Message from the President

I bring you greetings in this maiden issue of the CRIDAL Newsletter. As the former Open Learning Institute, the OUHK developed a reputation of excellence in teaching and community services. As a newly-established university, it is becoming increasingly important for us to build onto the already existing high quality discipline-based research that has been done in the past so that we can achieve a similar standard of excellence in research. In particular, it is important for us to publish our research outcomes widely in reputable international forums. CRIDAL was established in 1997 for the dual purpose of enhancing the research functions of the OUHK, and contributing to theoretical and practical knowledge about distance and open learning.

During CRIDAL’s first year, the main goals were to establish the Centre’s objectives and to recruit a team of researchers equipped to provide skill training and other support mechanisms that will facilitate the pursuit of high quality research activities as OUHK continues to grow as the centre for excellence in the Asia Pacific region. With these goals having been satisfied, CRIDAL is already well on the way to becoming an internationally-recognised research centre. For its second year, I wish the Centre well and hope that it will continue to grow and expand in its support for OUHK.

Professor S W Tam
President

Message from the Director

As CRIDAL enters its second year, we are proud to offer this maiden issue of our newsletter as a reflection on our achievements since our establishment. With a full complement of staff now in place, we have begun in earnest to provide the support essential to the research culture of an emerging university. This support structure has taken on many forms: leadership of cross-discipline team projects, organisation of seminars and colloquia to provide formal and informal settings for colleagues to discuss research in distance and open education, dissemination of information, organisation of workshops to develop and enhance research skills in distance education. We have been actively establishing networks in Mainland China and overseas, that will help OUHK to become a part of the international distance education research scene. Already we have begun to generate an income from collaborative research and consultancies and are currently awaiting the outcomes of several major submissions to external funding agencies, while further submissions are in preparation. Our goals for our second year are to consolidate on our current achievements while raising the research, publications, and scholarship profile of the University.

Professor Olugbemiro Jegede
Director; CRIDAL
CRIDAL’s vision is to **nurture** and **enhance excellence** in research with a view to become the **leader** in the **Asia-Pacific region** in research in distance and adult learning.

**CRIDAL Projects**

To further enhance the research culture at the OUHK, this year CRIDAL has introduced the initiative of establishing three major team projects, in which colleagues from across discipline areas will come together to work collaboratively on issues which are of common concern. The purpose of these team projects is two-fold. First, they are intended to contribute in the usual scholarly way to knowledge about distance education. However, the second, equally important, purpose will be to provide the opportunity and support structure for academic staff to participate in and to acquire first-hand the skills needed for research in distance education.

The three team projects are:

1. Factors that enhance achievement in open learning: a case study of high vs low achieving students at OUHK
2. A comparative study of the administrative style, educational processes, and outcomes of selected Asian open universities
3. Learning about learning: a focus on problem-based learning in distance education

There is also one CRIDAL project which is a part of the research centre’s infrastructure building:

- A database of experts and their expertise in distance/adult education: an Asian inventory

For more information, please refer to http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal/project.htm

**CRIDAL Services to OUHK Staff During the Past Year**

**A. Involvement in Research Activities**

- started three major team projects involving colleagues who wish to engage in cross-discipline educational research and/or develop their research skills
- prepared joint applications for external research funding
- co-ordinated institutional research activities
- hosted a visiting fellow as part of CRIDAL’s visiting fellowship programme
- facilitated research activities in the Mainland by OUHK staff

**B. Technical Advice and Support**

- conducted an introductory workshop for staff on distance education research methodology
- provided individual mentoring for colleagues’ own research activities in distance education and adult learning and/or higher degree studies
- introduced a series of lunch-time research colloquia to encourage colleagues to discuss issues related to research in distance and adult education
- assisted colleagues with structuring and reviewing articles for publication
- assisted colleagues with design and development of questionnaires for their own research
- provided expert advice on the use of statistical packages for data analysis

**C. Dissemination of Information**

- prepared a database of journal publication outlets to help colleagues identify and submit to appropriate journals (URL: http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal/journal/index.htm)
- initiated the preparation of procedural documents for various research-related activities and tasks
- disseminated relevant information, as it became available, about calls for applications for research grants
- disseminated information, as it became available, about various professional development programmes in distance and adult learning
The Expertise Within CRIDAL

CRIDAL is fortunate to have an international staff with considerable experience in research in the social sciences and distance, open and adult education. We also have among the staff a native of Mainland China who is quite conversant with developments in educational research in the Mainland.

The following summary gives a brief indication of the experience and expertise of the CRIDAL staff. Further information is available from our World Wide Web site (http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal/). The Centre Director, Dr. Zhang Wei-yuan, has an internationally-established record as a researcher in the field of distance, open and adult education. In his previous position he was the Foundation Head of the Research and Evaluation Unit of the Distance Education Centre at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia where, in 1995, he was the recipient of the University’s award for excellence in research. His work has included studies of curriculum design (Jegede, Taylor and Okebukola, 1991; Taylor, Jegede and Naidu, 1995) and quality teaching and learning environments (Jegede, 1993a; 1993b; Jegede, Fraser and Fisher, 1995) that have taken into account cognitive and affective factors affecting the achievement of adult learners studying in distance mode. His recent work includes collateral learning and cultural influences, and the use of modern communication technologies in the delivery of instruction at a distance.

Professor Jegede is Editor-in-Chief of the Electronic Journal of Instructional Science & Technology, and an Editorial Board member of several internationally refereed journals including: Distance Education: An International Journal, Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching, and Science and Technology Education Library (STEL). He is currently the Coordinator of the International Organisation for Science and Technology Education SIG on Cultural Issues in Science and Technology Education. He is Consultant to several international agencies including UNDP, Commonwealth Secretariat, and The World Bank.

Dr. Zhang Wei-yuan, one of the Research Fellows, has had international research experience in comparative education in Mainland China, Canada, the UK and Hong Kong since 1983. His recent book, Young People and Careers: A Comparative Study of Careers Guidance in Shanghai, Edinburgh and Hong Kong, was published by The Comparative Education Research Centre of the University of Hong Kong in June, 1998 (Zhang, 1998). He is a native of Mainland China and worked for five years at the East China Normal University, Shanghai. He has published seven books in Chinese and many articles in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Great Britain, Germany and North America. Dr. Zhang is responsible for the management of two of the major CRIDAL projects, and liaison with higher education institutions in Mainland China for academic exchange.

The other Research Fellow, Dr. Margaret Taplin, comes from a background in teacher education and has extensive experience in qualitative and quantitative pedagogical research in Australia and Hong Kong. Her previous work has included research and development in the use of hypermedia applications for computer-assisted learning (for example James and Taplin, 1994; Taplin and James, 1994; James and Taplin, 1996). Her particular area of expertise is problem solving and she has published widely in this field. In 1993 her research was honoured by the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia with the inaugural Practical Implications Award and the Early Career Award. In her former position as Sub-Dean of Research in the School of Education at the University of Tasmania, Australia, she gained valuable experience in co-ordinating the school’s research programme. Her recent work has focused on problem-based learning with adult learners (for example, Taplin, in press for 1998; Chan and Taplin, 1998) and she has recently authored a book titled Education in Human Values Through Mathematics. In addition to the management of two of CRIDAL’s major projects, Dr. Taplin is responsible for the co-ordination of the research seminar programme at OUIHK.

Ms Jessie Yum, the Research Co-ordinator, has a background in Psychology of Education. Her research interests are in teaching and learning and the evaluation of students’ experiences. Before she joined CRIDAL, she was a member of the co-ordinating team of the Action Learning Project, which looked after more than 50 sub-projects in seven universities in Hong Kong. She has jointly edited two books with the co-ordinating team: Case Studies of Improving Teaching and Learning from the Action Learning Project and Improving University Teaching in Hong Kong. Currently Ms.Yum is responsible for the co-ordination of institutional research at the OUIHK.

Mr. Clarence Fong, the CRIDAL data analyst, has expertise and experience in the latest computer technologies and statistical analysis techniques. As well as being responsible for maintaining the Centre’s web site and providing technical support to the Centre’s staff, he is available to give statistical advice and support to the Centre’s clients.
## Seminars/Workshop/Colloquium (May 1997-April 1998)

### OUHK SEMINARS

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<tr>
<td>Prof. Olugbemiro Jegede (CRIDAL)</td>
<td>Briefing and open discussion on research agenda at OUHK</td>
<td>16 June 1997</td>
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<td>Dr. David Murphy (ETPU)</td>
<td>A week in the life of an open learning student</td>
<td>25 June 1997</td>
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<td>Ms. Jessie Yum, PolyU</td>
<td>The research agenda for open and distance learning: context and application</td>
<td>15 July 1997</td>
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<td>Dr. Hilary Perraton</td>
<td>Distance education in the 21st century</td>
<td>6 August 1997</td>
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<td>Prof. Chun-ming Leung</td>
<td>Managing distance learning environment through Lotus Notes</td>
<td>4 November 1997</td>
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<td>Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY, USA</td>
<td>The use of multimedia in distance learning</td>
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<td>Dr. K.S. Yuen, Mrs Linda Chow, Dr. S.L. Chung &amp; Mr. John Mak (B&amp;A)</td>
<td>Hands-on demonstration of the use of a LOTUS-based electronic environment for teaching at a distance</td>
<td>26 November 1997</td>
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<td>Prof. Lee Harvey</td>
<td>Towards quality transformation of lifetime learners’ experience in higher education</td>
<td>15 January 1998</td>
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<td>Dr. Piet Steyn &amp; Dr. Benjamin Mokhaba</td>
<td>Distance education in South Africa</td>
<td>27 February 1998</td>
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<td>Vista University, Pretoria, South Africa</td>
<td>The design and development of an online evaluation system</td>
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<td>Dr. Olugbemiro Jegede (CRIDAL)</td>
<td>Culture, interpretation &amp; performance: issues for educational assessment</td>
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<td>Dr. Mairead Dunne</td>
<td>Interviewing for expertise</td>
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### WORKSHOP

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<tr>
<td>Prof. Olugbemiro Jegede (CRIDAL)</td>
<td>How to research distance and adult learning issues</td>
<td>2 &amp; 3 April 1998</td>
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### RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

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<tr>
<td>Dr. Margaret Taplin (CRIDAL)</td>
<td>Integrating research and teaching</td>
<td>19 March 1998</td>
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International Networking and Collaboration

Part of CRIDAL’s ultimate goal is to emerge as a leader in the Asia-Pacific region, and indeed in the world, in research in distance and adult learning. This necessitates networking and collaborating with institutions and organisations globally, regionally, and internationally. CRIDAL has established links with local universities and is working on research collaboration with Hong Kong Institute of Education, and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in the following projects:

- Teachers as action researchers in technology-driven, problem-solving mathematics classrooms (submission for Quality Education Fund)
- Professional development in Science & Mathematics education
- Virtual classroom, expertise, and professional development of teachers

A topical issue that CRIDAL is currently investigating, is employers’ perception about the distance mode of learning and graduates of the Open University in their employment. The results of this study when available towards the end of the year will have significant implications to industry, employment agencies, the Open University and other local universities as well.

While plans are on to network with organisations with similar outlook and focus (e.g., International Centre for Research in Open Learning, Cambridge, England; Centre for Distance Learning Research of Texas A & M, USA), CRIDAL has been consulted by and facilitated a number of projects for organisations such as The Commonwealth Secretariat, London and The World Bank HQ Washington, DC.

One way we have extended the concept of international collaboration is the establishment of an International Advisory Board for CRIDAL. This Board which is made up of distinguished practitioners, researchers, and research managers in distance and open learning from reputable institutions representing all parts of the world will amongst others advise and suggest to CRIDAL on new directions in distance education & open learning research and avenues of international co-operation.

CRIDAL is acting as a host for a major international project: ‘First International Study on Science, Culture & Science Education Nexus, and Distance Learning’ being proposed by a consortium of experts from various universities. The project which will cost about US$1.2 Million over three years, will be carried out in 20 countries sampled from the various continents of the world.

CRIDAL-OUHK Selected as Asian Node for the World Bank Distance Education project

The World Bank’s Human Development Network - Education and Technology Team has developed the Global Distance Education Network (Global DistEdNet). This global resource for distance education currently located at the World Bank website is being done through partnerships with a number of institutions world wide. OUHK, through CRIDAL has been selected as one of the collaborating partners for the Global DistEdNet especially for the Asia region. Eventually the Global Distance Education Network will consist of the World Bank’s Global DistEdNet core site and a number of partner institutions representing different regions of the world. It is expected that in 1999, partner institutions identified as having established capacity for knowledge management in distance education will further develop their systems for collecting and disseminating information about distance education in that part of the world where they are located.

The Global DistEdNet will amongst others, foster co-operative pooling of knowledge resources by partner institutions around the world, which entails decentralisation of responsibility for developing, assembling and maintaining content-rich web sites which will be linked to sites at the other partner institutions, and be a source of learning on the specific needs, capabilities and resources in developing countries for learning about distance learning and sharing good practices across countries.

The CRIDAL-OUHK regional site will function as cultural and geographical representative in the development of the Global DistEdNet, in Asia and will include resources from a variety of sources including:

- local and regional conferences, workshops and seminars.
- academic and non-academic publications.
- unpublished documents, monographs and reports.
- local and regional experts who could develop relevant case studies for inclusion in the network.
One of the aims of CRIDAL is to help to raise the research productivity profile of OUHK through publishing educational research outcomes in international forums. Despite the fact that there was only one academic staff member for most of the first year, with the others joining in the latter third, CRIDAL has made a good start with a total of 24 publications. Currently, several more publications are in various stages of submission and review.

**Articles in Refereed International Journal: 6**
**Scholarly Books: 2**
**Refereed Book Chapter: 1**
**Conference Papers: 11**

A selected sample of our publications is listed below.