

Consultant of the Month – Barbara Roberts

Barbara Roberts, the latest in our Consultant Of The Month series, is fast developing an impressive new career after becoming an education consultant in 2006. Barbara is a member of the SEC committee.

Having worked as a head teacher of two contrasting primary schools, as an Ofsted inspector and as an advisory teacher ICT with Northumberland LEA, Barbara Roberts has an impressive range of skills and excellent contacts.

Both have been invaluable assets as she has forged a new role as an education consultant over the past two years, trading as Aidan Consulting.

“I love what I do; there’s time for networking and I have been able to follow areas of interest,” she says.

She initially considered joining one of the large consultancy firms, but decided instead to strike out as an independent. Naturally friendly and gregarious, she joined the SEC partly as a way of networking and of avoiding any sense of isolation.

Barbara often works on projects in association with other consultants. For example, her current ventures include the Head Coach, a programme of professional development coaching designed for head teachers and senior managers in schools, which she has developed with two colleagues, one from a Government background and one from an administration background. Details can be found at www.theheadcoach-uk.com

Based in the North East, Barbara undertakes much of her work in an HE and FE environment. “The local universities here buy in my services in areas such as quality management for their teacher training. When students are training and they need observation of lessons to give them pointers, I give them feedback and written reports. There’s lots of follow-up work which comes from that, too, with Sunderland University for example. Also Newcastle University, where I have worked on the PGCE in the area of primary curriculum lessons. I do some work with Early Years Centre managers through Sunderland College.”

Another particularly rewarding area is the work she does with a North East local authority to help the long-term unemployed, re-educating and mentoring them, including training them to improve their self-esteem.

Recently, Barbara has also benefited directly from one of the SEC’s Consultancy Opportunities, which are emailed regularly to members. This involved preparing lesson packs for Ask About Medicines Week – the annual event run by national not-for-profit company Ask About Medicines, which aims to increase people’s involvement in decisions about their use of medicines. “It was very successful,” explains Barbara. “We gave free demonstration lessons to Sunderland schools.”

Roker-born and bred, Barbara's interests include travelling and football: she is a season ticket-holder at Sunderland AFC's Stadium of Light.