

Opening the door to an era of @-Learning

National Computer Education Week
15th - 22nd June 2003

The Secondary Education Modernization Project (SEMP) of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education & Cultural Affairs together with the Asian Development Bank launched on setting up 800 Computer Learning Centers (CLCC) island-wide.



Of the 800 centers, 212 centers are now ready. The Ministry declared a National Computer Education Week from 15th - 22nd June to coincide with the opening of the

Computer Learning Centres.

The National inauguration of this programme under the theme 'Universe at your fingertips!' was launched at Panama Vidyalaya in Lahugala and the Akkarpattu Muslim Vidyalaya by the Hon. Minister of Human Resource Development, Education and Cultural Affairs, Dr. Karunasena Kodithuwakku.

The project provided air-conditioners, computer tables, chairs and other accessories necessary for a fully equipped Computer Learning Center. Around 15 - 20 computers were provided to a center. Teachers from the schools were trained at the National Institute of Education on the

usage of computers and organization and maintenance of the Centers and computer assisted learning. During the project period more than 20,000 computers will be provided to the Computer Learning Centers in the country.

Computers will be used for the teaching of Science, Mathematics, English and Technology and also for computer assisted learning. Steps have been taken to prepare software which could be used in the schools for teaching these subjects and also for computer assisted learning. This approach to teaching will broaden the knowledge of the students and at the same time will help them to gain hands on experience in the usage of computers and will also improve the learning skills which are vital for the students to get quality modernized education.

Research on Discipline Not Reaching Schools, Experts Say

Washington
After four decades of research, experts know a lot about what some of the risk factors are for discipline problems in school and even how to prevent some of them. The problem, some of those researchers said at a forum held here last week, is that the message has yet to penetrate schools. "The lesson here is that education research and public-health or mental-health research are indeed one thing, and we have to learn how to integrate what we're doing into the school building," said Dr. Sheppard G. Kellam, a professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Medicine. "Our mission should be to help teachers effectively do their mission." Organized by the Albert Shanker Institute, a Washington-based think tank, the Oct. 29 meeting was intended to be a step toward bridging the gap between research and practice on an issue that teachers and parents alike see as a top concern. Conference organizers noted, for example, that more than three-quarters of adults surveyed for this year's Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll on education cited a lack of student discipline as either a "very serious" or "somewhat serious" problem. "Student discipline is one of the real

reasons many people give for opting to put their kids in nonpublic schools," said Nat LaCour, the executive vice president of the institute, which was established by the American Federation of Teachers to honor the late president of the union. At least some discipline problems could be prevented, experts said, if educators knew more about how to recognize potential trouble signs and about proven strategies for heading off aggressive classroom behavior. Peer Power For example, Hill M. Walker, a special education professor at the University of Oregon in Eugene, said studies have shown that explosive classroom confrontations with some problem students take on a typical pattern. A seemingly calm student might, for example, respond to a teacher's command by becoming agitated. When the teacher repeats the command, the student's misbehavior escalates, then peaks, begins to recede, and finally returns to normal—all within about a minute. "This 'behavioral escalation game' is one that teachers should not play," Mr. Walker said. "If the student gets the better of you, it compromises your ability to control the classroom." If the reverse happens, he added, the teacher will have created an enemy. The best course—one that most teachers are often not aware

of—is to short-circuit the confrontation. His research also shows that students' aggressive behavioral patterns often form before they set foot in a classroom. Those tendencies, however, can also be reinforced in school when difficult students become more isolated from better-behaved peers and are lumped together with other misbehaving students. Left untended, such problems often balloon in middle school, when reports of disruptive behavior multiply. Dr. Kellam's longitudinal studies affirm the influence that the classroom and peer environment can have in disciplinary problems. As part of his study program, which began in the late 1980s, 1st graders in 18 schools were randomly assigned to classrooms and tracked through middle school. The researchers found that boys who were rated among the top 25 percent of the group in aggressiveness fared much worse if they started out in chaotic 1st grade classrooms. By the time they reached 6th grade, those students were 59 times more likely than the average child to exhibit severe aggressive behavior. In comparison, students from that same quartile who started school in calmer, better-managed classrooms were only 2.7 times more

likely than most children to act up in 6th grade. What made the difference, Dr. Kellam said, was an intervention program known as the Good Behavior Game, through which teams of students could earn rewards, such as erasers or certain privileges, for positive behavior. The researchers have since tracked the same students through ages 19 or 21, Dr. Kellam said, and the effects appear to be holding. Investigators plan to present the results from that latest wave of data collection next year. Dr. Kellam said that other classroom-management strategies might be just as effective at preventing behavior problems. Yet half the teachers in his study did not have any effective tools for managing classrooms. Jerry D. Weast, the superintendent of the 137,000-student Montgomery County, Md., school district, which borders Washington, agreed that teachers need strategies to handle classroom behavior. "I don't think there's a very good marriage between practice and research," he said.

Debra Viaedero
Education Week
November 6, 2002

Education For Development and Fulfilment

Workshop for School Prefects in the Jaffna Education Zone

The School Prefect Programme initiated by the Hon. Minister of School Education, Suranin Rajapaksha is a project spread among schools island wide. Prefects from 20 schools in the Jaffna Education Zone were selected for the workshop, which will be held from 28th June - 1st July at Kopai Teacher Training College.

International Folklore Conference in Kathmadu, Nepal

Dr Gunadasa Amarasekera, and Prof. Mrs Rohini Paranawithana attended this Congress in Kathmandu. The topic of the discussion was the relevance of folk literature in creating a modern sensibility. Dr Amarasekera, presented a paper titled "Use of Folk Poetry in Expressing Modern Sensibility", at the conference.

A Sri Lankan Cultural Programme was also organized in Kathmandu during this period and the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Nepal Mrs G Asirwanth stated that this programmes and the Golden Jubilee celebration together with the Cultural and Food promotion at the Hotel Annapura was a great success and the Sri Lankan dance was the talk of the town. She said that everybody who attended the function enjoyed the programme.



Hon. Minister of School Education, Suranin Rajapaksha hand over the first copy of the book titled Patashaleeya Saddharma Kosaya' to the Ven. Theripeha Somananda Anu Nayaka at a ceremony held at the Ministry Auditorium on 11th June 2003.

In Praise of...

(Written by Alithamby Nakeel, a student of Akkaraipattu Muslim Central College, on the visit of Dr. Karunasena Kodithuwakku, to Akkaraipattu)

*The apple of our eyes that turns a new leaf in history today,
It is the mother school to the whole village,
Began as a Government Junior English School in 1946
And converted to 'Suwabaasha' school in 1956
An Alma Mater for several hundreds of all three races,
Who sat side by side together in a bench,
Learned to live to care and share,
Showing exemplary unity for all - the greatest need of the hour.
The first National School in the province,
Making national, International records in the history,
Bringing fame to the village - Akkaraipattu
The rice basin of Ampara District.*

*Our kids now have a ray of hope for a better future,
As you sun shine over their sky - their school,
With your wit and wisdom and the touch of foreign taste,
Information Technology and English Education,
Like a manna from the heaven,
Even for the darkest corner of the country,
To broaden the horizon of Eastern boys to the western world,
Meeting the needs of global village,
moving the world-at finger command
it is your brain child, mirroring your deepest thoughts and silent
actions and reactions.*

*The country knows your concern
Student's progress and the Teacher Welfare,
All for all and Education for all,
The one who lights up the hearts and shapes up the path,
Will never die in the earth.*

*We have a sense of pride, we feel proud to welcome you,
The fourth Doctor Education Minister to visit our school
Dr. Dahanayaka, Dr. Badi Udeen Mahmood, Dr. Nissanka Wijeratna
and now,
Dr. Karunasena Kodithuwakku,*

*You are also a Cultural Sculptor,
That declared Beruwela MasjidulAbrar,
A National Cultural Asset,
Ceylon Muslims will never forget,
All the ears and eyes are set on you now,*

*The man of high caliber
We wish you a long life,
The kids will never forget you and your service,
You will ever live in the hearts and minds
Of million kids for many more years to come.*

Media Unit
Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education & Cultural Affairs and Ministry of School Education
4th Floor, 'Isurupaya',
Battaramulla
Telephone: / Fax. 784869,
Email: secpedu@sltnet.lk

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