

# Announcement

## News on ICT in Education

### News & Events

#### **The employability of university IT graduates**

Organized by UNESCO, a two-day expert meeting sought to develop a framework for a research study on graduate unemployment and graduate employability in Asia.

#### **China promotes distance education through the “Classroom on the Air”**

“Classroom on the Air”, a satellite television channel of China Education Television, aims to provide services for primary and secondary schools, vocational education, and teacher education.

#### **Pacific ICT Ministers set priorities to “connect the unconnected”**

New projects and initiatives are launched on ICT capacity building for policy-makers and regulators, technical ICT training for young people, low cost solutions to connect rural villages and laptops for school children.

#### **State of ICT and Education in the small island developing states of the Caribbean**

This new study reveals opportunities for improving ICT skills in the Caribbean among school dropouts and through promoting employer-sponsored professional development to strengthen both the employability of individual youth and the competitiveness of businesses.

#### **New ICT development index compares 154 countries**

The International Telecommunication Union released its new ICT Development Index (IDI), which compares developments in information and communication technologies (ICT) in 154 countries over a five-year period from 2002 to 2007.

### Programmes & Projects

#### **Malaysian teens reveal their lives and concerns through one-minute videos**

During a five-day workshop, children equipped themselves with basic filmmaking skills and a newfound sense of confidence to tackle life’s challenges through digital storytelling.

### Resources

#### **Wealth of resources on sexual health online**

“I am gay. I am lesbian. What about you? Are you OK?” is one of 49 booklets and 931 resource materials on sexual health and HIV related issues in UNESCO’s online Healthy Sexuality Database.

#### **Education for a digital world**

Education for a Digital World contains a comprehensive collection of proven strategies and tools for effective online teaching. It offers practical, contemporary guidance to support e-learning decision-making, instructional choices, as well as

programme and course planning, and development.

### **Paying attention to attention**

In the digital age, where advertising and information overload are replacing human interaction, good teachers will need to develop the human side of the teacher-pupil relationship.

### **Recurring issues encountered by distance educators in developing and emerging nations**

This article explores a number of challenges faced by e-learning or distance educators in developing and emerging countries; provides a context for many of the challenges; and outlines some measures devised to overcome them.

### **EduSud - An ICT in Education portal from Africa**

The EduSud portal aims to help teachers discover the world of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and to provide tools, advice, references, educational resources and other materials, which help to integrate technologies into training.

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## **News & Events**

### **The employability of university IT graduates**

“When we were not trying to make our graduates more employable, they were more employable. But now that we are trying to make them more employable, they are not,” noted Professor Rosni Abdullah at an Expert Meeting on Graduate Employability held in Penang, Malaysia, on 11-12 February 2009.

Professor Rosni’s comment, based on her up close and personal experience as the Dean of the School of Computer Sciences in the Universiti Sains, Malaysia, provided some food for thought among participants attending the meeting.

Organized by UNESCO, the two-day event sought to develop a framework for a research study on graduate unemployment and graduate employability in Asia. This topic is of particular relevance and interest to many governments in view of the current economic downturn in the first instance. However, of even greater concern is the underlying responsibility placed on universities as the repositories of valuable human capital to enable countries to compete successfully in the global economy. The phenomena of unemployed and underemployed graduates are common in countries such as India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. In India, Indonesia and Philippines, this has led to an extensive export of professional workers to the United States and Middle East.

The study aims to understand these issues – in relation to the programmes, curriculum, content, capacities and skills – better and to formulate policies for governments and higher education institutions (HEIs) to address them effectively. Particular attention will be placed on the employability of IT graduates in view of the rapid developments in technology and their associated changing requirements. The study will investigate how HEIs prepare their IT graduates to meet labour market demands in selected countries: China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia and

Philippines.

The results of the study will be presented at a regional seminar, tentatively scheduled to take place at the end of 2009.

For more information, contact [ictinfo@unesco-bkk.org](mailto:ictinfo@unesco-bkk.org).

**Further information:**

- [ICT in Education, UNESCO Bangkok](#)

**Related links:**

- [Using technology to improve the graduation rate](#)
- [What Works in Youth Employment: The Impact of New Information Technologies](#)
- [From veil to camera: Empowering women through skills training](#)

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- [UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter](#)

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**China promotes distance education through the “Classroom on the Air”**

China Education Television Station, started a new regular programme “Classroom on the Air”, on March 2, 2009. It is the country’s first satellite television channel for schools and other learners. The channel is aimed at providing services for primary and secondary schools, vocational education and teacher education. Its broadcasting marks an important step forward in the development of distance education in China.

The channel’s origin dates back to 2003, when the [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome](#) (SARS) virus, hit some areas of China, resulting in the closure of many schools for months and millions of school children being forced to stay at home.

“Classroom on the Air” was started as a temporary channel to provide an educational service for those children unable to attend school. It broadcast content for 13 hours

a day and programmes covered different school subjects, psychological counselling, cultural and artistic appreciation, popular science, etc. The programmes were widely welcomed. The temporary channel demonstrated the effect and potential of modern distance education.

The channel was restarted in May 2008, after a disastrous earthquake hit China's Sichuan province. In the quake-hit areas, many schools collapsed and children stayed in tents. In those "tent schools", people were happy to find that they could watch "Classroom on the Air". This rebirth of the channel also broadcast for 13 hours a day, covering 556 schools and 530,000 school children. It played an effective role in helping people overcome the shadow of the disaster, and was highly praised by people in the quake-hit areas and the rest of the country.

In December 2008, the satellite channel was granted authorization to broadcast as an official satellite TV channel. At present, it is the only satellite TV channel in China whose orientation is to provide a service to primary and secondary education, teacher education and vocational education. Its aim is to promote equity and quality of education, especially in China's central and western rural areas.

The channel is mainly a campus channel. Between 2003 and 2007, China launched a "Modern Distance Education Programme for rural schools in Middle-and-Western China", and now 40 per cent of schools in China have installed satellite TV reception facilities, which means that about 100 million school children can watch satellite TV.

The "Classroom on the Air" channel has now been included as part of the national distance education project and China's Ministry of Education has announced that it will take measures to cover all schools in the country in two years. The channel also plans to coordinate with "schoolNets", which is gradually becoming popular in China.

The programmes are divided into several modules. About 40 per cent of the programmes are aimed at school children, including the instruction of different subjects and various extra-curricular activities for boarding schools in rural areas. About 30 per cent of the programmes are aimed at teacher education, both for in-service and pre-service teachers. Teacher training is one focus of the channel, especially during the winter and summer vacations. About 15 per cent of programmes are vocational educational programmes for vocational schools and farmers. Other programmes include emergency education programmes for public safety and news.

The channel keeps its broadcasting hours and content tied to the needs and the availability of its target audiences. Every school day, it has about four hours of morning, noon, and afternoon sessions for school culture, as well as 6.5 hours of selected high-quality lessons and teaching assistive programmes.

During the late afternoon and early evening, around four hours of teacher training programmes are provided for instructors. As for vocational education, it provides around 2.5 hours of vocational education programmes every day, which are usually broadcast during the late evening. On weekends and national holidays, special programmes and online interaction is provided for teachers and farmers.

"Classroom on the air" promotes the sharing of high-quality teaching and learning

resources between urban regions and rural regions, with a major part of its content being recorded lessons taught by selected excellent teachers in the cities. The channel demonstrates its distinct features through its combination of traditional TV media, distance education and ICT in education.

**Further information:**

- [China promotes distance education through the broadcasting of “Classroom on the Air”](#)

**Related links:**

- [China Education Television Station \(CETV\)](#)
- [Satellite education – Providing quality education under extreme conditions](#)
- [Chinese and Egyptian laureates receives UNESCO prize for the use of ICT in Education](#)
- [Shanghai TV University and Egyptian Ministry to receive the 2008 UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICTs in Education](#)
- [UNESCO and Iraqi Ministry of Education launch educational TV channel](#)
- [Teachers TV - Thousands of education programmes on TV and online](#)
- [The Education Clip Library](#)

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**Pacific ICT Ministers set priorities to “connect the unconnected”**

The Pacific ICT Ministerial Forum: Connecting the Unconnected wrapped up last month in Nukualofa, Kingdom of Tonga. Thirteen ICT Ministers from Pacific Island countries, including two prime ministers agreed to a set of priorities and actions to

spur ICT development. The Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, Mr Sami Al-Basheer Al Morshid, joined with partners to launch new complementary initiatives.

In a joint communiqué issued at the end of the forum, participating governments called for greater coordination among partners to minimize overlap and maximize the impact of investments in ICT development projects. Ministers welcomed the forum as a means of bringing partners together to share their activities and coordinate efforts. They agreed to explore the possible establishment of a Pacific association of regulators to harmonize activities. Ministers called for rapid implementation of regional connectivity initiatives and for reinforced efforts to build human capacity in ICT. They also directed officials to work towards establishing a shared regulatory resource centre at the earliest possible date and encouraged island states to make full use of ICTs for early warning and response systems to improve disaster preparedness.

“The Pacific Island Countries have clearly stated their objectives and priorities,” said Mr Al Basheer. “ITU is fully committed to work with our partners in delivering results for the Pacific Island States.”

Mr Al Basheer announced several new partnerships to assist Pacific Island Countries. “We are building on the expertise and resources of all interested partners to reinforce our collective impact on ICT development in the Pacific,” he said. Partnerships include collaboration with:

- the European Commission and the Pacific Islands; Telecommunication Association on two projects to strengthen ICT capacity building for policy-makers and regulators;
- Cisco Systems to expand technical ICT training for young people;
- Nokia Siemens Networks to test low cost solutions to connect rural villages;
- “One Laptop Per Child” to provide connected laptops for school children.

The Prime Minister of Tonga Dr Feleti Sevele expressed his thanks to Mr AlBasheer for organizing the forum as well as to Mr Jim Maraurai, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands and ministers and partners for their contributions. He said: “We leave this meeting with a renewed sense of optimism and solidarity, focused on tangible actions that we can implement in the coming months and years for the betterment of the Pacific region.”

**Further information:**

- [Pacific ICT Ministers set priorities to “connect the unconnected”](#)

**Related links:**

- [Putting technology in the service of global development](#)

- [UN works with the Philippines to close the digital divide](#)
- [Using technology to improve the graduation rate](#)
- [UN appeals for funds to bridge 'digital divide' in the Asia-Pacific region](#)
- [UN launches e-Learning initiative in over 160 developing countries](#)

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**State of ICT and Education in the small island developing states of the Caribbean**

Over the course of the past decade, many Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean have made significant efforts in relation to both ICT skills instruction and more general use of ICT in education. However, these efforts have not yet been rewarded by substantial impact due to regional challenges such as limited ICT capacity of the private sector (where those skills might be used) and the more traditional exam-focused orientation of instruction. At the same time, these efforts have done much to increase student access to ICT at the secondary level, while in the process, knowledge, capacity, and experience have been gained by the region's education personnel, especially among those now responsible for furthering ICT.

In spite of these challenges, given the increased use of ICT throughout the global economy, ICT has become even more important to the region's economic development at this juncture. Thus, there are valuable lessons to be gained in noting both the Caribbean countries' achievements in educational computing and other uses of ICT in the classroom as well as the limitations of those achievements.

To review the opportunities and challenges that these countries face, *infoDev* commissioned the study, *Survey of ICT and Education in the Caribbean*, which is intended to meet the need for a comprehensive representation of the current state of ICT use in education in the Caribbean. The Study addresses:

- The state of policy and planning;
- Current usage of ICT in the primary, secondary, and tertiary systems;
- Pre-service and in-service Teacher Professional Development.

The first volume of the survey presents information on region-wide trends in relation to policy management of information, ICT use in schools, and barriers to technology

integration. Common challenges are also described, and where appropriate, opportunities for regional action to address these challenges are identified. The final section presents profiles of selected ICT projects in Caribbean schools.

The second volume of the survey comprises individual studies of the countries, protectorates and departments selected for inclusion in the survey.

The region's SIDS face major challenges because of their socio-geographical locations, such as small and distributed populations and vulnerability to both international economic and local climate events. Thus, the importance of the introduction of ICT into Caribbean education systems to strengthen the ability of local populations to participate in the international economy as workers and consumers, and as exporters of culturally linked goods, services and information, cannot be underestimated.

**Further information:**

- [State of ICT and Education in the small island developing states of the Caribbean](#)

**Related links:**

- [infoDev](#)
- [infoDev releases report on state of ICT use in education in African countries](#)
- [Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation of ICT in Education Projects](#)
- [Quick Guides to "ICT in Education" Issues](#)

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**New ICT development index compares 154 countries**

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) released its new ICT Development Index (IDI), which compares developments in Information and Communication



Technologies (ICT) in 154 countries over a five-year period, from 2002 to 2007.

The Index combines 11 indicators into a single measure that can be used as a benchmarking tool globally, regionally and at the country level. These are related to ICT access, use and skills, such as households with a computer, the number of Internet users and literacy levels.

The most advanced countries in ICT are from Northern Europe. The exception is the Republic of Korea. Sweden tops the new ITU ICT Development Index, followed by the Republic of Korea, Denmark, the Netherlands, Iceland and Norway. They are followed by other, mainly high-income countries from Europe, Asia and North America. Poor countries, in particular the least developed countries, remain at the lower end of the index with limited access to ICT infrastructure, including fixed and mobile telephony, Internet and broadband.

The report reveals that all countries (except one) have improved their ICT levels over the past five years, but some much more than others. Eastern Europe not only features high relative growth, but also one of the highest IDI value gains and can thus be considered as the most dynamic region in ICT development during this period. Countries that were driving this process include the Baltic States and Romania. Other economies that have significantly improved their ICT levels are Luxembourg, the United Arab Emirates, Ireland, Macao (China), Japan, Italy and France.

Globally speaking, most progress has been made on ICT access, which includes fixed and mobile telephony, Internet bandwidth, and households with computers and Internet. In terms of ICT use, which includes the number of Internet users, fixed and mobile broadband, progress has been much slower. In particular broadband, a more recent technology, still has to take off in many countries.

Countries with low ICT levels (and hence low Index ranks) are primarily from the developing world. Given the close relationship between ICT level and GDP, many of the poorer countries, in particular from Africa, rank further down in the IDI, with little change in ranking since 2002.

**Further information:**

- [New ICT development index compares 154 countries](#)

**Related links:**

- [Measuring the Information Society - The ICT Development Index](#)
- [ITU press release](#)
- [ITU - International Telecommunication Union](#)

- [Singapore and Republic of Korea among the top ten in the Global Information Technology Report 2007-2008](#)
- [Using ICT appropriately in distance learning in the Pacific](#)
- [Putting technology in the service of global development](#)
- [ITU launches initiative to protect children online](#)

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## **Programmes & Projects**

### **Malaysian teens reveal their lives and concerns through one-minute videos**

Qusyairi Zazili, 15, is a budding environmentalist with a concern he recently revealed at the first “OneMinutesJr” video workshop hosted in Malaysia by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education.

“All the air pollution, all the open burning, the global warming, it bothers me. I am trying to do my part to save my world for my future generation,” said Qusyairi, who produced a one-minute video called “Gas”. “I created a video about the environment, mostly about air pollution. I don’t think the air we all breathe is clean enough. So I am doing my part to spread the message,” he said.

With the historic city of Malacca as an inspirational backdrop, Qusyairi joined 19 teenagers from all corners of the country to learn about using digital media to convey his story.

Workshop participants included children from the “Orang Asli” indigenous community, ethnic minorities and children living with disabilities – as well as those living in the shadow of HIV and AIDS. During the five-day workshop, children equipped themselves with basic filmmaking skills and found a newfound sense of confidence to tackle life’s challenges.

“At the start, I felt so scared. But after the filming, I believe I have achieved something and feel more positive about myself,” said Sonia Meyah Ak Selan, 16. Sonia shared her personal story on loneliness with a one-minute video entitled, “A Bad Day”. She was brimming with laughter after only a few days at the workshop.

Digital storytelling captures children’s imagination by engaging young people in a language that is familiar to their generation. Although most of the teens had no filmmaking experience prior to the Malacca workshop, they embraced the opportunity to learn with a sense of wonder and possibility.

“I believe that getting young people involved in broadcasting helps in terms of their self-image and self-worth, making them feel what they have to say is important enough to be on the air,” said UNICEF’s Executive Producer for Children’s Broadcasting Initiatives, Karen Cirillo.

Two artists from the OneMinutes Foundation, Evelien Krijl and Olivia Glebbeek, helped Ms. Cirillo facilitate the training.

“This workshop empowers children to understand the world around them and provides them with opportunities of expressing themselves,” said UNICEF Representative in Malaysia and Special Representative to Brunei Youssouf Oomar.

“We keep talking about the right to participation, the right to self-expression. These are means and ways which we can use to engage with children.”

A selection of the one-minute videos – some poignant, others funny – will be aired by Malaysia’s Media Prima Group 8 TV channel on 1 March to mark the International Children’s Day of Broadcasting. Videos from the workshop will also be submitted to the Dubai International Film Festival, further amplifying youth voices and messages.

Youth reporter Wan Su-Ann, 17, welcomed the chance for her story to be heard. “People always say that teens are meant to be seen and not heard,” she said. “I have the very strong urge to tell people that we are teens, we have our opinions and we want the world to know.”

Speaking in sign language, hearing-impaired Muhammad Syarifuddin bin Mohd Razib, 15, added: “I am deaf, but through video making, I can share my story with others and the world.”

**Watch the videos:**

- [YouTube](#)

**Related links:**

- [Malaysian teens reveal their lives and concerns through one-minute videos](#)
- [UNICEF Malaysia](#)
- [A journey of hope ... A new way of learning through ICT in Education](#)

- [VoiceThread – Interactive multimedia albums for collaborative work in the classroom](#)
- [Tikatok: Kids create and publish books](#)
- [Theatre and ICT used to teach about community radio in Bangladesh](#)
- [Student Peer Teaching Strategy: Hands on, heads on and hearts on learning](#)

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## **Resources**

### **Wealth of resources on sexual health online**

The goal of this project is to profile the educational and campaign materials available in the field of sexual health and HIV in an accessible format in order to facilitate a positive and focused direction for future programmes, material development, and campaigns.

“I am gay. I am lesbian. What about you? Are you OK?” is one of 49 booklets and 931 resource materials on sexual health and HIV related issues in UNESCO’s online Healthy Sexuality Database.

The bilingual database, launched two days before St. Valentine’s Day this year, provides a wide assortment of printed and audio-visual materials developed by government ministries, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations and health professionals.

It is divided into various categories, ranging from radio spots, documentaries, talk shows, posters and cartoon booklets, to study and academic reports.

The materials date back 20 years and can be downloaded free of charge.

The English-Thai online Healthy Sexuality Database profiles the history of sexual health and HIV prevention in Thailand.

It is a comprehensive online resource to ensure materials on the topics of sexual health, HIV and related issues are archived, stored and made accessible to health workers and the general public.

The database is supported by UNESCO Bangkok, in partnership with the National Science Museum of Thailand and UNAIDS.

Contact: [p.bergstrom\[at\]unescobkk.org](mailto:p.bergstrom@unescobkk.org)

**Access the database:**

- [Healthy Sexuality Database](#)

**Related links:**

- [HIV and AIDS online data hub launched](#)
- [Mobile phone games teach about HIV/AIDS](#)
- [Building knowledge about HIV and AIDS: An interactive course for educators](#)
- [UNESCO workshop urges ICT use in HIV/AIDS awareness](#)

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**Education for a digital world**

Digital information technologies are transforming the way we work, learn, and communicate. Within this digital revolution are new learning approaches that transform hierarchical, industrial-based models of teaching and learning.

The creation of this book employed the very principles it espouses. It embodied a forming relationships model, and the sharing of ideas to produce new thinking model.

It espouses a unique interactive, collaborative research model based on the formation

of online relationships among 50 contributors from around the world representing research, administration and business communities.

The development of the book demonstrates the powerful opportunity afforded by online technologies in this digital revolution era.

*Education for a Digital World* contains a comprehensive collection of proven strategies and tools for effective online teaching, based on the principles of learning as a social process. It offers practical, contemporary guidance to support e-learning decision-making, instructional choices, as well as programme and course planning, and development.

Practical advice, real-life examples, case studies, and useful resources supply in-depth perspectives about structuring and fostering socially engaging learning in an online environment. A plethora of e-learning topics provide insights, ideas, and usable tools. Tips and evidence-based theory guide administrators, programme and course developers, project teams and teachers through the development of online learning opportunities.

*Education for a Digital World* is an indispensable guide, resource, textbook and manual for policymakers and practitioners in developing and developed countries.

**Further information:**

- [Education for a digital world](#)

**Related links:**

- [The future of online learning: Ten years on](#)
- [Personalised learning puts students in a class of their own](#)
- [UN launches e-Learning initiative in over 160 developing countries](#)
- [Who re-uses learning objects?](#)
- [\(Critical\) history of ICT in education - and where we are heading?](#)

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## **What do you think about this topic?**

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### **Paying attention to attention**

I teach mathematics in a modern classroom. There is wireless, but there is also a tangled web of wires. The students are attentive, but they are easily distracted. They all have laptops, and they listen to the teacher, sort of, and they look at the screen, sort of, and they complete their assignments, sort of. They exhibit continuous partial attention (Stone, 2008), which is all a maths teacher can hope for when his explanation of the binomial theorem is competing with Hi-5 and YouTube.

Recently, the 10th-graders entered for their mathematics lesson. There was the familiar buzz: the unzipping of bags and unfolding of laptops, young legs tripping over each other to get to the power plugs, 20 repetitions of the obnoxious Windows start up sound, and the laughter and chirping of the informal learning space between lessons: when students quickly check their inboxes and “Facebook” pages, hoping for a joke but dreading another assignment.

As they settled in, one of the brightest students, Puja, asked me sincerely:

"Could you please be quiet today and just let us do our work?"

I laughed and agreed to her request. I abandoned my lesson plan and spent the lesson circulating the room, carefully stepping over their power cords, chatting with students and answering their questions.

Puja's question was profound. It sums up the changes in education since the arrival of the World Wide Web. How did this happen? Have teachers become obsolete? Will future generations ignore their teachers entirely?

I appreciate Puja's candour. She was telling me what many students (and teachers) want to say but are afraid to utter:

“I own my own attention, and I'm tired of you taking it away from me!”

Paying attention to attention is becoming one of the most important aspects of teaching and learning in the Digital Age. There are approximately one trillion websites competing for our attention (Alpert 2008). The competition for attention is intense. Remember, just five years ago, when many websites requested a username and a password, or maybe even a credit card number (hah!) just to view them? They all met the same fate: Death by the Quick Click.

Now I see teachers spending hours and hours designing their websites, integrating graphics, adding pages and pages of wikis to the portal, etc. Whenever I walk into their

classrooms, they ask me to “have a look at this!” They pester the principal and other administrators with similar requests: in short, with requests for attention. The only problem is: students aren’t looking at our carefully prepared websites on the Crimean War! They find “Facebook” more interesting, and when they finally get down to doing their history homework (often after midnight), they have more efficient means of obtaining information.

A typical international school now has an extensive portal with thousands upon thousands of pages. These portals are useful because they explain tasks and curricular materials. However, most teachers were educated before the Digital Age and we approach education from a content-driven perspective. We have poured enormous amounts of energy and time into putting content on portal sites and websites. We tell the students, “please read this assignment; it is on the portal” or, “please watch this video; get the link from my website.” However, many, if not most, students ignore the instructions and find their own materials using Wikipedia and Google. This is a fundamental miscommunication; why does it occur? Because we are not paying attention to the students’ habits; or, if we are paying attention, we often just try to change those habits, unsuccessfully.

Recently, a very bright student asked me for a file. “Get it from the portal,” I told her.

“Please, can you just email it to me; I hate that portal,” she replied.

“Why?” I asked.

“It's like one of those mirror mazes at an amusement park, you can get in but you can never get out.”

Students also must start paying attention to attention. We are now in the cut-and-paste age and their products tend to be too lengthy. I recently spoke to a student who had just submitted a 43-page paper on matrices. It was just a routine assignment and I'm sure the teacher was hoping for about two pages. I asked the student, “when you submit these 40-page papers, and I know students do it not only in mathematics, but in humanities or science as well, are you seeing evidence that your teachers actually read them?”

She paused, and then answered, “sometimes.”

She was startled by my question, and she had clearly never considered it. Students are not writing for human beings. They are writing to complete tasks. She seemed to think that her paper would not be graded by a human being, but by a robot.

With the proliferation of the World Wide Web, we now live in a world where one's attention is a valuable commodity. Students are aware of this; teachers less so. We teachers grew up in an environment where we were expected to pay attention to our teachers; the modern student quite rightly sees the teacher as just another adult clamouring for her attention. So is the vice-principal, so is the VJ, so is the soccer star selling fashionable clothes.



Teaching and learning in the Digital Age requires honest bargaining, between teachers and students, about swapping attention. As teachers and students interact with each other, there are multiple competitors grasping at our attention through many forms of media and electronic communication. The teacher's role is changing. Not one of us is as knowledgeable as Wikipedia. So, what can teachers offer that students cannot find on the web? Successful teachers can make students want to learn our subjects and overcome the distractions, both by making our presence interesting, and by offering personal warmth and compassion.

We cannot demand students' attention or threaten them with negative consequences if they don't pay attention. In a world that is screaming "LOOK AT ME!" good teachers will not join the cacophony, but instead will become good listeners. In a world where advertising, light pollution, sound pollution and information overload are replacing human interaction, good teachers will develop the human side of the teacher-pupil relationship. How does one become a successful teacher in the Digital Age? One must start by paying attention to attention.

The author, Mick Purcell is a teacher at [The New International School of Thailand](#)

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#### *Works Cited*

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Stone, Linda. Fine Dining with Mobile Devices. January 2008, 2008. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/linda-stone/fine-dining-with-mobile-d\\_b\\_80...](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/linda-stone/fine-dining-with-mobile-d_b_80...) (accessed January 29, 2009).

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#### **Further information:**

- [Paying attention to attention](#)

#### **Related links:**

- [ITeachNet.org - For international education professionals](#)
- [A journey of hope ... A new way of learning through ICT in Education](#)
- [Computer curriculum in elementary schools](#)

- [Personalised learning puts students in a class of their own](#)
- [Microtraining as a support mechanism for informal learning](#)
- [Living and learning with new media: Summary of findings from the Digital Youth Project](#)

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**“Recurring issues encountered by distance educators in developing and emerging nations”**

This article, published by Clayton R. Wright et al., explores a number of challenges faced by e-learning or distance educators in developing and emerging countries, provides a context for many of the challenges, and outlines some measures devised to overcome them.

These educators must: determine a sound rationale for employing online learning; recognize that technology is only part of the educational transformation process; address the lack of infrastructure and the cost of internet bandwidth and equipment; counter the cultural imperialism of courseware from Western nations; deal with limited educational resources; place a greater emphasis on quality assurance systems and change negative perceptions of distance education; respond to the needs and concerns of both students and faculty; access or develop up-to-date educational resources; and consider the implementation of mobile learning.

The continued growth and success of distance education in developing and emerging nations will depend on the extent to which issues covered in this article are addressed as they bear on the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

**Read the full article:**

- [Recurring issues encountered by distance educators in developing and emerging nations](#)

**Related links:**

- [ICT-based distance education in South Asia](#)

- [Satellite education – Providing quality education under extreme conditions](#)
- [A framework for adopting LMS to introduce e-Learning in a traditional course](#)
- [Technology-enhanced learning in developing nations: A review](#)
- [Theory and Practice of Online Learning - Second edition released](#)
- [Using distance learning to boost statistical training for developing countries](#)

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- [UNESCO “ICT in Education” Announcement e-newsletter](#)

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**EduSud - An ICT in Education portal from Africa**

The EduSud portal, created specifically for teachers, aims to help them discover the world of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and to provide tools, advice, references, educational resources and other materials, which help to integrate technologies into training and to appreciate these tools in a teaching context.

The majority of the resources on EduSud have been selected according to two criteria: Most resources are free, (which means you will find real support and a concrete tool to help you integrate ICTs into your classroom without having to pay); and particular attention has been given to providing access to resources emanating from southern countries

The website is also dedicated to provide knowledge on educational technologies in Africa and to assist policy-makers to formulate policies for the development of national strategies for the implementation of ICTs in the educational system on that continent.

**Further information:**

- [EduSud](#)

**Related links:**

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- [ICTs in TVET in AFRICA: call for participation](#)
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