and, given the relationship is one-to-one, there is no need of a discussion board.

Using WebCT in remote placements

Taking into consideration all these factors, we concluded that another kind of portal that might be worth establishing was one for trainees on remote placements. The trainees would be in an unfamiliar environment, living away from home, and in this particular case would be placed in a small group of five schools geographically fairly close to each other in a small education

authority. Moreover the mentors from the different schools would be fairly likely to know each other.

In addition all the schools had wireless connections, and all the teachers had access to a wireless enabled laptop. With funding from the TTA the trainees were equipped, on a loan basis, with wireless enabled laptops with an internet connection, in order to give them access to WebCT in addition to the usual office suite. This ensured that the mentors, trainees, and Edge Hill ITT tutors would all be able to have easy access to WebCT.

Trainees and tutors continued to have access to their existing subject WebCT environments, but in addition a new one was created to allow for communication between these trainees, the school-based mentors, and ITT tutors. This new WebCT portal included communication tools, school-partnership information for school-based mentors, and some subject resources.

The timing of the project was not ideal, and the students started the school placement before the laptops were ready (unavoidable, because of the arrangements concerning the funding and commissioning the laptops). Consequently they did not receive the laptops until three or four weeks into their placements. In addition the project was, of necessity, planned in rather a hurry (the only alternative would have been to delay the project until the following school year). This meant that there was little involvement from the mentors in the partner schools in the planning of the project, although the schools were contacted in advance and were very willing to cooperate.

The use made of the WebCT portal to a large extent reflected our expectations, although we were surprised how much use trainees made of it. Most read the discussion postings almost daily, and all were frequent and regular visitors.

On average, each trainee visited the portal 858 times, read discussion postings 465 times, and posted 45 messages. With their wireless laptops they were able to communicate with each other during their breaks. It appeared they did this as a matter of course, so much so that on one occasion a trainee stopped the online discussion to write:

eh? What do you mean..... Wait I'll come next door and see you.

The majority of postings were social in nature - arranging social activities such as what to do at the weekend, or just chatting generally. There were some postings which were supportive. For example there was one series of exchanges relating to how to deal with a particularly difficult pupil.

Unsurprisingly the trainees found the laptops invaluable for help in their lesson preparation. They used the laptops more or less daily to prepare worksheets, access the web for teaching resources, and access their 'remote placement' WebCT portal. Two thirds of them also accessed another WebCT portal (their subject portal) more or less daily. In their evaluation they were most grateful for this facility, and made very favourable comments including:

Excellent – shame they didn't arrive sooner

Very useful – especially the WebCT

The placement would have been impossible without the laptops [not to be taken literally, presumably]

Fabulous idea. Please make sure you give the next contingent them

Thanks for the laptops – it'll be really valuable to the next students on placement

Make sure [the remote placement students] have computers before they leave, so they're not alone.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to all persons involved in organising this remote placement! It's very well-organised and I have enjoyed this placement very much.

The last comment is particularly heartening given the fact that trainees are often reluctant to be given remote placements.

The trainees reported four different preferred ways of communicating with their tutors, fairly evenly divided between:

- Remote placement WebCT email
- Other WebCT email
- Groupwise Webaccess
- Phone

Two tutors stated that their preferred method of communicating with trainees was through WebCT email, one of them stating that they had made a particular effort to use WebCT rather than other forms of communication, adding that

It would probably be easier to contact say via Groupwise but if we try to develop the 'community' then we need to train ourselves to use it! This is one way of doing that – if we are going in to pick up trainees' discussion email etc then the mentors' shouldn't be a problem.

However, it takes two to communicate and only one of the mentors reported communicating with Edge Hill tutors via WebCT email, and none (unsurprisingly because they were able to communicate face-to-face every day) reported communicating with trainees via WebCT email. Neither did the mentors post any discussion messages in WebCT. Some did access some partnership information, although many did not use WebCT at all (but they had been given all the documentation in printed form). One of the mentors commented that there needed to be more training for the mentors, as there was insufficient awareness of its potential.

OK, so the title should have said – a *partial* success story.

Perhaps the most interesting result of all is that fact that some of the students are still accessing this WebCT portal – I have just now checked (1.40 pm on 26th November, and the last posting was on *Friday, November 26, 2004 11:12am* !). We were going to close the portal down after the trainees left - are we honour bound to let it continue? In our planning this year we shall be considering how we might incorporate some support for the next cohort not only throughout their block but also into their induction year.

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Acknowledgement

We should like to take this opportunity to thank the TTA for the funding which has made this project possible.

Learning Technology and Individualised Learning Projects

Helena Gillespie, University of East Anglia

Since coming into initial teacher education in September 2002, I have been faced with a wide range of challenges. One significant difference in doing this job compared with my previous role as a 'real(!)' teacher in a primary school is the size of group I'm expected to teach. My first lecture to the 180 trainees en masse was one of the most nerve wracking things I have ever done. I wasn't at all sure I knew enough about anything at all to talk for 50 minutes, never mind whether I was able make what I said interesting and useful to the diverse group of trainees. This is where my love/hate relationship with the lecture began.

Having overcome my initial nerves after a few lectures, I began to question my approach to the lecture as a teaching medium. In some ways it enabled me to convey my knowledge and enthusiasms about primary school teaching, which was my motivation for moving into ITE in the first place. But, I felt, the lecture quite definitely has an element of 'do as I say and not as I do'. In talking in lectures about different learning styles, about a range of teaching resources, about the importance of interaction, the benefits of questioning and learner involvement, I became acutely aware that it very difficult to model these elements of good teaching in this format.

This was my starting point for examining how learning technology could help me make the best of my large group teaching, and happily this coincided with the introduction of the Blackboard virtual learning environment into the Primary PGCE at UEA. I began to re examine the issues, and my questions started to crystallise:

- How can the lecture format address the needs of different learning styles? How can individuals interact with the lecture in ways which suit their learning style?
- What resources can I use in lectures, and how can I allow trainees access to them before, during and after the lecture?
- In what ways can the lecture promote a response from a trainee?

Like all questions, there are simple answers and more complex ones.

With support from colleagues at in the department, I have received two lots of funding from the TTA to research these questions. The first project is nearing an end, and looks at the relationship between individualisation in ITE and the use of a VLE. The second project examines the design and use of multimedia teaching resources through the VLE. I am by no means sure I have the answers to these questions, and I have more questions as a result of the research but so far, I've come to the following conclusions:

1. The lecture format can be useful in delivering 'content', particularly subject knowledge, but it's better if there are a number of different media used, including images, both still and moving.
2. Trainees respond well, generally speaking, to having access to resources used in teaching in electronic form. Most trainees make some use of such resources, some trainees make a great deal of use of them. This may be related to the 'learning styles' issue.
3. Trainees say they like lectures to be interactive, but they're not really sure what interactive means or looks like. To me an interactivity is about a learning resource which can respond to what the learners make of it. I'm still not sure how this fits with traditional lectures, although I have designed and used teaching materials for lectures which can be used after the lecture by trainees who want to review the lecture and navigate it in their own way.
4. The best use of a VLE is not as a glorified electronic filing cabinet to access teaching materials. But the trainees like to use it like this, so it's best to let them. If trainees have the chance to respond to a lecture using a VLE discussion forum, some will contribute and some won't. But most will look at the discussion. This adds something to the learning experience which goes beyond the 'filing cabinet' model.
5. There is an increasing range of learning technology which has potential for application in ITE, and should support the way programmes can be individualised both in terms of what teaching resources are accessed and how, and in terms of how individuals respond to teaching materials.

While I'm continuing to mull over these questions and answers in both my teaching and my research, I'll continue to use the 50 minute lecture in my courses. Perhaps the trend in Higher Education for more 'flexible' and 'distance' learning will eventually lead to this stalwart of the HEI eventually being abandoned. But what follows in its place will be shaped, to a large extent I believe, by what we can achieve using learning technology.

As a new member of the ITE community, I'm keen to make links with people who are interested in finding answers to questions like mine. Please do get in touch.

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AnnoTape: Audio analysis without tears

Tony Fisher, University of Nottingham

In a previous ITTE Newsletter (No.40, Spring 2002) I described my experience of using a minidisc recorder to record interviews as part of triangulation procedures in various evaluation projects in which I had been involved. I found minidisc technology to be excellent for that purpose (and greatly preferable to the almost obsolete cassette tape), and as a consequence I built up an extensive archive of field recordings. At the time, their main purpose was back-up, supplementing contemporaneous field notes. As a consequence, though quotations were selected to illustrate evaluation themes, the recordings were never transcribed.

More recently I wanted to return to some of those recordings (about 13 hours' worth, in this particular case) for closer analysis, for a different purpose. At about that time I read a newsletter from the Vitae Project in which it was mentioned that the interviews which lay at the heart of the data were "recorded digitally and downloaded onto a computer...[to be] electronically analysed using AnnoTape, a new software." (p.4)

This was interesting! I didn't want to do transcriptions of my interviews myself – far too time-consuming. On the other hand, I didn't really want to pay for them to be done because I wasn't sure how useful this expensive process would eventually prove to be, and in any case it would have meant transferring all the recordings to cassette tape for use in a transcription machine. Would AnnoTape be the answer?

AnnoTape is novel, in that it is built around a set of tools for coding and retrieval of sections of a digital audio recording, rather than the words and phrases of a transcription as in other qualitative analysis software. I downloaded an evaluation copy of AnnoTape (so named because with it you can electronically annotate a metaphorical 'tape') from the Web, had a brief conversation with one of the Vitae project team, and swiftly decided to use it.

The one remaining issue was how to get my recordings onto my computer for analysis. I had one of the new Sony Net MD Walkman players, misleadingly advertised as able to exchange files with a PC via a USB connection. Strictly, it can... but only if the files originate from that PC! My files were originated on the minidisc recorder. I pored over the Sony manual, and combed the Web for a work-round, but alas there was none. I couldn't do a straight digital transfer of the files from my minidisc player to my hard drive.

However, AnnoTape is designed to support direct recording into a PC. Hence, I was able to replay my recordings from the headphone socket of my minidisc player into the microphone socket of the PC for re-recording via AnnoTape. (Unlike my hoped-for quick digital file transfer, this of course took place in real time!) A split lead also allowed me to listen in to the replay, and hence to begin to re-engage with the data during re-recording.

Any digital recording is a trade-off between file size and quality, and AnnoTape offers three settings. I used the middle setting and this works out at about 2.5Mb per 10 mins. Once the recording is on the hard drive, the coding can begin.

Figure 1 shows part of the index for a coded interview (Maths 1). In the right-hand pane are some the codings that I have applied, each with its start and end time. I have chosen to sort the indexing alphabetically, but if preferred it can be sorted by start-time. A time counter shows that I am 34 minutes and 36 seconds into this recording, which is getting towards the end as you can see from the position of the slider.

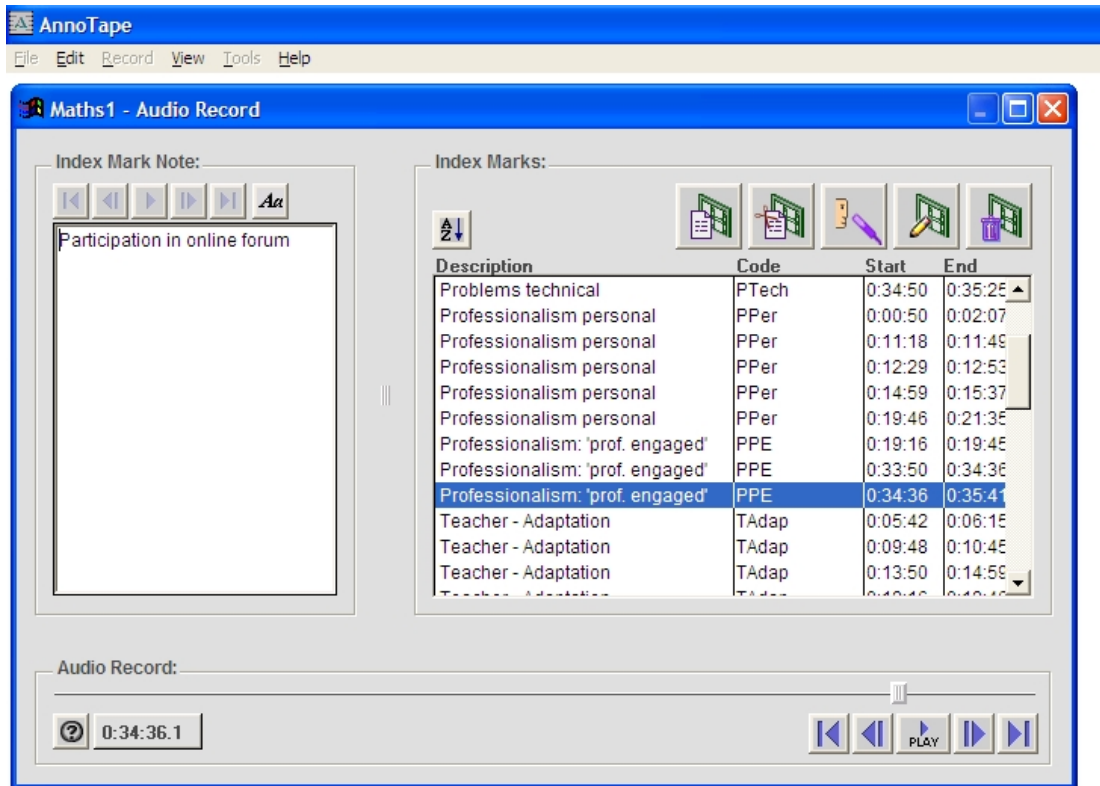


Figure 1. Indexing coded sections of an individual recording

The left-hand pane is available for me to make notes, or to transcribe specific quotations. I can make specific notes for each individual index mark. If I double click an index mark in the right pane, the recording replays at that point. If I wish to add more index marks, or more codes, I can do so at any point.

Once several interviews have been coded, AnnoTape allows me to re-explore by theme. Figure 2 shows part of the entire Curriculum Online 'project', (ie all the interviews) sorted by index description. So, it has brought together all interview sections with similar coding. In the example here we can see that there are four interview segments coded 'Teacher technical knowledge' from three separate interview recordings. Again, a double click on any listed segment will drop me back into that interview, at that point, together with any related index notes.

AnnoTape can also import text files in .rtf format. These can be coded and navigated as described for audio records above. Hence, an AnnoTape project can contain a mixture of audio and text records.

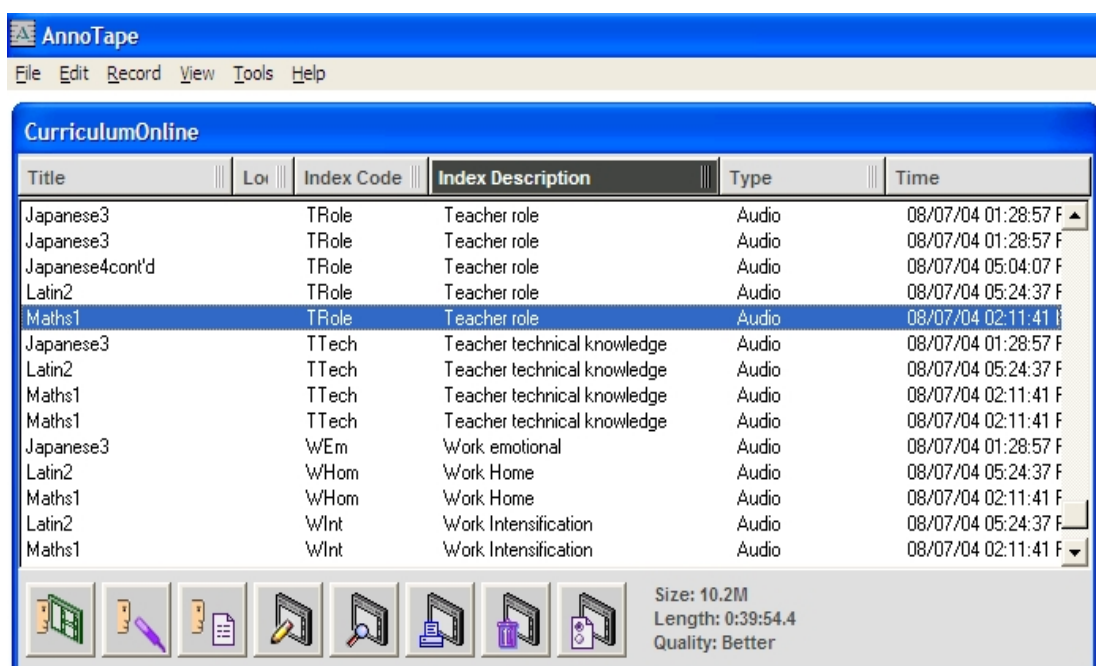


Figure 2: Interviews sorted by index description

This brief newsletter piece is about AnnoTape itself, rather than my substantive investigation. I think it's an interesting piece of software, and I'm enjoying using it. It doesn't have lots of unnecessary features, and the 'familiarisation overhead' is quite low. In future, unless I am travelling particularly light, I intend to by-pass the minidisc, and instead record direct into a laptop when in the field, though the minidisc recorder still has attractions in terms of portability (it goes in my pocket) and battery life.

Reference

Vitae Project (2003) Newsletter 3, January; University of London Institute of Education and University of Nottingham School of Education.

Available online at: www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/centres/crtsd/vitae/

AnnoTape Web site: www.annotape.com

tony.fisher@nottingham.ac.uk

Technology in schools: cure or inoculation?

Mike Richardson, Liverpool Hope University College

One of the most interesting books I have come across in the last few months has to be Alan November's 'Empowering students with Technology'. I came across his work when attending a Conference recently in Liverpool. Alan gave two keynote addresses outlining a view of the future that was both provocative and challenging. As in his book he asked the question 'what are we teaching our children to do and how is it preparing them for the future? Using the illustration of General Motors he outlined how they allowed the problems that design teams faced travel around the world through technological flexibility. It works by teams in one time zone passing on their work to another team further west. The greatest thing we need to teach the next generation is flexibility and collaborative skills. So problems travel through time zones and team members can pick up work that has been done by others in a different location. This change in the way work will be shared has many implications as we begin to see the impact communication and information technology will have on all our lives.

Our students are already harnessing its power yet we are in danger of failing to take account of this and are often guilty of trying to add on the technology to existing methods that are quite

traditional. I have recently had the experience of taking a module through a validation process that is seeking to use a blend of teaching methods, some delivered through remote access such as the internet. Questions like “how will you meet the required contact hours?” are hard to answer if you are bound by traditional views of how courses should be delivered. That is not to say that those methods are wrong or even outdated but that they no longer constitute the only way forward.

The book deals with issues of communication and information literacy. These are what we should focus upon says Alan as the technology is the “plumbing” which allows the communication and information to flow through. Whether or not you agree it is an interesting metaphor. Of course technologists like plumbers are needed to make this all work and this is never more noticeable than when the system goes wrong. You just don’t notice how much you needed it until there is an emergency or you have to do without it. Jippy tummy is no fun when half way up a mountain with not a piece of pipe work in sight! It is the same or rather should be with technology according to Alan. When there is real empowerment the technology is often invisible. Here lies one of his criticisms of the way we have sought to move things along in education. We do not solve our problems by throwing vast amounts of hardware and cash at them without looking at the solutions the problem itself is requiring. A challenging view.

As I listened to Alan’s points and then when I read the book I found myself asking a few questions about the assumptions I had made as to what the best solutions to improving Computer usage in schools might be. Finding the computer being parked in the toilet is still not as surprising as it should be when visiting schools that students attend, in trying to obtain those ITT standards. When the health service was introduced the phrase “free delivery at the point of need” was used as one of the founding principles. It helped to transform the health of the nation. If we applied this same phrase to our attack on reducing the digital divide it provides an interesting perspective on whether our deployment of technology in schools is effective. Some would say the patient is still sick! Buying Technology and delivering it before the recipient is aware of their needs (i.e. a relevant context for its use in teaching and learning) is fraught with danger. A bit like buying stocks of medicine before they are needed. They can go out of date before they are used. Alan November warns against being too focussed on the technology. Better to work on the awareness of how technology can empower one to achieve the solutions sought after.

As well as the warnings and the advocacy of taking risks, there are some interesting suggestions in the book on how to improve relationships with others in the information and communication community. There is a challenge to build knowledge without boundaries by teaching our next generation how to develop critical thinking.

I’m still undecided as to whether the injection of resources has been good for schools or whether there are still some problems just over the horizon. Perhaps it has inoculated them from using it effectively instead of curing our lack of using technology. Do we need a different approach? Answers on a postcard please...but read the book first!

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Support for ICT subject tutors

Margaret Danby, IT Network Induction Project Manager

Help for ICT subject tutors is just a mouse click away!

The website for ICT tutors provides information and advice for those involved in initial teacher training (ITT) in schools and higher education institutions. It covers ITT requirements, factors that contribute to high quality training, a range of topics that are included in ITT courses, where to get support and find the latest research evidence on aspects of ICT as a subject, and about

doing research yourself and supervising others. It can be accessed at www.ict-tutors.co.uk. Currently the subject content focuses on secondary specialist courses but we hope to expand the range in the future - and suggestions for new topics are always welcome. The web site is being developed by the IT Network, funded by the TTA, to provide a range of support to help new secondary ITT ICT tutors settle into their role quickly and deliver high quality training. Nevertheless, there is much on the site that is relevant to all tutors regardless of phase or experience. Do have a look and tell us what you think of it and of any additions and improvements that would make it more useful to you.

Tutors who have been appointed within the last two years may be eligible to benefit from the induction programme. These include:

- A closed email list for new ICT tutors to share concerns and experiences with other new tutors
- An induction programme tailored to new tutors needs and run by experienced ITT ICT tutors
- Sponsored attendance at the Annual IT in Teacher Education (ITTE) Conference
- Mentor support arranged on request

If you or any of your ICT tutors have been involved in initial teacher training for less than two years please let us have your/their names, contact details, including email addresses, and date of appointment so that we can let them know about the induction materials that are available and opportunities for induction training. We will also provide you/them with a free subscription to the ICT tutors email list. If you/they would prefer not to receive this subscription, please tell us. You can unsubscribe at any time so why not give it a try!

To notify us of new tutors, or if you would like further information about the IT Network induction website and programme, please email Margaret Danby, the IT Network Project Manager danby@soteme.freemove.co.uk

The IT Network is a forum for the major ICT professional associations in UK education - ACITT, BCS, ITTE and NAACE.

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TPE Update

Sarah Allsopp, Editorial Assistant

The most recent issue of Technology, Pedagogy and Education (13.2) came out in October - for those of you who haven't seen it yet, it is a Special Issue on research into ICT. An important theme, as the Guest Editor, Jean Underwood, stresses in her Editorial: "[These articles] explore the validity of the criticisms levelled at ICT research and the degree to which such criticisms are specific to this sub-domain. On a more positive note, the articles start the quest for possible ways by which we might raise the collective quality of our research."

Most of you will be aware of the literature review undertaken by Mary Webb and Margaret Cox looking at the research literature on ICT and pedagogy, and published by Becta earlier this year. We are pleased to publish the longer version of this review in Volume 13, Issue 3 of TPEd (in press). As Avril Loveless explains in her Editorial: "This review frames the research presented in the articles which follow, developing our understanding of pedagogy with ICT in particular contexts of subjects and settings ... although the article is longer than most journal articles, it presents a unique and timely picture of evidence and an analysis which will inform the development of research questions, policy formulation and reflective practice. As a literature review it provides a valuable resource in its bibliography which can be a starting point for further work. As a framework, it offers tools for analysis and development." The review is complemented by three other articles, each of which focus on pedagogy.

Volume 14 (2005) is well underway, with Issue 1 at the publisher too. A general issue, Avril has brought together the seven articles under the theme "A Sense of Place for ICT: 'a local habitation and a name'". She describes how she was "struck by the 'sense of place' in each of the works - a sense of the authors describing, explaining activities in a variety of contexts, and exploring ideas about the implications of their findings." The articles include the following themes: an examination of conversations between a teacher educator and instructional designer as they approached the development of a web-based course; the impact of socio-economic status and gender on computer ownership and computer profile of secondary education pupils in Brussels; student teachers' attitudes to, and experiences of, using computers in the primary classroom to teach mathematics; and the use of educational software titles on CD-ROM within families in home settings.

ITTE Receipt and Payment Accounts

Year ending 31/12/2003

Presented at Conference by the Treasurer

Receipts

Membership fees	4840
Summer conference	1472
TPE Royalties	4712
Interest on deposits	<u>125</u>
	<u>11149</u>

Payments

Stationery and Newsletter	729
Travel and subsistence	2044
Summer conference	42
TPE costs	3693
URL	<u>112</u>
	<u>6620</u>

Balance at 31/12/2003:

£30600

ITTE Committee Members 2004-2005

Richard Bennett	Elected 2004-2007	University College Chester
Tim Denning	<i>Past Chair</i>	Keele University
Babs Dore	<i>Secretary</i>	
Tony Fisher	<i>Chair</i>	University of Nottingham
Bob Fox	Elected 2004-2007	University College Worcester
Mary Hayes	Co-opted <i>Conference</i>	Nottingham Trent University
Chris Higgins	<i>Treasurer</i>	Oxford Brookes University
Libby Jared	Elected 2002-2005 <i>Newsletter</i>	University of Cambridge
Graham Jarvis	<i>Vice Chair</i>	Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds
Tony van der Kuyl	Elected 2002 - 2005	SITC, University of Edinburgh
David Longman	Elected 2004-2006	University of Wales Newport
Avril Loveless	Editor TPE	Brighton University
John Potter	Elected 2003 – 2006	Goldsmiths (University of London)
Ken Powell	Elected 2004-2007	Canterbury Christ Church Univ. Coll.
Sarah Younie	Elected 2002 - 2005	De Montfort University
Janice Staines	Observer	BECTA

New on the bookshelf

Neil Stanley, Liverpool John Moores University

As Libby comments in her editorial in the Summer 2004 edition, books without acronyms form the bulk of reading matter over the holidays. I took the opportunity to read some of the novels that had been building up on the shelf. Magnus Mills' *The Scheme for Full Employment* (Harper) was a particularly appropriate read whilst in Mexico as the number of people employed to don latex gloves and search luggage at Cancun airport seemed to indicate a similar approach to that of the title. As usual Mills provides an interesting parable in an easily read form. Tom Holt's *The Portable Door* (Orbit) made another amusing read (I suspect that there are several universities with goblins for landlords). Great fun and slightly weirder than Holt is Jasper Fforde's *The Well of Lost Plots* (NEL); imagine a world where the ideas for books are crafted in a parallel world, and fed through to the authors unknowingly, and where certain characters can move between these worlds (and where dodos have a passion for

marshmallows) and you have some idea of this. I also enjoyed Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters' Club* (Penguin). Although I am a bit older than the protagonists in this it seemed to ring true, being a tale of growing up in the 70s with national events I remember being written into the narrative. In some ways David Nicholls *Starter for ten* (Flame) continues this rite of passage theme. Alexei Sayle shows great skill as an author and *Overtaken* (Sceptre) provided an excellent read for the return flight. If you know Merseyside at all you may well enjoy this more – 'The pies, the pies'.

I don't know if it's a good or a bad sign that there are no texts with acronyms in this collection. The serious stuff I've been reading seems to come from pdf downloads rather than books. For those of you teaching subject ICT specialists don't forget the Payne-Gallway 50% discount offer for ITT – they have some new titles and many have been updated recently.

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Web Wanderings

Neil Stanley, Liverpool John Moores University

With the interest in Farmers' Markets and boxes of vegetables being delivered to the door I found <http://www.bigbarn.co.uk/>. Mind you I've still to get organised enough to order anything!

With (sorry Mac users) XP's SP2 objecting to certain files communicating with the outside world you may find

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,771890,00.asp>

useful. This provides a *What's that file* list and says if you should allow or block.

Continuing with software, many colleagues have benefited from running *Spybot* <http://www.spychecker.com/program/spybot.html>

to get rid of 'malware' on their machines. A

useful search addition for Outlook is *Lookout*

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=09b835ee-16e5-4961-91b8-2200ba31ea37&displaylang=en>.

This lets you search all your email and archives for terms.

The 'fontaholics' amongst you may like <http://simplythebest.net/fonts/index.html>

whilst if you are after an early years typeface try

<http://www.underfives.co.uk/download.html>.

ICT subject specialists should find <http://www.vocationallearning.org.uk/teachers/cei/ict/index.asp> useful and the KS3 Learning Diaries are in their latest form at

http://www.lgfl.net/lgfl/leas/lewisham/communities/ICT/resources/Secondary/KS3/KS3.db_psc.

I don't change tap washers very often so I used the web just to check that there were no reverse threads to catch me out. I found

<http://www.midkentwater.co.uk/images/flash/washer.swf>.

Finally the fun item. Check out <http://flipflopflyin.com/> for mini pictures of actors and bands etc. Might inspire some art work in school.

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Endpiece – Trigger Finger

Libby Jared, University of Cambridge

How many people do you know who have/had a trigger finger? I know three: me, my doctor and the surgeon who operated on my left little finger*. For a very left handed person, I can assure you I met with a few 'difficulties' following the cut, though being unable to do any washing-up for two weeks was not one of them. The only one I need to mention here is a continual use of caps lock. Reduced to using the non familiar hand only, seemed also to reduce said hand to one finger. So with three single hits on the keyboard just for a capital letter, I did gain some empathy for the little ones with their little fingers as they begin their big adventure on the keyboard.

*PS I just had to have the operation - I was unable to get any money out of my purse as the finger wouldn't let go of it!

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First announcement ...

The 8th ITTE Research Seminar

will be held on

Friday 9th & Saturday 10th December 2005

as usual at the sumptuous venue of

The Møller Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge.

Booking opens June 2005!

Enquiries to: Libby Jared, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Cambridge CB2 2PQ

email: ecj20@cam.ac.uk

ITTE 2005



UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE, UK

TUESDAY 12TH JULY
TO
THURSDAY 14TH JULY

CONFERENCE THEME:

ICT: Collaboration and Curriculum Change

ENQUIRIES TO:

ALLEN THURSTON a.thurston@dundee.ac.uk

ONLINE BOOKING WILL BE OPENING IN JANUARY