Open learning for development: towards empowerment and transformation

Alan Tait
Director of International Teacher Education
Professor of Distance Education and Development
The Open University, UK
Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning 2013
Abuja, Nigeria
Asa Briggs at Open University Degree ceremony
Summary: Open learning and outcomes for development

- What does development mean and how is it delivered?
- Open Universities as case for open learning
- Development and education
- Capability approaches: the contribution of Amartya Sen
- Qualifications as proxies for transformation and empowerment
- Drop out
- OER’S, MOOCs and open publishing
What is development?

- Purposeful intervention
- Values based
- To deliver change in social and economic relations
- Not (simply) same as ‘serving the market’
Development

• ‘intervention aimed at external social goals in a context of value-based conflict’

Alan Thomas, 1996
Open Learning

- The case of the Open Universities
- 60 plus open universities in world

Wikieducator Handbook of Open Universities  (Wikieducatgor.org)
Mission 1

• To be regarded as the foremost University providing highly accessible and enhanced quality education anchored by social justice, equity, equality and national cohesion through a comprehensive reach that transcends all barriers.
Mission 2

• Adopting the motto 'University for all', OU x believes in the democratisation of education; giving everyone a chance at self-actualisation and fulfilling their potential.
Mission 3

• Social justice and fairness: Inspired by the foundational precepts of our transforming society, social justice and fairness animate our strategy, guide our efforts and influence our imagined future
Mission 4

- to build an inclusive knowledge society through inclusive education
Mission 5

• The OU upholds the core values of “Openness, Responsibility, Quality, Diversity and Internationalization”. It strives to meet the needs of ... developing society and economy, and to satisfy the personal development needs of the people, particularly the educational needs of rural areas, remote areas and ethnic minority regions
Development themes for open universities

• Social justice
• Access, inclusion and breaking down of barriers
• Personal fulfilment
• Needs of economy
• Knowledge society
• Rural and remote communities
• Minority ethnic populations
• National cohesion
• Democratisation
Development on whose terms?

- Whose values?
- Whose consent?
- Outcomes for whom?
- Students as ‘Targets?’
- ‘Objects?’
- ‘Subjects?’
- ‘Partners?’
Development: contested ideas

- Increased GDP
- Sustainable world
- Social justice
Amartya Sen
DEVELOPMENT AS FREEDOM

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR ECONOMICS

Amartya Sen
‘People are the real wealth of a nation’

- In contrast with World Bank vision of time of GDP as criterion of development
- World Development Reports from UNDP 1990
- With Mahbub Ul Haq
- To Sen’s theories of development and social justice,
- Through Capability approach
Capability approaches: ‘To be and to do’

- Capabilities
- To enhance choice of *how to be and what to do*
- Supported by ‘Functionings’

- To support individual choice *to be and to do*
- Constraints of context?
Sen and education

- Enhancement of human capability
- Not just building of human capital
Capability approaches in education

‘if schools and universities are places where identities are formed, where we learn to be as well as to know, how much greater the responsibility for teachers to act and to think about what identities and what capabilities to function are being distributed’

Walker 2005 p 109
Commonwealth of Learning

- ‘following the ideas of development economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, COL understands development as freedom, increasing the freedoms that men and women enjoy is a definition of development, and greater freedom empowers people to be more effective agents of development’.

COL Three Year plan 2012-2015, p 9
Empowerment and transformation

- Qualifications as proxy
- Qualifications deliver for individuals
- If qualification is recognised and respected
- Good reputation for quality of ODL essential
- Drop out as barrier
Leave HE after 1 full year of study

UK

- Full time 7.4%
- Part time 35.1%
- Open University 44.7%

HESA Non-continuation rates Table 3A and table 3E
45% of Open University students have one A level or less
Less than minimum conventional university entry qualifications

Source: http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/the-ou-explained/facts-and-figures
Doing worse or doing more difficult things?

- With mature students
- With ethnic diversity
- With lower or no previous educational qualifications
- From families without higher education
- In rural areas
What does drop out represent?

- Not status of university
- Not part-time mode
- Not Distance and on-line modes
- But risk and challenges of openness and inclusion
- BUT
- Must have responsibility to students
- Must have data
Curriculum and programmes of study

• Biggest single contributor to fulfilment of development aims
• Programmes of study have to support building of capacity to choose more freely ‘to be and to do’
• Move from elite to mass higher education
• Challenge to curriculum design: ‘transformative curriculum’
• Open universities must challenge concept of university
• And offer credible qualifications
• ‘public good professionals’ (Walker and McLean 2013)
Outcomes of study for development

- build capabilities
- enhance choice
- exercise independence of thought
- Gain range of relevant skills
- Gain a livelihood
- Act as a citizen
Open education: the next generation

• Open Educational Resources
• MOOCs
• Open publishing
• Open education in development framework
The transition to the digital world
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Visitors since launch:</th>
<th>Visitors 2011/12:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Learn</td>
<td>22 million</td>
<td>5.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iTunes</td>
<td>2.9 million</td>
<td>63.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>16.8 million video views</td>
<td>2.7 million video views</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Journeys from informal to formal learning through open media
Core methodology

• Resource bank of OER teacher education materials...
• ... plus a network of over 20 institutions and partnerships
• Used by teacher education institutions to train pre- and in-service teachers
• Print, CD and/or online
• Under Creative Commons license
• 90 units cover five subject areas for primary and secondary teachers

TESSA is funded by The Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Waterloo Foundation and Open University alumni
**Scale and reach**

- 500,000 teachers so far engaged with materials
- Content adapted for ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa and four languages – Kiswahili, Arabic, French and English
- 700 African teacher educators helped author/adapt materials
- Materials used in 19 different teacher education programmes
- Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, South Africa
- Expertise now being used to get girls into teaching in Malawi and Sierra Leone

92% of teacher educators surveyed say that TESSA has enhanced student learning
English in Action (EIA)
Bangladesh

9 years, £50M UK-AID funded, partnership with G.o.Bangladesh and BMB MottMcDonald, BBC Media Action & Open University.
# English in Action: Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phase II - pilot</th>
<th>phase III - scale</th>
<th>phase IV - institutional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>600 GoB teachers (+ 100 NGO teachers)</td>
<td>12.5 K Teachers</td>
<td>current funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118k students</td>
<td>2M Students</td>
<td>additional funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76k Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>190k Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.5 M students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.5 M students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TESS-India

Core methodology

• First network of freely available, high quality, distance learning teacher education resources in India
• Primary and secondary level
• Various formats, including videos of great teaching in action
• Training embedded in classroom
• 1,000 teacher development units, culturally adapted and translated
• Specially developed units enable Head teachers to support teachers using TESS-India in school

TESS-India is funded by UK aid from the UK Government and led by The Open University
TESS-India

Scale and reach

• To reach a million teachers by 2015
• Seven Indian states in first phase
• Five Indian languages, plus English
• To be rolled out in partnership with national and state government, NGOs and other teacher education providers.

TESS-India works with 36 district level teacher education institutions, 4 state level teacher education institutions, 4 national level teacher education institutions and 11 NGOs.
Open Education for teacher development
MOOCS, Transformation and development

- MOOCs: millions want to learn
- 10% completion rate?
- Pedagogies?
- Who are learners?
- Transformation of Higher Education?
- Transformation of teaching?
- Transformation of price?
- Field of experiment
| Founded by The Open University – the pioneer in distance learning |
| 26 world-class UK and international universities and three cultural partners |
| Effective learning design embedded into all aspects of the platform |
| Uniquely designed for multiplatform use – Mobile First |
| Designed and built by from experts with backgrounds in entertainment consumer online and mobile products |
| Incorporates the best features of the social web |
• Open publishing
• New journal: founded and supported by COL
• Intersection of innovation in learning and development
• Open access: free at www.jl4d.org
• Research articles
• Case studies
• Reviews
‘People are the real wealth of a nation’

Thank you!

Alan Tait

Director of International Teacher Education
Professor of Distance Education and Development
The Open University UK

alan.tait@open.ac.uk