1994 - 2014

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia
Information and Communications Technology as a Change Agent for Higher Education

By Uma Coomaraswamy

This is an edited version of the Keynote presentation delivered by Prof. Uma Coomaraswamy at the Regional Workshop on ICT Leadership in Higher Education at Kandy, Sri Lanka, organized by Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) and Open University of Sri Lanka for the senior leaders of Sri Lanka and the region.

How is the World of Higher Education Changing?

The nature of work and expectations about the role of higher education and the basis of the role of graduates in economic life are changing as a result of:

- Knowledge society;
- Increasing uncertainty;
- ICT revolution;
- High performance workplaces;
- Globalization; and
- Change of the economic structure.

Universities are expected to produce versatile and engaging graduates with multidisciplinary knowledge and many capabilities. Universities have a commitment to equip graduates with 21st century skills, i.e. a set of essential skills that qualified graduates must possess in order to survive and work in this digital age. 21st Century Learning Outcomes Project has identified eight clusters of such skills (Table 1).

Understanding the student body and how they learn, the different trends on the labor market and its efforts on the skills that graduates need to have in order to stay employable is only the first piece of the puzzle.

In order to make use of this knowledge we need to understand the features of higher education that enables students (graduates-to-be) to develop these skills. The major shift in higher education is from instructional paradigm to learning paradigm with the driver in this transformation of education being advances in ICTs. Increasingly aspects of teaching and learning are being mediated through ICTs, both on- and off-campus.

The character of higher education (HE) is also changing. Delivery of HE is changing both in perception and implementation. Research and developments from distance educators, such as practitioners of Open Universities, are now setting the agenda for ICT use in HE in general. Thanks to the global reach of Internet based technologies, virtual education now occupies a point beyond distance at one end of the continuum from distance to F2F, while at the other, flexible, blended and distributed learning which incorporate elements of tutor mediated or self-directed, resource based, online

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**Table 1: 21st Century Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology Skills</th>
<th>Acquiring computer literacy and internet skills retrieving and managing information via technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>Reading, writing, speaking, listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computation Skills</td>
<td>Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning, analyzing and using mathematical data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills</td>
<td>Evaluating, analysis, synthesis, decision making, creative thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Management Skills</td>
<td>Collecting, analyzing and organizing information from variety of sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td>Developing teamwork, relationship management, conflict resolution and workplace skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Skills</td>
<td>Understanding self, managing change, learning to learn, taking personal responsibilities, understanding aesthetic responsiveness and wellness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Skills</td>
<td>Building ethical, citizenship, diversity/pluralism and local community, global and environmental awareness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learning feature in the life of most campus situations. Many traditional universities of the developed world are adapting a blended learning approach, that is, merging of face-to-face (F2F) and technology mediated learning.

Primary focus of this guest column is on the use of ICT on teaching and learning. However ICT has impacted on every aspect of operations of universities. What might be a new paradigm of higher education?

Knowledge production is the central issue of what teaching and learning is; thus the focus of learning is on ‘creating, producing’ knowledge to an experience that brings students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves and take responsibility for their own learning (student-centred) in the learning paradigm.

Hence responsibility is a ‘Win Win’ game where in two agents (teacher and student) take responsibility for the same outcome though neither is in complete control of all the variables. Measurement of success is often based on inputs and processes in the instructional paradigm.

On the other hand success is measured by student learning and success outcomes and quality of exiting students in the learning paradigm (Kelly, 2003). The shift from the ‘instructional paradigm’ to ‘learning paradigm’ creates tremendous pressure for change on all components of the educational system and practices. It has a profound implication for what is taught, how teachers teach, how it is learned, how students are tested and how HE institutions are structured. This has significant implications in changes for educational policy.

Reaching the goal of the learning paradigm will require the integration of several critical approaches:

- Ultimate goal is a transition to student centred communities which can be achieved with student centred technology.
- Transitioning to student centred technology will require transformational faculty development
- Transformational development must be coupled with the institutional change
- Course management system will be a critical enabling force driving the institutional change.

Putting learning at the heart of academic enterprise will mean overhauling the

### Box: Typical learning environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of content delivered online</th>
<th>Type of course</th>
<th>Typical description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Course with no online technology used - content is delivered in writing or orally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 29%</td>
<td>Web facilitated</td>
<td>Course which uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. Might use black board or WebCT to post the syllabus and assignments, for example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 79%</td>
<td>Blended/Hybrid</td>
<td>Course that is a blend of the online and face-to-face course. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically has some face-to-face meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+ %</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>A course where the vast bulk of the content is delivered online. Typically has no face-to-face meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Virtual</td>
<td>Fully online.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the developing world so far ICT has been introduced into conventional systems largely as a supplement to existing teaching and learning practices. There is still much to be done in terms of exploiting ICT for rich pedagogical uses, (ie. enhanced forms of teaching and learning) and for serving learners in different target groups.

Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Queensland, in 2004, posed a question — will universities become extinct in the networked world? He argued “that present traditional approaches based on conventional classroom teaching and learning and a hierarchical bureaucratic academic structure would not be capable of meeting the escalating demand of HE in the knowledge society and that the universities must therefore adapt or face the fate of dinosaurs”.

**Paradigm Shift in Higher Education**

Education is seen as the macro term which includes the concepts teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are inherently intertwined. The move towards an information economy and knowledge society necessitates a change in the approach to teaching and learning. Major shift has been from the centuries old model of ‘instructional paradigm’ (knowledge adoption era) to ‘learning paradigm’ (knowledge production era).

In its briefest form in *instructional paradigm*, teacher was the ‘sage on the stage’, and primary source of knowledge (teacher-centred) transferring it to students, whereas in the *learning paradigm* teacher facilitates the learning process as a ‘guide on the side’.
conceptual procedural curricula and other architecture of university education.

Hastening the potential for that overhaul was the emergence of ICT as a change agent. While the role of the teacher first shifted from ‘teaching’ to ‘learning facilitation’ — the later shift is towards ‘facilitated and supported enquiry’. The contemporary educational paradigms focus not only on the production of knowledge, but are beginning to focus more and more on the effective application/integration/manipulation of existing information and knowledge.

**ICT as a Change Agent: the main driver of the paradigm shift**

The first revolution relating to education came with the invention of written language which meant that for the first time people could store information and retrieve it without needing to rely on memory.

The second revolution that occurred in the middle of the 15th century came with the invention of Guttenberg’s printing press. With this revolution information in books and pamphlets could be disseminated much more widely and quickly.

The 3rd revolution brought about by ICT which embraces many technologies for capturing, interpreting, storing and transmitting information, is accelerating the dissemination of information and knowledge.

Throughout much of the 20th century efforts were made to introduce new technologies into teaching and learning. Information and communications technology (ICT) is increasingly utilized by higher education institutions worldwide. ICT is emerging as a part of on-campus delivery as well as open and distance modalities of higher education delivery.

In Asian countries, higher education institutions have been using both low and high technologies, and many that have been using low technologies such as analogue broadcast radio and television and print have been gradually moving in tandem with the evolution of technologies, i.e. from analogue to the digital realm using the Internet, the WWW and developing multimedia.

The advent of the Internet and the transformation of information into digital format and later emergence of newer technologies such as wiki, blogs, podcasts, and mobile telephones have also begun to influence many institutions (ADB, 2012). With the introduction of each new technology bold claims have been made about significant impact they would have on the education system. Each new technology came to be incorporated into the traditional form of instruction but always on the margin and the educational systems remained fundamentally unchanged (Kozma, 2011).

The impact of ICT on learning is currently discussed almost entirely in relation to the use of new technologies. These new technologies are significantly more powerful than the previous technologies; the power of the term comes from the convergence of the ever increasing information processing capabilities of computers and the information exchange capabilities of networks.

Whereas the old technologies are capable of distributing information in various forms, the new technologies fit with the education system that is tuned to knowledge creation and that is aligned with the emerging technological, economic and social paradigm which demand a very different response from the educational system, one more oriented to the information economy and knowledge society.

Within this paradigm, the multimedia capabilities of computers provide students with personalized instruction and interactive animations, games and simulations that can make complex concepts and systems more understandable. The interactive productive capabilities of ICTs allow both teachers and students to engage in collaborative projects and investigate and generate their own knowledge products. The networking capability of ICTs allows both teachers and students to work with distant collaborators, participate in knowledge building communities and access outside mentors, experts, scientists and business people. In addition knowledge resources and productive capabilities are available on an ‘anywhere’, ‘anytime’ basis inside and outside the institution. Thus, ICT enabled education will ultimately lead to democratization of education.

**Impact of ICT on Higher Education**

Education policy makers want to know the research findings that test the hype and bold claims of technology advocates. They want evidence to justify the significant financial investments that are needed to integrate ICT into the education system. They want to know if the use of ICTs makes a difference in teaching and learning. Many studies have been made to evaluate the educational impact of ICTs, i.e. inputs on students, classroom and institutions and outcomes. The new ICTs have made it possible to change institutional thinking about how instruction can be delivered, about who learns, how to learn and when and where they learn.

More and more institutions are using ICTs for many reasons:
- Improved student outcomes with regard to motivation, self-esteem, ICT skills, collaborative skills, subject knowledge, information handling skills, metacognitive skills, etc. and reputation for the programmes;
• Increased engagement in programmes on the part of both teachers and students;
• Increased retention and enrollment;
• Increased flexibility of delivery;
• Increased quality of learning and learner’s performance;
• Increased credibility with government, funding agencies stemming from the perception that uses of ICTs increase the institution’s ability to serve learners;
• New market niches;
• Facilitates changing the orientation of classroom of conventional systems into a learner-centred environment;
• Impact on open educational resources (OER) movement;
• Serves as a vehicle and a platform for meaningful educational reform geared toward a shift from didactic instructivism to constructivism.

ICTs have been used far beyond enhancing teaching and learning to include promoting research, scholarly community engagement and administration. Young (2002) describes the convergence of online and face-to-face instruction at several universities as the ‘single greatest unrecognized trend in higher education today’.

Factors influencing the use of ICT in Higher Education

A number of studies have shown that there are wide ranging factors which influence educator’s under-utilisation of ICT in their teaching and learning. The fundamental factors influencing the use of ICT in teaching learning have been identified by researchers: teacher’s attitudes, professional development of teachers, technical support, leadership support, pressure to use technology, institutional policies and support, e-readiness, access to resources, ease of use, incentives to change, and government policies and support.

Need for Organizational Change

To respond to taking advantages of the opportunities possible through ICT, policy makers need to make crucial changes. These outcomes do not emerge simply by introducing computers into the learning setting. An appropriate policy framework should cover the following:

• Use of ICTs to higher educational problems,
• Significant investment in training teachers and managers to change mindsets and increase their knowledge in ICT application to teaching and learning and in administration,
• Availability of qualified teachers and support staff,
• Funding for maintenance, and
• Access to Internet and upgrading is sustainable.

These conditions are rarely met especially in developing countries. Many argue that the potential impact of the implementation of ICT in higher education will not be observable without organizational change at the level of the whole system (Youssef and Dahmani, 2008). ICT should be integrated in the educational system. At present ICT integration remains sporadic without clear direction. Access to ICT by students and teachers has begun. Yet, its use supports traditional teaching rather than the shift to new roles and pedagogical practices. Too often the emphasis is on equipment than on opportunities for teachers to teach and experiment effectively.

Conclusion

There are massive benefits that can be derived from effective usage of ICT in HE. But there are intervening issues, conditions, and situational contexts that encourage or hinder effective use of technology in different settings, and therefore the impact that technology would have on different audiences. The impact of ICT on teaching and learning would therefore vary according to circumstances of a given case, and we should be weary of “one-size fits-all solutions”. ICT intervention meets an educational need and adds value to the educational activity.

HE in developing countries has to be innovative and leverage in the development of ICT to provide more accessible, affordable, efficient, and relevant quality HE. For those institutions who accept the challenge this will be an exciting adventure. For those who do not accept the challenge or perhaps do not believe that it is necessary to do so for the sake of our youth I suspect might be on their way to becoming ‘dinosaurs’.

Today’s job should be done with today’s tools. You can’t expect to meet the challenges of today with yesterday’s tools and expect to be in business tomorrow”.

References


Dr. Coomaraswamy is an Emeritus Professor of Botany and a former Vice Chancellor of Open University of Sri Lanka. The Commonwealth of Learning conferred the title of Honorary Fellow on her in 2008. She can be reached at umacoom[at]gmail[dot]com.
Higher Education Commission, Pakistan

By Manas Ranjan Panigrahi and Ankuran Dutta

The National Education Policy, Pakistan of 2009 (p.17) says ‘Our education system must provide quality education to our children and youth to enable them to realize their individual potential and contribute to development of society and nation, creating a sense of Pakistani nationhood, the concepts of tolerance, social justice, democracy, their regional and local culture and history based on the basic ideology enunciated in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.’

In Pakistan, 1,558 degree colleges and 135 universities are providing higher education of which about 74% degree colleges and 56% universities are under public sector. About 64,000 teachers are engaged in the higher education institutes of the country. To facilitate the institutes of higher learning to serve as an engine of growth for the socio-economic development of Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission has been established. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education in Pakistan is far below the world’s average. The President of Pakistan in a message visualised an enhancement from 2.6% to 5% of GER in higher education by 2009.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan is an independent, autonomous, and constitutionally established institution primarily for funding, overseeing, regulating, and accrediting the higher education efforts in Pakistan. Proceeded by the University Grant Commission of Pakistan in 2002 by a constitutional amendment, the universities were formerly accredited by the UGC established in 1947; the institution was revived in 1974 and came its modern form in 2002 with additional executive reforms granted by the constitution. Under the new and revised reform, the HEC is responsible for formulating higher education policy and quality assurance to meet the international standards as well as accrediting academic degrees, development of new institutions, and uplift of existing institutions in Pakistan.

The five-year agenda for reform was outlined in the HEC Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF), in which Access, Quality, and Relevance were identified as the key challenges faced by the sector. To address these challenges a comprehensive strategy was defined that identified the core strategic aims for reform as (i) Faculty Development, (ii) Improving Access, (iii) Excellence in Learning and Research, and (iv) Relevance to National Priorities. These strategic aims are supported by well-integrated cross-cutting themes for developing Leadership, Governance, and Management, enhancing Quality Assessment and Accreditation and Physical and Technological Infrastructure Development.

The HEC also facilitated the development of higher educational system in the country with main purpose of upgrading the 118 Universities and Institutions in the country to be focal point of the higher learning, research, and development. Over the several years, the HEC plays an important and leading role towards building a knowledge based economy in Pakistan by giving out hundreds of doctoral scholarships for education abroad every year.

Higher Education Commission dedicatedly carryout the many programmes for the proper development in the higher education sector. Main programmes of HEC are:

- Degree Attestation
- Faculty development
- Curriculum revision
- Higher education infrastructure development
- Indigenous scholarships
- Foreign scholarships
- Patent filing support
- Conference travel grants
- Increase industry and university research collaboration
- Developing new technology parks

2 http://www.hec.gov.pk/InsideHEC/AboutHEC/PresidentofPakistan/Pages/newmain.aspx
With regards to faculty development programme, scholarships have been awarded under the indigenous PhD programme, undertaking measures at each step of the process to ensure that international standards of quality are not compromised. Supervisors guiding the PhD scholars in the pursuit of research excellence are carefully screened to ensure they possess adequate teaching and research record. The foreign scholarship programmes have been geared towards improving the research base in areas of key national relevance where the requisite facilities are not available within Pakistan, particularly in areas relating to engineering, applied and pure sciences. Selected via an independent and rigorous screening process, PhD scholars have proceeded to Germany, France, Austria, Netherlands, Korea, and China. In addition, scholars have also been sent to premier research institutions in the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand. After years of sending scholars abroad, Pakistan has finally begun to see the return of scholars back to the country. During 2007, already more than 40 scholars have returned to take up positions in academia and research.

Higher Education Commission has developed a programme through which inventions (with appropriate supporting material) may be submitted for evaluation and potential awarding of a patent. HEC certifies that submission will remain completely confidential and no step will be taken without the consent of the inventors. In case an invention is determined to be patentable, the inventor will be encouraged to file for an international patent. Should it be decided that a patent would be filed, patent attorneys, supported by HEC assists in completing the process. It also encourages Pakistani industrial enterprises to work with academia in a 20-80 industry-university programme where HEC matches 4:1 funding provided by industry to work on a problem of interest to the industrial enterprise.

In order to improve the standard of higher education, HEC has established Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC) in all the public sector universities/institutions and private sector institutions. QECs have already been established in 69 institutions in four different phases. During 2010-11, another 24 public sector university/ institutions have been selected as next phase with aim that an independent and internally recognized system/process of internal audit/assessment could be initiated to improve the institutions and the quality programme/department.

The creation of HEC has had a positive impact on higher education in Pakistan.

- Established the finest Digital Library in Pakistan: Every student in every public sector university today has access to 50,000 textbooks research monographs from 220 international publishers as well as to 25,000 international research journals - regarded as one of the best digital libraries anywhere in the world.
- Increased University enrolment.
- Promoted research, resulting in huge expansion of international research publications from Pakistan.
- Four year undergraduate programme introduced so that degrees are internationally recognized.
- About 5000 Ph.D. level scholarships awarded for study in technologically advanced countries (largest programme in developing world) and some 3,000 indigenous Ph.D. scholarships have been awarded. The world’s largest Fulbright Scholarship programme (US $ 150 million) launched with joint funding (HEC/ USAID).
- Seven Pakistan universities became ranked for the first time among the top 250 universities of Asia according to QS World University Rankings 2013.
- Research output out of Pakistan increased by over 50% within two years, which was the second highest increase worldwide. According to Scimago world scientific database, if Pakistan continues at the same pace, its ranking will increase from 43 to 27 globally by 2017.

As a consequence of a focused attention to higher education along with consistent policies and financial support of the Government of Pakistan, the higher education sector in Pakistan has a new occupancy on life. Enrolment along with research output is growing rapidly and universities/institutions of higher education in Pakistan are becoming repositories of knowledge focused on the dissemination and creation of new knowledge with the support of Higher Education Commission, Pakistan.


EduComm Asia acknowledges Ms. Zia Batool (ziabatool@yahoo(dot)com), Director General – QA, Higher Education Commission, Islamabad for reviewing this write-up sourced from HEC website by Dr. Panigrahi (mpanigrahi[at]col[dot]org) and Dr. Dutta (adutta[at]col[dot]org), both programme officers at CEMCA, New Delhi.
Ten Platforms for Audio Sharing

1. **Sound Cloud, https://soundcloud.com**
   SoundCloud is the world’s one of the leading social sound platforms where anyone can create sounds and share them everywhere. It can be accessed anywhere using the iPhone and Android apps, as well as hundreds of creation and sharing apps built on the SoundCloud platform.

   Podbean is an online podcast-publishing service that provides free and premium hosting packages for individuals and businesses. It offers a user-friendly interface that integrates publishing, management, syndication and analysis tools into an easy to use podcasting package.

   Chirbit is a useful and fun tool that enables any individual to record, upload and share voice or audio files easily.

   The Internet Archive is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Internet library. Its purposes include offering permanent access for researchers, historians, scholars, people with disabilities, and the general public to historical collections that exist in digital format.

5. **Ourmedia, http://ourmedia.org/**
   Ourmedia is an internet project, which is a digital archive in collaboration with the Internet Archive lasting provides storage space for text, images, audio files, videos and other media present in digital form.

   PodOmatic is a website specialized in the creation of tools and services that enable users to easily find, create, distribute, promote and listen to both audio and video podcasts.

   Buzzsprout is the best way to create and publish a podcast online, in iTunes or on the individual website and it is very user friendly.

   YourListen is the first user generated music and audio content platform of its kind. The users can upload, listen, search, sell, share, download and store any audio and music files.

   Audiofarm helps any individual to broadcast audio files and connect with other people. It’s one of the easiest ways to find new and interesting music, audio recordings, people and friends from around the world.

10. **Audiobase, https://audibase.com/**
    Audiobase is a lightweight Windows application that allows to organise, catalogue and keep track of an individual’s physical music collection (CDs, LPs, tapes, etc). Audiobase is also a portable application.
CEMCA News

CEMCA Study Tour to Malaysia

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre of Asia (CEMCA) has been supporting study tour opportunities to senior and middle level teachers and policy makers to understand the best practices followed by other Open Universities of the Commonwealth Asia. Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak, Vice Chancellor, Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University, Prof Manjulika Srivastava, Professor of Distance Education, Distance Education Bureau, University Grants Commission and Dr Binod Kumar Bhadri, Assistant Education Advisor, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India visited Malaysia between 17 - 21 March, 2014. CEMCA planned and organized the tour for the team to visit the Open University Malaysia (OUM), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), Kuala Lumpur, and Wawasan Open University (WOU), Penang. The main objectives of this study tour were to understand the functioning of the two major open universities and to find out the role of Malaysian Qualifications Agency in assuring quality of all Higher Education Institutions, including the ODL practices in Malaysia.

CEMCA-EDAA Awards

In order to enhance the level of participation of Community Radio stations on the Ek Duniya Anek Awaz (EDAA) content exchange platform, CEMCA in partnership with One World instituted “EDAA Awards for Knowledge Sharing”. The first award for all-time top contributor (as on 31st August 2013) was announced on 1st September 2013 which also marked the 5 years of EDAA. In this context, Radio Benziger by contributing 234 programmes received the top award for knowledge sharing.

A total of seven Community Radio stations were recognized for regularly sharing of radio programmes on EDAA portal from September 2013 to March 2014. The awarded stations are: Radio Media Village, Radio Rimjhim, MSPICM CR, Vayalaga Vanoli, Radio Benziger, NIVH Hello Doon and Shyamalavani. Another award for stations contributing highest number of programmes during August 2013 – March 2014 was given to Radio Rimjhim for sharing more than 1400 programmes with Community Radio stations.

OER4D Project Initiated

Under the IDRC supported “Research on Open Educational Resources for Development” (ROER4D), Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) has initiated the project entitled ‘Teachers’ Attitudes, Motivations, and Conceptions of Quality and Barriers to OER in India’. This research project attempts to understand teacher’s psychological and behavioral determinants that may influence why some teacher share their educational materials and some other do not.

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director of CEMCA is the Principal Investigator of this project. Dr. Atul Thakur and Ms. Meenu Sharma are Research Associates. The research team has developed a communication website for the project (http://roer.cemca.org.in). Research associates also participated in online discussions on question harmonization organized by University of Cape Town team. Review of related literature has been completed and the team is now focusing on development of research tools.
Pilot Online Programme on OER-Based eLearning

Research Initiated for Sustainable Community Radio

CEMCA in collaboration with Ideosync Media Combine and UNESCO initiated a participatory research process to explore the parameters that impact the sustainability of Community Radio in the South Asia.

Under this research initiative, selected CR Stations from India, Bangladesh and Nepal will participate to gather data to provide evidence based approach to sustainable Community Radio.

Ideosync Media Combine organized two workshops (one to validate the research design and the other to train community researchers) on 16 May, 2014 and 5 June 2014 at Faridabad, NCR of India. Eight CR stations from India, two from Bangladesh and two from Nepal were selected using purposive sampling methodology and based on recommendations from key CR networks of these countries to participate in the study and the workshop. The initiative undertook a desk research to study existing materials and international literature on ideas and understanding around sustainability of community radio with a special focus on South Asia. Ideosync Media Combine designed a participatory research methodology to work with selected CR Stations in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Findings of the study would be available in March, 2015.

Staff News

Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi joined CEMCA as Programme Officer (Education) in May 2014. Before joining CEMCA he served in the Department of Educational Planning and Management, College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Haramaya University, Ethiopia, East Africa as Associate Professor in Education from 2010-2014. Dr. Panigrahi has also served IGNOU, NCERT; and Manav Rachna International University, amongst others in different capacities.

We at CEMCA and COL welcome Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi and look forward to his contributions to serve our stakeholder better.
Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) organised a workshop on e-Content Development for Virtual Open Schooling (VOS) for the academic staff of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) from 26-27 May, 2014 at NIOS, Noida.

With the support of CEMCA, the NIOS launched the Virtual Open Schooling (VOS) to serve diverse group of learners with access to Internet. Under the VOS, the learners get the opportunity to study a formal school-based course online and gain credit for certification purpose. Learners can study using asynchronously or synchronously technologies provided in the VOS platform. The VOS platform uses the power of Wiki, Learning Management System and two way video conferences on the web. The platform is based Open Source software, and NIOS has developed internal capacity to manage the platform on its own. However, the academic staff need to develop course to be offered on the platform, and therefore the two days training programme was held. Twenty-three academic staff of NIOS attended the workshop.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr. Sitansu S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS, who shared the experience of NIOS on VOS initiatives. Addressing about issues of offering online courses, Dr. Jena told that there is need to change the present course structure and the course has to be credit-based.

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Curriculum Development for Flexible Skill Training

CEMCA assisted Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU), Chennai to align its vocational courses to the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). The University organised a workshop on curriculum development for flexible skill training from 26-28 May 2014 in Chennai to consult the experts from National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Sector Skill Councils, subject matter experts and educational technologists to review its courses. As per the NSQF, all educational providers need to align its courses by 2018 and use the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for skill development in different domains. The TNOU has taken a lead in this direction to make its courses more relevant and appropriate for its learners and improve the employability of its graduates.

The curricula developed by TNOU will have appropriate inputs for technology enabled blended learning designs that can be used by other Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions in the country.

Tutor Training Workshop on Community Radio Technology

CEMCA in collaboration with Gauhati University and Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL) organised a five-days intensive capacity building workshop for the potential tutor-counsellor of CCRT course from 16-20 June, 2014 at Guwahati, India. A total of 37 participants attended the workshop.

Mr. Y.K. Sharma, Mr. Khuswinder Singh Bhatia, Mr. Pankaj Giri and Mr. Raghvendra Singh from BECIL served as Resource Persons. Dr. Ankuran Dutta of CEMCA facilitated the workshop. Prof. Kandarpa Das, Director, IDOL, Gauhati University coordinated this five day intensive workshop for CCRT tutor-counsellors.
MAJOR MILESTONES
OF CEMCA (1994-2014)

Achievements
- Thought leadership in educational technology innovations and practices
- Over 110 Community Radio stations in India supported
- Over 6500 individuals received capacity building opportunities
- Learning materials released as Open Educational Resources (OER) in timely, appropriate and emerging areas
- Institutional partnership fostered in Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka

- Developed Models and Frameworks for quality assurance of educational multimedia, OER, Community Radio station, and promoted innovative use of low-cost technologies (e.g. MedLive, EasyNew, Web Radio, Virtual Open Schooling (VOS))
- Provided policy support to Government ministries and public institutions in Commonwealth Asia
- Collaborated with UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, Ford Foundation, British Council, IDRC, etc.

1994
- Mr. K. Narayanan joined as first employee

1995
- First workshop on production of audio-video programme held at Pune
- CEMCA started publishing a newsletter titled EduComAsia
- Educational video database project initiated

1998
- Host country agreement signed between COL and Govt. of India for recognizing CEMCA
- CEMCA organized workshop on "Internet and Education" at IGNOU
- Regional workshop on Instructional Design organized at Open University of Sri Lanka

1999
- Govt. of India notified CEMCA as an international agency with privileges and immunities applicable to UN agencies
- Workshop on Instructional Design organized at Open University of Sri Lanka

2000
- Workshop on Multimedia Courseware for Distance Education organized at Open University of Sri Lanka
- International Symposium on Collaboration on ODL organized at IGNOU

2001
- Workshop on e-Learning organized at Calcutta
- Workshop on Multimedia Courseware for Distance Education organized at Bangladesh Open University

2002
- CEMCA started serving as South Asia node for Global Distance Education Network (GDENE)

2003
- ICT and media training programme for women journalists in South Asia held at IAMC under "Education Makes News" project of UNESCO

2005
- Teleconferencing toolkit released

2008
- Series of interviews on "Civil Paths to Peace" with Prof. Amartya Sen released
- 1st Regional Consultation on Community Radio awareness organized at Lucknow
- Quality assurance of educational multimedia started
- 1st exploratory workshop on Science for Women organized at New Delhi

2009
- Multimedia resource for special needs education released in Hindi and Bangla

2010
- CEMCA started promoting Open Educational Resources

2011
- CEMCA organized the 1st National CR Sammelan on behalf of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India

2013
- ICT Leadership in Higher Education workshop organized at Hyderabad

2014
- CEMCA Community Radio Facilitation Centre received support from Ford Foundation
- Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit (CR-CIT) version 1 released

IDRC supported research project on OER started
With the belief that Policy, Technology and Capacity are three pillars of any effective organization, CEMCA has been engaged with institutional leaders for appropriate policy development. The Regional Workshop on ICT Leadership in Higher Education was organized by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), in association with the Open University of Sri Lanka at Kandy from 6-7 June 2014.

The workshop in Kandy was organized for the Vice Chancellors of Sri Lankan universities. Some other leaders from India and Bangladesh also participated in the event. Inaugurating the event, Mr S.B. Dissanayake, honourable Minister for Higher Education, Sri Lanka urged the participating Vice Chancellors and leaders in higher education to focus on improving student learning through the use of appropriate information and communication technology. Prof. Ranjith Senarathne, Vice Chairman, UGC, Sri Lanka emphasized the role of ICT in improving Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER). The workshop focused on development of appropriate policies for use of ICTs in the universities, OER policies, and developing institutional strategies for open, distance and online learning. Prof. Uma Coomaraswamy, Former Vice Chancellor of OUSL and Honorary Fellow, COL delivered the Keynote address on ICT as Change agent to set the tone of the workshop. Participating leaders discussed, and worked individually and in groups to equip themselves with better understanding to lead from the front in their respective institutions to use ICT for teaching, learning, research and administration.

The next edition of the event will be organized for select Vice Chancellors of Bangladesh in 2014-15.

ICT shall help sharpen thinking

By S B Dissanayake

Minister for Higher Education, Government of Sri Lanka

I am pleased to be here with you today, as the Chief Guest, at the occasion of inaugurating the Workshop on ICT Leadership in Higher Education. Let me thank the organisers for their efficient organizational skills and commitment. Let me also thank the Commonwealth Education Media Centre for Asia, for its continuous support extended to the Open University of Sri Lanka.

Integrating Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education is highly challenging, especially in the higher education sector. While there are several factors for successful integration of ICTs in teaching and learning, strong leadership support and institutional commitment play significant role. Leadership has been regarded as a critical component in successful ICT integration in education. While distributed leadership and shared responsibility are necessary, to sustain any innovation and implementation of technology plan, in higher education, the vision of leadership with reference to ICTs become important in taking initiatives, and develop action plan for implementation. A successful ICT leader in education should be able to lead from the front to not only give vision, but also to manage change and influence major stakeholders to buy in. With this background the present initiative intends to engage with the Vice Chancellors in Universities in Asia, over the three years, during the current plan.

As I understood the main objectives of this programme are to create awareness of ICT integration in teaching and learning, it will sensitize institutional leaders about the importance of developing technology master plan. Within this framework some of the more specific objectives of the programme, intend to address are to provide a platform for institutional leaders, to discuss issues related to use of ICTs in teaching, and learning in higher education; and assist the participant leaders to develop strategic plan and roadmap, for ICT application in all activities of the university.

The expected outcomes of this deliberation as I was told, are for Universities to develop strategic plans for ICT use in teaching and learning, informed leadership in higher education institutions, and to drive implementation of technology plan, and integration of ICTs in teaching and learning in a more a systematic way.

However let me caution you, on the use of ICT in higher education. Consider ICT as an enabling technique to speed up, and organize your educational programmes. Don’t consider the ICT as your master, as my own conviction it is only a tool to assist you, but don’t allow it to control you. The ultimate impact of the technology is that it should be able to sharpen the thinking process of the user in this event, the teachers and students of our university system.

Thank you.
Case Study

Technology Based Delivery of Skills Training
Changing Lives in Bangladesh

By Shahnewaz Khan

Introduction

Bangladesh is predominantly an agriculture-based developing country having a population of approximately 160 million, living in 147,570 square kilometers. Here, the informal economy plays a vital role by creating jobs and contributing to total economic output of the country and has sizeable impact on the national economy as a whole. In Bangladesh, a labor force of around 49.5 million in size is involved in either the formal or the informal sectors. Of them, about 88% of the workers are employed in the informal vertical of the economy. The highest concentrations of workers in the informal economy (92%) are located in the rural areas and are engaged in the agricultural sector. The seasonal uncertainties of the agriculture scenario of Bangladesh leave the employment of this workforce highly volatile and susceptible to unemployment and hunger for a considerable period in a year. Adverse effect of climate change, mismanagement of natural resources and the massive pressure of a huge unskilled population on a limited amount of land forces Bangladesh to stay in the back foot in its fight against poverty.

Despite the fact that the informal economy is growing at a rapid rate, Bangladesh’s workforce is still deprived of opportunities to develop their skills and potentials. People of all ages and locations, especially in the remote and non-accessible areas of Bangladesh are being deprived of their rights to be trained up through conventional vocational skills training institutions of the country. Most of the poor people, especially women cannot afford to get training from formal skills training centers due to physical distance of the training institutions from their locality as well as due to their poor economic conditions and social barriers.

TVET Programmes in Bangladesh

At present the vocational and technical skills development courses are being offered by various vocational training institutes, polytechnics and private training providers. Nevertheless, present capacity of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system of Bangladesh in terms of resources, expertise and experience is inadequate considering the increasing need, scope and population it needs to address. Existing TVET mainly serves young males who have completed at least the eighth grade of education, overlooking the rights of millions of Bangladeshis who cannot survive in the education system up to grade VIII. It is estimated that around 40% of the total labor force in Bangladesh lacks any form of education and possesses little or no skills at all.

Need for a New Strategic Intervention

It is acknowledged that skills development cannot be the responsibility of the formal system of TVET alone. Scope should be widened to make provision for acquiring skills through all levels of education and training, occurring in formal, non-formal, informal and on-the-job-settings. There should be a wide range of modalities of delivery, organizational and institutional mechanism to address the needs of diverse clientele for developing livelihood skills. This concern has been reflected in the Bangladesh national skills development policy 2009, which stated that ‘To more effectively manage its human resources, and develop an integrated approach for skills development, there is a need to think beyond state controlled TVET system and emphasis must be given on the varied types of formal and non-formal training through which skills are developed’. To create alternative provisions of vocational

1 http://www.swisscontact.org.bd/inner.php?Title=35
skills training in rural areas in line with the spirit of Bangladesh government’s commitment towards use of ICT in the educational purpose, the delivery of livelihood skills training through technology based approach is an appropriate alternative to produce huge number of skilled human resource in Bangladesh.

Innovations in Skills Training

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), since its inception in 1958 has focused on education, and has been operating various non-formal education programmes for different groups of people. In addition to its formal skills development courses, DAM has been implementing skills development training through non-formal delivery approach and developed a series of booklets on skills enhancement and income generation.

Banking on DAM’s experience of developing literacy and skills training materials over several decades, in 2012 with the support from Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the Center for International Education and Development (CINED) of DAM has developed a skills development training package for use in the livelihood skills training. The package was developed for youths, women and men having limited reading skills and those who have never had the opportunity to participate in any formal skills training programmes.

With the heading ‘Let’s Work and Build Our Lives’ 5 pictorial and instructional booklets and 5 animation videos (each of 15 minutes duration) have been developed on 5 topics. The vocational trades covered under this series are: Flower Gardening, Poultry Rearing, Batik Print, Vermi Compost and Nursery. A systematic step by step process was followed for development of the booklets and animation videos. All booklets of this series follow an easy to understand language to describe entire cycle from production to marketing along with a guideline for self-assessment. DAM developed guidelines for the facilitator’s who are willing to use this package material for organizing skills training. This packaged material can be used as self-learning materials by anyone, at any time and from anywhere. Colorful booklets and animation videos were designed to bring excitement in the learning process, encouraging learners to read the booklets and watch the videos as many times as they require. For wider replication of this innovative delivery approach in other countries, an English version of the 5 animation videos and the 5 booklets has been prepared with support from COL.

Delivery Approach

Utilizing the strengths of Open, Distance and Flexible Learning (ODFL) this package has introduced a technology based delivery approach for livelihood skills training. This approach is a combination of watching videos and reading booklets individually or in a group guided by a local facilitator using different delivery platforms. Community Learning Centers (CLC) or local clubs having audio-visual facility are arranging skills training programme with support of this package materials for the delivery of skills training for anyone who is interested in a community. To get access
to the people of the remotest areas, Mobile Library Van is also being used as a delivery platform to provide skills training.

For wider application of this innovative livelihood skills training materials, CINED took the initiative to utilize the effective delivery mode of Community Radio for dissemination of the messages of skills training. To enhance the capacity and motivation of the community radios to develop and transmit audio contents on livelihood skills, CINED has organized a workshop in cooperation with Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) / Commonwealth of Learning (COL).

Technical training institutes located in different parts of Bangladesh lacking competency based trade curriculum, skilled instructors and necessary equipment for providing practical training are now recognizing this livelihood skills training package as very useful resource for their training.

To further popularize the skills training package, as well as disseminate good practices of small entrepreneurs of the country, a partnership has been established with a national daily newspaper “Alokito Bangladesh”. Under this partnership a unit has been established in CINED in the name of “Small Entrepreneurs Support Unit” (SESU) with a helpline number so that anyone can call and get proper guidance and advice to start and upgrade small enterprises or identify job opportunities in the market. A website has been launched (www.alokitobangladesh.com/ sesu) where anyone can read and download booklets and animation videos as well as success stories of small entrepreneurs and useful information and publications on skills development.

Through this combined delivery approach, innumerable number of unemployed urban and rural youths, women and men are developing their home-based small businesses for economic self-reliance. After a colorful launching ceremony in February 2013, so far 2065 persons of whom 1589 are female received training through this newly developed skills training package. Most of the trainees are members of rural communities and received training on one or more trades. After receiving training, so far, 490 female and 168 male trainees have taken initiative to start their own small enterprises. They are now at different stages of operating small businesses. Many individuals upon receiving information regarding this skills training package through website and other publicity measures are collecting this package from DAM and developing small enterprise irrespective of age and sex.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission through its field offices in 46 districts are popularizing this package and have made it available in the District, Upazila and Village levels. This skills training packages are being sent through currier services on demand.

Conclusion

Developing training materials for people with limited reading skills on livelihood issues is a very difficult job, especially when it comes to narrating the production process. But it is observed that animation videos are very effective in demonstrating the process which is otherwise difficult to visualize. People who received training through this package highly appreciated the innovative and effective delivery methods of the skills training. Although the production of animation videos are time consuming and costly, they are very effective and enjoyable for the people in the remote and rural areas where there is no skilled trainer and institutional arrangements for skills training.

Mr. Khan is the Chief Executive Officer at Center for International Education and Development (CINED), Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Dhaka, Bangladesh and he can be reached at shahnewazbd03[dot]gmail[dot]com

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Internship Available

CEMCA offers internship to graduate and post-graduate students to gain work experience in the area of CEMCA’s field of competence and enhance their academic knowledge through practical work assignments. Internships are available for 2-6 months, and should be part of the learning and development plan of the candidate. For details visit Knowledge Management page at CEMCA Website.
Regional Round Up

2nd Regional Symposium on Open Educational Resources

OER-Asia organised the 2nd Regional Symposium on Open Educational Resources: Beyond Advocacy, Research and Policy at Wawasan Open University (WOU), Penang, Malaysia from 24-27 June, 2014.

Prof. Ho Sinn Chye, Vice Chancellor of WOU, Penang welcomed all the participants in the opening ceremony. Ms. Ng Wan Peng, Chief Operating Officer, Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC), Malaysia, presided over the opening ceremony and appreciated the initiative of WOU. She informed that technology can bring change in the development of education in Malaysia in particular and Asia in general. At the end of the opening ceremony Tan Sri Dato’ Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan, Convenor of the symposium, in his closing remarks, enumerated why it is a symposium and not a seminar. Further he emphasised on the importance of OER and objectives of the symposium. In the four day symposium participants from 20 different countries participated. Five keynote speakers and 19 papers were presented in five sub-themes i.e. collaboration, impact, content, innovation and quality of Open Educational Resources. Each session was quite interesting with strong and significant discussions. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) supported the event by facilitating participation of delegates, while CEMCA supported the participation of Prof. V.S Prasad, Keynote Speaker on Quality of OER.

COL President delivers Ram Reddy Memorial Lecture

Professor Asha Kanwar, President and CEO of Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Vancouver delivered the 19th Professor G. Ram Reddy Memorial Lecture on 2nd July, 2014 at the Convention Centre of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. In the memory of Professor G. Ram Reddy, IGNOU has been organizing a lecture series since 2nd July, 1996. The topic of the 19th lecture was ‘Open Universities in the Time of MOOCs: Reaching the Unreached’. Presiding over this prestigious memorial lecture, Professor M. Aslam, Vice Chancellor of IGNOU gave an overview of how IGNOU is serving all sections of the society through open and distance learning.

While delivering the 19th Ram Reddy Memorial Lecture, Professor Asha Kanwar remembered Professor Reddy as a visionary who spoke of equity and social justice long before he inaugurated the notion of open education in India. Enumerating the importance of the OER and MOOC, Professor Kanwar said ‘the MOOC effect is unexpected in some sense. 270, 000 people signed up for the Computer Science (CS) course offered by Udacity which is much larger than the total number of learners who aspire to do CS courses in nearly 3000 degree granting institutions in the USA’. Justifying the increasing need of MOOC in the Open University system, Professor Kanwar stated ‘It is significant that universities are investing in MOOCs to lead innovations in teaching and learning. This is an important and welcome development as the focus is on good teaching rather than only on research’.

Dr P Prakash, Pro Vice Chancellor, IGNOU delivered the welcome address and the Registrar, Sh. J Ernest Samuel Ratnakumar proposed the vote of thanks in the event. Srimati Pramila Ram Reddy, spouse of Late Prof. Ram Reddy was also present along with a huge gathering of academia in this event.
Women and Leadership in Open and Distance Learning and Development


By Trisha D. Baruah

Asha Kanwar, Frances Ferreira and Colin Latchem (Eds), in their book, ‘Women and Leadership in Open and Distance Learning and Development’ clearly and eloquently demonstrates that women’s leadership is a critical step in promoting gender equality. The book is a compilation of articles by twelve remarkable women who have made a mark for themselves in the field of open and distance learning in the society. The book has been divided into three parts with each part dealing with an underlying theme of open and distance learning. The book basically deals with three aspects of ODL - women and leadership in Open and Distance Higher Education, Open Schooling, and in Open and Distance Non-Formal Education and Development.

First part of the book has laid emphasis on the importance of Women and Leadership in the field of Open and Distance Higher Education with inspirational inputs provided by Caroline Seelig, Abtar Kaur, Brenda Gourley and Denise Bradley. Caroline Seelig, the Chief Executive of New Zealand’s leading distance learning provider, the Open Polytechnic, pens down her thoughts about being a leader; Abtar Kaur, a professor in the Faculty of Education and Languages at Open University Malaysia, describes her experience of becoming a leader in instructional design at an open university, and Brenda Gourley, a former Vice Chancellor of The Open University, in the UK, provides a lucid account about providing the necessary help to other women to become leaders. Denise Bradley, a former Vice Chancellor and President of the University of South Australia contributed the review chapter on the work and accomplishments of the aforementioned women achievers. Bradley has eulogised the achievements of the trio for being able to balance professional and personal work with ease and fortitude.

Second part of the book lays down emphasis on Women and Leadership in Open Schooling through the eyes of Lystra Sampson-Ovid, Sushmita Mitra, Lambertha Mahai and Cindy Gauthier. Lystra Sampson-Ovid, former Director of the Ministry of Education’s National Open School, Trinidad and Tobago and Sushmita Mitra, National Institute of Open Schooling, India talk about their experiences of being a leader in open education system while at the same time imploring the people to have a well-defined vision and to be prepared for the vagaries of politically charged environments. Lambertha Mahai, the former Director of the Institute of Adult Education, in Tanzania says that women need to develop greater self-confidence, set higher goals for themselves and pursue their dreams and ambitions. Cindy Gauthier, Principal of the Vancouver Learning Network, a distributed learning school with the Vancouver Board of Education, in British Columbia, Canada has contributed the review chapter where she outlined the fact that family support, hard work and role models have a profound influence on the lives of these remarkable women.

Third part of the book focuses on Women and Leadership in Non-formal Education and Development. Batchuluun Yembuu, the Director of the National Centre for Lifelong Education, in the Mongolian Ministry of Education and Science, describes her leadership role in non-formal education. She elaborated how she had to put in a lot of thought and effort into being an advocate and developing policies and practices for non-formal and lifelong education. Nodumo Dhlamini writes about becoming a leader in non-formal education in African contexts, while Chetna Gala Sinha, economist, farmer, activist as well as founder and President of the Mann Deshi Mahila Bank, in India, tells about her experiences
in helping other women through non-formal education. The review chapter contributed by Dame Carol Kidu, an Australian-born Papua New Guinean politician emphasizes that whilst leaders must have clear visions and goals, they must also be willing and able to readjust in the face of the inevitable setbacks, disappointments and shifting circumstances. The book will thus, help educators, scholars and trainers to gain an insight into the fact that women’s leadership is a critical step in promoting gender equality.

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Open Schooling with Open Educational Resources: Opening doors, creating opportunities


By S. K. Pulist

The incessant efforts from UNESCO and Commonwealth of Learning have made the Open Educational Resources (OER) revolution happen globally. The volume in hand is the product of such a collaborative effort of William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning in the form of the Project – Open Educational Resources for Open Schools (OER4OS) initiated in 2008. The project culminated in creation of OER courses at secondary education level by the teachers from six countries (Botswana, Trinidad and Tobago, Lesotho, Namibia, Seychelles and Zambia). At the initial stage, India also was an active partner, however, withdrew subsequently. The volume is divided into eight different chapters excluding the ‘Introduction’ and ‘Conclusion’.

The book is the storyboard of varied experiences based on local expertise as a result of international collaboration. It presents the insight that focuses on development of OER at secondary level of education with the help of diverse people creating a synergic effect. In the form of country chapters, the book presents the first-hand experience gained by the authors who were involved with the project at different country locations. The chapters address some of the common topics like instructional design, integration and use of ICT, professional development of teachers involved in development of OER, etc. in different settings.

The project took a long time deviating from the specified time-line due to various challenges faced by not only the content developers but also the project leaders which have been described in the book. The project completed OER on 20 subjects in print and 10 subjects in Moodle virtual platform with the help of 88 teachers from 6 different countries. Challenges faced in the project were related to pedagogical, quality, training and development, technological and connectivity, organisational, project time management and withdrawal by a partner.

I like the book on two accounts – one - it shares the administrative and logistic tools and techniques which would be necessarily indispensable for the people handling any international project involving participants from different nationalities -and two - it unearths the treasure of experience gained by the teacher-authors in creation of OER, in the form of country chapters. While the book raises number of issues and discusses constraints on different accounts, at the same time it provides possible solutions and the ways these can be optimally addressed in creation of OER. Such projects are yet the need of the mankind and the book would prove to be a path finding effort not only for the educational administrators, policy planners and educational project managers but also the teachers who would like to involve themselves in one form or the other with the OER movement.

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SMART Tips

Creating a Podcast

By Vasuki Belavadi

A number of radio stations put up their popular programmes on the Internet for people to download and listen at leisure. One can also use audios on the Internet for stories, interviews, experiences and of course music. This facility is popularly known as Podcast. Apple is lucky enough that one of their brands was wrapped into a term for a new technology much like the Sony Walkman becoming the popular name for a portable audio player. The word “podcast” comes from combining the words iPod and broadcast. Let’s start with the basics.

What is a podcast?

Podcast is a multimedia digital file made available on the Internet for hearing online or for downloading to a portable media player or computer. One can make available either an audio or video file on the Internet. However, this article shall limit itself to creating audio podcasts.

Podcast is a popular technology not only for entertainment, but also for education and information. Teachers find it a useful tool to put their lessons in audio format.

Let’s look at the requirements to create a podcast. You will need:

1. A digital audio recorder
2. A computer with sound card, speakers and audio editing software
3. Web space to host your audio files
4. A feed burner to create an RSS file so you can distribute it online

So, what kind of digital audio recorder would one need? There are several digital audio recorders in the market suiting various budgets. You can either try the cost effective Sony ICD recorders or the slightly more expensive recorders such as Zoom or even Olympus.

Remember to record your ‘programme’ in a place that doesn’t reverb or is free from external noises. If you have an audio studio, it’s always better to record your programme in a studio.

Next, install an audio editor on a computer. One can use a free, open source audio editor like Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net/). Interestingly, you can even record audio directly using Audacity, and therefore can save cost of recording software or hardware. The best part about Audacity is that it works on Windows, Linux and also Mac platforms!

Having installed the software, import the audio you recorded using the USB connections on your audio recorder and computer. Edit the programme to suit your need.

Having edited your programme, you will need some web space. Some free and fee based audio hosting services that also offer some free plans have been listed in the Worth While Web section of this issue of EduComm Asia. However, if you were to go in for a web hosting solution (if you are affiliated to an institution, you would probably have a website and hosting space) the space you require will depend on the following:

a) The length and the file size of each show/programme you create. The longer the show, larger will be the space required. Similarly, if the quality of your audio file is higher, it will take up more space on the web. One of the ways of getting around this is to export your edited programme at lower kpbs.

b) The number of shows/programmes you create or want to upload as podcasts.

Table-1 should give you an idea of how much space your one minute show can take up.

Audio hosting solutions often provide you with an option to embed your audio into your website. After uploading your audio into the audio hosting website, it throws up a couple of options. One can either embed the audio into a website using the html code or even just provide a link to the audio file from where to download.
If you do not have a website or a web hosting account, you can also publish your podcasts on a blog. For example, create an account on blogspot.com. In the blog settings, enable the ‘Set the link field’ to Yes.

Now, create a new post and use the url of your audio from your audio hosting site in the link field. Save your post and your first podcast is ready!

Creation of a podcast is not enough for your purpose. It should be known by the public. You have to use the Podcast XML Creator tool to create an RSS feed of your podcast. You will, of course, use social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to popularize your podcasts. The XML creator tool essentially creates an XML file which you can use to submit various podcasting platforms. If you create a new podcast episode, you should add a new item section to your RSS podcast feed. The order in which the episodes appear is based on the publication Date for each item, with the most recent episodes appearing at the top of the list. Hope you will be able to create podcast on the topics of your interest.

Mr. Belavadi is Associate Professor at the Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad and can be reached at mailme@vasukibelavadi.com Note: An Edtech Note on ‘Pedagogical Podcasting for Learning’ would be soon released by CEMCA.

### Learning Designer

**By Indira Koneru**

The Learning Designer (LD), a web-based tool enables teachers to create and organize Teaching and Learning Activities (TLA). LD suit of tools allows teachers design, describe and sequence the learning activities and share their learning designs (session / lesson plans) using its pedagogical templates. The Learning Designer (version 0.98.2014) suit comprises browser and designer tools.

### Browser

The Browser tool enables us browse various designs organized as (i) Curated designs - by pedagogy, by topic, (ii) Submitted designs - Submitted, Reviewed, Designs not yet reviewed, (iii) View designs as a list, (iv) Personal space - My designs, Public. My designs list the designs we create; whereas Public lists the designs we submitted for public use. It allows us browse others’ sample patterns and adapt. Or we can create our own learning design from scratch using the designer tool.

### Designer

The Designer tool enables us use the pedagogical pattern template to design learning for a session / lesson / course. We need to:

(i) name our session and topic,
(ii) define aim(s), formulate and categorize learning outcomes as per Blooms taxonomy
(iii) specify the estimated learning time in minutes,
(iv) add number of students
(v) describe session (see Fig. 1).

Using the designer interface, we can create the required number of TLAs.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bit Rate (type of MP3 encoding to use)</th>
<th>Audio Quality</th>
<th>File Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>220-260 kbpsStereo/44 kHz</td>
<td>CD Quality (used for most music MP3s)</td>
<td>Big (3.0 MB/Min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155-195 kbpsStereo/44 kHz</td>
<td>Near CD</td>
<td>Smaller (1.5 MB/Min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-90 kbpsStereo/22 kHz</td>
<td>Like FM Radio</td>
<td>Smallest (785 kb/Min)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table - 1: Space requirement
(Teaching and Learning Activity) in a session / lesson / course. TLA allows us to choose the learning type, time allocated to a TLA, number of students (individual or group activity), teacher presence is required or not, attach resources - URL and File (attaching a file is not currently supported). We can create a TLA with one or more learning types -
(i) Read Watch Listen,
(ii) Collaborate,
(iii) Discuss,
(iv) Investigate,
(v) Practice and
(vi) Produce (see Fig. 2).

We can use the Notes area for adding additional information about each TLA.

Analyzing and Reflecting on the Learning Design

The system provides us instant feedback on the designed time and nature of learning experience. It calculates and displays the total time designed (Designed time) for completing the TLAs (see Fig. 3). A pie chart depicts the nature of learning experience we have created under different learning types with percentage. This (visual) feedback enables us to analyse and reflect on our learning design and change the type of learning and activity description or the amount of time on an activity. Learning Designer supports the well established iterative reflective design approach used by educators.

Exporting and Sharing Learning Design

We can export the design to
(i) LDJ and (ii) MS Word. The .ldj file can be imported into the Learning Designer. We can share the shortened URL of the design, which enables others to view and export our design (see Fig. 4).

We can view the design as
(i) List view or (ii) Block view. LD automatically saves our design on the browser every 1 minute and on the server about every 5 minutes under our profile. However, it is recommended that we immediately save the design before start working with it, so that it creates a URL with a unique identifier.

Learning designs submitted to the Learning Designer are under Creative Commons Attribution Licence (CC BY). We need to attribute the author of the original design while adapting it. The Learning Designer works best using Chrome or Firefox because of their HTML5 standards compliance.

Website: http://web.lkldev.ioe.ac.uk/LD/ or http://learningdesigner.org/

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Fig 2: Designing Teaching & Learning Activities

Fig 3: Sample Learning Design

Fig 4: Exporting & Sharing Features

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Forthcoming Events

7th International Conference on e-Learning and Innovative Pedagogies

3-4 October 2014 in Portland, Oregon, United States of America

For more information visit:
http://ubi-learn.com/the-conference-2014

ICDE International Conference 2014

25-26 September in Moscow

Conference Theme: Connecting the World through Open, Distance and e-Learning

For more information, contact:
Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics (MESI)
Marketing Department (room 31/2)
7, Nezhdinskaya Street, Moscow 119501, Russian Federation

E-mail: icde-russia2014@mesi.ru

AIEC 2014

28th Australian International Education Conference (AIEC)

From 7-10 October, 2014 at Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Cnr Merivale and Glenelg Streets, South Bank, Brisbane, Queensland Australia

For more information, contact:
AIEC 2014 Conference Organisers
Epic Conferences & Events
E-mail: aiec2014@epicconferences.com.au

28th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities

From 28 - 30 October 2014 at The Open University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China

Conference theme: Advancing Open and Distance Learning: Research and Practices

For more information, contact:
AAOU Secretariat
Open University of Hong Kong
30 Good Shepherd Street
Homantin, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China
http://aaou2014.ouhk.edu.hk

OpenEd14

November 19 - 21, 2014 in Washington, DC

Theme: Achieving the Potential of Open

For more information, visit:
http://openedconference.org/2014/

UNESCO International Conference on ICTs for Disability

November 24-27, 2014 in New Delhi

Theme: From Exclusion to Empowerment - The Role of Information and Communication Technologies for Persons with Disabilities

For more information, visit:
http://en.unesco.org/events/exclusion-empowerment-role-information-and-communication-technologies-persons-disabilities

NIFT ICLAM 2014

November 27-29, 2014 in New Delhi

Theme: International Conference on the Convergence of Libraries, Archives and Museums (ICLAM)

For more information, visit:
http://www.nift.ac.in/iclam-2014/