



遙距及成人  
教育研究中心  
Centre for  
Research in  
Distance & Adult  
Learning

## Summarised Report of Activities

May1 1997 – October 1999

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## Introduction

The University Council's Executive Committee recommended that at the end of 24 months of the existence of CRIDAL, the following should be the general target against which the performance of the Research Centre can be assessed (see paper EC -3/96/12). This document summarises the activities of CRIDAL since its establishment in May 1997 and provides information against which the main indicators of performance can be assessed. There are indications, from the various assessment and evaluation exercises, that CRIDAL has largely met the objectives for which it was established. As a young Research Centre still growing, it has displayed some potential for further development and achievement especially as the University strives to be a Centre of Excellence in distance and adult learning regionally and internationally.

The major goals of CRIDAL are to support research and scholarship activities which:

- create a conducive environment within the university and foster an appreciation of the role of, and need to continually engage in, research in distance and adult learning;
- develop a research culture at OUHK, enhance the development of research skills of staff, and lead toward capacity building of expertise proficient in distance and adult learning research;
- provide an understanding of issues and factors which affect life long learning by students within the open learning system using the distance education mode;
- examine the usefulness and appropriateness of the various communications technologies in the flexible delivery of instruction;
- investigate the efficiency and effectiveness of distance learning techniques in non-formal environments, such as in industry, training, and government;
- enhance community and regional perception of OUHK as a Centre of Excellence in distance and adult learning.

This report summarises CRIDAL's performance using the indicators established by OUHK Council.

## Main Indicators of Performance

### 1.0 Unit level

#### 1.1 Performance indicator: The smooth operation of the Centre should be evident

- The CRIDAL staff team was established in January 1998. The core members of the staff include the Director, a Research Co-ordinator, two Research Fellows, a Data Analyst, a Secretary and a Clerical Officer. This enabled the full and smooth functioning of the Centre to commence. CRIDAL homepage URL is <http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal>
- Monthly seminars, research colloquia, and quarterly workshops have been offered to cultivate and strengthen the research culture at the OUHK and to provide skill training in research in distance and adult learning to the academic staff members.

#### 1.2 Performance indicator: Efficient service is provided to other OUHK academics involved in collaborative projects coordinated by the Centre

- Eleven projects designed as collaborative projects have been conducted and managed by CRIDAL. In line with one of CRIDAL's missions, a goal of these projects is to provide the opportunity and support structure for academic staff to participate in and to acquire or refine the skills needed for research in distance education. Four of these projects have been completed.
- CRIDAL has been providing research consultancy to OUHK staff and assisting colleagues with research and publication.

#### 1.3 Performance indicator: A significant collection of reference resources to support research in key distance learning and adult education areas is developed

- Information on publication outlets has been set up on CRIDAL web site to support research activities of OUHK staff.
- An inventory of Asian educators in open distance and adult education has been set up as an outcome of one of the research projects at CRIDAL.  
Web-site: <http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal/cridata/main.shtml>
- CRIDAL has from time to time consulted and interacted with the OUHK library in the acquisition of books, periodicals and reports to boost the resources in open and distance learning collection in the University. OUHK now has one of the largest collections of resource materials in open and distance learning in Asia.

## **2.0 University level**

### **2.1 Performance indicator: Research skills of OUHK academics should have been enhanced through attendance at workshops organised by CRIDAL**

- Nine workshops have been presented to introduce staff to various aspects of research methodology. In addition to workshops offered for academic staff at OUHK, CRIDAL Research staff members have conducted several workshops on research methodology for OUHK students and tutors. These have included:
- The regular OUHK Seminar Series organised by CRIDAL has provided opportunities for OUHK staff to hear about current developments in research related to Distance and Adult Learning from expert local and international researchers. 27 such seminars have so far been held.
- CRIDAL has also set up a forum for staff to gather peer comments about their proposed or ongoing research in Distance and Adult Learning, through the regular monthly research colloquia. 16 sessions have held since March 1998.

### **2.2 Performance indicator: The number of academic staff involved in Distance Education and Adult Education Research projects should have increased significantly from the 1995/96 levels**

- Figures indicate that there has been an increase in the number of academic staff applying for PACRD or School-based support for research projects on Distance Education and Adult Education Research. It should also be noted that, since CRIDAL became fully functional with the appointment of the full team in January 1998, a number of academic staff members have been actively engaged in CRIDAL projects. In addition to this direct involvement, CRIDAL staff has given substantial advice and assistance with proposals, data analysis and interpretation and particularly with writing papers to approximately 30 academic staff members.

### **2.3 Performance indicator: OUHK supported projects should have been completed and at least 8 papers published (with at least 3 in international journals)**

- The following CRIDAL projects, supported by OUHK, have been completed.
  - Factors affecting high and low achievement of OUHK students
  - Learning about learning: Cycle 1
  - Employer and student perceptions of distance education and studying at OUHK
  - A database of experts and their foci in distance/adult education: an Asian inventory

These are all one-year projects which have just been completed. Articles are being prepared for publication considerations in international journals. It is anticipated that several articles based on these projects will have been published within the coming year.

Excluding the final reports for each of these projects and the book based on Learning about Learning that has been drafted and is on hold pending the completion of Cycle two, 29 publications (24 published conference papers, five journal articles) have been produced, with 11 others currently submitted for referred journal review. Three papers from CRIDAL projects were short-listed for the 1999 AAOU Conference Best Paper Award, with the winner and runner-up being two of these.

### **2.4 Performance indicator: At least one large externally funded project should be near completion and at least 3 more substantial projects supported by International Agencies with funds exceeding HK\$3M should be ongoing**

- Despite restrictions in our eligibility to apply for research funding as principal investigator, CRIDAL staff have utilised every available opportunity, with some success, to submit applications to external funding. These include:
  - 'Global Distance Education Network East Asian Site at CRIDAL ([www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal/gdenet](http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal/gdenet))', supported by the World Bank (US\$75 000).
  - 'Access to distance education by Asian women', supported by the Commonwealth of Learning (US\$2500)
  - an Australian Research Council Large Grant of AUD\$133 360 for a joint project between Professor Terry Evans, **Professor Olugbemiro Jegede** and Dr. Richard Guy 'Australian distance education in Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea: an investigation of the consequences of internationalising education'
  - substantial contribution by CRIDAL to the research section of the proposal for the OUHK Multimedia Laboratory, supported by Hong Kong Jockey Club (HK\$10M - CRIDAL's allotment for technological research projects is HK\$1.2M)
  - two submissions to the Quality Education Fund for the research and development of distance education professional development packages (not funded):
  - three proposals currently being prepared for assessment by the RGC, for submission in October.

**2.5 Performance indicator: At least one International workshop/conference should have been hosted with the organisation of one or more in progress**

- CRIDAL has organised and hosted the Specialised Workshop on Institutional Research in Open and Distance Learning, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1999. 27 participants from ten countries attended.
- From 20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> June, 2000, CRIDAL will organise and host the First Conference on Research in Distance & Adult Learning in Asia. To date, the conference website (<http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal/cridala/>) has received 985 visitors from all parts of the world.

### **3.0 Regional level**

**3.1 Performance indicator: An OUHK presence in the area of distance learning and adult education should have been established via publication contribution to conference and symposia**

- CRIDAL successfully hosted the first ever video-conference session in Hong Kong on distance education at the 1998 Hong Kong Educational Research Association Conference, with participants at four sites in Hong Kong, Australia, the USA and India being linked electronically.
- There has been an appreciable number of OUHK staff attendances at conferences/seminars/workshops since 1996.
- CRIDAL is the East Asia regional site for the World Bank Global Distance Education Network (Global DisEdNet).
- CRIDAL jointly edited the special issue of the *Open Education Research* journal, Vols. 2, 3 & 4, with the Institute for Open Education Research, Shanghai TV University to commemorate the second anniversary of the changeover of Hong Kong back to China.
- CRIDAL staff have made significant contributions to conferences, symposia and special lectures in the region since 1998.
- CRIDAL staff have published a total of 21 refereed journal articles, 5 book chapters, 8 papers in conference proceedings and 34 conference presentations since 1998.
- CRIDAL staff have presented several workshops/seminars on distance education for distance educators in Mainland China.

### **4.0 International level**

**4.1 Performance indicator: A good reputation as successful developing Centre for research in distance learning and adult education should have been established among peers in the same discipline**

- The work and focus of CRIDAL are guided by expert advice from an International Advisory Board (IAB) composed of distinguished academics, researchers and managers in academia, industry, and international organisations around the world. The group meets twice yearly using a password-secured a electronic meeting format. This is an innovative strategy for international collaboration that CRIDAL has initiated in order to enhance its work from an international perspective.
- CRIDAL has been selected as one of the collaborating partners for the Global Distance Education Network (Global DistEDNet) and served as the East Asia site.
- CRIDAL staff have earned professional, academic and scholarly recognition worldwide through their participation in and contributions to professional association activities and community services, as follows: Editorship of Journals, Membership of Editorial Advisory Boards & Committees of professional Organisations, Coordinator, Special Interest Group , Keynote Addresses. The Director of CRIDAL, Prof Olugbemiro Jegede was invited as Keynote speaker at three major international conferences in 1999.  
CRIDAL has so far been awarded funds by The Croucher Foundation to support two Visiting Professors from China each on a six –month research visit.  
CRIDAL also hosted a USA Fullbright Scholar from September 1998 to August 1999.  
Several research collaborative projects with local and international universities are either on-going or under final negotiation.

#### **4.2 External Evaluation**

Two groups of external evaluators were used to assess CRIDAL. They are the International Advisory Board (IAB) members and some international visitors to CRIDAL who have worked closely with the staff of the Centre. Their assessments included the following comments:

- CRIDAL is playing an important role to establish research on adult and distance learning not only in OUHK and Hong Kong but also in Asia, even though it is still very young.
- Since the use of distance education in Asia is expanding so rapidly, a quality research centre is critical to promoting the best learning for all students.
- The Open University of Hong Kong is establishing itself as the world leader in adult and distance education in Asia largely because of the research activities of CRIDAL.
- The work on small internal projects, the building of publication records etc. are important aspects which are already underway. The welcome removal of restrictions should facilitate research grant performance for CRIDAL and OUHK in the future.
- CRIDAL staff have contributed significantly to the increase in OUHK staff publications over the past two years. However, it should be recognised that growth in research output measures occurs over a longer period than this and that, therefore, the increase in research projects and grants noted previously should lead to a further growth in publication scores in subsequent years.
- CRIDAL has organised and facilitated an impressive array of internal workshops and seminars geared to the needs of the OUHK community.
- CRIDAL has achieved a great deal over the past two years and the Director and staff should be commended for their efforts. The institutional, national and international contribution that CRIDAL can make over the next five to ten years is substantial.
- The research studies completed and in progress not only meet the needs of the management of the OUHK, but also make a significant contribution to the international literature in distance education and adult learning.
- The global nature of many of the activities of CRIDAL, which is entirely appropriate in the context of distance education, is also reflected in the two major workshop/conference activities organised by CRIDAL.
- CRIDAL's growing international reputation for excellence is well deserved.