

MirandaNet E-Zine

February 2001

The last month has been another busy one in the life of MirandaNet. One of our main successes has been the winning of a project for the DfEE which you can read more about in this newsletter. Look out for the details of the South African teachers exchange programme taking place in April, the Fulbright Scholarship programme and the teacher bursaries. If you are able to come to CAL01 International Teachers Forum you will hear all about funding your schools visits abroad. Seeing how other teachers cope raises standards and morale. I do hope that senior managers still have the vision to understand this, despite shortages, in fact because of them. In this context, I have a few free professional development places left for the 3rd/4th April, worth £250, funded by the DfEE and Oracle. Please take advantage of this opportunity to learn.

You will also find an update re the mentoring service and details of the new Teachers Zone on Think.com and GridClub. Anne Sparrowhawk is running professional development seminars in London - all expenses paid. From May these will be national. Gerard MacDonald, our resident playwright, is piloting a management of change role play workshop on 16th February which we can run for your institution. Let us know if you are interested.

There is also some important news re the website and the new automatic profiling function Jane Dorner has now set up. Please read about this as it is important that we have a profile of every single member of the community on the web. A £10 gift voucher at Amazon is on offer for the first 3 fully completed NEW auto-profile entries to be drawn from a hat on 1 March.

As ever there is lots of interesting stuff going on so please read on!

Web Resources for Teachers by Teachers WEBRITTe Project

MirandaNet has just begun a project in collaboration with TeacherNet at the Department for Education to increase teachers' awareness of the National Grid for Learning resources, to promote ownership of this new medium and to consult with teachers by peer review. This process will be a celebration of teachers' existing work on the Web and a promotion of resource development by teachers for teachers.

The first phase of this project is a pre-pilot to be completed by March which will focus on the provision of lesson plans on the internet. A web site will be created by teachers for teachers on The DfEE TeacherNet site representing the outcomes of the pre-pilot. A number of MirandaNet Fellows are heading up teams to evaluate existing lesson plans.

We are looking for web surfers to evaluate teachers' web resources on the NGfL in the short term and the long term. This is an opportunity for fees for something that many teachers want to be doing anyway. Get in touch with me for further details.

South Africa

MirandaNet has sponsored the fares for four black South African Teachers from Mamelodi School and Spring Vale Schools to visit CAL01 and schools in Wapping. MirandaNet hosts from Wapping schools will then visit the township on a return visit. If you have close links with a country and want an exchange visit let us know.

What a Lottery!

MirandaNet is in the middle of the time and money consuming business of putting in bids to the European Union, the Lottery, Year of Science, The British Council and the Thinking Skills Board. MirandaNet companies are also developing plans to support ICT professional development. Many of you will know that the average chance of getting such funding is about 1 in 8. We will just forge on until our activities are sponsored. Keep letting us know about your good work because examples of good practice raise the chances of being accepted. Send information to Tanya and fill in your profile on the website so that funders can see who you are.

European Union of Women

You will remember that Bozena Mannova and I won the EUW Women of Achievement Award in 1998 for the Anglo-Czech alliance - CzechMiranda. In 1999, Sue Heightman won the EUW Award for Professional Women for the role she has taken as a Deputy Head at Tolworth Girls' making contacts across Europe. We would like to nominate someone in our community this year for the same awards - humanitarian or professional award categories. Education representatives in companies will also count. Who do you think deserves an award? Please let me know. The lunch at the Grosvenor House is on Friday 13th July. There will be free tickets for MirandaNet members so again please let me know if you would like to attend.

Teachers' International Professional Development Bursaries

For details and potential exchange partners contact me at christina@mirandanet.ac.uk. Membership of MirandaNet can be important in the success of your application. Schools in Canada, Brazil, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic are particularly keen to receive visits from MirandaNet Fellows. You need four from one school or nine from an LEA. MirandaNet will help you apply for these grants. Let us know what your schools interests are.

Do you need a new direction. What about America?

Fulbright Scholarships for teachers

Exchanges with schools across the world can enrich the schools curriculum and raise standards. MirandaNet Fellows have the chance of piloting Fulbright scholarships for teachers. The pilot encompasses two reciprocal phases of 3 week school-based exchanges across two academic years with online communication. I am in Washington in March making contact with potential exchanges in Virginia and Iowa. Please let me know before March 2nd if your school wants to be considered for this possibility. We are hoping to find three weeks when UK schools are on holiday and US schools are not!

Thinking Space

GridClub

GridClub is a new online service for 7-11 year olds that makes learning fun, at home and in school. It is funded for children eligible for education in England, by the DfEE and provided by a new consortium led by Channel 4 in partnership with Intuitive Media and Oracle. GridClub has four major components - The Club, The Virtual Library, The Shop and GridClub TV. The Club is based on Oracle's Think.com technology and is a safe online community designed specifically for 7-11 year old children. It offers a variety of flexible and powerful communication tools and is totally free, providing access for all children, whether they have high or low level technology. The website address is www.gridclub.com. A Teachers pack containing a registration form is available. For further information contact Caroline Hook at caroline.hook@oracle.com.

E-mentoring: Ten heads are better than one

The think.com e-mentoring service has been running for a couple of months now. This is a community on think.com which allows any teacher or ICT co-ordinator to have a dialogue with the ten enthusiastic mentors about anything to do with ICT or online education communities.

Those who have used the e-mentoring service on think.com seem to be happy with the outcomes ... but we have experienced a lull in the contributions during January. So please, let us have your contributions with questions to the ten mentors. You can pose a question, a comment, a challenge or raise any issue concerning ICT (around lesson planning, specific skills, access, projects etc) or online education communities (such as getting started, keeping the motivation going, assessment).

We would love to hear from you; there is a direct link to the e-mentoring service from the MirandaNet web-site. For further information contact Jane Field: Telephone 01788 891925 or email janefield@educationanddevelopment.co.uk

UK Teacher Zone

A new community will be launched on think.com in the beginning of March 2001. Search for Teacher Zone UK to discover a range of different communities to support teachers and ICT Co-ordinators in their work using ICT and online communities in school. A chat room, link to e-mentoring, putting research into the classroom, calling other classrooms, Hotseats, Think in the classroom, and a bulletin board are some of the initial communities that teachers can access through the Teacher Zone UK. More details on the exciting new development will be coming your way soon.

If you have any thoughts about what should be included in the UK Teacher Zone please contact Jane Field: Telephone 01788 891925 or email janefield@educationanddevelopment.co.uk

Seminars

The next Think.com seminar will be on the 19th March, followed by the final one for this year in May. Please look at the MirandaNet site under the Diary of events for details and the booking form. If you have a Think.com pilot your fares will be paid. Anne Sparrowhawk,

who runs these thought provoking sessions is currently planning the series of Think.com seminars to run from September 01 to May 02. Watch this space and the website for details.

The Website

Automatic Profile Function

The MirandaNet online database has now been redesigned to do automatic profiling. As you all know, it is a condition of being part of the MirandaNet community that you have a profile on the site. We have made this really easy for you by creating a template that will automatically 'publish' a profile on the website. But it does mean going back and answering a new profile questionnaire. Even if you think you have already done this, please make sure what appears is what you want.

Each of you will be getting an individual email to tell you what you need to do. Please read it carefully. Those of you who have sent material to Jane Dorner in the last few weeks need not do anything (but that doesn't apply to very many people).

Please do this by 1 March. We look forward to seeing profiles of every single member of the community.

A £10 gift voucher at Amazon is on offer for the first 3 fully completed NEW auto-profile entries to be drawn from a hat on 1 March. Only people who didn't have a profile before will qualify.

Fellow of the Month

The February Fellow of the Month is Sue Heightman, a long-standing MirandaNet Fellow and Deputy Head at Tolworth Girls' School, who has recently completed her research for her PhD on "School Based Research Into The Benefits of Using An Effective Learning Model In The Work of Mentors and Trainee Teachers At Tolworth Girls' School, A London Teacher Training School". Visit the site for further details.

Think.com project of the Month

The February Think Project of the Month is Sarah Quilty's excellent work in Northern Ireland using Think.com. Please visit the site to read more on this. Look out for the March Project of the month on the website which will detail the work being done by Alison Seagrave in the London Borough of Redbridge.

Conferences and Seminars

CAL01

MirandaNet has free ICT professional development places at CAL01 International Teachers Forum 3rd - 4th April at Warwick University. In partnership with industry, workshop sessions run by teachers include funding your ICT projects to include visits abroad to see good practice, building online learning communities, and industry education partnership. All participants will be asked to contribute brief information about teachers' ICT work in their region.

Included is a medieval banquet at Warwick Castle on the 3rd April. Email communications@mirandanet.ac.uk

MirandaRose Awards

The February Educational-site-of-the-Month MirandaRose Award goes to:

the Lewisham/Goldsmiths NOF area. Freely accessible and well organised courseware for teachers integrating ICT into their teaching. The opening screen couldn't be better for navigating from. Usually this sort of quality of material is subscriber only and/or password protected. Francis Howlett is the editor of this website and a number of Fellows are involved. The link is <http://www.talent.org.uk/>

Fellows' Byte by Ben Franklin

Ben will be back next month with another Fellows' Byte. Meanwhile, please get in touch with him to book your space (benjamin@franklin77.freeseve.co.uk).

Please send items for next month's Ezine to Tanya who is keeping track of all our events (communications@mirandanet.ac.uk). Let me know about anything I can do to improve MirandaNet.

All the best

Tina