

Connections



A news publication of *The Commonwealth of Learning* • May 1999 Vol. 4, No. 2

PAN Commonwealth

FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING

Empowerment through Knowledge and Technology • A Celebration of Ten Years of The Commonwealth of Learning

400 meet in Brunei

The first *Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning* attracted 300 international and 100 local delegates to celebrate COL's tenth anniversary in Brunei. The Forum and the pre-Forum virtual conferences brought together all those interested in and able to contribute to the growth of open and distance learning in the Commonwealth.

COL values and appreciates the contributions of many organisations and individuals who made the event possible, including Universiti Brunei Darussalam, the Brunei Darussalam Ministry of Education, the Government of Brunei Darussalam through several other ministries, the Commonwealth's open and distance learning professional associations, keynote speakers, plenary and parallel session presenters, exhibitors, members of COL's Board of Governors – and, especially, the delegates.

COL is also grateful for the substantial financial support of the Canadian International Development Agency, as well as the significant contributions made by Industry Canada, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Caribbean Development Bank, New Zealand's Official Development Assistance, the British Department for International Development, the British Council, the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia, Malaysia Airlines, and Royal Brunei Airlines that enabled delegates and presenters to attend from all corners of the Commonwealth.

Support for a future Forum was overwhelmingly positive.

Awards

COL salutes the recipients of the first awards made under the Excellence in Distance Education Programme (EDEP) presented at the Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Brunei. The enclosed supplement provides highlights. More detail and photographs are also available on COL's web site (www.col.org/edep).

Forum web site

The Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning web site (www.col.org/forum) contains all keynote and plenary presentations (including Sir John Daniel's reflections on the early days of COL and its growth in ten years), welcoming and closing addresses, virtual conference and sectoral reports, 128 parallel session papers/posters, rapporteur's reports, and over 50 photographs. There is also an index for the Forum documentation and a search utility for COL's entire web site.

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Brunei's Crown Prince opens the Forum



Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku: COL is a bridgehead into the new information age, reinforcing those attributes that make the Commonwealth a force for good



COL's President, Dato' Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan: information and communications technologies are fast emerging vehicles for delivering education and training across national boundaries – there is a need to establish learner-sensitive and -centred common standards for good practice



Barbados Minister of Education, the Hon. Mia Mottley: if we change how we teach children, sometimes we have to change what we teach



Earth Council Chair, Maurice Strong: open learning and technology should support new policies for sustainable development



Director of the Institute of Southeast Studies, National University of Singapore, Professor Wang Gungwu, delivers the Asa Briggs Lecture: bridging cultures is one of the important purposes of modern education



ST. MICHAEL, BARBADOS • 24 - 27 NOVEMBER 1999

Leading educators and technology professionals will meet in Barbados to identify methods in which technology can enhance education and training in the Caribbean. Themes include:

- professional development of educators in the use of technologies
- appropriate use of affordable technologies
- strategic planning and direction for technology-enhanced learning
- design and development of quality learning materials for technological delivery
- promoting co-operation between technology providers and educators

TEL-isphere 99, The Caribbean and Technology-Enhanced Learning is being organised by The Commonwealth of Learning and The Caribbean Broadcasting Union, with support from the Caribbean Development Bank. It will be co-hosted by the University of the West Indies Distance Education Centre and the Ministry of Education, Barbados.

Further information, including brochures and registration, presentation proposal and exhibitor application forms are available from COL. The deadline for submitting presentation proposals is 15 July. The early registration discount deadline is also 15 July.

www.col.org/tel99 • e-mail: tel99@col.org



Commonwealth open and distance learning professional associations meet in Brunei

COL in Action

DE professional associations meet in Brunei

Presidents and other representatives of 14 Commonwealth open and distance learning (CODL) professional associations met in Brunei, while attending the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, to discuss their on-going co-operation. The meeting was chaired by Professor Judi Walker, President of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (Director, Department of Rural Health, University of Tasmania) and was facilitated by COL.

At the meeting, it was agreed to officially establish a "federation" of CODL professional associations "to provide a vehicle for collegiality among members for our mutual development, benefit and sustainability." A statement of purpose and list of objectives is being developed.

Recognising the success and benefits of the Forum, it was also agreed "that a Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning be held biennially in alternate years to the World Conference of the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), and that the second Pan-Commonwealth Forum be held in 2002." The associations expressed their appreciation for being given an advisory role in planning the Brunei conference and welcomed the suggestion from COL that the new "federation" work toward becoming the organiser for future Forums.

COL will continue to facilitate e-mail and tele-conferencing sessions with CODL associations to help take these items forward.

More legislative drafting graduates

Seven more students have completed the Commonwealth Distance Training Programme in Legislative Drafting, being offered in the Pacific by the University of the South Pacific as a Professional Diploma in Legislative Drafting (PDL). The Pacific islanders that graduated in December include the Fiji Police Commissioner, the High Court Registrar in the Cook Islands and the

Director of USP's Institute of Justice and Applied Legal Studies. The other 15 students expect to complete their coursework in 1999.

The course was developed jointly by The Commonwealth of Learning and the Commonwealth Secretariat to meet the needs of member jurisdictions by providing workplace training for those who prepare government legislation, rather than having to send personnel overseas for an extended period. It was offered for the first time in the Pacific by the University of the South Pacific in 1998 with an initial intake of 22 students from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Niue and the USP Law School in Vanuatu. A new intake of 15 students will start their two-semester programme in February.

USP's delivery includes weekly satellite tuition, enabling the tutor, Mr. John Wilson, First Parliamentary Counsel, Parliament of Fiji, to work with students throughout the Pacific region all at the same time. Audio tapes of the tutorials are also available to students. Course requirements include eight assignments and a two-day workshop. The USP programme is co-ordinated by Professor Van Den Bergh, CFTC Legislative Drafting Fellow.

Vista University in South Africa is also developing a Graduate Certificate programme based on the same materials. It will be made available later this year.



Professor M. Aminul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, Bangladesh Open University, introduces David Walker, COL's Education Specialist (Educational Technology), who conducted a workshop for BOU staff on audio teleconferencing and its use for both administrative and teaching purposes. COL supplied BOU with a teleconference network that now encompasses six regional centres throughout the country.

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Forum delegate comments

Our Bruneian hosts wonderfully gracious. Thank you to them!

Wonderful, stimulating and friendly group of delegates.

A fantastic job of organising and running this conference. Congratulations!



COL's Chairman, Dr. H. Ian Macdonald greets Brunei's Minister of Education, Y.D.M. Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya, who delivered the Forum's closing address

Events

Education ministers to meet in Halifax

The 14th triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CEM) will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada from 26 November – 1 December 2000. Ministers of education and officials from the Commonwealth's 54 countries will attend. It will, among other things, receive a report from The Commonwealth of Learning. A parallel conference and exhibition is being planned.

Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister The Honourable Dr. Lloyd Axworthy extended the invitation on behalf of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). CMEC will co-ordinate Canada's participation in the conference.

"This conference is being held for the first time in Canada and presents an opportunity to showcase constructive international co-operation in the field of education," said Mr. Axworthy. "This conference also provides an excellent forum for expanding knowledge, interpersonal exchanges, and increased international understanding."

Zimbabwe creates open university

The University of Zimbabwe's University College of Distance Education became an independent Zimbabwe Open University on 1 March 1999.

Zimbabwe's Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Technology, Dr. S.D. Ndlovu, presented a paper on ZOU's technology applications at the Pan-Commonwealth Forum in Brunei. He noted that "The use of technology for communications purposes was inherent in many pre-colonial and pre-industrial societies all over the world. Africa, since time immemorial, has perhaps been a world leader in distance communication using available local technologies. A good example was the use of the talking drum to send messages to people in distant places while others used the *kudu* horn or the *gong*."

While printed material remains the primary delivery method for ZOU, extensive use is made of electronic media such as audio/video cassettes and radio broadcasts on the Zimbabwe Broadcast Corporation's educational channel. Both printed material and electronic media are also available at regional centres throughout the country. The University is establishing a remote classroom video network that provides an educational environment for students through a satellite-based system.

Dr. Ndlovu recognised COL's contributions to his country and especially its encouragement and funding for the new Zimbabwe National Association for Distance and Open (ZINADOL).

Innovations in development communications

An International Forum on Innovations in Development Communications for rural and disadvantaged communities was held in Bangalore, India, in March 1999. The workshop was sponsored by The Commonwealth of Learning and hosted by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Don Richardson, of the Ontario Agricultural College (University of Guelph, Canada) and TeleCommons Development Group, participated in the Forum and has created a web site containing an overview of the meeting, available papers and information on resources. It is designed to assist participants and others to share information on the resources available and to foster further collaboration. It is located at: www.telecommons.com/documents.cfm?documentid=90

The meeting addressed issues related to participatory and community-driven approaches and to accessibility. Participants

explored the role and potential of various media as contributing factors to viable, sustainable sources of knowledge, information and skills.

Tech/Voc Seoul-searching

Over 1000 policy makers and practitioners attended UNESCO's Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education in Seoul, Korea, in April. The theme was *Lifelong learning and training: a bridge to the future*. COL's TVE Specialist, Mr. John Bartram, addressed the conference on "Flexible access to technical and vocational education throughout life." He noted that the need to improve access to TVE throughout the world is acute and he contended that "Governments must develop policy and strategic plans to provide a framework for labour market training which enables alternative methodologies that result in open and flexible delivery of TVE." The text of his presentation is available on COL's web site (www.col.org/tvet)

In Memoriam



James Maraj

James Maraj, first President of The Commonwealth of Learning (1989-95), died in Australia on 3 April 1999 at the age of 69.

Dr. Maraj had a distinguished career as educator, diplomat, and international civil servant, which included Director of the Education Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat and Assistant Commonwealth Secretary-General (1970-75); Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of the South Pacific (1975-1982); and, following a short stint at the World Bank (1982-84), Fiji's High Commissioner to Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and India. He was the recipient of several honorary degrees and was decorated by his native country, Trinidad & Tobago (Medal of Merit First Class), and by France (Chevalier de la légion d'honneur).

James Maraj brought a sharp, analytical mind, a creative intellect and a fertile imagination to all the offices he held. He worked assiduously as Assistant Secretary-General for the advancement of functional co-operation in the Commonwealth. Under his leadership, USP became an internationally respected institution, but with its own ethos and an emphasis on relevance. At COL, he was an ardent and persuasive advocate for the integration of distance learning into mainstream education, and he worked tirelessly to help developing countries derive their fair share of the benefits that he saw accruing from the convergence of communications technologies and education.

Different persons saw James Maraj through different lenses. To his friends he was a steadfast ally, generous almost to a fault. To many who worked under him, he seemed irritatingly the perfectionist, who was not prepared to accept anything that did not meet his exacting standards. He was implacable in defence of 'righteous' causes and often used his excellent command of English to lend persuasiveness to his case. He was a wonderful teacher to those who wanted to learn; a man ready to acknowledge, and gracious in commending, the contribution of others; and a gentleman in the truest sense. He will be sadly missed.

— Dr. Dennis Irvine

A more detailed tribute by Dr. Irvine appears on COL's web site at: www.col.org/maraj_99.htm



Glenn Crombie

The Commonwealth of Learning and the Canadian educational community are saddened by the loss of Dr. Glenn N. Crombie, who passed away suddenly on 30 January 1999. He was Canada's representative on COL's Board of Governors.

A professional forester, Dr. Crombie began his career in post-secondary education in 1968 as founding Principal of Sir Sandford Fleming College's Frost Campus in Lindsay, Ontario. In 1978, he became President of Olds College, an agricultural college in Alberta, and in 1992 he was appointed President of Cambrian College, in Sudbury, Ontario, where he served until 1998. Throughout this 30-year career in education, his focus was on access, excellence, diversity and equity. He will be missed.

World Review of Distance Education

The Commonwealth of Learning, in association with *Routledge* has launched a *World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning*. The first title in the series, *Higher Education through Open and Distance Learning*, was jointly published in March 1999. (Keith Harry, ed.; ISBN/ISSN: 0-415-19792-9; 328 pages, paperback)

Open and distance learning has expanded dramatically in recent years throughout the world, across many subject areas and at various educational levels.

Nevertheless, as observed by the President of The Commonwealth of Learning, Professor Gajaraj Dhanarajan, "...it is amazing how little is known about the nature, practices, successes, failures, relevance and effectiveness of training and education delivered using distance education."

Compelled by the need to bring people from both developed and developing economies to appreciate the impact of distance education and the power of change that it represents, this publication aims to make available the wealth of experience in distance education in a readable and usable form for community developers, politicians, policy-makers, international development agencies and non-governmental workers.

This first volume of the series contains 20 edited articles on key issues and accounts of practices in higher education in each region of the world. It includes:

- open and distance learning in relation to internationalisation, lifelong learning and flexible learning
- costs of distance education
- the impact of telecommunications
- applications of open and distance learning in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania

Further information is available by visiting COL's web site (www.col.org/worldreview).

25% discount

Higher Education through Open and Distance Learning can be ordered from booksellers world-wide. It is also available, while quantities last, from The Commonwealth of Learning at a 25% discount for readers of *Connections*. For orders from developing Commonwealth countries, shipping charges will be waived. Orders must be accompanied by a pre-payment of CDN\$ 30.00 Canadian (or equivalent US funds), plus shipping if applicable, or charged to VISA or MasterCard accounts. Orders should be sent to The Open Learning Agency, Attn: COL Customer Service, 4355 Mathissi Place, Burnaby BC V5G 4S8 Canada; tel: 604.431.3210; fax: 604.431.3381; e-mail: catalogue@ola.bc.ca.

Now available

The Facilitation of the Transfer of Learning Materials. Prepared by Christine Swales. The Commonwealth of Learning, 1999. This manual provides practical advice to producers and users in selling, transferring, purchasing and acquiring materials. It is designed to facilitate the inter-institutional negotiation processes between producers and users and to identify the roles that COL may play in specific transfer and accreditation situations. Issues addressed include: types of transfer arrangements; copyright and intellectual property; adaptation and translation; costs, pricing, and remuneration; quality; and accreditation. (84 pages) CDN\$ 12.00, plus shipping, from COL Customer Service, c/o OLA (see above). The manual is also available on COL's web site (www.col.org/newpub.htm). Single-sided masters can also be ordered.

Ten years of The Commonwealth of Learning – a celebration of achievement. To celebrate its 10th anniversary, COL published a special *Summary Report, 1996 – 1998* and produced a multi-media CD-ROM. Both are available free-of-charge from COL or can be viewed with appropriately equipped systems on COL's web site. The CD-ROM is packed with information about COL and distance education in the Commonwealth. It includes examples of best practice in the Commonwealth videos (including COL's new 10th anniversary video), highlights of COL's work, COL's *Summary Report, 1996 – 1998*, historical milestones, reference and research material, COL publications and web links.

Congratulations!

"In its tenth year of operation, COL can be proud of the substantial contribution it is making throughout the Commonwealth to [the] revolution in education ... COL is now perfectly positioned to play a large role in meeting the demand for ever-widening access to educational opportunities at all stages of peoples lives."

His Excellency Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Commonwealth Secretary-General

"I am very pleased to be part of this celebration of ten years of The Commonwealth of Learning...and I am proud that Canada has played a role in its growth and development."

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien
Prime Minister of Canada

"I was the Chairman of the planning committee ... that led up to the foundation of COL by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. Those were exciting times, and I'm proud of what has since developed ... perhaps, some of its most important work has been to put developing countries in touch with each other."

Sir John Daniel
Vice-Chancellor, The Open University, UK

"Congratulations to The Commonwealth of Learning for reaching its tenth birthday. It is an achievement in which the organisation must take some pride. We have watched COL grow

from an idea in the minds of people into an organisation that reaches around the world, into all Commonwealth countries, helping people get access to education and training."

Ms. Madeleine Woolley
Director, TAFE South Australia

"COL is very important to people like ourselves. And in its decade or so of existence it has definitely demonstrated its pivotal importance to far flung island territories like our own in the Caribbean ... it was one of the finer initiatives taken by the Commonwealth, and one that promises to do a great deal to link the millions of people across the Commonwealth."

Professor Rex Nettleford
Vice-Chancellor,
The University of the West Indies

More congratulatory messages can be viewed on COL's web site.

COL welcomes Nigeria back into full membership in the Commonwealth,
29 May 1999.

EdTech News will return with the next issue of *Connections*.

Connections

May 1999
Volume 4, Number 2

Connections is published by The Commonwealth of Learning. COL is an international organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning/distance education resources and technologies.

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Unless otherwise stated, items appearing in *Connections* may be reproduced. Acknowledgement should be made to The Commonwealth of Learning.

Further details on any news item that appears in *Connections* may be obtained by contacting COL's Public Affairs Office, or by visiting our World Wide Web site.

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