

ASSOCIate Online Update

February 2009

This Update gives you, the trainee teachers, e-moderators, e-mentors and teacher educators, some of the latest information about developments for ASSOCIate Online.

- **More activity and fewer 'lurkers'!** More e-moderators are reporting that more trainees and other users are becoming more active as opposed to simply 'lurking'.
- **E-mentors needed.** We are experiencing some problems with trainees finding suitable e-mentors. Whilst we want to be able to provide this facility, it is offered on the basis that it should be used by those trainees who are finding it difficult to locate a suitable mentor on a face-to-face basis, rather than as an automatic facility for all 6,000 trainees! We do need more e-mentors; remember that a teacher can join ASSOCIate Online if they agree to e-mentor just one trainee per annum; they can use this as their CPD for their IfL registration. Please ask your colleagues to consider joining. The application and details are on the ASSOCIate web site – <http://associate.hud.ac.uk>
- **Teacher Educator Survey.** A pilot is being undertaken of a questionnaire for teacher educators to complete. This asks them about their experience to date of using the OurSubject - ASSOCIate Online. When the pilot has been evaluated we will send the questionnaire out to all teacher educators. A survey will also be undertaken of trainees' experience. This might be best channelled through the user institutions themselves; we will discuss this at the next meeting of the User Group.
- **Logging in.** We have done a brief survey of some of the problems that trainees have experienced in logging in. It seems that the main problem is, quite simply, not reading the instructions carefully for their own institution. In some cases, the HUDCETT office is giving considerable support in basic IT skills to the trainees. This reveals the need for greater identification of basic IT skills at the start of the course and greater support is needed from the provider and the teacher educators themselves.
- **Teacher Educators' section.** A new section of ASSOCIate Online is being developed to provide a **national** forum for teacher educators. Jim Crawley of University Bath Spa is developing this section. He will be reporting on the development at the User Group meeting on 12th February. A forum for **Skills for Life** teacher educators is also to be added.
- **Chief E-Moderators' Pilot.** The report on the pilot on moderation of the e-moderators has resulted in proposals for a new Super-moderator role. This role will ensure a quality assurance system for our e-moderators and will provide support and development for them. Note that the Ofsted report on VLEs (see reference below) has commented on the lack of moderation of VLEs – not so for ASSOCIate Online!

ASSOCiate Online

Achieving Subject Specialist Online Communities
and providing subject support wherever you are

➤ ***New Training Packs for Teacher Educators!***

We are presently piloting a number of training packs for teacher educators on the development of their skills in using aspects of VLE facilities and how to incorporate them into an ITE curriculum. We have also mapped these against the LLUK units of Achievement so that they can be used for any ITE curriculum. Some examples of the topics are:-

Wikis

Network Databases

Forum

They all provide instructions (including screen shots) of how to set the facilities up and how to manage them. They then go on to suggest how the teacher educator can use these in an ITE curriculum. A further advantage is that these can also be used with trainees to develop their skills.

➤ ***Ofsted report on VLEs.*** This is well worth reading. It can be found on the Ofsted web site **The virtual reality of e-learning**

Despite expectations, the use of Virtual Learning Environments across schools and colleges has been slow to take off. Enthusiasm and peer support from teachers and learners should help the initiative develop more widely, says Ofsted.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/News/Press-and-media/2009/January/The-virtual-reality-of-e-learning>

and the ASSOCiate web site – <http://associate.hud.ac.uk>.

- ***E-moderators and e-mentors' training event, 13th January, 2009.*** We had a very useful event to raise issues and offer further training to e-moderators and e-mentors. Around 30 people attended.
- ***Dates for your diary.*** The next event for ASSOCiate is the annual conference on **5th June, 2009** at the University of Huddersfield. This will also include the User Group meeting.
- ***Consultants needed for Skills for Life and 14-19 development.*** We are looking for consultants or teachers who are experienced practitioners and who can locate suitable resources for either Skills for Life or 14-19 issues. Please ask them to contact us at the HUDCETT office. Or email us (see below)

And don't forget – the last Bulletin in November showed you how to **upload a picture** and **where to look for suitable video clips**. You can find the November Bulletin on the ASSOCiate web site – <http://associate.hud.ac.uk>

If you have any queries about OurSubject - ASSOCiate Online, you can email us at assoc@hud.ac.uk any time.