

# educateUK



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Barack Obama, US President

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## WELCOME

*"Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave"*

Muhammad (PBUH)

The passage of life takes us through many stages from the depth of our mother to the home of our parents, to our neighbours and the community we grow up in, to the school where we start learning, to the country we serve and to the world where we reach out to. Is there any stage when we stop learning? No, we never stop - not even after graduation from university - and we look to become masters in disciplines beyond our initial understanding.

This first edition of *educateUK* will broaden your knowledge about what's on offer in the UK in terms of Masters qualifications and how they have been perceived by students who have undertaken these. We have views, reviews and articles - all taking you to the next stage.

Dr Muhammad Farmer  
Editor in Chief

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# Study, Work and Live in the UK

Dr Joy K Joseph & Dr Ying Liu

In the past, centuries of education have paved the way for the great civilisations, through the development and growth of the person in particular and society at large. In the current climate of the global economy, education is even more crucial to this development so we can acquire new knowledge, skills and experience. Both Dr Joseph and Dr Liu are lecturers and researchers at the British Institute of Technology and E-Commerce, London. Here, they share their views on the outstanding contributions of British education, where international students are at the very centre of learning and training. They also highlight some of the special features of the British system of education, work and life.



Education in the UK is renowned for its high quality. It has all the inspirational ingredients in education dating back hundreds of years: from scientific discoveries to industrial revolution, and to many "first - of - a - kind" initiatives towards education for all. Whatever you choose to study - Business, Engineering or English - there are different levels through which you can progress and continue your studies: General Certificate level, Honours level, Masters level and Doctoral level.

There are also different approaches that can be tailored for your needs, enabling you to learn in a way that best suits you. As an example, in Business Studies, through specialist learning you can increase the depth of your knowledge

and develop the skills and expertise needed to respond to the complex problems of modern business. So you will have the ability to make strategic decisions. You will rapidly acquire high-level knowledge, equip yourself with thinking or problem-solving skills, developing your own ideas after collecting, analysing and synthesising information from an area of work or study. If you are well motivated, you can also adopt a new and creative approach to developing new sciences or solve the unanswered questions the world still faces.

You aren't expected to just sit in a classroom listening to lectures and taking notes; you are being empowered to participate in the learning process through innovative teaching methods. For example, through group discussions, debates, presen-



tations, demonstrations, role-plays, co-operative learning, and case studies. These methods aren't just making the learning process more interesting, but also effectively improving your communication, leadership, organisational and social skills.

Life-long education and the education-for-all policy of the UK provides an atmosphere of a cumulative learning process, for everyone, irrespective of age, through identifying the individual learning needs, developing the potential through effective listening and proper caring and support. As per the Home Office information, you can undergo a course of study in an organisation that is on the register of education and training providers.

Education in the UK is renowned for the reflective cultural diversity of its international ethnic communities. The UK has been the international education centre for centuries, and will continue to cherish diversity in the era of globalisation. Students who come to the UK to study are finding their own communities without much difficulty.

There are many opportunities for international students to work in the UK both during and after their studies. There are also possibilities to stay in the UK in order to develop professional experience in the workplace, or develop course-related work placements. The 'Post Study Worker' category allows us to retain the most able international graduates who

have studied here. They can work without a sponsor for the length of their extended stay. The category also provides a bridge for highly skilled workers to extend their stay.

There is much to see and do, and there are many places to visit - from large cities such as London, Manchester, Edinburgh and Cardiff, to historical towns and villages, and to quite unique natural scenery. Education in the UK costs lower compared to the US, because a university degree course will generally take three years, which is less time to complete than in America. Also a number of scholarships and bursaries are waiting for talented students.

So, what are you waiting for?



# Special Relations

between the United States of America and the United Kingdom

By David S. Onassis

The 'special relationship' between the United Kingdom and the United States has endured amidst a rapidly changing world. This was reaffirmed with the recent election of Barack Obama as US President and his assertion that he intends to continue the close economic and political ties that America has with Britain. This expression of goodwill was reciprocated by the current British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.

On the face of it, such a close relationship may seem surprising, as Britain is now very much part of the European Union and is also at the centre of the Commonwealth of its other former colonial countries. Yet the relationship between the UK and the US is more than just an alliance pursued for the sake of political convenience, dependent on the coincidence of their sharing the same language. There is a sense of mutual respect between the two countries and, if not a complete understanding, then at least a considered attempt to achieve this.

How has this been achieved, when so many other relationships between countries are defined by mistrust, if not downright antagonism, often fostered by the changing balance of power between them? The answer lies in education. A legacy of the crucial alliance between the UK and the US during the Second World War was the desire to promote world peace and understanding. Apart from the economic assistance America gave to countries needing to undergo reconstruction after 1945, there was a need for the



improvement of the exchange of information, not just in political and economic spheres, but in scientific and cultural ones as well. Hence, the Fulbright Commission.

Since its inception in 1946, more than 27, 000 Americans and Britons have crossed the Atlantic to participate in the US-UK Fulbright Educational Program. Although most Fulbright Scholars are actually exchanged between the US and other countries – 143 in total – the 'special relationship' with the UK is the main feature of the Program and this has been strengthened and redefined over each of the last six decades.

Former US President Bill Clinton said: "The United States-United Kingdom Fulbright Commission was created to promote peace and build bridges of understanding through educational exchange. For six decades, this program has worked to nurture more effective co-operation between our two countries and cultivate leaders who

can work together to address common concerns. This anniversary is an opportunity to recognize the achievement of this historic program." Clinton himself (although he was actually a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University in the late 1960s) worked as an intern for the Commission's founder, Senator William Fulbright and remained close to him and his ideals of promoting international understanding until Fulbright's death in 1995.

Although most scholarships are given to university scholars, one unique feature of the Commission is that it is not limited to academics. Doctors and members of other professions can apply for grants to work and carry out research in the countries of their choice. However, most of the outstanding alumni of the Program are those who have made up the US-UK partnership. These have included the writers Joseph Heller, Sylvia Plath and Ian

Rankin, the actors John Lithgow and Dolph Lundgren, as well as the economist Milton Friedman, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros Ghali and politicians Charles Kennedy and Shirley Williams. It is this wide-ranging appeal that makes the Fulbright a unique experience for those participating in it.

During the recent visit to London by current US President Barak Obama, his wife Michelle expressed her own dedication to the US-UK educational relationship in a public speech to young British girls, urging them to work hard in order to achieve their educational and career goals. This was significant, not just for the obvious importance of encouraging young people here, but for giving a strong indication that the new presidency would be giving attention to the more positive aspects of the political relationship between the US and the UK.

Every time a British Prime Minister meets their new American counterpart for the first time (and vice versa), there is a flurry of commentary in the UK media asking whether the 'special relationship' between the two countries is secure. The close US-UK relationship has had its ups and its downs over the past generation. The Thatcher-Reagan era was a high point, with the two seeing eye-to-eye over domestic economic ideology and their stance against the Soviet Union. By contrast, the Major-Clinton era saw strains over Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Clinton's belief that Major had supported George Bush Senior in the 1992 election. The Blair-Clinton era was much warmer, due to the two leaders' common centrist ideology and global outlook. Blair then surprised everyone by becoming even closer to George

W. Bush, with whom he initially had very little in common, when the two united over Afghanistan and Iraq.

Historically, the 'Special Relationship' has not run as smoothly as it has in more recent times. There has long been a feeling, on both sides of the Atlantic, that Britain owed its very survival in the face of Nazi aggression in the Second World War to American military help. After the war, this was extended to economic aid in the form of the Marshall Plan. Britain was very much the junior partner, the US actively undermining Britain's remaining colonial power in the 1956 Suez Crisis. Britain has had to undergo a long period of readjustment and redefinition of its role as an international power, whereas the US has, perhaps until very recently, grown from strength to strength.

The US has 'special relationships' with several other countries too, including Israel, Japan, Saudi Arabia and South Korea, both military and economic. Apart from the continuing military ties between the two, the US is Britain's biggest single-country trade partner, and the two share a similar 'Anglo-Saxon' economic model. Yet its bond with the UK is not just merely political, but cultural. The US is a country that is mainly populated by people whose ancestors came from the British Isles – and those from Germany, Italy and other European countries were quickly assimilated into an English-speaking culture, thus ensuring a common language with the UK. As the US becomes more Hispanic and Asian in terms of its population and national

character, its citizens will probably feel less of a kinship with Britain. This is especially the case with the succession of a President who does not have the same close ties to the UK as his predecessors, despite the warm overtures he has already made to the British government. (Barack Obama described his talks in Downing Street during his recent whistle-stop tour of Europe as 'terrific'.)

This is why such programmes (note the British spelling of the world, compared to the particularised American one used above) of educational exchanges like the Fulbright are of crucial importance in maintaining links, especially between people who will become influential as the political leaders of the future. Perhaps this is why the Fulbright Commission is to increase its awards by 30%, making a total of seventy scholarships a year. Also, a Fulbright Distinguished Chair, to be established in 2010, shows the extent to which knowledge is to be respected as much as – if not more than – mere military and economic strength. That is what makes the relationship between the United States of America and the United Kingdom 'Special'.



# Guru of the Computer Age

## Marshall McLuhan

By Robert Murray

As an intellectual figure from that benighted decade, the 1960s, the ideas of Herbert Marshall McLuhan stand up quite well in comparison to other gurus of the time. For example, such thinkers as the psychiatrist R. D. Laing (who proposed that insanity is a quality that should be valued as a means of creativity) or Timothy Leary (who believed the use of psychedelic drugs are beneficial to society) are today mainly seen as charlatans, despite the undoubted validity of some (but certainly not all) of their ideas.

Marshall McLuhan was Canadian and unlike most of his compatriots, never felt the need to completely cross the border into the United States to make his fame and fortune. He was also a convert to Catholicism, whose faith, as well as an innate

conservatism, gave him an objectivity that many of his contemporary thinkers lacked. He was officially a professor of English Literature, who received his doctorate from Cambridge and eventually settled at the University of Toronto, yet he single-handedly invented the subject of Media Studies, in much the same way as a century earlier Gibbon and MacCauley invented History as a discipline to be studied in Western universities. Thousands of Media Studies graduates with comparatively useless degrees may well be cursing his name as they stand in line at the local Job Centre - if they are aware of him at all, that is. Academia has a dreadful habit of dishonouring, if not



Marshall McLuhan (1911 - 1980)

completely disowning, its own prophets. Yet it was McLuhan who made the study of media an innovative and, at least in its early years, a fascinating subject.

This is unfortunate, as McLuhan's ideas have never been more relevant as they have been in the present time, what we could call the computer age. Previously, no-one considered the effect that the mass-media in its various forms - newspapers, magazines, radio, television, etc. - had on society and how it actually changed human behaviour. For example, he claimed that the advent of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century had a direct bearing on the change in the nature of religious belief in Western Europe. The ideas of Protestantism were spread by





the printing of cheap bibles written in a more colloquial style (rather than in Latin), as well as other literature that opposed the Roman church. In turn, this led to the establishment of the independent nation-state throughout Europe

McLuhan produced several books, the most renowned being *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man*, published in 1964. He practised what he preached in print, employing a 'mosaic' approach to writing that did not follow the usual linear order, which he saw as a legacy of a bygone age. (1) His view was that the emergence of an electronic media environment had produced a mainly visual culture, one which had superseded the previous print-based mechanical society. His oft-quoted catchphrase, 'The Medium is the Message', encapsulates his basic thesis - that the form of communication dictates its content, rather than the other way round. The same message was repeated many times, in books that are as much visually as intellectually appealing, often produced in collaboration with visual artists - and on the occasional television production. He once made an infamous cameo appearance in Woody Allen's film comedy, *Annie Hall* (1977), where he berates an annoying man in a cinema queue for (loudly) misquoting him.

In a book entitled *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (published in 1967 - note the deliberate mistake, which



was kept as a pun that showed his puckish sense of humour), he wrote that:

Electric circuitry, an extension of the central nervous system. Media, by altering the environment, evokes in us unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act - the way we perceive the world.

- When
- these
- ratios
- change
- men change (pp. 40-41)

(It is difficult to do justice to the typographical effect of the original in cold print, but it shows the mercurial nature of his ideas).

McLuhan saw the new media (which would have included computers in their primitive, mainframe, form) as an extension of human sensibility. Put crudely, where a shovel is an extension of a man's hand, the book is an extension of his

brain, in terms of it being a distillation of the sensory perception of the world. At the same time, however, the book prevents the reader from actually doing the things a book may describe. For every extension, there is a corresponding amputation of sensibility. Effectively, a farmer has lost the use of his hands through his constant deployment of the most basic of tools and he is not as connected to the earth as his predecessors would have been. This especially applies to industrial society and even more to the succeeding electronic society. McLuhan appeared to champion, but was actually very critical of.

Where McLuhan's message applies to the computer age seems to lie more in his consideration of these amputations than the extensions. In an earlier book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), he wrote that:

...the world has become a computer, an electronic brain,

exactly as an infantile piece of science fiction. And as our senses have gone outside us, Big Brother goes inside. So, unless aware of this dynamic, we shall at once move into a phase of panic terrors, exactly befitting a small world of tribal drums, total interdependence, and superimposed co-existence. (2)

It was his conception of the world dominated and defined by electronic media as a 'global village' that gives an indication of McLuhan's reservations about it. People rarely engage with new technology, casually accepting what it has to offer in terms of its visual, rather than intellectual, appeal. He made the distinction between a 'hot' medium and a 'cool' one. An example he gave of a hot medium was the cinema, a 'high definition' means of communication that demanded the viewer's complete attention. A cool medium, such as television, was 'low definition' and allowed for greater participation on the part of the viewer. (3)

Yet the 'hot'/'cool' distinction is one that necessarily flexible. We now know that television is a medium that takes over peoples' lives and detracts from their ability to think for themselves - something that is actually very 'hot'. The same could be said for the computer, especially when applied to the pernicious influence of games on younger users (and e-Bay on older ones). The question is whether the computer is something that creates a new environment or

simply expands the older ones - the visual medium of the television combined with the typewriter. McLuhan pointed out that when it was first marketed for public use, the typewriter was hailed as a potentially great educational tool, something that would aid the teaching of writing in schools. In practice, however, it was only ever found in offices and in writer's studies. In contrast, the computer is actively used as an educational tool, as well as a necessary part of the office environment.

In terms of McLuhan's definition, the computer is firmly rooted in the same phase as television and the typewriter - as well as all the other facilities it basically imitates, like the cinema and the postal system. If anything, it has hindered progress from the electronic age into the next phase of man's communicative development - whatever that may be. He may have died on the last day of 1980 and not seen the tumultuous effects that computers have had, not just on the Western world (where most of his observations applied to), but on a truly global scale, yet he was living in a future world of his own creation and gave no indication that the computer heralded the dawn of a new era. Perhaps it is up to us to push the boundaries of what that particular machine can do.

## FOOTNOTES

(1) Curiously, it was McLuhan's novel approach to communicating his ideas that has led to the relative decline in his reputation. He is not seen as a credible intellectual figure by many academics (who surely owe their positions in university departments of Media and Communications to him).

(2) p. 158. Perhaps appropriately, this quote was taken from the Wikipedia entry on McLuhan - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall\\_McLuhan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshall_McLuhan), page 6.

Of course, when McLuhan mentions 'Big Brother', he is writing about the all-seeing form of authority described by the British political writer George Orwell and not the reality t.v. show. Still, you can imagine what he would have thought about that had he been around to see it!

(3) A cool medium, for McLuhan, was a more desirable state than a hot one because it allowed the participant in the medium to be detached and therefore have an objective view of what was being portrayed. This especially applied to television and the way the t.v. news invited critical comment, especially at the time of the Vietnam War which, it was said, was mainly fought in people's living rooms, as it provoked (at least in the United States) an extreme reaction of being either for or against the campaign. The term 'cool' is derived from a style of jazz that was developed in the 1950s and which distinguished itself from the 'hot' styles of the pre-war era.

# Tackling the Diabetes and Obesity Epidemics



## Biotechnology at the University of Buckingham

There are more than 1 billion overweight adults in the world. It is believed that 1 in 10 city-dwelling children are obese. Obesity leads to a much higher risk of many diseases, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers.

The University of Buckingham's Clore Laboratory is an internationally recognised research centre for diabetes, obesity and metabolic diseases. It provides pre-clinical services to pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies from target discovery and validation, through lead generation and optimisation, to proof of concept and selection of clinical candidates. In addition to its contract research programmes, the Clore Laboratory scientists undertake in-house research programmes to identify and evaluate novel drug targets.

### Research Areas

Staff at the Clore Laboratory have expertise in molecular genetics, biochemistry, pharmacology, nutrition and the physiology of

metabolic disease. In-house research uses unique model systems together with microarray expression and suppression subtractive hybridisation to identify candidate genes associated with regulation of energy balance, insulin sensitivity and pancreatic cell function. There is strong interest in metabolic programming in early life and it has been shown that treatment of mothers during pregnancy and lactation with leptin re-programmes the offspring so that they are protected from the adverse effects of a 'Western' high-fat diet throughout their entire lives. A further interest is in natural products including traditional medicines as a source of new drug treatments for metabolic disease.

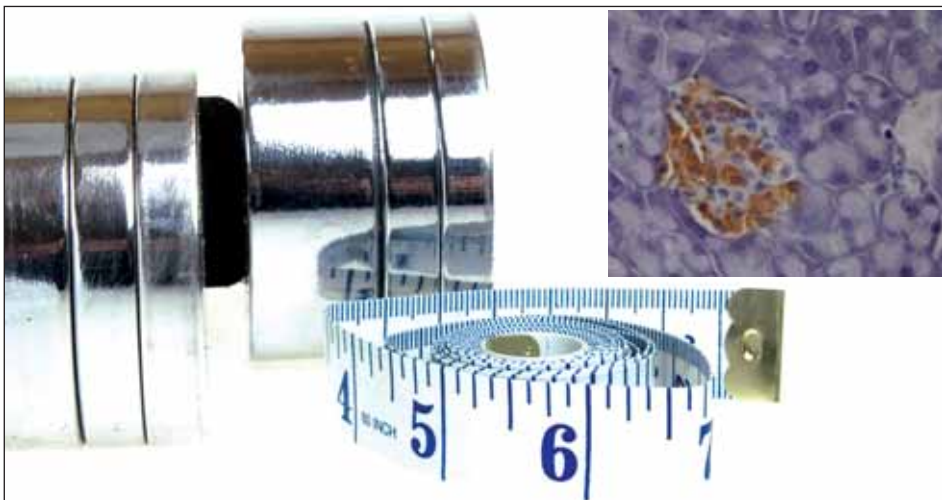
### Postgraduate Research Students

The University provides an excellent training ground in laboratory research. Students benefit from an integrated biology approach which ranges from investigations at the molecular and cellular level through to whole body physiology, including dietary

interactions with genetic background in producing disease, in utero origins of metabolic disease and the understanding of pharmacological interventions, including plant-derived treatments. Graduating students are highly rated by academic research groups and by industry worldwide.

### Postgraduate Taught Programmes

For students from either biological or computing backgrounds, the MSc in Bioinformatics run in conjunction with the Department of Applied Computing, provides intensive training in software development, database technologies and molecular genetics. Graduates are equipped to undertake careers in various industries including pharmaceutical, healthcare, bio-imaging and information processing.



### Further Information

For students with backgrounds in Biochemistry, Physiology, Pharmacology, Nutrition and other Life Sciences, further information can be found on the Clore Laboratory's website: [www.buckingham.ac.uk/clore](http://www.buckingham.ac.uk/clore)

Individual enquiries may be made to Professor Mike Cawthorne via the Science Admissions

Department Science  
[admissions@buckingham.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@buckingham.ac.uk)  
 Telephone: +44 (0) 1280 828204.

# Culture and Life in London

By Mohammed Siddiqui

Located on the banks of the River Thames, London is the capital of the United Kingdom and the largest city in Europe. London became part of many historical movements and phenomena, including the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the Gothic Revival. Today London is one of the world's business, financial and cultural centres. In the field of education, entertainment, politics, fashion, media, London is known as a global city.

London is a multi-cultural city and a major tourist attraction. The major attractions of London includes Big Ben and Houses of Parliament, the Tower of London, Tower Bridge, Westminster Abbey, the British Museum and the London Eye amongst others.

People of different cultural and religious backgrounds live here; over 250 different languages are spoken. Though Christianity is the main religion of London, festivals of other communities such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, Eid, etc are celebrated with great enthusiasm along with Christmas.

London is well known for its architecture and its wide variety of buildings. Besides the historic buildings and the usual brick houses, we can see modern architecture like the skyscrapers in Canary Wharf, the Gherkin, City Hall and the British Library.

Eight Royal parks covering 5000 acres of land provide sufficient



green space in London. Hyde Park is the largest of those and the world's oldest scientific zoo, the London Zoo is in Regents Park.

The entertainment district of the West End hosts several theatres, cinemas, bars, clubs and restaurants, including the city's Chinatown district. West End theatre is considered to be the highest level of commercial theatre in the English-speaking world. Many London and world film premiers are held here. The famous halls in London include the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Opera House, the Coliseum etc.

Many renowned writers like William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Daniel Defoe and Arthur Conan Doyle were closely associated with London. The life of Londoners is

reflected in many of their works.

London is known for its rich heritage in the performing arts and music. The city hosts a number of performing arts schools, including The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), the Central School of Speech and Drama and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Several conservatoires are located within the city: the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the Trinity College of Music. London has numerous renowned venues for rock and pop concerts, including large arenas such as Earls Court, Wembley Arena and the O2 Arena. 240 museums and art galleries in London carry evidence of its glorious past.



London was chosen to host the Games in 2012, for the first time since 1948. Even so, there are plenty of other sports played here. Football is the most popular game; five Premier League clubs are based in London. The new Wembley Stadium is the home of the English national football team. Rugby is also a common sport. London has four rugby union teams and Twickenham Stadium in West London is the national rugby union stadium. There are also the renowned cricket grounds, Lords and the Oval and one of the world's best known annual sports competitions, the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, also held here.

London has a very extensive public transport network. The London Underground is the oldest, longest, and most expansive metro system in the world. High-speed Eurostar trains link St Pancras International with Lille and Paris in France, and

Brussels in Belgium. Five International Airports connect London with the rest of the world. London Heathrow airport is the busiest international airport.

London is the home to a range of universities, colleges and schools. The University of London is the largest contact teaching university in the United Kingdom and in Europe. Imperial College London and University College London have been ranked among the top ten universities in the world.

The London School of Economics, is the world's leading social science institution for teaching and research, plus it has the most international student body of any university in the world today. Several students from overseas come to London for higher education.

All find a place in what surely is the cultural capital of the world.



# Free London

## Free Places to Visit in London

By Jason Stone

"You find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London. No, Sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford - Samuel Johnson" (1709 - 1784)

For many who have come from outside the city (including myself) moving to London naturally means having to pay more for many things than you would be used to back home, most especially when it comes to accommodation.

If, like me, you have come to London initially as a student, then you will be dismayed that going into so many of the key attractions sets you back so much. (When I first went to Madame Tussauds on my own it cost me just £6.95 which I considered pricey at the time which shows you how long ago it was!). (Ahem, 1993.)

However you can get a very good day out in London by just visiting the great sites you don't necessarily have to go in or ON them.

Best of all the great museums of London are FREE to enter! Although donations are invited you are under no pressure to make one and don't feel that you have to give more than you want to.

The South Kensington Museums are outstanding places to visit-even multiple times and Entry is indeed FREE! Be advised however that your bags will be searched upon entry for security reasons.



Natural History Museum, London

The Natural History Museum, The Science Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum are all within a few minutes walk of each other and the South Kensington Tube Station, which will be your likely route to them, features a long gothic Victorian tunnel which links the station's Ticket Area with the museums. It is quite a sight in itself and normally populated by talented (and not at all pushy) artists and buskers. In these museums you can see dinosaur skeletons of every kind of creature that has ever walked God's Good Earth, an animatronic Tyrannosaurus Rex, ancient antiquities and every major aspect of science laid out and explained for you.

Even closer to home to those of you who live in the East End is the Greenwich Royal Observatory, which, in addition to its stunning historical significance to Astronomy and Chronology, allows you to

stand simultaneously in both the Western Hemispheres and Eastern Hemispheres and offers a stunning view of the City of London. Greenwich itself offers a valuable experience complete with many historic buildings and a general "olde worlde" feel to it. The Docklands Light Railway provides a very comfortable swift and scenic journey of the revamped Docklands area on its way from Stratford to Greenwich and it is probably the nicest journey-certainly one of the most comfortable - you are likely to take on London's railways.

The crucial thing to understand is that you don't need to take the paid-for tours that are on offer to you. If you research London quite well, or the specific area or attraction you are interested in, then a proper tour is not really necessary.

## The Greenway

If you just want a little piece of quite and green you will find it hard to do better than the Greenway. It's a minor hidden wonder of the East End and though many people are aware of it - the distinctive bright blue metal 'Greenway' banners at main access points can be seen at the various roads which cut across it - few probably realise its full extent and even fewer have walked its full length.

The Greenway is a network of rooftop level public footpaths. Almost continuous and straight, it is a car-free route that carves through the East End, overlooking many residential areas, gardens and places of interest. ("Ridgeway Walk" is a similar route in Southeast London.) The Greenway may also be used by cyclists.

<http://www.walklondon.org.uk/>

Walking west-east the route starts in Wick Lane, close to a bus route on Wansbeck Road and not far from Hackney Wick station.

There are numerous points of interest.

- Four waterways (River Lea, City Mill River, Waterworks River/Bow Back River and Channelsea River), where connections are made with



the Lea Valley Walk and Heron and Kingfisher Walks, and pass the palatial former Abbey Mills Pumping Station.

- Further down you have a grandstand view of flower-strewn gravestones in the East London Cemetery.

- Near the eastern end is the 'Mountain Ski Village' known as Beckton Alps, whose summit is reached via a zigzag path from the Newham Way flyover junction.

- This volcano-like former refuse tip (now grassed over) provides a superb 360-degree panoramic view of east and southeast London into Essex and Kent. The small diversion is well worth the effort, and you can watch brave souls tackling the dry-ski slope.

- At the eastern end of The Greenway, a bus travels along the Eastern Gateway (Royal Docks Road). Alternatively you can follow the cycle-track south to the Docklands Light Railway stations at Beckton or Gallions Reach (1.0km/0.6ml).

### Access information

All of The Greenway is level, with ramps at most entry and exit points, and bonded gravel surface, except where you have to divert.

For a display of sheer pomp and ceremony see the Changing of the Guard outside Buckingham Palace. This is where one member of the Queen's Guards exchanges duty with the old guard. Both guards are dressed in traditional red tunics and bearskin hats, and the ceremony is set to music.

To catch the ultimate royal experience, stand outside Buckingham Palace at 10.45 and again at 11.40 to watch the mounted Guards ride out of the palace and down The Mall.

### Houses of Parliament

Yes you can watch the politicians in action! See history in the making by watching debates as they happen in the Houses of Parliament. Not only can it be a thrilling way to spend the morning or afternoon, but you also get to spend time in the historic Palace of Westminster. The Palace was built in 1042 as a royal residence. Some years later the Westminster Hall was built which housed stalls selling legal accessories. Following a fire in 1834 the Palace was extensively rebuilt and the famous clock tower "Big Ben" added. However if you want to view Prime Minister's Question Time you will need to book in advance and will normally need to get tickets from your Member of Parliament office.

### The Old Bailey

If you fancy seeing how others live on the edge, why not view a trial in session at the Old Bailey? The Old Bailey is, along with the Royal Courts of Justice, the most famous court in the world, hearing cases from all over England and Wales. The original Old Bailey courthouse dates back to 1539. Famous trials held there over the years include those of Oscar Wilde, Dr. Crippen, William "Lord Haw Haw" Joyce Kray Twins and the "Yorkshire Ripper". Public galleries open Monday to Friday from 10.00 to 13.00 and 14.00 to 17.00. You will probably have to queue for a while!

# Career prospects in the Credit Crunch

By Paula Benson

The world is in a recession. It is sad but true. It has been a long time coming and it will take a long time to get out of. People all over the world have been affected in different ways. Many people have lost their houses, their jobs and their dignity. Businesses are failing and those that are still running, are finding it difficult to keep going.

Over the last three months, thousands of people have been made redundant but how does the credit crunch affect those who are looking for work? Well, the answer is not a simple one but there are some solutions.

First of all, we should be aware of the job sectors that have been badly hit by the credit crunch. The Financial, Retail, Construction and Housing markets have all had losses. Also, car manufacturers, restaurants and hotels have also been affected with closures. Some factories and pottery makers are also feeling the crunch, leaving many people out of work. This is the bad news and it is quite troubling if you belong to any of these sectors, but I do have some good news too.

For those aiming for the Business sector, you may have to delay for a while and work in another department. Experience in a new

field is never a bad thing and could lead you to discover other jobs that may interest you. There are many other sectors that are open to you but I will only go through the main ones.

**Public Services** - This sector includes Teachers, Doctors and all parts of the healthcare system. This does not mean that you have to train as a Teacher or Doctor as there are many other jobs that fall under this category. For example, you could work as an administrator or office manager dealing with the paperwork. These are not really managerial positions but they are the jobs most commonly available and will be throughout the credit crisis.

**Insurance** - Those working in the Insurance sector would find jobs available straight away. This could be in house as part of a call centres or higher up as a manager.

**Human Resources** - Companies are always looking for people to work in HR. Working with and helping people would be good experience for when that managerial position you have been waiting for comes up.

**Accountants** - Believe it or not, accountants can still get work but the number of jobs available is considerably smaller than normal and so the chances of getting a job may be smaller with higher competition for them.

**IT Sector** - The IT Sector is always going to have jobs available because businesses cannot work without technology. So, if you want to work as an IT Technician or IT

support, you would be able to find many jobs advertised.

**Other Sectors** - Some other jobs that are readily available but might not suit your field at all are in the Arts Sector. These include Web Designers, Web Developers and Animators. If you have an interest in these types of things then now would be a good time to invest some time in developing your skills. They might just be hobbies but while the credit crunch is happening, it may be a good time to see them as a possible career.

There are, of course, jobs available in other sectors but the ones mentioned will have the most opportunities and be appropriate for your field of work. This does not mean that you will have to stay in the sector you choose to get you through the credit crunch, but at least you will get through it. There will be plenty of time after the crisis is over to get into the field you want and you will have had the valuable experience gained through the time you spend there.

Nobody knows how long the credit crunch is going to last for, some say months, others years, so you may find yourself working in a different position for a while. If this is the case, you may want to try doing some courses as they, along with the valid experience you are gaining, could help you in your future career. There are plenty of organisations and colleges which would provide this for you, so why not give it a go - it may change your future career in a way you never thought it could.





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# Big Picture Thinking Bridges Business - IT Gap

John Godfrey Saxe's poem, "The Blind Men and the Elephant", is required reading for Singapore Management University (SMU) students enrolled in a course on "Process Modelling and Solutions Blueprinting". Their assignment - to analyse and draw lessons from the comic plight of the six men in Saxe's *Indostan*. Groping blindly around the various parts of an elephant's anatomy, they fail to identify the animal as the sum of its parts.

What do 19th century American humorous verse and ancient Indian fables have in common with information technology today? According to information systems professor Venky Shakararaman, a key architect of the business modelling and solution blueprinting course, the core objective is to train students to take a big picture view. "IT no longer plays a 'back office processing role' but is now an integral part of business and must play a strategic role within the organisation," says Shankararaman. "Business personnel must understand the IT implications of change and IT personnel must understand and highlight the business opportunities and challenges from new technologies. Our aim is to produce future IT managers who will know how to communicate with business users and implement solutions that add value directly to the



business."

According to him, the more traditional IT approach ignores the business side and simply focuses on system requirements in trying to solve a business problem. There are several reasons for this misalignment: business users who only view IT as a support tool for automating data storage, retrieval and analysis; IT specialists interested solely in technology and routine applications; the lack of a common language between the two groups to exchange views and share understanding; IT applications which have evolved

over time into independent silos, or "islands of automation" that are no longer relevant to current business needs; and the growing numbers of new processes and IT applications which make it more difficult to keep up. The result - IT solutions that do not deliver the expected business value.

Mayank Gupta, Principle Architect at Infosys agrees. "We were called in by one of Thailand's largest banks to rescue a project that had stalled after four to five weeks. The initiative was aimed at automating the bank's manual funding and payment

processes, but there was little progress because the business and IT teams did not get along." In the end, Infosys was able to bring the various stakeholders together on a common platform by providing formal methods to help define business processes and arrive at the user tasks that needed to be automated.

Translating these 'real world' experiences and concepts into course content for students is challenging. "We couldn't find any books in the market which covered the breadth and depth of the course offering. This is when we got the idea of writing a book for both SMU students and other IT professionals," explains Shankararaman. Together with SMU instructor Kar Way Tan and experts from Infosys Technologies Ltd, he developed a customised course book, Business Process Engineering Methodology, in 2006 to fill this knowledge gap. A second, expanded edition of the book will be published in August this year.

### The Business Process

Simply put, a business process can be defined as a "repeatable" series of activities performed to deliver a service or a product to a stakeholder. Just as the brain, acting as the control center, uses the information it receives from around the human body to coordinate actions and reactions, organisations too are made up of numerous business processes involving people, machines, IT applications, rules and activities through which the

organisation is able to deliver goods, services and information to its employees, external customers and stakeholders.

"Business processes are valuable corporate assets that directly support business strategies and goals in an organisation and, therefore, need to be managed and optimised just like any other business asset," says Shankararaman. "One way to translate business objectives into IT solutions is through systematic and well thought out models, techniques and tools." Managing business processes entails working in the space where management and IT intersect, also known as Business Process Management (BPM).

According to the SMU authors, business and IT alignment can take place at two levels: enterprise-wide through the use of an Enterprise Architecture - defined by the authors as "both a product and a process to align business objectives, processes, information and technology across the organisation"; and at

the project level to smoothly translate business requirements into IT solutions through modelling. It is at this project level that the Business Process Engineering Methodology (BPEM) comes into play.

### The Methodology

A methodology is a systematic way of carrying out an activity or series of activities. Shankararaman states: "We needed a sound methodology which both parties could understand and use to describe business processes on the one hand, and the concept IT solutions that could automate them on the other". In seeking a methodology based on the latest industry best practice and standards, Shankararaman approached the well-known Indian software company, Infosys Technologies Ltd, headquartered in Bangalore, India, which had developed its own proprietary InFlux™ BPEM methodology.

Working closely with a team from Infosys, comprising of Srinivas Thonse, Mayank Gupta and Nivedita Deshmukh from the company's Software Engineering and Technology Labs (SETLabs) division, the SMU faculty adapted the InFlux™ methodology - used by experienced IT consultants in large and complex projects - into teachable materials for undergraduates and professionals.

The InFlux™ methodology consists of two main phases: Business Modelling and Concept Solution Blueprinting.



Business modelling is used to understand and analyse existing problems and requirements ('As-Is Modelling' and 'As-Is Process Analysis'), and translate these into IT requirements and solutions ('To-Be Modelling', 'To-Be Process Analysis'). In the final activity, IT Solution Requirement Definition, detailed functional and non-functional requirements are mapped out in the form of 'Use-Cases', a user-centric way of capturing tasks performed by people or IT.

During this first phase, appropriate business process models or templates are developed under various scenarios taking into account everything from roles and reporting structures, business rules, and geographic location and deployment, to a catalogue of sub-processes, sequences of activities and process flows, and types of collaboration, interaction and work product exchange within and outside the organisation. Shankararaman says: "The business model provides a common language and frameworks for all the stakeholders involved to share and discuss the problems that need to be solved".

In the second, Concept Solution Blueprinting phase, a high level design is developed which consolidates the various requirements and 'actors'. In addition to the requirements identified in the previous phase, 'big picture' inputs are also taken into account such as business goals, IT trends, industry standards, as well as

corporate IT principles, standards and a roadmap for the organisation internally. In this phase, more models are generated representing the various aspects of the proposed solution including solution modelling (bird's eye view of the solution), application modelling (new and existing software), domain modelling (information or data entities involved), service modelling (functionalities exposed to facilitate system-to-system interactions), risk modelling and concept cost modelling.

What are some of the distinctive features of the InFlux™ methodology? "InFlux™'s strengths lie in its formalisation, semi - automation and prescriptive methods for the requirements phase," explains Deshmukh, Technical Architect at Infosys. "InFlux™ provides a process-centric approach using prescriptive meta models to capture and translate business requirements into system requirements and, thereby, clear IT solutions. For example, InFlux™ can auto-generate use cases from the business process definition," he says.

The InFlux™ methodology also enables process optimisation by providing methods for business process analysis. It augments the process design and analysis phase by providing some industry best practices and reference models. For example, InFlux™ fully incorporates the iterative nature of requirements, whereby the various artifacts generated are seamlessly integrated at the methodology and tool level.

### **Win-win Collaboration**

The collaboration has worked well for both organisations. SMU students are exposed to industry-relevant knowledge and skills while Infosys Technologies, in turn, has benefitted from the academic depth, rigour and refinement of techniques and tools brought to their methodology by the SMU faculty. Infosys's Education and Research Department is exploring the use of SMU's course materials for the company's own recruits.

Another interesting feature of the course is its dynamic content. Shankararaman and Tan plan to incorporate online suggestions and feedback from students, faculty and staff into course updates and subsequent editions of the book. Infosys's own website InFluxconnect.com also invites people with domain thought leadership (within and outside Infosys) to share business practices and processes and improve peer-to-peer collaboration.

On a larger scale, both organisations are looking at the possibility of offering the BPEM course materials to other universities within and outside India. Deshmukh says: "InFlux™ is a very comfortable common platform for both business and IT stakeholders to evolve, exchange and manage requirements throughout the business process lifecycle. The greatest value-add is that this knowledge has crossed organisational boundaries and is widely available for both practitioners and the student community".

# Sports United

By Miss Ayshe Reshat

Sports is widely regarded as the most popular activity amongst the mainstream population in the UK.

Whether it is football, rugby, tennis or cricket, you will find the majority of individuals taking part in or supporting one of these.

You will often find the media following the successful achievements of Lewis Hamilton in car racing, Ronaldo in football and Andy Murray in tennis, in order to meet the demand of fans who want to get the latest action from their favourite sports person.

The most popular sport in the UK is football. Football has been a very long tradition amongst sports enthusiasts and the UK is seen as the hub of football that sets an example for other

countries to follow. The UK is home to the most popular and internationally recognised football teams, such as Manchester United, Chelsea, Liverpool and Arsenal. Fan-bases spread from the UK to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, with merchandise and memorabilia to dedicate their support for their favourite football team. Some of the most exciting games take place in the spacious, Emirates and Old Trafford stadiums, where you get to witness some of the most internationally acclaimed football players such as Didier Drogba, Ronaldo, Fabregas, Berbatov and Steven Gerrard.

In addition to football, London will get to experience the most celebrated and established sports events of all time, the Olympics. This event gives the world's nations an unforgettable opportunity to witness all types of sports in one venue, ranging from football, basketball, gymnastics, handball, etc.

Over 300 channels broadcast the Olympic Games to 222 countries and territories, which shows the scale of the popularity amongst global viewers.



The most important aspect of the Olympics is that every individual from each country can get together and celebrate the event at the same time and place to watch their countrymen and women succeed in their sport. The eagerly-awaited 2012 Olympics will be held at the heart of the East End, Stratford, which is in close proximity to the stadium of the popular English football team West Ham United, where you can witness very exciting premiership games. West Ham United also commits to training and mentoring young talents within the East London Community, which encourages young Asians to participate in football, supporting such schemes as the Bangali Women's Training Academy. Sports is an activity which goes beyond territorial borders that ultimately brings people from different backgrounds to share a mutual interest in an activity which people can enjoy and experience together.



# Overview of Education in China

Dr Frank X Sun

## Abstract

This article presents information on China's education system and its development and also the efforts of the Chinese government to place priority on developing education. The Chinese government has put forward a strategy of revitalizing the country through science and education, and implementing a nine-year programme of compulsory education. Criticisms of the current education system in China and statistical data about Chinese students and scholars studying abroad are also presented.

## 1. Introduction

Modern Chinese education was initiated about one hundred years ago to meet the needs of economic and social development and the challenges of the rapid progress of world science and technology. China has formulated and implemented the strategy of "revitalizing the country through science and education" and put the development of education as a strategic priority in the drive to modernisation.

China has already pulled off one of the most remarkable expansions of education in modern times, increasing the number of undergraduates and people who hold doctoral degrees five-fold in 10 years [1]. In 2003 China supported 1,552 institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities) and their 725,000 professors and 11 million students. While there has generally been intense competition for admission



Her Majesty The Queen Greeting Dr Frank X Sun

to China's colleges and universities among college entrants, Beijing and Tsinghua Universities and more than 100 other National Key Universities have been the most sought after.

Although the government has authority over the education system, the Chinese Communist Party has played a role in managing education since 1949. The party established broad education policies, tying improvements in the quality of education to its modernization plan. The party also monitored the government's implementation of its policies at local level and within educational institutions through its party committees. Party members within educational institutions, who often have a leading management role, are responsible for steering their schools in the direction mandated by party policy.

## 2. China's Educational System

In China, the education is divided into the following stages:

- Pre-school education for the 3-5 years old children in kindergartens.

- Primary education for 6-11 years old children. Primary schools are usually run by local educational authorities and, in some cases, by enterprises and individuals.

- Secondary school education provided for 12 to 17 - years - old children. Education of this kind is conducted by local governments and various business authorities and carried out in secondary schools, or vocational high schools and whose graduates hold the same degrees as those studying at senior middle schools and all sorts of secondary professional schools, and whose graduates enjoy the some privileges as those from colleges. In particular, public secondary schools include junior middle schools and senior middle schools, both for three years of study. Students graduating from junior schools usually go to common senior middle schools, and some of them go to vocational high schools or secondary professional schools for 3-5 years of study.

- Higher Education is constituted for those for vocational college students, undergraduates, postgraduates and doctoral students. Higher Education is performed by universities, colleges, institutes and vocational colleges. These institutions bear the three major tasks of conducting courses, doing scientific research and providing social services.

### 3. Primary and Secondary Education in China

In China, primary and secondary education takes 12 years to complete, divided into primary, junior, secondary and senior secondary stages. Primary education lasts either 5 or 6 years with the former accounting for 35% of the total enrollment and the latter 65% of the total enrollment. At junior secondary stage, most have 3 years' schooling, with a tiny proportion with 4 years. Almost 98% of students are enrolled in the former schools. The 9-year schooling in primary and junior secondary schools pertains to compulsory education. General senior secondary education lasts 3 years.

#### a) Implementation of Nine Years Compulsory Education

In 1986, the Chinese government passed a compulsory education law, making nine years of education mandatory for all Chinese children. Since then the 9-year compulsory education rule has been implemented by governments at various levels and has made significant progress. According to the statistics of 2002, the net enrollment rate of primary school age children attained 98.58%, and the proportion of primary school graduates continuing their study in junior secondary schools (including vocational ones) reached 97.02%. In the urban areas of large cities and economically developed

coastal areas, the universalization of senior secondary education has been launched.

#### b) Teaching

The school year of primary and secondary school is divided into two semesters. The school year of primary schools comprises 38 weeks of teaching sessions with an additional week in reserve and 13 weeks for holidays and vacations. The school year for junior secondary schools comprises 39 weeks for teaching with an additional week in reserve and 12 weeks for holidays and vocations. The school year for senior secondary schools comprises 40 weeks of teaching with one or two weeks in reserve and 10 to 11 weeks for holidays and vocations. A five-day week has been implemented in primary and secondary schools.

### 4. Higher Education in China

#### National Higher Education Entrance Examination (Gao Kao)

The National Higher Education Entrance Examination (also known as Gao Kao) is an academic examination held annually in China. This examination is a prerequisite for entrance into almost all higher education institutions at the undergraduate level. It is usually taken by students in their last year of secondary school, although there has been no age restriction since 2001. The national examinations to select students for higher education is an important part of China's culture and, traditionally, entrance to a higher education institution is considered prestigious.

In 2006, a record high of 9.5 million people applied for tertiary education entry in China. 8.8 million of them (93%) are scheduled to take the national entrance exam; 27,600 (0.28%)

have been exempted from standardized exams due to exceptional or special talent. The rest (0.7 million) will take other standardized entrance exams, such as those designed for adult education students.

The overall mark received by the student is generally a weighted sum of their subject marks. The maximum possible mark varies wildly from year to year, and also varies from province to province.

The National Higher Education Entrance Examination is not across the country, but administered within each province of China or direct-controlled municipality. It is graded on a scale of 100-900 points and is arranged at the end of the spring semester. Secondary school graduates across the country take the examination simultaneously, over a three-day period.

In most places, students list their university or college preferences prior to the exam (a few regions allow modifications after students learn their score). The preferences are given in four tiers (early admissions, key universities, regular universities, technical colleges), each of which can contain 4-6 choices in institution and program.

Three subjects are mandatory everywhere: Chinese, Mathematics and a foreign language—usually English, but this may also be substituted by Japanese or French. The other 6 standard subjects are 3 sciences—Physics, Chemistry—Biology, and 3 humanities—History, Geography and Political Education. Applicants to science/engineering or art/humanities programs typically take 1-3 from the respective category. Currently, the actual requirement varies from province to provinces.



The mark requirements for entry into a university or college course vary between provinces. In 2006 for example, the minimum score to enter a key university for an applicant from Beijing was 516 (total score). In contrast, the minimum score for applicants from Henan province was 591. As a result, there are vast regional differences among acceptance rates simply because of an imbalance of opportunity. Although today's admission rate is much high, it is still fairly low compared to the availability of higher education in western world countries. Consequently, the examination is highly competitive, and the prospective examinees and their parents experience enormous pressure. For the majority, it is a watershed that divides two dramatically different lives.

### Higher Education Today

Since the late 1980s, tremendous economic development in China has stimulated reforms in higher education that have resulted in remarkable changes. In 2002, there were 2003 Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) in China, among which 1396 were regular HEIs - the other 607 were specifically higher education institutions for adults. In

2002, there were 2,003 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) altogether in China – 1,396 regular HEIs and 607 institutions specifically for mature students. In 2002, the number of new entrants admitted by both types of institutions was 4,380,000, making a total of 11,256,800 students. In the same year, just over half-a-million graduate students were enrolled for post-graduate programmes of study at HEIs and research institutions, new entrants making up 38,400 for PhDs and 164,200 for Master's degrees, respectively. In 2005, there were about 4,000 Chinese institutions, but student enrolment had increased to 15 million, with a rapid growth that was expected to peak in 2008. Clearly, the higher education system could not meet the needs of some eighty-five per cent of the college-aged population. [2]

The Chinese economic system used to be highly centralised, with education provided and administered by both central local governments. The disadvantages of this were that the state undertook too many responsibilities and schools lacked the flexibility and autonomy to

provide education according to the needs of society. With central departments and local governments providing education separately, the structure of education was irrational and segmented. There were too many single disciplinary and professional HEIs which effectively worked against each other and hampered the overall improvement of educational quality. The reforms of higher education consist of five parts: reforms of education provision, management, investment, recruitment and job-placement, and the inner-institute management, among which management reform is of most importance and difficulty. The overall objectives of higher education reform are to smooth the relationship among government, society and HEIs, setting up and perfecting a new system in which the state is responsible for the overall planning and macro management, while the HEIs follow the laws and enjoy the autonomy to provide education according to needs of the society.

Since 1998, ten universities have been targeted by the Chinese government to become "world-class" - including Peking and Tsinghua Universities. To achieve that goal, the government promised to increase the educational allocation in the national budget by 1 percent a year for each of the five years following 1998.

### 5. Criticisms on the Basic Education System in China

The primary and secondary education system in China has sometimes been criticized for its emphasis on rote learning. Some critics point out that the examination is basically a test of how much knowledge a student has been able to memorize in his/her years in school. Critical



Thinking is rarely emphasized in the Chinese classroom. Subjects that talk about reasoning are rarely discussed, nor are global and social situations.

The National Higher Education Entrance Examination also was criticized as the "most pressure packed examination in the world." Behavior surrounding the testing period has been extreme according to some reports, with doctors in one major Chinese city purportedly prescribing birth control to female students to ensure they were not menstruating at the time of examination [3]. Testing pressure, for some critics, has been linked to fainting, increased drop-out rates, and even increasing rates of teenage depression and suicide.

## 6. Chinese Students and Scholars Studying Abroad

### General Information of Students and Scholars Studying Abroad since 1978.

Since the reform and opening up in 1978, the work related to students and scholars studying abroad have seen rapid developments and now it serves as a window for China's reform and opening up as well as for the cultural exchanges between China and other countries. In harmony with social-economic development, a management and implementing system for the work related to students and scholars studying abroad has been set up in HEIs as well as in Science and Technological research institutes, from the national level to local levels. This system mainly consists of three complementary channels for students and scholars: namely, state-funded, employer-funded and self-funded.

In 2003, the total number of students and scholars studying abroad was 117,300, among which 3,002 people were state-funded,

5,144 employer-funded and 109,200 self-funded. In the same year, a total number of 20,100 students and scholars returned from overseas studying, among which 2,638 were state funded, 4,292 employer-funded and 13,200 self-funded.

From 1978 to 2008, a total number of 1.39 million Chinese students and scholars studied in 108 countries and regions all over the world, covering almost all disciplines. Both the quantity and scale was unprecedented in the history of China. During the same period, a total of 390,000 Chinese students and scholars returned home [4][5].

### Big Rise in Number of Chinese Students in UK

Statistics from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) show that 4,976 students from China started higher education courses the autumn of 2008 at Britain's universities and colleges. This is a 14.7 per cent rise on 2007's figure of 4,337, the highest in recent years. In total, about 75,000 Chinese students study in Britain [6].

Chinese parents and employers have begun to place a high value on overseas education, especially at top American and European institutions such as Harvard University, Oxford University, and Cambridge University, which are "revered" among many middle-class parents. Since 1999, the number of Chinese applicants to top schools overseas has increased tenfold.

It was reported by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2008 that 179,800 Chinese students departed for overseas study. Meanwhile, the number of Chinese returning home upon completion of their overseas education in 2008

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reached 69,300 [7]. That's a 55.95 percent increase from 2007, as domestic opportunities for personal and professional enrichment grow. These alumni are contributing to China's unprecedented economic growth and development, either in the private sector or by returning to public sector jobs with added-value knowledge, skills and experiences.

# CHINA - Developments on achieving a world-class education system

Education in China today is on a course of steady development, providing the human resources needed to build a well-off society.

In 2004, the land of China was studded with 684,000 schools of various kinds, including 607,000 regular schools and 77,000 adult schools. The total number of students topped 261 million; and the number of teachers and staff reached 15.974 million, 12,758 million of them being full-time teachers.

In addition, 64,411 million students were registered for non-degree education that year.

A total of 340 million people were receiving one kind of education or another in China in 2004.

In 2004, China's gross attendance rate (percentage of the total population in a given age-group) was 40.75% for pre-school education, 98.95% for primary school education (the 6-11 or 7-12 age group), 94.1% for

junior middle school education (the 12-14 age group), 47.55% for senior middle school education (15-17 age group), and 19% for higher education (the 18-22 age group).

The illiteracy rate of the 15-45 age group was kept below 5%. Citizens' average length of schooling was increased to eight years, reaching the average level of the middle-income countries that year.

The higher education system has improved greatly since 1999. In 2004, China led the world with more than 20 million students studying in all manner of higher education institutions. In 2004, a total of 819,900 students were attending 769 graduate schools around the country, including 165,000 doctoral candidates and 654,300 in pursuit of a master's degree.

The country's 1,731 institutions of higher learning had a total student body of 13.335 million; these included 684 regular

universities and colleges with 7.3784 million students, and 1,047 post-secondary vocational and technical schools with 5,956,500 million students.

In the same year, 4,198 million students were pursuing undergraduate or junior college studies at 505 adult universities across the land. Two pivotal government programs - Project 211 for developing 100 first-class universities and a number of key fields of study for the 21st century and Project 985 for developing world-class universities and world-famous research universities - are making steady headway.

The universities involved have noticeably improved their infrastructure, strengthened their capacity for training talent, upgraded their research work, and improved their services for society, and come up with a host of influential research results and findings. Both programs have put these universities in a better position to supply strong and reliable human and intellectual resources in support of the modernisation drive.

The work to upgrade and expand the China Education and Research Network (CERNET) and the China Education Broadband Satellite Net (CEBSat) is picking up speed all these years.



The new - generation internet and China Grid are also being developed without a hitch. China has also intensified the reallocation and consolidation of resources and the construction and management of information networks, in order to establish a user-friendly service system and feasible operational mechanisms.

Some 1,000 universities, 5,600 secondary vocational schools and 26,000 primary and middle schools across the country have installed campus networks and intranets at different scales. More than 10,000 elementary and secondary schools in rural areas have set up computer classrooms and satellite television transmission ground stations. New progress has also

been reported in the work to install digital libraries and e-museums on university campuses and build online schools and e-learning networks.

#### Sources

- Education in China
- Ministry of Education

# Malaysian Education

## Malaysia Centre of Educational Excellence

The Malaysian international education sector has grown tremendously during the past decade and Malaysia is fast becoming a centre of educational excellence in the region. Malaysia currently houses more than 50,000 international students from more than 100 countries and it is proud to be the study destination of choice, offering quality international education at an affordable cost.



Besides the relatively low cost of education, many choose to study here because they recognise Malaysia as an ideal gateway to develop their Asian network and relationships. They are also able to learn from Malaysian's great diversity, rapid economic development and peaceful and harmonious multicultural society!

The country is set to welcome 80,000 international students to study in Malaysia by the year 2010.

Higher education opportunities in Malaysia are provided by 20 public universities, 24 polytechnics, 37 public community colleges, 33 private universities, 4 foreign university branch campuses and about 500 private colleges. There are also various other higher educational institutions from the UK, US, Australia, Canada, France, Germany and New Zealand which offer twinning and franchised degree programmes through partnerships with Malaysian

colleges and universities.

The 38 international schools (American, Australian and British styled) and 12 expatriate schools which include French, German, Japanese and Taiwanese schools have facilities for students from pre-school to upper secondary levels. They provide parents with many options of pre-tertiary international education at affordable fees.

Source: A Glance Brochure, MOHE  
<http://www.educationmalaysia.gov.my>

# Study in Denmark

create an excellent platform for your future career

By Anders Geertsen  
Director General, CIRIUS.

CIRIUS is the national agency for internationalisation of education and training within the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

Danish higher education institutions have a lot to offer international students. Whether you are coming to Denmark as part of your study programme at your home institution (as an exchange student) or to study for a full degree programme, our highly international institutions offer a range of excellent study opportunities. More than 200 degree programmes (most of them at Master's level) and over 1,000 individual modules taught entirely in English are available at Danish institutions.

Danish higher education is well-known for its unique teaching approach. The institutions offer a dynamic study environment, emphasising independent study, initiative and project-oriented learning. As a student at a Danish higher education institution you are encouraged to play an active role in your learning process and take responsibility for planning and carrying out your projects, either independently or together with other students. In addition to attending lectures, you will be expected to participate in discussions and continuously develop your critical thinking and analytical skills.



For international students, the Danish approach to teaching and learning can introduce a whole new way of studying and thinking, which will challenge you and provide you with an excellent platform for your future career.

All Danish higher education institutions have established co-operation with business, industry as well as research & development institutes, which creates an enriching and dynamic learning environment for the students. Some courses have integrated placements, which provide students with an opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge and gain practical experience.

## Postgraduate opportunities in Denmark

The Danish Candidatus / Master's degree is normally awarded after two years of study on top of a Bachelor's

degree. The programme is research-based and gives students a theoretical knowledge combined with the ability to apply this practically. Upon completion of the programme, students can enter the labour market or undertake further studies (for a PhD qualification).

Programmes are offered in a range of disciplines, including innovative areas of science, where Denmark has internationally recognised centres of excellence. A broad range of interdisciplinary programmes have been developed to meet the needs of a globalised labour market.

In December 2009, the United Nations World Forum on Climate Change will take place in Copenhagen. This event will

- A Danish education provides you with
- Strong analytical and communicative skills
  - The ability to work independently and in groups
  - An international profile
  - A good foundation for your future career

further emphasise Denmark's commitment to contributing to developing and enhancing sustainable energy study programmes. A range of excellent Master's programmes are available within the study of climate change, such as MSc programmes in Wind Energy, Environmental Engineering or Sustainable Energy Planning.

In order to gain admission to a Candidatus/ Master's programme, you must hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent - normally in a subject area related to the programme you wish to study. In addition to the academic requirements, proof of proficiency in English is required, e.g. through a TOEFL or an IELTS test.

### What do our students say?

A recent survey conducted amongst more than 3,500 international students studying in Denmark showed that:

78% would recommend Denmark as a study destination

93% consider Denmark to be a safe country to live in

85% are satisfied with their overall institution experience

### About Denmark a knowledge-based society

Denmark is a small Scandinavian country, located in Northern Europe. The total population is approximately 5.3 million. Denmark is an internationally oriented country and has been a member of the EU since 1973. The country has had a significant influence on both environmental

and social issues in the EU as well as the enlargement process.

Denmark is a modern, democratic, knowledge-based society known for its extensive welfare system. The distribution of wealth is relatively even, and Danes enjoy free education, free medical treatment, etc. The country is recognised for its high-quality research in areas such as biotechnology, food science and environmental protection.

### Working in Denmark

Denmark has a strong economy and needs highly qualified professionals. If you complete a study programme in Denmark, your residence permit will be extended by six months to allow you to look for work in Denmark.

The work culture in Denmark is characterised by a non-hierarchical structure and open dialogue between management and employees. It is team-oriented, and the working environment is open and informal. Danish companies offer flexible working conditions and modern facilities. The enhancement of qualifications is a high priority and most workplaces offer continuing education to their employees.

### Living in Denmark

Thanks to the country's international outlook, visitors find it easy to live and study in Denmark. Most Danes speak English fluently as their second language, and you will find easy access to international television channels, foreign newspapers etc.

The Danes are generally informal, helpful and tolerant.

They value individual freedom, equality and their social life. They have a love for small cafés, pubs, and social gatherings, which form an important part of the Danish culture. Denmark is known as a country with a high personal safety – even the Queen can go shopping with a minimum of security personnel.

### Would you like more information?

Further information about our institutions, programmes, student life, etc. is available at [www.studyindenmark.dk](http://www.studyindenmark.dk).

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Accreditation and quality assurance

Higher education in Denmark is regulated by the state and all public institutions are subject to continuous approval and evaluation processes. The institutions have a high degree of autonomy, but they are required to follow the national regulations. This ensures that all students obtain an education of the highest quality. A national, fully independent accreditation agency assures the quality and relevance of the higher education programmes. Furthermore, many Danish institutions have obtained – where relevant – international accreditation for their programmes.

### Tuition fees

Higher education is usually provided free of charge for all EU/EEA citizens. Students from outside the EU/EEA, who are not participating in a bilateral or international exchange programme, are required to pay tuition fees. Annual tuition fees for full-time degree students range from 6,000 to 16,000 Euro.

# Culture - The Fifth English Learning Skill

## English Language Teaching Corner

By Robert Murray

### 'What do you mean you've never heard of the Beatles?'

I was, of course, too polite to make such an exclamation, but in a recent English class, I was surprised that some students – from China and Sri Lanka – couldn't recognise a picture-prompt featuring the Fab Four. The lesson was on the theme of 'genius'. I used the picture as an example of this, assuming that everybody, even people who were only in their twenties and from relatively faraway places, would know who the Beatles were and could readily relate them to the topic of discussion.

Yet not only had the students not heard of the Beatles, but they hadn't heard them in the active sense of being able to recognise any of their songs.

Therefore, they were unable to make a judgement, even on second-hand knowledge, on the issue under discussion. It wasn't that the students were not aware of the existence of Western pop music – one young Chinese girl in another class of mine is a fan of the US group Linkin Park (although she too had never heard of the Beatles, despite the contradiction that one group could not exist without the other.)

Culture has been called the 'fifth language skill' by Barry Tomalin (<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/making-culture-happen-english-lang>, 13/01/2009) because, in addition to the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, it is necessary for a student of the English language to have some knowledge of the culture of Britain in order to have a complete understanding of how the language works. In the

same way that all skills have to be upgraded and maintained, a student needs to have some knowledge of the context in which it works – language cannot be learned in a vacuum. Yet what sort of culture should be taught, not just to the English language learner, but to the non-native speaker studying in a British university?

Obviously, this is the same with other languages and cultures – when learning French, the first thing we find out is what *un crocque monsieur* is and how to order one in a café. More advanced students might read a novel by Balzac or listen to the songs of Jacques Brel. Yet the complexities of the English language are not always matched by the consideration of the complexities of British culture. All too often culture is consigned to a remote section of a textbook and, correspondingly, in the mind of





the student, where subsequently there is little or no connection made with the practice of the language.

When teaching English at any level – from Beginners to Advanced – the common currency of exchange, the Gold Standard of mutual understanding, is not just the language itself, but a culture of some sort. The act of exchange occurs whether teachers or learners recognise this or not. In the basic, anthropological, sense, this can apply to the relationship between behaviour and language – for example, ways of greeting (what to say and conventions of shaking hands, etc). Yet the common definition of the word usually applies to the arts, especially in the sense of a ‘high concept’ interpretation of what these may be. This often means the plays of William Shakespeare and there is often a section in an English Language Teaching textbook about a visit to Stratford-upon-Avon, or another British historical site. The cultural context for learning English for many learners – and particularly those on the Indian sub-continent and China – is formed

out of the remnants of the classical curriculum that was the basis of the British education system and which has not been reformed for decades.

This presents more of a barrier to understanding how the language works, especially for students who may have been force-fed the Bard in their schooldays in their home countries and who have no natural feeling for the actual poetry of what was written. They often claim, justifiably, that the language used is hard to understand (and some Chinese students may well have not have heard of Shakespeare at all).

Yet English is not just taught straight out of a book and popular culture is necessary for an understanding of how the English language works in an everyday context. It also provides a better means of relating to the cultures of other English-speaking countries. We all know that American culture is essentially defined as being ‘popular’ because of the influence of the Hollywood film industry, yet why should it suffer in terms of reputation because

of the fact that Shakespeare was born in Warwickshire rather than in Wisconsin? The same applies to Australia and New Zealand, although there it can be said that the predominant culture is actually sport rather than the arts.

Obviously some sense of proportion is necessary – the US and Australasia produce ‘serious’ art as well as Britain does and no one English-speaking country has a monopoly on the ‘best’ cultural models – or, correspondingly, the best linguistic ones. For some native speakers in these countries, popular culture has become – somewhat contentiously – a formal subject for study in itself at further and higher education levels, usually under the umbrella of ‘Media Studies’. Yet despite the relative lack of knowledge that such students may have of more traditional notions of culture, the two-tier structure of ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultural standards remain.

The argument about which is better, or more relevant, to today’s society, is not something that immediately concerns the English language student. Perhaps the Beatles are more of a fixed point of English-speaking culture than Shakespeare, but one will provide a more viable model of how the language is used than the other according to the personal background and experience of the learner. Ultimately it may just come down to a matter of taste – and I myself have always preferred the Rolling Stones.

# The Life of Anglo Indians

By Nidhi Nahal

## How it all begin

"Anglo-Indians have played a notable part, out of all proportions to their numbers, in the country's progress." **Indira Gandhi**

The phrase Anglo-Indians suddenly makes one think, who are exactly these people? In simpler words it's a community which originated in India during the British Rule almost 500 years ago and almost vanished on August 15th 1947 with India's independence. People from this community were known as "The fun loving lot". The origin of this community was a result of inter marriages of Britishers with Indian women and that is how the Anglo-Indians originated. This community had a high influence from the west and was much more "Anglo" than "Indian" in terms of their culture, lifestyles, mother tongue and religious upbringing, although many complications arose when intermarriages began to take place between Indian and other European communities such as the French, Dutch, and Portuguese, which resulted in them being called "Eurasians" until 1911. Times had not been easy for Anglo-Indians as they faced the consequences of "Identity Crisis" and apparently this situation worsened when some of them married large numbers of Indian Christians. In times before Indian Independence people from this

community had very strong control over all major institutions & organizations including the senior positions in the Army, the Civil Service, the railways and the post and telegraph services. Their lifestyle differentiated them from the locals and didn't allow them to mingle with the Indians. The distance between them and the local Indian population and their struggle to be as close to the British Community as possible led them to a very unstable future.

The British Army had its own rigid social barriers whereby the Anglo-Indians were considered as a lower class. This attitude of the Britishers worsened the situation for Anglo-Indians because it isolated them from the local Indian communities too. Anglo-Indians were divided into different classes which were The "White" Anglo-Indians, the "Dark" skinned Anglo-Indians and the "Black" skinned Anglo-Indians. These social norms created by society forced them to create sub-communities within a community. They had known that life would certainly not be the same after India's Independence and perhaps worse, so a large number of people migrated to countries like Australia, Britain, Canada,

U.S.A and New Zealand in search for a better life and careers. Due to these reasons the Anglo-Indians increased their dependence on Britishers in hope of a better future and a much better status in society, which often unfortunately turned



out to be a mere misconception. The Anglo-Indians faced a lot of uncertainty because they were not supported by Britain, which was the land of their forefathers, and neither did they see any future in India after its independence.

## Lifestyle & Fashion

As the Anglo-Indians migrated to different countries they all adapted to the local cultures and dressing styles. They have always been characterised by the following criteria: (1) Christian Religion (2) English Mother tongue (3) European lifestyle (4) Western dressing





(5) Employment in the administrative & service professions. The fashion for Anglo-Indians was mainly western i.e. long & short dresses, long skirts, vest tops or t-shirts and a major reason for this was the struggle their community was going through to be a part of British society during their period of rule in India. As times moved on things changed drastically, e.g. the Anglo-Indians who settled in Goa/India are now called Goanese and a complete different lifestyle compared to their fellow community members living in other Indian metro-cities where they have adapted to local Indian fashion and lifestyle making it harder to distinguish them.

If we look at the people who had migrated to other countries, they have a complete different cultural outlook and way of living although some of them still have Indian connections, but the

majority have mixed in with those countries lifestyles. Let's take the U.K. as an example where some of the Anglo-Indians had migrated in hope of better a better life as they were thought to be social misfits in Indian society. These people have adopted some highly recognized professions such as Outsourcing Consultants or even have their own established businesses. As far as fashion is concerned, it's more of a fusion for them, because whatever they have is a mixture of different communities and their lifestyles e.g. those living in U.K. dress up in a western style and those living in India dress up in various different styles from skirts to saris and all different sorts of outfits. Fashion has now become a global phenomenon, whereby by countries from all over the world come together on a global platform and showcase their creations to the public and the other designers. Due to these fashion weeks being held

in different fashion hubs across the globe, a lot of cross-cultural fashion has been in demand better known as "Fusion Clothing". This trend has been constantly growing with the continuous growth of the fashion industry delivering effective and successful results. Anglo-Indians settled across the world are no different because now they are part of whatever country and community they are living in; they have also adapted the styles and latest fashions of that particular place.

### Anglo-Indians Today & Tomorrow

The community extinct, is on verge of becoming as in realistic terms they have been unable to sustain their identity amongst the whirlpool of the worlds various different communities and cultures. Anglo-Indians have a great civilisation behind them which provides an in-depth insight into their origin, lifestyle or culture but it's almost impossible to predict the future stability of this community due to its lost roots. Today this community is on the verge of extinction like the "Lost Tribes of Egypt" but they are still known as the hard-working and fun-loving people who were once one of the strongest civilizations. It is a heritage that has steadily eroded and it is inevitable it will disappear into oblivion.

# The Developments & Expansion of Higher Education System In Thailand

By Ayshe Reshat

Government education in Thailand dates only from the latter half of the nineteenth century. Until then, the only education of a semi-public nature was that offered by the Buddhist monasteries, catered for only a small percentage of the male population.

In an effort to consolidate Thailand's independence and to modernize the country, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) introduced far-sighted reforms in the government bureaucracy after he assumed the throne in 1868. Centres of higher education incorporating elements of western influence were established and subsequently flourished.

In 1950, with the establishment of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), Thailand was set to embark on its modern course of planned development through a series of six and five-year economic plans. The very first was a six-year plan, launched in 1961, whereas successive plans covered the period of five years each. This era saw tremendous expansion and change in Thailand's higher education system.

Within a decade of the first national economic plan, three regional universities, Chiang

Mai University in the north, Khon Kaen University in the northeast and Prince of Songkla University in the south were established successively from 1964 to 1967 as part of the



education decentralisation program. Special attention was paid to promote engineering, agriculture, medicine and natural sciences as priority areas of study in line with the nation's accelerated efforts for economic and social development. A significant innovation during the Development Planning period was the initiation of two open admission universities: Ramkhamhaeng University and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University which opened in 1971 and 1979 respectively. These two universities provide an effective and economical way to respond to the growing public demand for access to higher education. Both make use of modern technologies such as radio and television to broadcast tutorials to a wider audience and the two

universities presently share around sixty percent of all tertiary enrolments.

Suranaree University of Technology, founded in 1990, is the first public university in the county to operate independently from the government bureaucracy, with its own autonomous administration system and with government financial support in the form of block grants.

It is hoped that it will become a model for other public universities seeking to become autonomous in the future.

#### Source of information

2008 Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy, Commission on Higher Education.

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*The Hon. Gordon Brown Prime Minister of United Kingdom, February 2009.*

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