

George Auckland

In a BBC career spanning over 40 years, George Auckland has made an outstanding contribution to the lifelong learning agenda in the UK both in TV and Online. This work has enriched the learning experiences of millions, and he has played a major role in supporting thousands of people to realise their potential as learners especially with the development of their basic skills.

George joined the BBC in 1969 making TV programmes in nearly every area of the department's wide ranging educational output including adult literacy and numeracy, computing, hands-on science and cookery. He made a major contribution to the UK's science education by making science accessible and relevant to everyday life. Not only was he responsible for giving Carol Vorderman her first major break in television, he persuaded numerous public figures (including Margaret Thatcher when she was Prime Minister) to participate in scientific experiments and produced the hugely influential Johnny Ball series "Think of a Number" and "Think Again". Both are regarded as two of the finest examples of informal science education for young people ever made.

In 1996 George created the BBC's Education website and the BBC's online learning department owes its inception to George Auckland. He commissioned a number of influential sites including Webwise, the History and Health websites and the inaugural Teletubbies site. During this exciting period he was also instrumental in the growth of other technologies such as interactive television, video-on-demand, BETSIE (BBC education text to speech internet enhancer) which allowed blind people to access increasingly complex web pages, and a variety of European co-funded digital projects.

As if this wasn't enough, in 2001 George created the Innovation Unit for BBC Learning and tasked it with investigating editorial, pedagogical and technological innovation. Since then George has been at the heart of cutting edge developments supporting the UK's lifelong learning agenda. He has been a consistent champion of broadband and R&D in learning and made a massive contribution to the success of the BBC's interactive TV pilot in Hull. He is currently pioneering trials in the use of wireless, mobile and IPTV technologies.

Although George's work makes its own eloquent testament to the significance of his contribution to UK society and to the BBC, George himself has been a fantastic ambassador both for BBC Learning and for the wider educational community in the UK.