Integration through Openness: Knowledge Communities in Research and Teaching

Annual Conference of the German Society of Media in Science
September 7, 2011
Dresden
The Commonwealth

THE COMMONWEALTH COMPRIZES 54 DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Map Published by the Communications and Public Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2010.
The Commonwealth of Learning

What is it for?

- To help Commonwealth governments and institutions use various technologies to improve and expand learning for development.
Low-resource Settings: Access to Education

- **OECD Average**: 40-50%
- **South Asia**: <15%
- **Sub-Saharan Africa**: <10%
- **Global Average**: 65%
- **Sub-Saharan Africa**: 30%

**Higher Education**

**Secondary Education**
Opening up education in low-resource settings: the uses of Open Education Resources (OER)

Asha Kanwar, Vice President
Commonwealth of Learning
September 6, 2011
Plan

- Three Generations of Open Education
- Open Education Resources (OER) and its advantages
- Challenges and some initiatives to address them
The Rise of Open Universities: First Generation
The Philosophy of ‘Open-ness’

- Open as to people,
- Open as to places,
- Open as to methods, and, finally,
- Open as to ideas

– Lord Crowther
‘Open-ness’ in Practice

- No entry qualifications
- Credit banking
- Cafeteria approach for courses:
Increased Use of Technology Mediation

Gyan Darshan Broadcast in Session
Key Developments in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Generation

- 1984: first electronic courses
- 1989: Internet
- 1991: WWW
- 1994: first online MBA (Athabasca)
- 1996: first web-based course delivery
- 1999: learning objects; LMS’s
Open Education: Second Generation

- Wider Use of Web and Online Technologies
- Interactivity: Key Aspect
- Much higher level of personalization through technology mediation
- Learning Objects
Third Generation: OER
Open Educational Resources (OER)

- OER are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits their free use and in some instances, re-purposing by others

  Atkins, Brown & Hammond, 2007
What are Open Educational Resources (OER)?

Materials that are
- Free and freely available
- Suitable for all levels of education
- Reusable
- Digital or any medium
Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences & Humanities

‘Our mission of disseminating knowledge is only half complete if the information is not made widely and readily available to society....Content and software tools must be openly accessible and compatible’

October, 2003
Advantages of using OERs

1. Increase availability
2. Improve quality
3. Cut costs
4. Foster collaboration
5. Build capacity
6. Opening up access
7. Preservation & dissemination of indigenous knowledge and global exchange
1. Availability: Malawi

- Bunda College of Agriculture
  - 102 page Communications Skills textbook
  - 75% OER
  - Adapted by adding contextually relevant materials, activities, assignments
2. Improving Quality

- 509 institutions in India
  - KSS Women’s Engineering College, Andhra Pradesh
  - Maya Devi Educational Foundation, Uttarakhand
  - Bhilai Institute of Technology, Chattisgarh
3. Cutting costs: TESSA

- 20 teacher education programmes in 12 countries
- Materials available in 4 languages
- In 2010, 320,000 teachers benefited
4. Fostering Collaboration

Ministries of Education  Schools  Teachers  Consultants
5. Build capacity

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth of Learning
6. Increasing Access: OERU

- Athabasca University
- Otago Polytechnic
- University of Southern Queensland
The OER university concept. Adapted from Taylor (2007)
7. Global exchange

University of Ghana

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

The Balme Library of the University of Ghana
Challenges

- Awareness at grassroots level
- From production to use
- Policy advocacy
COL Resources

- Basic Guide to OER
Policy Forum  December 2010
UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning

- Taking the Open Educational Resources (OER) beyond the OER Community: Policy and Capacity
Conclusions of the Forum

Governments and HEIs should:

- have policies to support the development and re-use of OER;
- develop capacity in OER; and
- support the improvement of national ICT infrastructures.
International Guidelines for Open Educational Resources

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

C·O·L
THANK YOU
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