COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

# LEARNING
## FOR DEVELOPMENT

*Selected speeches of Sir John Daniel and colleagues*

*September 2006 – February 2007*

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# *Introduction*

Although the hundred presentations that I have given since joining COL in 2004 can be read on our website at *www.col.org/speeches*, the collections of selected addresses that we published in 2005 and 2006 proved rather popular. This, the third booklet in the series, reproduces five addresses and one article from late 2006 and early 2007.

This collection is entitled *Learning for Development* because that is the focus of COL's work. In abstract terms we follow Amartya Sen's definition of development as freedom whilst our operational framework for development combines the Millennium Development Goals, the Dakar Goals of Education for All and the Commonwealth values of peace, equity, democracy and good governance. COL considers that learning, on a massive scale, is the primary route to the attainment of these goals and the adoption of these values. Unfortunately, traditional methods of teaching and learning cannot address either the scale or the scope of the challenge. Educational technologies must be harnessed to the task and COL's role is to help governments and institutions do this.

An overriding development goal is to ensure that billions of young people have access to satisfactory livelihoods. Making the link between learning and livelihoods is the subject of the first speech, delivered at the launch of Canada's *Learn@Work Week*. It reports on COL's successful programme, *Lifelong Learning for Farmers*, which is visibly improving livelihoods in Indian villages.

The following addresses were given at the opening and closing ceremonies of the highly successful *4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning* held in Jamaica in late 2006. I am indebted to the four moderators of the virtual conferences that preceded the event, Olabisi Kuboni, Som Naidu, Balasubramanian Kodhandaraman and Jocelyn Calvert for the material they provided for my remarks at the opening ceremony. The memorable keynote addresses by Winston Cox, Penina Mlama and Sugata Mitra, all with an emphasis on values, inspired my address at the end of the forum.

One of COL's functions is to cast a critical eye on new technologies and to be ready to speak out when a new technology is hyped beyond its performance. In a light-hearted piece with my colleagues Paul West and Wayne Mackintosh we use animal analogies to point up the strengths and the weaknesses of eLearning.

Memorial lectures are an occasion to honour distinguished people and to review a topic in depth. I was honoured when the University of Guyana asked me to give the first Dennis Irvine Lecture since his death and took advantage of the occasion to explore the rationale behind COL's current Three-Year Plan.

The last text in the collection is an autobiographical piece written for a book of reminiscences by veterans of open and distance learning. I hope the reflections it contains will amuse and inspire younger practitioners in this ever-changing field.

The Commonwealth of Learning is an extraordinarily stimulating environment for reflecting on the application of technology to learning. I thank all my colleagues for the ideas and experiences that they share with me and I acknowledge with special gratitude the help of Tatiana Anestik, Alex Hennig, Kathryn Romanow and Dave Wilson in putting my speeches on the web and creating this booklet.

Sir John Daniel
April 2007

# Learning for Livelihoods: The Key to Development

Learn@Work Week, Canadian Society of Training and Development (CSTD)

Toronto, Canada, 18 September 2006

*Sir John Daniel*

It is a singular privilege to be the Honorary Chair of the Learn@Work week celebration for 2006. Thank you for the recognition of the Commonwealth of Learning and the confidence in me that motivated your choice. I am only sorry that the extensive travel that goes with my work with the Commonwealth of Learning will prevent me taking part as often as I would like in the events organised by the Canadian Society of Training and Development this year.

Although I spent 21 happy years working in Canadian universities in Quebec, Alberta and Ontario it is now sixteen years since I earned my living in a Canadian institution. In 1990 I went to Europe, first as executive head of the UK's largest university, the Open University, and then as Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO in Paris. I am delighted to be back in Canada and to add a fourth province, British Columbia, to my experience.

Although I work in Vancouver my task at the Commonwealth of Learning is to serve 53 Commonwealth governments. Following developments in education, training and learning in countries as varied as India, Namibia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and The Seychelles is now as important for me as keeping up with developments here in Canada.

My main contact with the Canadian learning scene today is through the fairly new Canadian Council for Learning, the CCL, on whose board I am proud to serve. I believe that that CCL has made a very strong start and that its decision to create Knowledge Centres across the country will prove to be inspired.

Each Knowledge Centre is national in scope but organised from a particular region of the country: Adult Learning from the Atlantic Provinces; Early Childhood Learning from Quebec; Work and Learning from Ontario; Learning and the Aboriginal Peoples from the Prairies; and Learning and Health from British Columbia. The central office of the Canadian Council on Learning looks after issues related to learning in the formal education systems. I am very pleased that the CSTD is a member of the Work and Learning Consortium and has done a state of the field review for CCL looking at diversity, competencies, eLearning and performance management.

This morning, however, I am going to put on my COL hat, take you into the wider world overseas and tell you how an organisation based in Canada and supported by Canada is bringing together the concepts of learning, work and development in new ways.

## The Commonwealth of Learning

So, what is the Commonwealth of Learning?

We have lived our lives through a continuous communications revolution that started long before the Internet. Back in the 1980s this communications revolution focused on television, radio and computers. The Commonwealth Heads of Government wanted these technologies to be used to extend and improve education and training in their countries. By the 1980s there were already successful examples of the large scale use of educational technology; notably the open universities that were giving many more people access to higher learning in several Commonwealth countries.

When they met in Vancouver in 1987, Commonwealth Heads of Government decided that it would be good for their countries to have an agency dedicated to helping them make better use of the new technologies in education, training and learning generally. They created the Commonwealth of Learning as a small intergovernmental agency supported by the voluntary contributions of Member States. There was a 'beauty contest' to choose the host for the new agency, which Canada won with the support of British Columbia.

> *We have lived our lives through a continuous communications revolution that started long before the Internet.*

So the Commonwealth of Learning is based in Vancouver and is one of the rare Commonwealth organisations not based in the UK. Being located in Canada gives us a somewhat different take on the Commonwealth from our colleagues at the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation in London.

Today some 35 Commonwealth governments contribute to the budget of the Commonwealth of Learning. Our six major donors in absolute terms are Canada, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, South Africa and the UK, whilst the biggest donors as a proportion of their GDP are the Pacific Island states of Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu, along with St. Kitts & Nevis, Swaziland and Sierra Leone.

We are a small agency of only forty people. Most are located in Vancouver but we also have an outpost in India, the Commonwealth Educational Media

Centre for Asia in New Delhi. However, what they lack in numbers our colleagues more than make up for in quality. I have the privilege of leading an extraordinarily talented staff from all over the Commonwealth, backed up by a much larger and equally talented diaspora of colleagues who help us in their various countries.

So what do we actually do? At the beginning some wanted the Commonwealth of Learning to prepare courses and beam them by satellite to countries around the Commonwealth. But the majority view, which prevailed, was that – if I may paraphrase the famous Chinese saying – we should teach people to fish rather than giving them fish.

COL helps countries to develop policies, systems, models and materials for harnessing technology to education, training and learning generally. We also advise and assist with particular applications.

I put a special emphasis on the notion of models. We try to find new ways of combining people, communities, organisations and technology to foster learning that improve lives and livelihoods. Our aim is sustainable development without donors. The Commonwealth of Learning is not a donor agency. We do not sustain our innovations by pushing money at them. They must be sustainable because all those involved ensure that they continue. Indeed, our ambitions go beyond mere sustainability.

We look for models that are so patently powerful that they replicate themselves. We want people to copy the model spontaneously because it is so obviously better than present practice.

## Development is Learning – Learning is Development

We focus particularly on learning in support of the international development agenda in poorer countries.

This agenda combines three sets of goals: the eight Millennium Development Goals; the six goals of Education for All articulated at the Dakar World Forum in 2000; and the Commonwealth values of peace, democracy, equality and good governance.

Today I shall focus on the Millennium Development Goals and especially on the goal of reducing poverty and hunger. The other MDGs address primary education, gender equality, health, the environment and partnerships for development. COL starts from the principle that a massive expansion of learning is a requirement for the achievement of any of these goals.

Take the example of health. The Millennium Development Goals in health are to reduce infant and maternal mortality sharply and stop the spread of diseases like AIDS and malaria. Attaining such goals clearly requires improvements in health services. But it is even more important for people to learn how to avoid disease and to keep themselves and their children healthy. We know, for example, that if each person on earth washed their hands five times a day the incidence of disease would plummet. We know

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how to avoid malaria and HIV/AIDS but millions of others need to learn this too.

The same reasoning applies to the other Millennium Development Goals.

Development means learning and learning means development. The problem is that learning needs are so massive that conventional face-to-face instruction simply cannot address the scale of the challenge. There are not enough teachers and health workers to go around. So COL's second principle is that technology must be used to expand learning. Technology has already transformed most aspects of life, including agriculture. It is now time to apply technology to learning.

I shall explain how we are doing this in rural areas so that farmers benefit from the technologies and systems that can improve their livelihoods. As you know very well, most people in developing countries still live in rural areas and depend on farming.

We will never create a better world unless we tackle poverty in the rural areas, which means improving the livelihoods of the many millions of farmers and smallholders on whom millions more depend.

## Lifelong Learning for Farmers: A New Model

We have created a model for this purpose that we call Lifelong Learning for Farmers, or L3Farmers. It starts from the premise we must give farmers easier access to the information and knowledge that could improve their livelihoods. This is the task of agricultural extension services, which are staffed by dedicated people where they exist. There are, however, too few of them to address the challenge. Where we work in India there is one agricultural extension worker for every 1,150 farmers. If you add in the landless labourers each extension worker has to serve 2,500 people which is impossible.

The consequence is that the wealth of information resulting from agricultural research and development fails to travel the last mile to where it is most needed, the villages of the developing world. These farmers have no opportunity to learn at work.

How can we scale up the impact of extension services? Can technology help?

In the last few years many villages in India have been equipped with ICT kiosks as a result of governmental or commercial initiatives. Since each kiosk provides its village with Internet and telephone connections COL wondered whether these kiosks might help to carry useful information and bridge that last mile to the individual farmer.

We began in 2002 by studying the impact of ICT kiosks in four regions of India. The results were clear. The impact of the kiosks was less than

expected and the reason was simple. They had been introduced in a top-down manner without involving local communities. This criticism can also be levelled at agricultural extension systems on the old model. They convey knowledge on new agricultural technologies in a unidirectional way from the researcher to the farmer that ignores the extensive experiential learning and traditional wisdom that farmers already have. Such communications fail to unleash the huge capacity for innovation latent in the farmers. I suspect that exactly the same principles apply to learning at work in Canada.

So a fundamental principle for the new model was to get away from top-down planning and unidirectional communication. We began in 2004 in a number of villages in two regions of Tamil Nadu, India: Theni and Sivaganga, which have different agricultural regimes. Villages with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds were chosen in consultation with the communities themselves.

Our first step was to mobilise the farmers by encouraging them to form an association and create their own vision of development for their village. This included identifying how they thought that their livelihoods might best be improved.

The challenge then was to help them achieve that vision, acting first on their ideas about how to improve their livelihoods from farming. These might be acquiring better livestock, growing new crops, or simply improving the process of marketing their produce. Those ideas generate questions — often rather simple questions. How do I identify a good cow? How do I keep wild boars off my land when they are a protected species? How can I get my produce to market in good condition?

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The next step is to get those with the information to work together to answer these questions. In Tamil Nadu, for example, we helped to create a consortium of the Agricultural University, the Open University, the Veterinary University, a large Engineering University and the University of Madras (for questions with a social science element). These institutions previously operated separately and sub-optimally in their relationships with farmers. Now they work together.

This is important because communities of farmers are not homogeneous. Each farmer has a different attitude towards risk and has different objectives in participating in the market. These attitudes change as the market evolves. Farmers also differ in their access to resources which means that the information each needs for improving her livelihood is different. They need a basket of options of processes, products, technologies, skills, ideas and information from which to make a choice.

Furthermore, they learn to make choices through discovery, not through instruction. Learning is a participatory process that needs a community information space to provide the information from which both the individual and the community can learn.

The ICT kiosks are used to link the farmers to the consortium and support this community information space. In our villages these are commercial ICT kiosks which we prefer to kiosks provided by the government. Farmers are prepared to pay for useful information such as very local weather forecasts.

The commercial kiosk operator and franchisee, usually a local youth, becomes a stakeholder in the project with an interest in providing useful information that helps to make the project sustainable.

In Tamil Nadu the kiosks are set up by n-Logue, a company that developed with the Indian Institute of Technology (Chennai), a technology called Wireless in Local Loop that links the village kiosks to the base tower at block headquarters. Each village kiosk has a Pentium computer with digital camera, Uninterruptible Power Supply and printers. n-Logue provides an intranet portal, video conferencing facilities and some generic content but the local franchisee, who pays a bit less than $20 a month for the Intranet, has to develop local content in response to demand.

The fourth and crucial element is to involve the commercial banks. The key to development without donors is using local resources. In India the banks are under pressure from government to increase rural lending. The Reserve Bank of India has a norm that the public sector banks should focus 18% of their credit on agriculture but the reality falls far short of this figure because the record of rural repayment has been poor.

To give an idea of the shortfall the 2002-2007 Plan calls for an annual disbursement of $30 billion of credit to agriculture, which the President of India thinks is far too modest, whereas the figure for actual disbursement in 2001 was only $13 billion.

As a consequence the average capital formation per year is only $45 per farmer. Fifty-five per cent of the capital required by farmers comes from the informal sector: local money lenders whose interest rates vary from 36% to 3,600%. The public sector banks reach only 17% of the rural credit market: only 20 million of India's 130 million farmers — and almost none of its 100 million landless agricultural labourers.

The banks do so little for the rural economy because of high transaction costs and a high proportion of non-performing assets. The L3 Farmers initiative addressed both issues through three hypotheses:

1. Blending agricultural credit with improvements in the knowledge and capability of farmers will improve productivity, return on investment and repayment of loans.

2. Improving the knowledge and capability of farmers will also enlarge the market for bank credit among small farmers and landless labourers.

3. Using ICT kiosks can help the capacity-building process in a financially viable and socially acceptable way.

The State Bank of India agreed to help us test these hypotheses and we introduced it to the village associations that the farmers had created. The bank's policy is to link credit to a contract farming system, so it puts the associations in contact with potential buyers that it has identified.  Once an association and a buyer reach a trade agreement, which defines price and quality, the bank gives credit to the association and its members. The advantages of scale and a direct link to the buyers create an efficient marketing system and reduce price spread.

This contract farming system then determines the content and timing of formal learning in the village, which focuses on how to make a success of the contract. The issues may be choosing inputs, for instance how to identify a good cow; how to manage the quality of outputs so as to meet contract criteria; or other issues such as insurance, which is a new concept to most of the farmers.

The learning process is simple and addresses needs defined by the farmers themselves through video-conferencing and multi-media tools. Not surprisingly, learners retain new information best when it is immediately useful. Some material is specific to the particular village profile of crop growing or animal husbandry, some deals more generically with quality management, credit management and literacy. These women are learning how to measure the quality of milk.

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Learning involves groups of ten members in a peer group with a facilitator who uses learning materials available from the Internet, prepared by the community on CD-ROMs, or available from the local service provider's Intranet. Each group has a 60-minute learning programme once a week. Each village may have 250 of its members involved in such classes in the Internet kiosk and each learner has some 24 hours of formal learning over an eight-month period. The Intranet and Internet are also used to study dynamic phenomena such as market prices and the weather.

To give a concrete example, the farmers' association in one of the villages near Theni decided that improving dairy production was their best route to greater prosperity. Their key question to the information providers was, 'how do I tell a good milk cow from a poor milk cow?'

The specialists worked together and came up with a check list with diagrams which the women of the village, who have learned some web programming, made into an instructional sequence on the computer in the ICT kiosk.

The bank loaned money to the farmers to improve their dairy cows, some $US 200,000 so far, and also brought in a dairy company from the nearby town, which agreed to buy a guaranteed quantity of milk and take it to market provided that the farmers agreed to meet certain quality standards.

## An interim assessment

Let me step back and ask what has been achieved so far in this attempt by the Commonwealth of Learning to introduce learning at work in Indian villages. The project only started in the Spring of 2004, so this is an interim assessment. It also comes with the caveat that such projects tend to benefit from a halo effect in the early stages. Nevertheless, we have good reasons to be optimistic.

First, this really is development without donors. COL has spent less than $US 80,000, mostly on local consultancies. All other resources have come from routine local sources, notably the loans from the bank to the farmers. In six villages the bank has made loans approaching $US 300,000 to 300 villagers. Loans of an equivalent value are now being processed for 100 more villagers and another 300 are preparing loan applications. One of the villages had previously been blacklisted by the banks because of a poor record of loan repayment. Fifteen villages are now involved in the process.

Note that some 60% of the farmers involved are women and this project is particularly empowering for them. For example, buying a cow was traditionally the men's responsibility but they then handed the cows over to the women to care for. With L3 Farmers the women now know how to select and purchase a healthy cow; the steps to be taken in insuring a cow; and how to claim insurance if the cow dies. When a woman whose cow died recovered the insured amount her fellow villagers were amazed. Insurance was a new concept for them.

Furthermore the men are happy that women are taking over responsibility because it makes them even more committed to taking care of the cows – and they can't complain to the man if they selected a poor cow!

Some 500 villagers regularly attend the ICT-based learning sessions which are compulsory if they want to stay in the programme. They are happy to participate because of the benefits. Initially the communities were hesitant to use the Internet but when they started to hear local voices and see familiar faces they relaxed and lost their fear of the technology.

This year COL engaged a professional external evaluator to look at its work and Dr. Patrick Spaven took L3 Farmers as one of his case studies. To quote from his report:

*"For anyone who met the stakeholders and visited the villages... it would be difficult to come away without a very positive impression. The optimism and excitement among the stakeholders was palpable. This even included hard-nosed banking officials.*

*The interests of all the stakeholders are being addressed and the mutual awareness of this among the consortium members underpins their confidence in the project.*

*Meetings with farmers in four of the villages produced a wave of personal accounts of benefit, ranging from improvements in milk yields, to attitude change such as a determination to plan for, rather than be resigned to, the future. Some women in particular appear to be experiencing transformational change in their lives.*

*The farmers and other project stakeholders are already exploring new agricultural strategies for the future based on non-traditional crops such as jatropha (biodiesel), aloe vera, and gherkins. Landless labourers are beginning to negotiate the purchase of small parcels of land for fodder. Non-agricultural community development – such as better housing – is also being discussed.*

*Driving all this is the confidence and empowerment that the learning process, the expanding access to information through ICT, and the prospect of financial independence are generating.*

*Self-replication is beginning. Three neighbouring villages have formed associations for implementing the model in their villages with minimal help from the project. Vidiyal, a local cooperative-model NGO with 5000 women members already organized in Self-Help Groups, has asked to join the L3 process."*

You will understand that we are excited and encouraged by these results. Is this a model that can contribute to the long-awaited transformation of the rural economy in the developing world?

To conclude, let me enumerate the elements and logic of the new model of partnership that is evolving and try to identify the critical factors in the very encouraging trends that we observe. You may wish to ask yourselves how much of this is relevant to learning at work in Canada.

The model has six elements.

First and last there are the farmers themselves. Getting the farmers, especially women, to organise themselves and letting their vision drive the project is the most fundamental innovation in L3Farmers. Second, there are the information providers working as a consortium to answer the farmers' questions rather than pushing information at them separately. Third, there are the ICT kiosks in local ownership that facilitate the information exchange and provide a focal point in the village. They are backed up by ICT companies. Fourth, there are the banks whose fundamental business of making loans is facilitated and enhanced. Fifth, the banks involve other businesses to market the produce. Sixth, there is an organisation that provides the initial spark for the process. In this case it was the Commonwealth of Learning but others could do it perfectly well.

The logic of the model, and the key to its success, is that each stakeholder wins. Farmers are encouraged to organise, develop a vision of a better future and pose questions generated by that vision. Information providers work in consortium to answer those questions. This generates a learning process designed to improve farmers' productivity.

Banks are prepared to fast-track credit because of the lower risk of loan-default offered by the learning-productivity process – and lower transaction costs offered by the farmers' organisations. Learning and credit

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leverage greater productivity. Farmers maximise the returns on their productivity by entering into contracts with marketing organisations such as dairies and secure their returns by taking out insurance.

The greater the farmers' income and its security, the more the banks stand to gain so they help to mediate the contracts and the insurance. The farmers' learning is centred on commercial village ICT kiosks whose owners mobilise the community and facilitate the learning. The kiosk owners' incentive derives from the income they obtain from increased kiosk usage, as well as community status.

Banks are willing to fast-track kiosk owner loans. ICT companies gain from better kiosk contract performance and are willing to offer ICT enhancements to encourage further usage. Learning content is delivered by educational and social organisations committed to serving rural communities.

Farmers are motivated to participate in the learning process because it leads to tangible improvements in their lives. They are willing to pay for internet access to more learning. Farmers give feedback to educational and social organisations helping them to make their knowledge services more relevant. Finally, the success of the model attracts other communities.

## Conclusion

Our key measure of success is whether L3 Farmers self-replicates. I suppose that the key measure of success for the Canadian Society of Training and Development is whether learning at work becomes the norm across the country. I hope that this account of learning at work, in the very different environment of rural India, may have given you some useful insights. Along with my colleague Krishna Alluri, who is guiding this work, I thank you for your attention and wish you success.

# Achieving Development Goals: Innovation, Learning, Collaboration and Foundations: Learning for Development

Remarks at the Opening Ceremony of the Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning

Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 31 October 2006

*Sir John Daniel*

Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates.

I am delighted to add my welcome to that of my friend and colleague, Professor Stewart Marshall, with whom I have the honour of co-chairing this 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning. Under Professor Marshall's leadership our Caribbean colleagues have done an outstanding job in laying the groundwork for this conference.

It is now up to all of you to make this Forum a true success. We much appreciate the presence of the Honourable Robert Pickersgill, Jamaica's Minister who deputises for the Prime Minister when she is out of the country. I welcome also the participation of Ministers from other Caribbean and Commonwealth states. We thank you and the many other Ministers from around the Commonwealth who have written warm letters of support.

Our previous Pan-Commonwealth Forums on Open Learning have been held in Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Today, before we even begin this 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum in the Caribbean, I am delighted to announce that in 2008 these conferences will complete their first tour of all the Commonwealth regions.

2008 will mark the 150th anniversary, or sesquicentennial, of the establishment of the External Studies Programme of the University of London, a seminal moment in the development of distance learning and cross-border education. To celebrate this historic event the University of London will host PCF5 in the heart of London in July 2008.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, Sir Graeme Davies, will arrive tomorrow and his colleagues are here already to tell you about their plans for PCF5. The University of London will host the reception before the Awards Banquet on Thursday evening. I welcome them and I thank them. We look forward to another splendid gathering like this in 20 months' time. Please give the University of London a round of applause.

My task in the next few minutes is to set the scene for this conference. Although today is the opening ceremony, hundreds of colleagues around the globe have already been taking part in PCF4 for several months through four online conferences.

Our forum theme is *Achieving Development Goals: Innovation, Learning, Collaboration and Foundations* and each virtual discussion focused on one of the four quadrants of that challenge.

It is a pleasure to thank the four lead coordinators of these online gatherings: Olabisi Kuboni for Innovation; Som Naidu for Learning; Balasubramanian Kodhandaraman for Collaboration and Jocelyn Calvert for Foundations. Moderating a global virtual discussion is almost a 24-hour-a-day task while it lasts, so please join me in showing your appreciation for them!

I shall draw on the conclusions of these virtual conferences in posing some questions for you to answer during our real conference here over the next few days.

Three principles underpin the work of the Commonwealth of Learning and the programme for this Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning.

First, development is job number one for the 21st century. Development means helping people to greater freedom. That includes freedoms from, as in freedom from hunger; and freedoms to, as in freedom to express your opinions. In operational terms, for the Commonwealth of Learning, development means achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the Dakar Goals of Education for All, and the Commonwealth aspirations of peace, democracy, equality and good governance.

Second, learning is the key to development. This is true not only for the goals that target education directly, but also for reducing poverty and hunger, improving health, promoting gender equity and nurturing a better environment.

Third, the learning challenge is so enormous that traditional approaches are not up to the task. We need new approaches for expanding learning that can be used at scale to deliver good quality at low cost.

What did our virtual conferences have to say about these three principles?

Learning is the key to development – but learning for whom? One online discussion concluded that in development the learner is the whole community. Most of us are used to courses that lead to exams for individuals. But in order to develop, communities seek knowledge that helps them navigate in real life. And because many poor people in rural areas are

unfamiliar with traditional education systems they are open to learning in different ways. Classrooms are not their benchmark for learning.

Developing communities have common purposes that their members can only achieve together and each community has its own identity. Learning for development must start from the community's common purpose and identity. The old habit of a benefactor teaching a beneficiary will not foster learning for development. Helping communities to learn requires a genuine spirit of collaboration.

This emphasis on community requires even open and distance learning institutions to change focus. We often begin by asking: "what do we want the individual to learn?", but that is the wrong question. The right question is not even "what do we want the community to learn?" but rather "how can we help the community articulate its own purposes for learning and then support it in achieving them?"

Here is a big challenge. Are our ODL institutions psychologically equipped for reaching informal groups and addressing development issues? Collaborative efforts between institutions are one way of becoming better attuned to the learning dynamics of developing communities. Use of ICTs can be both the cause and the effect of collaboration.

For example, in COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme in India, local universities work as a consortium to give joint answers, via ICT kiosks, to the questions posed by each farming community. Previously each institution did its own thing with little regard for the real preoccupations of the village communities.

What is the model of development to which learning seeks to contribute? This is not an abstract question. How will learning translate into development? If farmers learn to be more productive how do they get funds to exploit their new knowledge? Commercial banks are crucial partners in our Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme. They are a key element of the model. Building models for development through learning is not just an intellectual exercise. Models help us predict whether a learning programme that works in one country will work in another. Are the essential elements of the model present?

The online discussion extended the emphasis on social and community learning well beyond rural development. All open and distance learning now places increasing emphasis on active learning – on the construction of knowledge by the student. There is more attention to the context of learning and the culture in which it occurs.

Context is a like a Russian doll. We find the learners in their own contexts. We create a context for each learner. Our institutions create a context for their staff which can be empowering and productive or dysfunctional and frustrating. Government policies create context for our institutions – which can be either of those things too. And, increasingly, globalisation creates a context for governments which some find more difficult than others.

One spin-off of globalisation is the growth of cross-border education, especially but by no means exclusively, in higher education. This is a special opportunity for distance-teaching institutions because it seems that our courses cross borders easily. COL and UNESCO have created this simple guide to help you.



In reality, cross-border education is a serious challenge for distance education because when we operate abroad it is easy to let our standards slip – both our standards of quality and our standards of integrity. To help you there UNESCO has produced some guidelines for good practice that will be presented at a session this afternoon.

The more we engage with development the greater the scope that will be required of ODL and the wider the variety of people that it will attempt to serve.

As technologies evolve we can create new contexts for the learner. As education becomes more international we face both threats and opportunities. Awareness of contexts must be our watchword.

Questions of technology were never far from the surface in all the virtual conferences. Practitioners of open and distance learning have always brought a healthy scepticism to the marvels of new technology and that is especially true when learning is for development. Fortunately the short cycle between initial infatuation and early disillusionment with eLearning has helped to make our discourse on technology more sophisticated. eLearning is not a magic medium to solve all learning problems, but it is a useful addition to our technological toolkit. eLearning has also made us focus harder on two important questions.

*First, what do we mean by interaction?* I will not try to answer that, because interaction is a very slippery term. I simply urge you to use the word interaction with clarity at this conference. I can interact with a book in my head when I read it; I can interact with my laptop, whether on the network or off; I can interact with laboratory equipment; I can interact with my tutor on the phone; I can interact with a group – online or face to face; and so on. What kinds of interaction are there, how do they help learners, and how do different technologies exploit them?

A second question is very important if we are serious about learning for development. *How does eLearning affect the economics of open and distance learning?* Using the mass media gave ODL economies of scale, which was very important for increasing access. eLearning does not yield economies of scale, at least as most people currently use it. But does eLearning have to take us back to the cottage-industry approach to teaching and learning?

**OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

A Global Intellectual Commons

ODL broke free from that straitjacket a long time ago. Must we remain free if our aim is learning for development? I leave that question with you too.

One reason that people have become less excitable about eLearning is that a new magic medium has appeared: mobile learning. We have all noticed that mobile phones are now more common than laptops, most especially in developing countries. It follows, therefore, that mobile phones will stimulate the next revolution in ODL – or does it?

Because of its timing, and the people who are here, this Forum is uniquely equipped to take forward the debate about mLearning. Our virtual conference noted significant usage of mobile phones in ODL in Australia, Nigeria and South Africa – mainly for student support and mass SMS messaging. What works and what doesn't?

We are also seeing teaching by podcasting. How is this going to develop?

One development that can only be good for ODL is the galloping increase in connectivity.

In the next four years the numbers of Internet users in India will double from 35 to 70 million. That will still be less than 10% of the population but a few more doublings will make a huge difference. How will this affect how people learn?

Another innovation may help to give people much greater choice of what they learn. I refer to open educational resources or OERs. This pooling and sharing of learning materials in electronic formats is not merely, indeed not mainly, a technological development. OERs represent a new drive to create a global intellectual commons on which all who wish to learn can graze. It brings to teaching and learning the spirit of sharing that has always inspired academic research.

I express our warm thanks to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, which has sponsored many delegates here in the expectation that this

> *There is much evidence that the sharing of ideas and innovations occurs most readily within communities of practice. Please take full advantage of this 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning to develop and extend our community of practice so that, collectively, we make a great contribution to achieving the development goals.*

Forum will be a catalyst for the creation and use of open educational resources.

The Hewlett Foundation has supported three important phases in the development of OERs. The first occurred in 2002 when MIT started making the lecture notes of its faculty freely available. The second and third phases are occurring right here at this meeting.

Tomorrow the UK Open University will formally launch its OpenLearn project and on Thursday there will be a session on the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth which involves 25 countries in the collaborative development of OERs.

These phases build on each other. MIT uses OERs to share curriculum information. The UKOU, through self-instructional materials and social software, uses OERs to share learning. The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth uses OERs as a vehicle for sharing teaching and learning.

These are very exciting developments which have the potential to both cut the cost and increase the quality of the learning materials that we can make available to students.

I have done scant justice to the richness of the virtual conferences and there are more questions that I could leave you with but I shall stop there with a final plea. I began by talking about communities of learning. We are a community of practice in open and distance learning.

There is much evidence that the sharing of ideas and innovations occurs most readily within communities of practice. Please take full advantage of this 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning to develop and extend our community of practice so that, collectively, we make a great contribution to achieving the development goals.

Once again I thank our Caribbean partners for creating a wonderful context for our work – and also our play. Have a great conference!

# Achieving Development Goals: Innovation, Learning, Collaboration and Foundations: The Road to London

Remarks at the Closing Ceremony of the Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning

Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 3 November 2006

*Sir John Daniel*

Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates.

Three days ago it was my privilege to make some opening remarks and set the stage for the conference drawing on the conclusions of the virtual conferences that preceded this real conference.

I might say this was a very real conference. Never have I attended a conference where the level of engagement was so high. I congratulate and thank you all for acting so energetically on my request four days ago that you take full advantage of PCF4 to develop and extend our community of practice so that, collectively, we make a great contribution to achieving the development goals.

May I say how good it has been to have some ODL students with us, both those who won awards last night and others sponsored by the Commonwealth Scholarship Foundation. The emergence of scholarships for people studying at a distance is a wonderful development. I am delighted to learn that the success rate of the students who obtain these scholarships is excellent and hope this will lead others to create similar scholarships, which are a most cost-effective way of expanding education.

Any one of us can only attend a small sample of the many sessions that have taken place. The ones that I went to were filled to capacity, as they deserved to be given the excellent presentations and interesting discussions. Thanks to the diligence of the many session chairs, who have submitted reports on their individual sessions, I now have a pretty good overview of the whole Forum and it is a very pleasing picture.

On behalf of COL and our Caribbean co-hosts I thank the session chairs, the speakers and all of you for grasping so fully the opportunities that we offered you, through the programme, to take forward the practice and the theory of open and distance learning, especially as it applies to development.

My task in the next minutes is to summarise some of the conclusions that emerge from our three days of debate and discussion. You must forgive me in advance because I cannot possibly do proper justice to the very rich interactions that we have all engaged in. I hope however, that I can offer some useful reflection and some food for action as well as for thought.

We shall meet next as PCF5 in London. Sir Graeme Davies welcomed you to that event last evening and I add my welcome to his. I have entitled these closing remarks The Road to London, because I shall try in a minute to emphasise some conclusions that we should act on in the two years before we come together again.

I begin by paying tribute to our three keynote speakers, Winston Cox, Penina Mlama and Sugata Mitra. Three speakers who came from three continents, having different backgrounds and addressing different topics – yet whose words were united by a common emphasis on values.

Winston Cox stressed that using ICTs to increase participation and strengthen democracy must start from strongly held values like the Commonwealth values of peace, equality, democracy and good governance. Defining development as freedom, he noted that ICTs have powerful potential for reinforcing those values since civilisation is information.

**PCF5**

ACCESS TO LEARNING
FOR DEVELOPMENT

**THE FIFTH
PAN-COMMONWEALTH
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Talking about journalism without journalists he showed that new media like blogs can increase the transparency that can make for a better world and other online technologies can make the processes of democracy more accessible. The message for us is that in using new technologies in governance we must raise our sights and raise our game.

Yesterday Penina Mlama began her keynote by emphasising that education is a human right. She applauded the progress made towards the Millennium Development Goals but noted that the world seemed at a loss to reduce the huge number of illiterate adults. Observing that people used to become restless when one talked about gender, she proceeded to make us restive for ODL to attack a challenging gender agenda. Since most ODL programmes cannot claim any level of gender equality to date ODL must move beyond itself and develop formulae for addressing gender inequalities in education. For the sake of our development and our dignity we must transform the deeply entrenched gender construction.

This morning Sugata Mitra challenged us to take a robust approach to the use of ICTs for development, focusing on the poorest and least accessible areas with the best technology. A little improvement through the use of advanced technology at the bottom of the pyramid will do wonders for development. His own work arising out of the original "'hole-in-the-wall" project has shown the power of non-invasive education, meaning that children can go a very long way into using and understanding ICTs simply by using the technology and learning by doing. I am sure that you are still reflecting on his concept of outdoctrination.

These inspiring keynote addresses have been illustrated and extended by the extraordinary variety of papers that have been presented in the parallel sessions, which have been of a rare richness and intensity.

How have things changed since some of us met two years ago for PCF3 in Dunedin?

First we are seeing a gradual shift away from papers that are purely descriptive to presentations with deeper analysis. However, we still need to progress faster in beefing up research to underpin our activities. Vital developments like open schooling will not be taken seriously by governments and donors without more research on their cost-effectiveness and their social and educational impacts.

Second, we have heard more of the professional programme management: terms like results-based management and logic models. You had anticipated the plug for articulating models that I made in my opening remarks.

Third, and most appropriately given our conference theme, there have been far more presentations from developing countries, giving, in turn, evidence of flourishing south-south collaboration.

Fourth, I detect that our talk about technology at this Forum has treated it less as a novelty that gives interesting possibilities for the delivery of ODL and more as an integral part of our practice.

Finally, phenomena like cross-border education and open educational resources, which were hardly mentioned in Dunedin, are now at the centre of debates. You have taken many copies of the publications on GATS and Cross-Border that we brought with us.

Let me now shift the focus forward to the road to London. What are the issues that should be on our minds as we move forward from PCF4 to PCF5?

An issue of over-riding importance is to keep the focus on ODL for access. There is a Chinese curse: "may you achieve your fondest wish". For years we have wanted the theory and practices of ODL to impact on teaching and learning in conventional

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**ICTs: PARTICIPATION & DEMOCRACY**

- Development as freedom
- Civilisation is information
- Transparency for a better world
- Vote online not in line
- Raise our sights, raise our game!

~ *Winston Cox*

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**GENDER**

- Education is a human right
- Are we at a loss to reduce adult illiteracy?
- No gender equality in ODL programmes?
- The "cross-cutting" syndrome
- For our development and our dignity!

~ *Penina Mlama*

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**OUTDOCTRINATION**

- Remoteness affects quality
- Put educational technology in remote areas first
- Values are acquired
- Learning is a self organising system

~ *Sugata Mitra*

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settings. Suddenly, through eLearning, that is happening massively. The problem is that in some countries those with expertise in ODL are now spending their time beefing up a cottage-industry approach to teaching and learning on campus instead of taking education off campus to those who need it most. The empire is striking back – we must resist.

We need that expertise to keep open learning open. Are our open universities in danger of reaching a plateau and being content with their present reach into the population instead of striving to get costs down and head for the bottom of the pyramid? Will we have to wait for the private sector to take on that challenge?

In my opening remarks I talked about open educational resources. We have certainly advanced the thinking on OERs at the this meeting and we were delighted that the UK Open University did the international launch of its new OER programmes, OpenLearn and Tessa at this Forum. As Andy Lane said at the launch, "we don't know where this will lead us". That is the sign of a true innovation.

This is also true of our Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth. Don't blame me for the name, the Ministers chose it in 2000. The VUSSC is really a collaborative network in support of local institutions in the small states, not a new institution. But the international collaborative development of learning materials on line on our WikiEducator is a genuine innovation and we do not know where it will lead either.

Our first course development boot camp in Mauritius in August this year created a Diaspora of online course developers from scratch. Going back to my comment about the need for more research, we are excited by the idea that the University of London will create a mirror site for WikiEducator as a laboratory for research on the use of social software in learning for development. This would be a WikiResearcher to complement WikiEducator.

Some of our most heated discussions were about the difference between open and not-so-open content, between free and non-free licences. There is a genuine and healthy tension here. The impact of open educational resources on the business models of education, particularly of open universities, is an open question. As Professor Lane said, we don't know where this will lead us. But since it may have the potential to transform the cost structures of ODL we urgently require more research and development on the systems aspects of OERs.

Far from splitting into warring camps with each disputing the purity of the other's openness we must rather broaden the community of practice around OERs so that we can change educational paradigms at all levels.

This is closely related to our good sessions about copyright and I express warm thanks to WIPO for sponsoring

a session here. Delegates formed new networks around copyright, you learned about the "3-step test" to aid access to copyrighted materials, and you are now familiar with the debate about the non-commercial restriction under Creative Commons Licences. You learned that developing countries need to focus on issues of digital rights management if they are to foster access to knowledge. COL will continue to focus on these issues in order to cut the costs of education and remove barriers to learning.

This is all exotic but important stuff. Let me move now to some of the very basic links between learning and development that were discussed here, starting with rural development.

First, I understand that the model behind the Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme in India, Ghana, Nigeria and Zambia has now proved that it is relevant to other developing countries. The challenge that emerged is to convince development agencies that mobilising communities and investing in building cognitive and structural social capital is worthwhile. Basically, as I noted on Tuesday, how do we get all the players: researchers; educational institutions and extension units to see rural communities as partners, not beneficiaries of our greater wisdom.

For COL the challenge is to go beyond projects and create a phenomenon of rapid self-replication so that the model spreads spontaneously from village to village, increasing prosperity as it does so. For ODL institutions the

challenge is to extend their rich experience of non-formal education for the benefit of disadvantaged rural communities and to reorient their policies, systems and structures to foster interactive learning for development.

You pointed to another challenge of scaling up in discussions of the use of media – or rather media empowerment. Those of you who have come across it find that COL's approach to the MDGs for Health, which is to empower people with media to develop their own health messages, is working effectively. It is having an impact on improving health and reducing disease, notably malaria and HIV. The challenge is to scale this up so that more NGOs in more countries can benefit. How can we scale this up? Can we even talk of doing it on a mass scale?

Closely related again are programmes that relate learning as closely as possible to improved livelihoods. You noted the connection between self-respect and education, the difficulties of overcoming rural isolation and the need for collaboration to overcome the problems of small or distributed communities.

There was a debate about the use of public-private partnerships for technical and vocational education and training across the Commonwealth. You noted that there is an increasing demand here in the Caribbean for training youth in TVET and training TVET trainers. In Asia the Bangladesh Open University and the Allama Iqbal Open University are seeking to increase their links with NGOs for livelihood programmes. Similar discussions for the ECOWAS region of West Africa took place here too, whilst Papua New Guinea intends to play a greater role in PATVET, the Pacific Association of TVET.

Open schooling sits between the non-formal and formal systems. The conference confirmed our impression that this is a very hot topic right now.

India's National Institute for Open Schooling has had a tremendous influence on developments around the world, which COL has been proud to facilitate. It was a special pleasure for me, last evening, to confer the honorary fellowship of COL on Father Kunnunkal, who was the originator of open schooling at scale.

The gradual achievement of Universal Primary Education creates a tidal wave of children looking for secondary education that governments simply cannot provide by conventional means because they lack both teachers and buildings. Alternative methods of schooling are also essential for marginalised groups such as nomads, street children and AIDS orphans.

Trinidad and Tobago, Nigeria and Jamaica are just some of the countries that are implementing open schooling, either across the whole curriculum or for specific courses. Open schooling is supplementing traditional schooling at all levels, from basic education through to "A" Levels. Interest in the delivery of technical and vocational courses through open schooling is increasing sharply because learners want more training in skills for livelihoods.

Media for open schooling tends, rightly, to be rather traditional because that is what is available. Radio continues to be a successful medium and computers are gradually coming into the system. At the local level open schools need to be carefully planned and the proponents of open schooling will need to show more research evidence of their effectiveness before the international community accords them the importance they deserve.

Another key application of ODL is teacher education, both pre- and in-service. The conference found that students are responding well to the use of ODL and blended learning, which is opening up access to the profession and proving the point I made in my introductory remarks. The learning challenge is so enormous that traditional approaches are not up to the task. We need new approaches for expanding learning that can be used at scale to deliver good quality at low cost.

The success of ODL programmes in this area requires that they be based on a good model of teacher education, that programme development and planning be done competently – especially as far as student support and assessment systems are concerned. In this respect the TESSA programme being launched by an African and international consortium seems particularly promising.

I understand the approach called Situated Learning Design that has been piloted in Sri Lanka attracted much interest. This is an attempt to ensure that teacher education is set firmly in the teachers' context and encourages reflective practice.

Coming back again to the importance of models, we now have a number of examples of Consortia for Teacher Education in different parts of the Commonwealth, such as South Asia and West Africa. It is time to compare the models being used, ask what works and what doesn't, and use the most successful model in creating future consortia.

I said on Tuesday that technology would never be far from our discussions and I remarked earlier that our attitude to technology is more mature and much less "gee-whiz" than it was even two years ago.

I also said that because of its timing the people at this Forum were uniquely equipped to take forward the debate about mLearning. I think we have done that. In the light of our discussions here I have renamed mLearning as mMotivation. Students see their cell phones as part of their persons and like to use them. When their ODL institution uses them for communication it motivates them by making them feel included. So far applications are mostly for information and administrative updates – but we all know that getting those noticed is very important.

eLearning, on the other hand is a very big topic, especially if, as many do outside this conference, you simply use it as a modern term for ODL. I have already asked if, through eLearning, the empire of traditional education is striking back by diverting our energies to the use of technology in classrooms. Assuming we can avert this danger, you emphasised the importance of focusing on learning rather than technology in developing programmes. Electronic feedback is powerful but information about it needs to be more widely shared. Given all the hype that surrounded eLearning it is refreshing that one session showed great interest in what went wrong in the cases presented.

I conclude from the reports that you are confident that you can use eLearning effectively once the infrastructure permits it. Participation in the development of eLearning materials collaboratively for the VUSSC project has been a very empowering experience for those who have taken part so far.

Our forum theme has been Achieving Development Goals: Innovation, Learning, Collaboration and Foundations. Many discussions came back to the importance of foundations.

In my introduction I suggested a Russian doll as a metaphor for the various contexts that we have to consider in creating and offering technology-mediated learning. Sometimes those contexts embed one inside the other, sometimes we address them side by side. Foundations are in the embedded category and many of you, particularly those who are relatively new in ODL found it helpful to have the fundamentals re-affirmed through some of the problem-solving workshops.

One foundation at the core of the Russian doll is instructional design. We have been very gratified by the enthusiastic welcome that you have given to COL's Instructional Design Template. I am sorry that we did not bring enough physical copies with us to satisfy the demand, but you can find it on your COL CD. This is but one of the ways that COL tries to help the ODL community of practice and we appreciate your feedback about other tools that we should work on with you.

Learner support is another foundation of ODL. Some were surprised that there were few sessions devoted to this. Does that mean the importance of learner support is so deeply embedded in our thinking that we have less need to discuss it, or do other meetings, like the Cambridge conference, fully address the need? Those would be dangerous assumptions and learner

> "It is the enduring spirit of hope and the appetite for learning against all odds".
>
> ~ *Karen Speirs, Connections*

> "There is real capacity building going on here".
>
> ~ *Ioanna Chan Mow, Samoa*

support ought to receive more attention in the London programme, something that Roger Mills, who will be involved in its design, is eminently qualified to ensure.

The same goes to a lesser extent for administration and logistics, although there were some fruitful discussions here on the challenge of transforming a conventional educational institution for dual mode operation. This is a very important area since much of the development of ODL in the coming years will be through dual-mode provision, yet organising an institution to deliver effectively both in classrooms and at a distance is notoriously difficult to achieve.

The positive interpretation of this aspect of the programme structure is that this Forum has been less concerned to explore all aspects of conventional ODL and more focussed on the new challenges of learning for development. With the possible exception of some of the Dakar goals, the development goals that have formed the backdrop to our meeting challenge our organisations to operate in new ways.

We are finding that it is not easy to apply the principles of instructional design and learner support within these new approaches, which are often community led. Nevertheless, the growing worldwide community of practice of ODL and technology-mediated learning is probably better equipped than any other to address these challenges as Penina Mlama argued yesterday in the case of gender. I am sure that we all intend to maintain the focus on Learning for Development on the Road to London.

I am indebted to my colleagues for many of these insights. I have sometimes expressed the conclusions of the conference in the dry language of development but at the end of the day we are talking about human beings and, in Winston Cox's quotation from John Stuart Mill two days ago, 'the perfection of our nature'.

In this respect it was my colleague Karen Speirs, editor of COL's Newsletter *Connections*, who summed it up best. When I asked her at the Banquet last evening what had impressed her about the conference she said simply:

> *"It is the enduring spirit of hope and the appetite for learning against all odds".*

And when I turned to our colleague from Samoa, Ioana Chan Mow, who was sitting next to me she said:

> *"There is real capacity building going on here".*

Those are not bad epitaphs for PCF4. Thank you all for being the Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning over the last few days. I hope you recognised something of yourselves in the remarks that I have made. That is my take on PCF4.

Have a good trip on the road to London! I look forward to seeing you at PCF5

# eLearning in Open Learning:
# Sacred Cow, Trojan Horse, Scapegoat or Easter Bunny?

16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers
Stakeholders Conference, Theme: Learning Support, Materials and Technology
Capetown, South Africa, 11 December 2006

*Sir John Daniel, Paul West and Wayne Mackintosh*

## Introduction

Thank you for inviting me to make a short contribution to this 16th CCEM Stakeholders Conference and the theme of Learning Support, Materials and Technology.

I have prepared these remarks with my colleagues Paul West and Wayne Mackintosh, both South Africans. We shall use the time to reflect with you on the evolution of the technology of open and distance learning and the contribution of the latest technological wonder, eLearning.

It is helpful to put things in context so we start with a brief history of the parallel evolution of technology and open and distance learning (ODL). As a framework for examining eLearning we shall take four animals whose names have entered the language from various cultures as metaphors. Our title is *eLearning in Open Learning: Sacred Cow; Trojan Horse, Scapegoat or Easter Bunny?*

## Technology and Open and Distance Learning: a little history

You can take different starting points for open and distance learning.

We start with St. Paul for two reasons. First his letters to the young churches of the 1st century launched the basic methodological framework of ODL which continues today and is captured in the theme of this session, Learning Support, Materials and Technology. To take them in reverse order, Paul's technologies were writing, despatch carriers and oral exposition. He prepared materials, what we call today his epistles, which were copied by hand and carried to the various churches. There the priests and bishops provided learning support by reading the epistles aloud to the people, commenting on them and celebrating the sacraments.

A second reason for starting with Paul is that even if he can take only partial credit for the subsequent growth of Christianity, this remains the most successful and durable application of open and distance learning ever undertaken.

Subsequent technologies have embroidered and improved on what was available to Paul. The first was printing. This eliminated the need for fastidious hand copying of manuscripts and slowly but surely put the written word in the hands of ordinary people. We still call academics

> There is no magic educational medium (and never will be)

"lecturers", recalling their role for many centuries as oral intermediaries between the written word and the student.

If education was slow to adjust to the implications of printing, it reacted more quickly to the next key technology, postal systems, which allowed print to be disseminated more readily. When the Penny Post, the first postal service, was introduced in Britain in 1840, Isaac Pitman took immediate advantage of this new technology to start teaching shorthand by correspondence. In so doing he launched the commercial correspondence education industry, which defined ODL for more than a century. We note in passing that the blackboard was invented at the same time as the Penny Post. It defined conventional teaching for more than a century and continues to do so.

In that century various new technologies came and stayed, such as radio, film, television, computing and computer assisted learning. Enthusiasts predicted that each new medium would revolutionise education, claiming that it was the most important invention since... Since what?

Revealingly, these prophets all took printing as their benchmark, not the previous technological marvel, thereby implying (correctly) that the previous wonder medium had not sparked the revolution predicted by its fans. From this secular experience, wise practitioners conclude that there is no magic educational medium and risk the hypothesis that there never will be.

No single technology is revolutionary but a combination of them can be. Thus, by the 1960s, the steady succession of technologies we mentioned had created a rich communications environment. At the foundation ceremony of the UK Open University in 1969 the

> *The term sacred cow refers to something that is immune from criticism, often unreasonably so. We apply it to the tendency to suspend our critical faculties when the term eLearning is used. It is today's manifestation of the tradition of genuflecting before a new magic medium that claims to solve our educational problems.*

Chancellor, Lord Crowther, captured this in some memorable words:

*"The world is caught in a communications revolution, the effects of which will go beyond those of the industrial revolution of two centuries ago. Then the great advance was the invention of machines to multiply the potency of men's muscles. Now the great new advance is the invention of machines to multiply the potency of men's minds. As the steam engine was to the first revolution, so the computer is to the second".*

The Open University took ODL beyond the simple process of correspondence education and into the era of multi-media distance learning. It took advantage of a range of media – mostly mass media – to enrich teaching and learning with much more attractive materials. It took advantage of new communications tools to improve learner support. In so doing it made possible a massive increase in access to higher education, both in the UK and even more in Asia, where a host of local open universities have followed its example.

As the era of personal media succeeded the era of mass media, the open universities followed the trend, not abandoning the mass media, but incorporating the new online media that developed through the Internet and the World Wide Web. The UK Open University was using computer conferencing as a component of its teaching systems in the late 1980s and had 150,000 students interacting with it online by the late 1990s.

## What is eLearning?

The term eLearning came into regular use around 2000. What is eLearning? The confusion around the term is part of the reason for writing this paper. Open and distance learning has a history of terminological confusion and eLearning is continuing that tradition. But since the term is now in widespread use it is worth pausing on the variety of meanings given to it.

For Wikipedia, eLearning "is a general term that relates to all training that is delivered with the assistance of a computer".

Others deny that the "e" stands for electronic and argue that it stands for concepts like evolving, everywhere, enhanced or extended. This leads them to a fuzzy definition of eLearning as "a learning environment supported by continuously evolving, collaborative processes, focused on increasing individual and organisational performance".

For yet others eLearning is simply a sexier term for distance learning.

In exploring the place of eLearning through our four animal metaphors we shall remain aware of the range of interpretations of the term but assume that it does have something to do with electrons and computers.

*First, like the Trojan horse, eLearning has been welcomed into the academic city. Computing technology strikes closer to the heart of intellectual endeavour than media like TV or radio so academics have embraced it more readily. But in doing so they may have prevented eLearning from being a subversive device. Using eLearning to best effect calls for some fundamental rethinking of pedagogy.*

## eLearning as Sacred Cow

The term sacred cow refers to something that is immune from criticism, often unreasonably so. We apply it to the tendency to suspend our critical faculties when the term eLearning is used. It is today's manifestation of the tradition of genuflecting before a new magic medium that claims to solve our educational problems.

Fortunately, the starry-eyed visions promoted during the dotcom frenzy in 2000 have had to adjust to reality. Internet enthusiasts claimed then that the future of education lay in front of a computer screen and all other educational methods would soon be consigned to the dustbin of history.

Those who acted on that assumption by creating pure Internet teaching either went down in flames or quietly added other media, even books, to their materials mix. Nevertheless, even today you meet people who ask you if you are using eLearning in a tone of voice implying that a negative response brackets you with those who haven't yet made it into the 21st century. My advice, when you are faced with this question, is to ask what they mean by eLearning. The chances are that the reply will be so convoluted that you will never have to answer the original question.

## eLearning as a Trojan Horse

A Trojan horse is a subversive device placed within enemy ranks, referring to the hollow wooden horse in which Greeks hid to gain entrance to Troy so that they could open the gates to their army. We apply this analogy to eLearning in three ways.

First, like the Trojan horse, eLearning has been welcomed into the academic city. Computing technology strikes closer to the heart of intellectual endeavour than media like TV or radio so academics have embraced it more readily. But in doing so they may have prevented eLearning from being a subversive device. Using eLearning to best effect calls for some fundamental rethinking of pedagogy.

In research the challenge of fundamentally rethinking a paradigm would attract a large team, but academics mostly approach the use of eLearning in teaching as lone rangers. Thousands of teachers acting separately are less likely to develop a new pedagogy than a more concerted approach.

Second, because it has been absorbed into the cottage industry of campus teaching, eLearning is having less effect than it might in an area that welcomes subversion. Historically, educational media, especially the mass media, have made possible the revolution of distance learning, which has simultaneously increased access, improved quality and cut costs.

The power of eLearning should be harnessed to distance education; as is being done impressively by large institutions such as the UK Open University. In smaller institutions, however, those who might have developed eLearning as a tool for extending access have been drawn into using it to offer a richer experience to existing students rather than to reach out to a new clientele. It is as if the Greeks had been captured as they jumped out of their horse and prevented from opening the gates to let their army occupy Troy.

Third – a more subtle but important point – the Trojan horse of eLearning carries a problematic stowaway called Digital Rights Management. If I buy a book or a CD I may not copy it but I can lend it to others, one at a time. However, if I buy an electronic book, the seller often digitally locks the book so that I have to open it with a code, such as my credit card number. This prevents me from lending my electronic books to my friends as I do with the print version. In some cases Digital Rights Management even makes the book expire and become useless at a certain date.

DRM is a problem in eLearning. It allows no equivalent to the second-hand market for textbooks. Learners will need to pay the full price each year. All we can do here is flag the problem. Publishers and software producers need to get together to solve it, otherwise we shall see large-scale pirating.

COL is investing considerable effort in helping governments and institutions through the copyright maze and I shall come later to one solution that we strongly recommend.

## eLearning as Scapegoat

A scapegoat is one that is made to bear the blame of others. Aaron confessed all the sins of the children of Israel on the Day of Atonement over the head of a live goat which was then sent into the wilderness symbolically bearing their sins.

eLearning is sometimes used as a scapegoat by those who might expand learning opportunities, particularly through distance education, but claim they cannot do so because they do not have the equipment, bandwidth or expertise for eLearning. The digital divide is used as an excuse for inaction.

This attitude, which is linked to the tendency to rename distance education as eLearning, is unfortunate and unnecessary. It is perfectly possible to offer distance learning of good quality at scale without having all the paraphernalia of eLearning. After all, St. Paul lacked bandwidth!

> *eLearning is sometimes used as a scapegoat by those who might expand learning opportunities, particularly through distance education, but claim they cannot do so because they do not have the equipment, bandwidth or expertise for eLearning. The digital divide is used as an excuse for inaction.*

> *Finally, we believe that the most brightly coloured egg brought by the Easter Bunny through eLearning is a global intellectual commons of learning materials that can be shared and adapted. These are called open educational resources (OERs).*

## eLearning as Easter Bunny

Finally, on a more cheerful note, we come to eLearning as the Easter Bunny. In ancient times the rabbit was a symbol of fertility, equated with springtime and the renewal of life. The Easter Bunny makes her visit every year, scattering brightly-coloured eggs as she goes. What brightly coloured eggs are being scattered around our educational garden by eLearning? We identify three – in increasing order of importance.

First, eLearning allows online access to a huge array of resources: the libraries and museums of the world and much more. The challenge to teachers is to help students to use these resources wisely and purposefully. After all, pointing students in the direction of a conventional library does not, of itself, lead to useful learning.

Second, eLearning speeds up communication, which is usually a good thing. Research shows that students benefit from timely feedback. Electronic submission of assignments removes any delay in transmission, although it does not guarantee that teachers will correct and comment on the student's work quickly. The fact that contributions to discussion (e.g. in chat rooms) must be made in writing is also helpful. It slows down communication and gives people more chance to express their points clearly. This is particularly helpful to those who lack confidence in oral expression; say because they are working in a second or third language.

Finally, we believe that the most brightly coloured egg brought by the Easter Bunny through eLearning is a global intellectual commons of learning materials that can be shared and adapted. These are called open educational resources (OERs).

People are contributing eLearning materials to common repositories under licences that allow others to use and adapt them provided they acknowledge the source and put their adaptation back into the system for onward use.

Open educational resources are an antidote to all three of the bad effects of eLearning as a Trojan horse: academics need not re-invent every wheel of course content; the cost of developing learning materials, which is a major obstacle to distance learning, is slashed; and the use of open content licences removes the spectre of locking up knowledge under Digital Rights Management.

*The expansion of freedom is both the primary purpose and the principal means of development…freedom is also what makes development happen.*

*~Amartya Sen~*

## Conclusion

eLearning, like all technologies, can be used well and badly. The Commonwealth of Learning is helping the small states of the Commonwealth use it well through the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, which the Secretary-General will formally launch at 16CCEM. Its aim is to allow the small states to work collectively to master the eWorld and bridge the digital divide. The collaborative development of Open Education Resources is the foundation of its work.

# How Can Learning Contribute to Development?

The Dennis Irvine Lecture, University of Guyana,

Georgetown, Guyana, 27 February 2007

*Sir John Daniel*

## Introduction

Thank you for the great honour of giving the Dennis Irvine Lecture. The first lecture in this series was given in 2001 by my predecessor as President of the Commonwealth of Learning, Dato' Professor Raj Dhanarajan. My presence here symbolises the strong links between the Commonwealth of Learning and the University of Guyana, links that were expressed so well in the life of Dr. Dennis Irvine.

This is the first of these lectures in honour of Dennis Irvine since his untimely death two years ago, so let me take a moment to recall the highlights of his illustrious career that had such an impact on both our organisations.

### DR. DENNIS IRVINE

Dennis had a most distinguished academic trajectory. After earning a first class honours degree in Chemistry from the Leeds University and a PhD from Cambridge, he began his career at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria where he was first a lecturer and then Professor of Chemistry. He was Vice-Chancellor of your University of Guyana for 13 years and I know that his legacy here still lives on. Later he was UNESCO's Science Adviser to the Caribbean and Education Consultant to the Jamaican Government in the 1980s.

He then served on COL's staff as Director of Caribbean Programmes and of Materials Acquisition and Development from COL's inception in July 1989 until July 1994. On his retirement, he returned to Jamaica but continued to assist COL as Co-ordinator of COL's Programmes in the Caribbean from 1994-96 and later as Regional Adviser to COL's President until June 2000.

Dennis also served as a consultant to many national and international agencies, including UNESCO, UNDP, UNEP, Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) and the Government of Jamaica. In 2002 he was named an Honorary Fellow of COL and in 2005 he was elected founding President of the Caribbean Regional Association for Distance and Open Learning (CARADOL).

Dennis Irvine was a great citizen of the Caribbean and I am delighted to see that the University Council of Jamaica has also recently instituted a Dennis Irvine Lecture. He was also an esteemed citizen of the Commonwealth and we remember him at the Commonwealth of Learning for his wisdom, dedication and commitment. He was a kind and understanding colleague who was a great comfort to COL staff during some of the difficult days of our early years. It is a singular honour for me to give this lecture in his memory.

### STRUCTURE OF THIS LECTURE

Six years ago, when my predecessor and friend Professor Raj Dhanarajan gave this lecture he chose as his topic Combating Poverty through Adult Education. I shall be returning to some of the themes that Raj explored and have taken as my title: How Can Learning Contribute to Development? I shall begin by dwelling on the notion of development. We use the word liberally every day, but what do we mean by it? How do we break this broad concept down into some goals that we can pursue in a systematic way?

Looking at such goals I shall argue that achieving them – and I mean achieving all of the development goals and not just those directly related to education – depends fundamentally on mass learning. This conclusion presents a problem, because current methods of teaching and learning in face-to-face groups cannot address the scale of the challenge. What has happened in other areas of life when old methods cannot respond to contemporary demands? The answer is technology.

Whether it is in transport, food production, power generation, communications or consumer goods, technology has created revolutions that have provided mass access to goods and services of high quality and relatively low cost. Many of you are carrying a good symbol of that technological revolution in your handbags or pockets this evening – a cell phone. You have others in your homes and your work places.

Can we create a similar revolution by applying technology to learning and so respond to the challenges of development? The evidence suggests that we can. The Commonwealth of Learning has been engaged in that revolution for nearly twenty years. I shall share some of that experience and tell you how we propose to continue that work in the Commonwealth and in Guyana in the coming years.

## What is Development?

That is the menu I offer you this evening. Let me now go back to the beginning and explore with you what we mean by this word development. If we want to understand how learning can contribute to development we must agree on what we mean by the word.

You must all have thought deeply about this question over the years since independence.

I believe that we need look no further than the title of Amartya Sen's inspiring book *Development as Freedom* for guidance. He says that development simply means expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Development and human rights are two sides of the same coin. According to Sen, the expansion of freedom is both the primary purpose and the principal means of development. We measure the progress of development by the advancement of the freedoms that people can enjoy.

*Fighting hunger and sustaining a liveable environment means empowering millions of farmers and smallholders and giving rural people more control over their lives.*

He also points out that freedom is also what makes development happen. It is primarily through the free agency of people that development is achieved. Free people devote more energy to the development of their families, their communities and their countries than those who are not free.

What kind of freedoms are we talking about? We can distinguish between freedom from and freedom to.

The first freedom from is freedom from hunger. You cannot concentrate on much else if you worry constantly where your next meal is coming from. Hunger is a direct manifestation of poverty. Taking people out of abject poverty helps to free them from hunger and gives them other freedoms as well, notably some freedom from being pushed around by others and from having most of life's decisions made for them.

The second freedom from is freedom from disease. It is hard for people to fulfil their potential if they are constantly sick. It is hard to develop a community if its members are constantly sick.

The next freedom is the freedom to live with a minimum of dirt, smoke and germs. There seems to be a paradox here. In rich parts of the world individual people consume more than their share of the earth's resources but live in nice clean environments with fresh water in the taps, clean air to breathe, and no piles of garbage to trip over. In developing countries individuals make fewer demands on resources but often have to live besides heaps of garbage, breathe foul air and make do with dirty water.

I'm sure that you can think of other "freedoms from", but there are also "freedoms to". The freedom to be treated as an equal to other members of society, especially the freedom for men and women to be treated as equals. There is the freedom to be educated; the freedom to choose who governs you; the freedom to express yourself; and the freedom to practice your religion.

No doubt you can think of more "freedoms to" as well, but this list of "freedoms from" and "freedoms to" begins to define what we mean by "development". The more people can enjoy these freedoms the more developed they are – and the more they will contribute to the further development of their families, their communities and their nations.

"To improve the health of mothers and children and arrest the spread of disease, ordinary people want information that connects with their lives".

The challenge is to express these freedoms as concrete aims that we can work towards. At the Commonwealth of Learning we do this by bringing together three frameworks of goals. First, there are the Millennium Development Goals, which set targets for progress towards freedom from hunger and poverty, freedom from disease, freedom from pollution, the freedom to be equal and the freedom to be educated. Defining the freedom to be educated was taken further in the Dakar Goals of Education for All, or EFA. There are six goals for EFA, which cover all levels of education from early childhood to adult learning and skills training.

Finally, a number of the other "freedoms to" are embraced in the key goals espoused by the Commonwealth: the freedom to live in peace, the freedom of democracy, the freedom of equality before the law, and the freedoms that flow from good governance. COL defines its work by combining these three frameworks.

## Learning and Development

So far, so good! Development means greater freedom and greater freedom leads to more development. But what is the role of learning in development? I am sure we can all see a link between education and freedom – indeed according to Amartya Sen "education is the royal road to freedom: the royal road to that fundamental freedom of the human spirit that underpins other more practical freedoms".

So I don't need to convince you that achieving the Dakar Goals of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals for education requires a massive increase in learning – not just for children but for teachers and all those who work to expand schooling. I'll come back to what COL is doing about that in a minute.

But reaching the other goals also depends on more and better learning. Take the first Millennium Development Goal, which is the reduction of poverty and hunger. Fighting hunger and sustaining a liveable environment means empowering millions of farmers and smallholders and giving rural people more control over their lives. Learning new ways of doing things is the key to better livelihoods. I shall describe COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers model, which has proved to be a good way of increasing prosperity in rural areas of India and is being adapted to other countries.

Similarly for the MDGs related to health. Clearly, better health services and an increase in the number of nurses and doctors are helpful in achieving these goals. But people can do a great deal themselves to avoid disease and keep their families healthy. The challenge is to facilitate such learning by providing information that people can relate to. This is the aim of COL's Media Empowerment programme that is being implemented here in Guyana with the Guyana Planned Parenthood Association and the Pan-American Health Organisation. I shall say a word about that too and my colleague David Walker who will be working here in Guyana on this programme this week.

But if helping more people to learn is crucial to development there is a problem. There are hundreds of millions of smallholders and farmers in developing countries. The existing systems of agricultural extension, which rely on face-to-face contact to transfer knowledge, simply cannot

be scaled up to cope with the numbers. When we talk of sharing health information we are talking about billions of people. How can we reach them?

# Technology and Learning

The answer is by applying technology to scale up learning. In other areas of human life technology has given more people access to services and products. Cell phones are a good example. Not long ago getting access to a phone in Guyana was expensive and the quality was poor. Today, thanks to cell phones, many people have access to a quality service at a reasonable price. It has revolutionised the way that ordinary people communicate. The same can be done for learning and COL is there to help countries and institutions take part in the revolution of learning technology.

Learning technology is not just a promise for the future. It is here already. Twenty years ago, when the Commonwealth Heads of Government held their biennial meeting in Canada, they could see the potential of learning technologies and decided to establish the Commonwealth of Learning to help countries exploit this potential. Were they right about this potential? Has it justified their expectations?

In preparing our current plan for 2006-2009 COL looked back over the use of learning technologies over these 20 years in four areas and asked what had been achieved. We found a tremendous impact of technology-mediated learning, especially distance learning in higher education; teacher training; alternative or open schooling; and fighting poverty.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

A good example of this growth is the multiplication of open universities in the Commonwealth. From ten in 1988 the figure has grown to 23 and today they enrol some 4 million students between them. But open universities are only part of the story. Over these 20 years there has been a massive increase in the number of campus universities functioning in "dual mode", that is to say teaching at a distance as well as in classrooms. The University of Guyana is an example.

The picture in the three other areas is equally persuasive.

## TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Teacher education at a distance is now a vibrant activity. The numbers being trained are impressive: hundreds of thousands in Africa and over one million in India. COL has contributed substantially to this trend by helping to increase capacity for distance learning in countries as diverse as The Gambia, India, Lesotho, Nigeria and Sri Lanka.

Recently it worked with Zambia to formulate a strategy for using open and distance learning (ODL) and ICTs in both pre- and in-service teacher development. Teacher education administrators from all countries of the Commonwealth have received support through an annual COL-sponsored workshop series in Singapore. Some of COL's most recent work has focused on raising standards by developing Commonwealth quality assurance guidelines with partners in Asia and Africa.

## OPEN SCHOOLING

As countries strive towards achieving universal primary education, many more youngsters are finishing primary school. Sadly, most of them have little chance of getting into secondary school. There are simply not enough secondary schools or the trained teachers to staff them. Ministries of education are therefore turning to alternative means of secondary schooling. Open schooling uses high-quality self-instructional materials coupled with networks of local centres staffed with capable facilitators trained to support the learners.

Recent successes in Asia and Africa show that open schooling is a feasible alternative to classroom education. It increases access to schooling in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner and is especially good for reaching girls, women and other disadvantaged groups that have difficulty accessing conventional schooling on a full-time basis. For example, there are now some 1.5 million children enrolled in the open schooling system in school-level and technical/vocational training courses in India alone. COL has worked with India's National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS) to update its production processes for quality learning materials and to extend awareness of the potential of open schooling in India. As a result, NIOS is now working with state governments to establish 14 state open schools across India.

## NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Finally, the basic development agenda of improving health and reducing poverty and hunger calls for learning on a massive scale, with the focus on improving livelihoods and fostering a healthy population. While the content of learning in these areas is necessarily very locality specific, economies of scale have been achieved by sharing similar models for technology use and learner support.

Improving livelihoods in rural areas is central to world poverty reduction. These livelihoods are mostly farming-dependent, and agricultural extension is still largely based on face-to-face communication and demonstration. However, since the Green Revolution of the 1960s, communications technology has also been applied to agricultural extension.

Radio remains the most important medium for communicating with the rural populations of developing countries. This is particularly true in Africa where there were already 65 million radio receivers a decade ago. More recently video has become an important medium for agricultural education, the basic principle being to empower agricultural extension officers by teaching them camera and video production skills for use at the local level. This supports government policies of crop diversification among small-plot farmers in response to changing patterns of trade.

New tools for poverty reduction are also now available. ICT kiosks are spreading into the villages of India, although evaluation of the early experiences showed that they had been introduced without the adequate involvement of local people. To correct this omission, COL developed its Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers) programme. I'll come back to that in a minute. Meanwhile those are just four examples of the growing role of distance learning – broadly defined – in development.

So how is COL going to build on these successes in the years ahead? Technology is changing and development challenges are changing. How can COL best help Guyana and the other countries of the Commonwealth?

## COL's Three-Year Plan

I shall give you the highlights of COL's Three-Year Plan for 2006-2009. Its preparation reflected massive consultation around the Commonwealth. We also commissioned environmental scans in all regions. Dennis Irvine, whose memory we honour today, coordinated the scan that we did in the Caribbean in 2005.

I noted earlier that COL defines development as the combination of the Millennium Development Goals, the Dakar Goals of Education for All and the Commonwealth values of peace, democracy, equality and good governance. This led us to divide our activities into three sectors: Education; Learning for Livelihoods; and Human Environment.

In our activities and initiatives we aim for one or more of four outcomes.

First, the longer COL exists, the more we observe that successful use of technology for learning depends on laying down a foundation of policy.

Second, much of COL's work is capacity building to help systems that involve technology-mediated learning to work better.

Third, we try to analyse our areas of work in terms of models. This helps us understand why something works and the ingredients of its success. It also helps in transferring the programme to a different country.

Finally, although we do not develop materials ourselves, we help institutions to produce them. COL then tries to get them used across the Commonwealth.

Those are the outputs and outcomes we aim for in each of our initiatives. In the Plan, which you can find on the web, these outputs, outcomes and impacts have been boiled down into performance indicators, the whole making a Corporate Logic Model on the pull-out centrefold of the Plan.

To keep it simple we have five initiatives in each of the three programme sectors.

| EDUCATION | Policy |
| LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS | Systems |
| | Models |
| HUMAN ENVIRONMENT | Materials |

**EDUCATION**

Quality Assurance

Teacher Development

Open/Alternative Schooling

Higher Education

eLearning for Education Sector Development

### EDUCATION

In Education we offer help in Quality Assurance; Teacher Development; Open or Alternative Schooling; Higher Education; and eLearning for Education Sector development. These are the areas to which governments attached most importance in our consultations with them.

I have already mentioned the brisk growth in the use of ODL for teacher development and open schooling for secondary education and we can come back to that in discussion. But let me focus now on COL's two other sectors where the contribution of learning to development may be less obvious.

### LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS

In the sector of Learning for Livelihoods we also have five initiatives. First, there is Learning and Skills for Livelihoods, where the aim is to find ways of translating learning as directly as possible into improved livelihoods. Second, there is our Rural and Peri-Urban Community Development Initiative, which is our successful programme for improving the prosperity of farmers. Let me use that one as an example. We are extremely proud of the success of our Lifelong Learning for Farmers programme – L3 Farmers. It takes dead aim at the Poverty MDG. It began in India and is now being transferred to Sri Lanka and Africa.

The model, like most of our models, is simple but effective. We start at the grassroots and get the farmers to define their vision of a better future and the questions that it raises. We then get the information providers to work together to answer those questions, using commercial ICT kiosks as an information channel. We get banks and businesses involved by holding out the prospect of a more prosperous village.

In one village in Tamil Nadu, for example, the farmers decided that better dairying was the way to a more prosperous future. Their first question was how to tell a good milk cow from a poor one. The information providers came up with a checklist which some of the village women, who had learned some web programming skills, put into an instructional sequence on the ICT kiosk. This generated other learning needs, such as testing the quality of the milk, because the bank got a dairy company in the local town to guarantee regular purchases of good quality milk. The banks then started loaning money.

Two years on the results are good. Loans of $200,000 dollars have been made with a repayment rate of more than 100% because some are repaid early. Hundreds more loans are in preparation. The farmers, 60% of whom are women, are more prosperous and more empowered and, best of all, the model is spreading spontaneously from village to village without COL's involvement. We shall launch it in Sri Lanka very soon and discussions are going on in several African countries.

Coming back to the Learning and Livelihoods Sector there is an initiative in National and International Community Development that refers particularly to working with the international organisations in the agriculture sector to extend our poverty reduction programme.

Then there is the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, in which Guyana is involved. I shall come back to that at the end.

The final initiative in Learning and Livelihoods is Transnational Programmes. These are courses and materials whose use we facilitate around the Commonwealth. The best example is the Commonwealth Executive MBA and MPA programmes, developed in South Asia but now being adopted in Africa, the South Pacific and possibly here in the Caribbean.
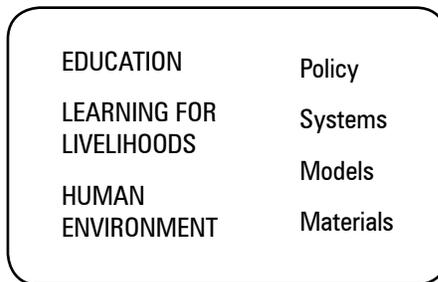
## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

The final sector, which we shall develop further in the coming years, is Human Environment. The five initiatives are Gender and Development; Health, Welfare and Community Development; Environmental Education; Good Governance and the Educational Use of Mass Media and ICTs. To illustrate this area let me take our work in Health, Welfare and Community Development – which is also being done in here in Guyana.

Let me describe another simple model that we call Media Empowerment, which is a contribution to tackling the three Health MDGs. It began in Africa but is now being adopted in Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean.

The model is to equip effective local NGOs, usually identified for us by the World Health Organisation, with a complete set of video recording and editing equipment, which costs less than $20,000, and to train them intensively in its use. They then shoot and edit videos on health matters, usually HIV, or AIDS stigma, or malaria, or soon diabetes. These videos communicate very effectively because they are made by the people for the people. To reach the audience the NGO uses what we call village cinema: they go a to village at night, hang up a sheet between two trees, and project the video using a projector powered by a generator on the back of a pick-up truck.

In The Gambia they estimate some 60% of the total population have seen these videos and the Government says they have arrested the increase in HIV transmission and have increased substantially the numbers using insecticide treated bed nets. It's effective and inexpensive. COL refreshes the equipment from time to time but otherwise this is development without donors.

This programme is the brainchild of my colleague David Walker, seen here at a school in The Gambia, who has done a brilliant job implementing this model in a dozen Commonwealth countries in all regions. In Guyana, COL partners with the Pan American Health Organisation and the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA). The activity with the GRPA is in its early stages but a video about HIV/AIDS and family health will be delivered to all regions of the country as in the Gambian example.

Let me end by going back to an important initiative that I listed under Learning for Livelihoods, namely the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth.

## VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY FOR SMALL STATES OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth was conceived by the Ministers of Education when they met in 2000. COL helped them work up a proposal which they approved when they met again in 2003

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**LEARNING FOR LIVELIHOODS**

Learning and Skills for Livelihoods

Rural and Peri-Urban Community Development

National/International Community Development

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Transnational Programmes

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**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

Gender and Development

Health, Welfare and Community Development

Environmental Education

Good Governance

Educational use of Mass Media and ICTs

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and we have been coordinating the implementation of the VUSSC, as it is called, for the last three years. It is now gathering momentum. Guyana is a signed up member of the VUSSC but has not been very active so far. I hope that will change.

So far we have secured funds for the development of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth from two sources, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation of the USA and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC). The CFTC has allocated £1 million over four years as part of its policy of supporting human resource development in the Commonwealth.

A major use of these funds has been to hold planning and course development meetings as shown on this schedule. Although much of the work of course development will take place online and at a distance, we believed that to get the project going, people needed to meet. These course development meetings are nicknamed "boot camps" because they include basic training in online working.

One thing we had to get right is the subjects on which courses and programmes will focus. This list was the result of correspondence with small states' governments back in 2004 and the planning meetings in Singapore in 2005 and 2006. As you can see the VUSSC is focussing on skills and livelihood-related courses.

A very important milestone in the development of the Virtual University was the first course development boot camp held in Mauritius in August last year. Participants were introduced to the ICT components of the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth, open source software, Wikis, and ePortfolios. All this material is being prepared as open content with a Creative Commons-BY-SA licence.

The participants in the boot camp created content on Tourism and Hospitality and on Small Business Management – three times as much material as we expected in the time available. This course development work is continuing as participants contribute online from their offices at home. Next month work on courses on professional development for teachers will get under way at a boot camp in Singapore with 24 states participating. Participants in these boot camps picked up skills fast and are now providing buddy-training to their colleagues back in their countries. This illustrates what a useful tool the VUSSC will be in bridging the digital divide in the small states.

COL's role is to coordinate the initiative; to put our expertise in educational technology at the disposal of the participants; to assist in building local capacity; and to obtain funds for the programme.

But you should understand what COL is not. COL is not a degree-awarding body. COL is not the Virtual University. Awards made as a result of VUSSC

study will be made by institutions in the countries and we are working with them and the South African Qualifications Authority to facilitate arrangements for credit transfer and recognition of qualifications. I hope that the University of Guyana will take part.

I emphasise that this is not COL's project; it is a programme that originated with Ministers of Education back in 2000. Ministries of Education have a crucial role in developing policy so that the VUUSC fits national priorities; in liaising with other ministries where courses are of interest to them; in allocating people to the work; and generally in supporting and monitoring the implementation of the programme. The beneficial impact of the VUSSC will depend very directly on the extent to which Ministers get their people engaged and have them take responsibility for it.

The VUSSC must develop in close collaboration with local institutions, which will have the responsibility for linking into the international teams developing the courses and then adapting and delivering them in appropriate ways in each country.

We are increasingly confident that the VUSSC will make a real difference and we detect rapidly rising enthusiasm for it in the participating countries as more people and institutions get involved.

## *Conclusion*

I shall end there. I hope I have convinced you of the crucial role of learning in development and of the major role that technology can play in expanding and improving learning.

I trust that I have also given you the flavour of what COL means by Learning for Development and how we shall be promoting learning for development in the years ahead.

All this would, I believe, have been very pleasing to Dennis Irvine who did so much to develop both the University of Guyana and the Commonwealth of Learning. It has been a privilege to speak to you in his memory.

# Reflections on a Career in Distance Education

January 2007

*Sir John Daniel*

## Conversion on the Road to Milton Keynes

I found distance education whilst seeking something else. My first real job, after a long, conventional and highly specialised education, was an assistant professorship of Metallurgical Engineering at the Ecole Polytechnique (Université de Montréal). Fate appeared to have made me a university teacher so I thought I ought to develop some professionalism in my new métier by undertaking formal study of education.

Before I realised that this was an unusual – even a perverse – reflex for a young engineering academic, I had enrolled in a Master's programme in Educational Technology at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University). I had little idea what educational technology was but swallowed my scepticism because it was the only programme in Montreal with "education" in the title that could be studied part time and appeared to offer some intellectual challenge.

For someone who had specialised in science for many years the whole programme was an eye-opener, but its three-month internship changed my life. As I wondered in 1971 where to go for my internship the press was suddenly full of stories about an amazing innovation – by the Brits of all people – called the Open University. It sounded interesting and Professor David Hawkridge took me on as an unpaid visiting lecturer at UKOU's Institute of Educational Technology for the summer of 1972. I did no lecturing but I had a conversion experience.

I was introduced to the practice of developing courses in teams, which the founding Vice-Chancellor of the OU, Walter Perry, regarded as his major innovation. I was a back-row player in a team for a science course, Solids, Liquids and Gases, which later acquired a reputation as one of the OU's few "dogs". Much more interesting was my larger role in a team charged with proposing revisions to the Technology Foundation Course, T100, then being offered for the first time. I had to sift through the abundant information that the OU collects from its students and suggest changes that would improve the course the following year.

I found this systematic approach to quality improvement inspiring, as I did everything else about that summer. All my spare moments were spent viewing OU TV programmes and I was amazed by their quality and interest. I went along to a residential summer school and was bowled over by the 16-hour-a-day commitment to academic discourse: in labs and field trips during the day and in the bar until late at night. The idealism and the commitment to student success were palpable.

Here was a teaching and learning system. When my internship ended I was no longer at ease in the old dispensation. Here was the future of higher education and I wanted to be part of it.

On returning to Montreal an opportunity to join the distance learning revolution came almost immediately in the form of an advertisement in *Le Devoir* seeking a director-general for the new Télé-université; Quebec's answer to the UKOU. With youthful enthusiasm I applied for the job, even though I was an Anglophone, barely thirty years old, who had only stepped off the boat from Europe three years earlier.

To their eternal credit the search committee, instead of binning my application, called me up to Quebec City for interview. They made it clear that they were not going to make me director-general – which was a relief – but told me that I was the only person they could find in Quebec who had seen an open university from the inside. Would I like to join the Télé-université and organise its educational technology unit? I replied that I would!

## Improvement by Feedback

We moved from Montreal to Quebec City and had four tremendously stimulating years – both professionally and personally. The UKOU had its well-staffed Institute of Educational Technology; the Télé-université had me! How could I make an impact? I decided that evaluating our first course offerings and feeding back the results to the course teams was the most fruitful approach. It did not make me popular, because even the innovators and risk-takers who had joined the Télé-université did not like to be told that students did not find their work perfect. However, the institution steadily became a self improving system.

The years at the Télé-université were intensely interesting on the personal front because, as a new institution using media to reach large numbers, it was a magnet to the young nationalist academics who wanted to promote change by spicing the traditional academic fare of Quebec social science with more penetrating insights. They were splendid people whose commitment to the sovereignty of Quebec was more than rhetorical. In the election of 1976, which swept the Parti Québecois to power as the provincial government, four of my faculty (by then I had become director

> *Those who believe that expanding access is a fundamental mission of distance learning should also worry that eLearning is diverting attention and resources away from disadvantaged students and back to those who are already well served.*

> *The fundamental question before the planning committee was whether COL would produce courses and offer them to Commonwealth countries through technologies such as satellites, or help countries to build up their own capacity for distance education. The committee chose the second option.*

of studies) were elected to the National Assembly and three of them immediately became ministers.

During these years I attended my first international conference on distance learning, the 1975 conference of the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE), held in Brighton UK. At that time ICCE's membership was a blend of commercial, military and public sector correspondence schools. UKOU Vice-Chancellor Walter Perry was the star turn of the meeting with a speech about the Open University. In his uncompromising way Perry said bluntly that the UKOU was providing the quality learning material and student support so lacking in the correspondence sector. By the end of the conference the battle lines were drawn. The public-sector university people were feeling superior. The commercial schools were arguing that with generous public funding, they too could offer exciting media and excellent student support.

## Improvement by Clarity

By now open-university networks were forming. Alberta had created Athabasca University as Quebec set up the Télé-université. There was

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contact between the two institutions and we worked together on evaluating the first educational experiments conducted on Canada's communications satellites.

One thing led to another and in 1977, in the depths of the cold Alberta winter, I arrived in Edmonton to take up the post of vice-president, learning services, at Athabasca University (AU). AU had originally been established as an overspill campus to the University of Alberta, but as that became less necessary and scandal erupted over land sales near the campus site, it sought a new mission as an open university.

It had produced one blockbuster course: Ancient Roots of the Modern World, which required nineteen 3,000-word assignments and should have led to the award of a full degree, rather than a few course credits, for any student courageous enough to get through it. (My wife and I later took the course as students in a slimmed-down version and found it excellent).

When I arrived, Athabasca was still trying to find its way to a fuller curriculum. However, each successive meeting of the Senate jettisoned the course and programme proposals approved at the previous meeting and set off in a new direction.

Taking the view that implementing an imperfect programme consistently was more productive than an endless search for a perfect curriculum, I simply insisted that we develop the courses that had been agreed. Once they recovered from their surprise my colleagues thought this was an excellent idea and set to work with a will. Enrolments doubled in each of the three years that I was there.

My stay was short because Sam Smith, Athabasca's president who had lured me west, fancied himself as a kingmaker. Suggesting to me that after six years in unorthodox open-university start-ups it was time to establish my credentials in the conventional sector, he placed before me an advertisement for the post of vice-rector, academic at Concordia University. Being an obedient type I took his advice, applied and got the job.

Appointing me was broadminded on Concordia's part because at that stage I was a drop-out from the Master's programme in Educational Technology that I had started at Sir George Williams University in 1970. I had completed the coursework and the internship but had abandoned a research thesis on the introduction of computers in Quebec primary schools when I moved to Alberta. (Sir George Williams University and Loyola College had merged to form Concordia in 1974.)

Concordia gave me a wonderful training in every aspect of conventional university management under the wise guidance of Rector John O'Brien. The University did not teach at a distance but my involvement with ODL continued through ICCE.

## What's in a Name?

ICCE had held another conference in New Delhi in 1978 at which I was elected chairman of the programme committee for the 1982 conference scheduled for Vancouver. Then in 1979 the UKOU held a memorable invitational conference to celebrate its tenth anniversary. Whether to create an international association of open universities was one of the issues discussed.

David Sewart of the UKOU had been active at both the Brighton and New Delhi ICCE conferences. He and I both thought that it would be better to expand the remit of ICCE to include the interests of the open universities rather than create a new association for them. Discussion at the UKOU conference already indicated that drafting the membership criteria for such an association would be difficult.

At this time the growing professional community of public-sector distance education was increasingly uncomfortable with the designation "correspondence education". On the one hand it did not capture the richness of the new multi-media approaches and on the other it had unfortunate associations with dubious courses advertised on packets of matches. Changing the name of the International Council for Correspondence Education was a sine qua non for broadening its membership base.

With the strong support of Kevin Smith of the University of New England (Australia), David Sewart and I began a campaign to change

"correspondence" to "distance": to convert ICCE to ICDE. This was put to a vote at the Vancouver Conference and approved. Sadly, however, the commercial correspondence sector interpreted this as a repudiation of their interests and gradually drifted away from ICDE, causing its membership to focus more on higher education and the public sector than before.

At the Vancouver Conference I was elected president of ICDE and used some of the surplus generated by the event to convene face-to-face meetings of the Executive Committee and promote the Council around the world. Unfortunately subsequent conferences did not generate surpluses and ICDE gradually became more dependent on government grants, diminishing its credibility as the membership gradually ceded control of the association to its secretariat. The Asian Association of Open Universities emerged in the 1990s as the most stimulating international forum for discussions of ODL.

## The Challenge of Dual-mode Operation

Before the ICDE met again for its Melbourne Conference in 1985 I had moved again, to the presidency of Laurentian University, a multi-campus institution serving North-Eastern Ontario from its main campus in Sudbury.

This brought me back into direct operational contact with ODL since Laurentian is a dual-mode institution. Watching the faculty struggle – or fail to struggle – to serve both their on-campus and off-campus students gave me a conviction, which has never left me, that managing dual-mode operations is extremely difficult. Whatever arrangements are put in place seem inherently unstable. Too much centralisation of the organisation of ODL and the faculty feel disempowered; too much delegation of responsibility for ODL to individual academics and student support becomes inconsistent.

Some would say that the blending of distance and classroom learning through eLearning has made this distinction irrelevant. That may be true but dual-mode eLearning raises another fundamental question. Does not the cottage-industry approach to eLearning through dual-mode operation effectively ensure that this powerful new teaching tool performs below potential?

Those who believe that expanding access is a fundamental mission of distance learning should also worry that eLearning is diverting attention and resources away from disadvantaged students and back to those who are already well served. For example, the Sloan Foundation's interesting annual reports on eLearning in the USA (Allen and Seaman, 2006) explicitly duck the question of whether the eLearners are new students. Is eLearning just another example of the empire striking back, with traditional academe undermining attempts to widen access?

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## ODL on the International Agenda

At Laurentian my extracurricular activities within the Canadian Association of Distance Education and the Canadian Higher Education Research Network gave me a good overview of developments across Canada. In 1987 Prime Minister Brian Mulroney hosted both the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and the Sommet de la Francophonie. He intended to propose initiatives for the educational use of communication technologies to both gatherings and I was drawn into an informal group led by Canada's Department of Communications that advised on the presentation to the Commonwealth.

At the CHOGM, which was held in Vancouver, Mulroney's proposal was reviewed alongside a report from a group led by Lord Asa Briggs: Towards a Commonwealth of Learning. This had grown out of the work of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility which, worried by the impact of rising fees on the numbers of students from developing countries going overseas to study, wondered if modern technology could make it possible to move the courses rather than the students.

The upshot was a decision by the Heads of Government to create the Commonwealth of Learning. The UK's Margaret Thatcher was opposed to the creation of another intergovernmental body but India's Rajiv Gandhi supported it strongly and pledged a hard currency contribution, as did Brunei and Nigeria, so the developing world won the day. Exactly what the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) would be or do was left for later decision.

Shortly afterwards I was asked to chair a planning committee to put flesh on the bones of COL. We worked through 1988 and produced a Memorandum of Understanding that governments signed later in the year.

The fundamental question before the planning committee was whether COL would produce courses and offer them to Commonwealth countries through technologies such as satellites, or help countries to build up their own capacity for distance education. The committee chose the second option, strongly influenced by the international development agencies of Australia, Canada and the UK. These agencies were to provide the funding for COL and experience had made them sceptical about hi-tech educational systems for developing countries.

In the initial years the UK, reflecting Margaret Thatcher's scepticism about COL, supported it by funding services from the UKOU rather than by transferring funds to Vancouver, which had been chosen as the home of the organisation. As chairman I joined the other members of the planning committee in expressing disappointment with the UK's unilateral stance.

## Open as to people, places, methods and ideas

My criticism of the U.K.'s stance proved ironic because in 1989, when on leave from Laurentian University at a senior executive course in international affairs at the National Defence College of Canada, I was appointed vice-chancellor of the UKOU. On taking up the post in 1990 I found myself in receipt of the funds for supporting COL that I earlier thought should have gone directly to Vancouver!

The UKOU is an extraordinary institution – certainly among the most successful new organisations created in the 20th century – and leading it for 11 years was a thrilling task. Eighteen years earlier I had been an unpaid intern; now I had the top job. Such has been the numerical impact of the UKOU, and such the satisfaction it gives its students, that wherever I gave speeches, all over the world, people would pop up in the audience with warm testimonials to the quality of the institution.

The situation that I found at the UKOU on arrival in 1990 was almost the opposite of the challenge that had faced me at Athabasca a dozen years earlier. The UKOU was brilliant at consistent organisational follow-through but its self-confidence had suffered through the political vicissitudes in the late 1980s. My new colleagues were deeply suspicious of an imminent government review of its funding.

Being able to make international comparisons, I was perhaps more aware than they of the remarkable quality and value for money that the UKOU represented, so I insisted that we work openly and collaboratively with the review. We later discovered that the real purpose of the review was to help government decide how to position the UKOU in the major reform of UK higher education that was coming in 1992. This positioning proved highly favourable. First, the UKOU became effectively the only national university in a newly federal structure. Second, the creation of common funding and quality assurance mechanisms for all UK universities enabled the UKOU to leverage its cost-effectiveness and quality into a doubling of enrolments over the 1990s and a steady rise to fifth place in national rankings of teaching quality in the country's hundred universities by the early 2000s.

As part of my strategy of strengthening the UKOU's faith in its mandate and capabilities I reminded colleagues relentlessly of the inspiring mission articulated by its first chancellor, Lord Crowther: to be open as to people, open as to places, open as to methods and open as to ideas. Fidelity to this mission led the University to grow in numbers, to extend its reach to the rest of Europe and beyond, to embrace the online world, and to lead higher education in the adoption of concepts such as foundation degrees and national vocational qualifications.

> *For me this is the perfect job, combining as it does distance education, international development and institutional leadership. COL operates from the principles that development in all fields is largely a matter of learning; that traditional teaching methods cannot cope with the scale of the challenge; and that technology-mediated learning and ODL is a large part of the answer.*

In a highly effective and well-governed institution like the UKOU an important role for the leadership is to create room and resources for new initiatives that lack natural constituencies of support among the established faculties and schools. In this respect my riskiest decision was to persuade the Council in 1995 to invest about $25 million in fully embracing the Internet. Fortunately it paid excellent dividends as the faculties responded with enthusiasm and the Knowledge Media Institute, which was created as part of the package, rapidly acquired an international reputation. This meant that when the dotcom frenzy struck in 2000 the University was already exploiting online technology in a big way.

A decision that my successor came to regret was our establishment of the United States Open University in the late 1990s. The UKOU Council closed it in 2002 because by then the financial outlay and the time required to bring it to breakeven were both too great for comfort for a public-sector institution.

The interesting question is whether the US operation could have been brought to success if the UKOU had been in the private rather than the public sector. This touches on a wider interrogation about the profile of distance education in the future. I was lucky to begin a fascinating career just as the public sector displaced the private sector as the locus of the exciting developments in ODL. As my career draws to a close I suspect that the private sector is returning to the ascendant. Certainly private institutions will play a major role in the development of higher education in developing countries (Daniel, Kanwar & Uvalić-Trumbić, 2006) and some are gearing up to do this through distance learning.

Early in my time at the UKOU I completed the courses for a diploma in Theology by distance learning that I had begun at Laurentian University. Wishing to continue as a distance learner, I was about to enrol in a Law programme when my exasperated wife sat me down and told me firmly that if I wanted to be a student again I should finish the Educational Technology Master's degree that I began two decades earlier.

Concordia University, showing admirable broadmindedness once again, let me back in to the programme and the UKOU gave me a month's study leave. In a month in Montreal, which coincided exactly with the 1995 referendum campaign on Quebec sovereignty, I coined the term "mega-universities" and wrote a thesis about them which became my book *Mega-universities and Knowledge Media: Technology Strategies for Higher Education*. In 1996, 25 years after I had started, I graduated from the Concordia Master's programme. At that time I used to officiate at a dozen UKOU degree ceremonies each year and was able to comfort, by citing my own experience, graduates who felt they had taken too long to complete.

## Distance Education for Development

In 2001 my career took a new turn when I joined UNESCO as head of education. This took me away from distance education but plunged me into the challenges of education in the developing world. Job number one at UNESCO, then as now, was to help the world achieve Education for All. I took my second UKOU course, Third World Development, in order to learn more about it.

UNESCO was fascinating, and I learned much about how intergovernmental agencies work whilst assisting Director-General Matsuura in his attempts to reform an idealistic but somewhat dysfunctional organisation.

This experience was invaluable when another wheel came full circle in 2004 and I became president of the Commonwealth of Learning, the small intergovernmental agency that I had helped to plan in 1988. For me this is the perfect job, combining as it does distance education, international development and institutional leadership. COL operates from the principles that development in all fields is largely a matter of learning; that traditional teaching methods cannot cope with the scale of the challenge; and that technology-mediated learning and ODL is a large part of the answer.

This is not the place to go into detail about COL's work, which is described from many angles in my speeches (www.col.org/speeches). Suffice it to say that a small but extraordinarily talented staff of only 40 punch far above their weight in helping the developing countries of the Commonwealth to develop policies, systems, models and materials for expanding and improving learning through technology.

## Conclusion

By following the thread of distance education wherever it led me I have been blessed with a thoroughly engaging and enjoyable career. Those beginning a career in the field today will face fresh challenges and different opportunities. My advice to young practitioners is fourfold. First, be clear about the values that underpin your work. Second, pay less attention to technology, which will continue to evolve, than to new ways of doing things. For my generation the great innovation was the course team. For the next I suspect that it will be open educational resources. Research in how best to convert OERs to credit-bearing courses will repay dividends.

Third, be alert to developments in both the public and private sectors, which are moving closer together. Finally, I urge you to follow your own convictions without worrying too much about what others think. A constant feature of my own professional trajectory was that whenever I moved on, colleagues at the institution I was leaving thought I was mad and warned me against putting my career at risk and my happiness in jeopardy. They were all proved wrong!

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