

So far, yet so near – NILE distance training in 2010

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One of the distinctive features of NILE's MA in Professional Development for Language Education (MAPDLE) programme is its blend of face-to-face tuition and distance supervision. In 2010 NILE will also be launching the new modular DELTA, with more extensive online delivery.

For the past 15 years NILE has provided distance supervision on our postgraduate programme (MA in Professional Development for Language Education), first under the aegis of the School of Education at the University of East Anglia, and more recently on the current MA in Professional Development in Language Education in association with the Leslie Silver International Faculty at Leeds Metropolitan University. Intensive two- and three-week modules are followed by a six-month period of research during which candidates produce written assignments that form the basis for assessment on the core module (Language Teaching Methodology) and a range of elective modules. The course experience is extended during this period via email, a system that has proved increasingly robust as broadband access has proliferated and email technology has become more and more reliable.

Now that Web 2.0 has ushered in a new generation of communications technology, and with the modular DELTA being prepared for the first half of 2010, we have decided to move into more extensive online provision. NILE already hosts a Virtual Learning Environment (or Learning Management System), a moodle site (www.nileontheweb.co.uk) which provides a forum for course participants and a repository for materials they produce, and has proved popular with tutors and teachers alike.

Prompted by the general shift towards blended learning and the specific requirements of the modular DELTA, we are planning to introduce a fully interactive online facility, which will be available to DELTA trainees early in 2010.

Online delivery will bring with it a number of benefits:

- A dedicated forum for interaction and collaboration among teachers and between tutors and teachers
- The opportunity to store and track successive blocks of feedback
- The opportunity to store and access discussion threads
- Web space where documents, audio files and video files can be uploaded
- The chance to access resources on the Web

We plan to deliver DELTA Module 1 in two one-week blocks, separated by several units of work to be completed online. DELTA Modules 2 (with a local supervisor) and 3 will also be available online for teachers who wish to work towards these qualifications from wherever they are working. Once the new system is up and running, it seems highly likely that we will extend this facility to teachers following certain modules on our MAPDLE programme.

Further reading: <http://www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/teaching-awards/delta-modular.html>