

## **Full Text: Letter to the Observer Newspaper**

Dear Sir

In The Observer of 16th August, in the Escape section, under 'Dream Gap Year Jobs' the section entitled 'English Teacher in Thailand', we read: '... you only need a computer and £150 to become a fully trained TEFL teacher'.

I would like to take issue with this. The notion of becoming a 'fully trained teacher' of any subject in just 50 hours online is not just pie in the sky but a complete banquet!

The standard route to become a 'fully trained' teacher of virtually anything is a one year Post Graduate Certificate in Education.

The fact that one may be a 'Native Speaker' of English in no way mitigates the above, as the skill to speak a language is in no way related to knowledge of how to explain the language (ie, of syntax, vocabulary, phonology, etc) and learning (psychology, language acquisition, etc).

What a (very) short course of this nature does is to provide the barest of introductions to the language and no more. Let applicants be under no illusions that the 'certificate' that emerges from this will in any way assist them in a job market other than a cheap and minimally skilled one in a few overseas centres.

There are other courses (run, for example, by Trinity College or Cambridge Exams and others) that provide a much more detailed and widely recognised validity, involving face to face and online work together with some very necessary teaching practice. Certificates emerging from these courses have a far wider validity and can even form the basis for a career in this country.

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### **Edited Text, appeared 30.08.09**

Dear Sir

In The 'Dream Gap Year Jobs' (Escape, 16<sup>th</sup> August) we read that to be an English Teacher in Thailand:

'... you only need a computer and £150 to become a fully trained TEFL teacher'.

The notion of becoming a 'fully trained teacher' of any subject in just 50 hours online is not just pie in the sky but a complete banquet!

There are other courses (run, for example, by Trinity College) that provide a much more detailed and widely recognised validity. Certificates emerging from these courses have a far wider validity and can even form the basis for a career in this country.