

Connections



Learning for Development



LEARNING4CONTENT WORKSHOP AT WAWASAN OPEN UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA IN FEBRUARY 2009



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LEARNING4CONTENT EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

COL's Learning4Content programme has trained 3,000 people in wiki skills for content editing over an 18-month period. More than 85 online and face-to-face workshops have been held around the world since January 2008, drawing participants from 110 countries.

"We are delighted to have been the catalyst to build this global collaborative education community," said Dr. Wayne Mackintosh, who launched and oversaw the growth of Learning4Content as COL's Education Specialist, eLearning and ICT Policy. "This is a fantastic example of what can happen when people have the opportunity to share knowledge freely."

The Learning4Content workshops are offered at no cost. Participants learn how to use WikiEducator and other wiki technologies to create and publish open educational resources (OERs). In return, they are asked to contribute one open content learning resource for use in secondary schools, vocational education and post-secondary institutions.

"We've had tremendous support from governments and educational institutions who have contributed meeting space and computers, and from numerous people who have volunteered their time as facilitators," Dr. Mackintosh explained. "Most importantly, we have a large and growing group of about 9,000 educators who are now able to create, use, share and adapt learning content. This will make a huge, long-term contribution to education worldwide."

Dr. Savithri Singh is Principal of Acharya Narendra Dev College at the University of Delhi in India and a keen supporter of Learning4Content. She has acted as facilitator for three face-to-face Learning-

4Content workshops and was elected a member of WikiEducator's first Community Council.

"The WikiEducator workshop that I attended in July 2006 opened up a whole new world for me – a world that allows us to actually practice collaboration and share what we know across the very wide world," Dr. Singh said. "Through the Learning4Content workshops I hope to persuade more academicians to contribute OERs and maybe as a group, we can make a significant contribution in India. There is a need to make India-centric contextual materials, especially in local languages."

"The Learning4Content facilitators have been an inspiration – motivating and supporting me to complete my training notwithstanding my work demands and a hectic travel schedule," said Mr. Victor Mensah, who works for the Commonwealth Youth Programme

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COL'S NEW THREE-YEAR PLAN, 2009-2012

The final version of COL's new Three-Year Plan, which was presented to Commonwealth Ministers of Education and received their endorsement this month at the 17th triennial Conference (CEM) in Kuala Lumpur, is available for review and download on COL's website (www.col.org/3yp).

Read more about COL's plans, activities and goals for the upcoming three-year period in "In Focus" on page 8.



WIKIEDUCATOR GOES INDEPENDENT

Under COL's sponsorship and leadership, WikiEducator has grown with extraordinary rapidity and exceeded its targets. Named the Best Educational Wiki in 2007 by Stephen Downes (www.downes.ca), it was the inaugural recipient of the MERLOT Africa Network's award for exemplary open educational resources (OERs) practices in 2008 (<http://man.merlot.org>).

WikiEducator has now matured into a prototype for scalable OERs development. Since its inception in May 2006, 3,000 people have been trained in Wiki editing skills in 30 online and 50 face-to-face workshops in 30 countries.

Much of this work has been funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation under COL's Learning4Content programme (see cover story).

WikiEducator's activities and influence have now expanded well beyond the Commonwealth. WikiEducator

will become an independent entity as from 1 July, 2009, headquartered at the new International Centre for Open Education at Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin, New Zealand. The Council of Otago Polytechnic

has established an OER Foundation, a new non-profit body founded for charitable education purposes. Otago Polytechnic's OER Foundation will be legally responsible for administering WikiEducator's funding.

WikiEducator now joins the ranks of international, community-run initiatives, such as Wikipedia, which have their own independent governing structures and are run according to criteria established by those communities. WikiEducator had always intended to form an elected governing council to which it would report once its membership base had grown large enough. Online elections were held in 2008, and WikiEducator's first independent governing Board is now in place.

WikiEducator's success owes much to the single-minded passion and commitment of Dr. Wayne Mackintosh, COL's former Education Specialist, eLearning and ICT Policy, who is continuing his involvement



DR. MACKINTOSH (TOP RIGHT) AT THE TECTONIC SHIFT THINK TANK IN 2006

with WikiEducator as Founding Director of Otago Polytechnic's International Centre for Open Education. (see People, page 10).

Otago Polytechnic is a pioneer in open education. It was the first New Zealand tertiary education institution to sign the Cape Town Open Education Declaration on open education and one of the first institutions in the world to implement an intellectual property policy which defaults content developments to a Creative Commons Attribution license.

COL continues to provide some financial support for WikiEducator and encourages educators around the world to support it and contribute to its ambitious goal of developing a free K-12 education curriculum for the world by 2015.

NEW COL WIKI

COL will continue to use wiki and other collaborative technologies to support its work and partners. For this purpose it is setting up a "COLWiki". As well as being specifically designed with COL's programmes in mind, the COLWiki will differ from WikiEducator in accepting material under all Creative Commons licenses including the NC (non-commercial) and ND (no-derivatives) versions. The new platform can also include any "all rights reserved" material that is made available free of charge for others to use.

The COLWiki will be managed by COL as a service to Commonwealth ministries of education and educational institutions.

www.wikieducator.org

LEARNING4CONTENT CONTINUED FROM COVER

Regional Centre for Africa in Zambia. Since completing the Learning4Content workshop, Mr. Mensah has encouraged others to take Learning4Content training, led workshops in Zambia, provided online support to other learners and developed several content resources for the community. "Through mass collaboration and a dynamic community – it's hard to imagine what can't be achieved!"

At a Learning4Content workshop in St. Kitts in March 2009, the country's Minister of Education, Hon. Sam Condor, spoke to participants about the need for accessible learning materials that can be adapted to local needs.

"While we are yet to fully witness the potentially powerful impact and exciting

prospect of making educational material, educational curriculum and content free and accessible to all, we anxiously await this moment," he said. "It is equally significant that we hone the skills which would allow us to adapt and modify such content to meet our specific needs."

Learning4Content is supported by COL and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. There continue to be opportunities to host, attend, facilitate and sponsor workshops. Visit the Learning4Content page on WikiEducator for more information about how to get involved.

www.wikieducator.org/Learning4Content

DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Arasakumari is one of more than 400 women who joined COL's Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3 Farmers) programme in the Tamil Nadu region of India in 2005. This is the story of how the unique approach to development has had a profound impact on one family.

After ending her formal education in middle school, Arasakumari worked as an agricultural labourer in the village of Uppukottai in the Theni district, Tamil Nadu. She married another landless agricultural labourer from the same village. Murugan worked as a labourer in a sugarcane field. The couple has a boy and a girl.

In 2005, COL supported Mr. Ganankulandai, the local Internet kiosk operator, to develop an L3 Farmers programme in the village. Using information and communication technology (ICT), Mr. Ganankulandai helped nearly 30 women learn about various livelihood opportunities, particularly backyard dairy management. The programme also partnered with banks to provide credit and with markets for buy-back arrangements.

Arasakumari obtained a bank loan and bought two cows. Using what she learned through L3 Farmers, she managed the animals in a scientific manner, yielding 15 to 20 litres of milk per cow, compared to a village average of about ten litres.

By 2006, COL was able to withdraw from direct involvement after the L3 Farmers programme became self-sustaining. Then tragedy struck Uppukottai and Arasakumari's family. A peculiar strain of Foot and Mouth disease hit the cows. In spite of vaccinations, productivity declined drastically to about two litres of milk per day.

Using Mr. Ganankulandai's ICT facilities, the village community contacted veterinary experts, bankers and insurance agencies. The



COL'S LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS PROGRAMME HAS ENABLED ARASAKUMARI TO EARN A LIVELIHOOD AND SUPPORT HER FAMILY IN CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES

insurance company argued that they would not be able to pay any insurance unless the cow became completely dry.

During this period, Murugan suffered an accident in the sugarcane field, which resulted in the amputation of both his legs. Arasakumari's family had now lost both sources of income.

Though shocked, Arasakumari was undaunted. She and her fellow villagers approached the bank for help and discovered their loans could be waived under a Government of India scheme. Arasakumari sold both her cows at a very cheap price. The local community and a self-help group gave her a loan with a low interest rate to buy two new cows. With her new knowledge gained through the L3 Farmers programme, she identified two healthy cows. She consulted the veterinary experts, using

emails and telephone, and developed a balanced feed and disease management plan.

Today, Arasakumari again gets a yield of 15 to 20 litres of milk from each cow and her monthly income (between Rs. 2,500 and 3,000) is much higher than what she would get as an agricultural labourer. She attributes the higher productivity to the feed management which she learned through the L3 Farmers programme.

She devotes her time to her family and to the backyard dairy. Her two children are in school. Her husband helps her in her activities. Arasakumari goes to the Internet kiosk regularly to talk to veterinary experts, and meets her friends in the village frequently to learn about new developments in local dairy. Her lifelong learning continues.

www.col.org/L3Farmers



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL CO-OPERATION. COL'S PRESIDENT, SIR JOHN DANIEL, CONFERS WITH FORMER COL PRESIDENT, DATO' PROFESSOR GAJARAJ DHANARAJAN, NOW VICE CHANCELLOR AND CEO OF MALAYSIA'S WAWASAN OPEN UNIVERSITY, (LEFT) AND NAMIBIA'S PRIME MINISTER, THE HON. NAHAS ANGULA AT A CONFERENCE HELD 31 MARCH AND 1 APRIL, 2009 IN OXFORD, U.K. SPONSORED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT,

THE COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH AND COL, THE INVITED ATTENDANCE INCLUDED GOVERNMENT MINISTERS, EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS AND STUDENTS FROM 27 COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES TO MARK THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL CO-OPERATION. THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS (CCEM) WAS HELD IN OXFORD IN 1959. THE 17TH CCEM IS BEING HELD THIS MONTH IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA.

CC **COPYRIGHT DEMYSTIFIED**

COL is working with experts in copyright to help member countries gain insights into the present copyright situations and implement education-friendly legislation that makes learning content accessible and affordable for more people. The copyright section of COL's website offers extensive resources including:

- An information sheet that explains Creative Commons "NC" and "ND" restrictions;
- *Introducing Copyright: A plain language guide to copyright in the 21st century* by Julien Hofman (see page 15 for more details about this new book);
- Copyright Guidelines, which explain COL's position on the sharing of learning content; and
- *Copyright & Distance Education: A trainer's toolkit*, which provides resources for hosting a workshop that introduces participants to copyright as it relates to distance education.



www.col.org/copyright



FOLLOW COL ON TWITTER

President Obama has one. So does Westminster Abbey. NASA has several. Now COL has its own Twitter page. This is where you'll find messages from COL staff about interesting sources of information, programme updates and other news. Anyone can access the COL Twitter page; those who have a Twitter account can receive updates about COL's Twitter Feed.

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging system that people use to send out short messages, known as "Tweets". A Tweet can be no longer than 140 characters (about the length of a mobile phone text message) and can include photos (TwitPics) and links to websites. Twitter is rapidly gaining popularity among organisations worldwide as an informal communications tool.

<http://twitter.com/colkm>



DR. WILLIE CLARKE-OKAH,
COL EDUCATION SPECIALIST,
HIGHER EDUCATION,
WITH CONSULTANTS MS.
CAROLINE DONOVAN (LEFT)
AND MS. ALISON SCHMIDT
AT THE UTECH TRAINING
FOR COL RIM

MAKING QUALITY WORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The University of Technology, Jamaica is piloting a cost-effective institutional quality audit model developed by COL. The COL Review and Improvement Model (COL RIM) provides higher education institutions with the knowledge and tools they need to conduct an effective institutional quality audit. Developed in partnership with Quality Works (Pty) Ltd., COL RIM integrates internal and external quality assurance processes, with an emphasis on improvement. This "do-it-yourself" approach to auditing quality will help higher education institutions reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

COL developed COL RIM in response to a growing demand for institutional quality audits. After leading teams that conducted audits of UNISA (the University of South Africa) and the University of Ghana in 2007, COL concluded that the use of external teams can be very expensive. Cost effectiveness can be achieved with the use

of credible, well trained people, good planning and focus, and the use of technology and other tools. Self-assessment seems to be particularly effective.

COL RIM is a model for internal quality assurance, planning and systematic institutional improvement. The two-part package includes a conceptual framework and a handbook. While it is especially useful for countries where there is no functional external quality assurance system for higher education, it can also be used to good effect in partnership with, and supplementary to, national external quality assurance.

At UTech, COL provided training for the internal verifiers who will conduct internal assessments. The results of this internal institutional quality audit will inform revisions to COL RIM, which will then be made publicly available. Seventeen universities have already expressed interest in obtaining this tool for conducting their own audits.

OERs FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA

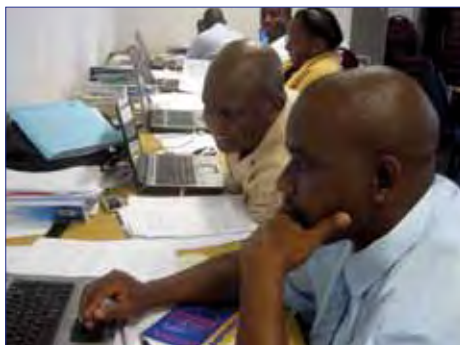
The Community Radio Support Centre (CRSC) in Nepal has donated seven open educational resources (OERs) for community radio to COL's Community Media Space. The materials from CRSC, which cover strategic planning, performance assessment and institutional strengthening guidelines, are now freely available for download and use.

The CRSC materials are part of a growing cluster of training materials, case studies and other resources related to organisational development on the Community Media Space on WikiEducator. Other excellent materials have been shared by Roots-FM,

Jamaica (financial sustainability), Maraa, India (six modules covering topics such as conceptual clarity, management and sustainability), and open source community radio pioneer, KRUI-FM, USA (Volunteer Handbook).

If you have training curricula, manuals or handbooks that will benefit groups involved in community media, visit the Community Media Space or contact Ian Pringle, COL Education Specialist, Media at ipringle@col.org.

www.wikieducator.org/Community_Media/Organization_Development



PARTICIPANTS AT THE OERs FOR OPEN SCHOOLS WORKSHOP IN BOTSWANA

OERs FOR OPEN SCHOOLS

COL is pleased to report significant progress in the Open Educational Resources for Open Schools initiative. A two-year partnership between COL and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, it aims to improve access to secondary education by developing open educational resources (OERs) and training teachers in online materials development.

Six countries are taking part in the initiative: Botswana, India, Lesotho, Namibia, Seychelles and Trinidad & Tobago. Each country is developing learning materials for open school students. After two years, 20 subjects will be developed for the free use or adaption by open schools in the Commonwealth.

Training workshops in all six countries in early 2009 focussed on building the capacity of teachers to develop OERs. Country Management Committees will ensure the materials comply with the country's syllabi. The

materials will then undergo peer review by committee members in the other countries.

"This is an exciting development, because it will build a library of quality OERs that can be freely used by open schools, while also developing the skills of educators to create more learning content," said Ms. Frances Ferreira, COL Education Specialist, Open Schools. "This is large-scale collaborative effort; we are pleased to have participation from more than 100 educators, government representatives, trainers and evaluators from across the Commonwealth."

The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) will conduct rigorous ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the inputs and outcomes to ensure it meets the goal of broadening access to secondary education and increasing student achievement.

www.col.org/openschooling

VUSSC DEVELOPS ACCREDITATION SYSTEM, MORE COURSE MATERIALS

An international group is collaborating on the development of a widely recognised system of accreditation for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Three regional cluster meetings, attended by executives of qualification authorities and quality assurance agencies for the Africa-Mediterranean, Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions, were held in South Africa, St. Lucia and Samoa during the first half of 2009 to provide input to the new Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF).

The aim of the TQF is to encourage the use of VUSSC programmes in all countries by ensuring students receive credits. The TQF is of particular interest to nations that don't have a quality assurance authority.

The TQF Management Committee, comprised of representatives from six small states of the Commonwealth, is incorporating input from these regional meetings into the final TQF document for presentation to Commonwealth Education Ministers this month.

Meanwhile, educators continue to collaborate on courses in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), including entrepreneurship and tourism, which began in VUSSC training workshops or "boot camps". The materials will be available on the COL website.

Two more content development training workshops are being planned for Samoa and Maldives later in 2009.

www.col.org/vussc

SUPPORTING TEACHER EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

COL and the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) consortium have formed a partnership for the dissemination and use of TESSA resources by primary school teachers and teacher educators in Uganda and Zambia. This initiative, which will be jointly funded by COL and the TESSA Secretariat in Milton Keynes, UK, will help primary schools and teacher training institutions in Uganda and Zambia make effective use of the teacher training resources provided by TESSA.

TESSA is a consortium of 18 organisations, universities and teacher training institutions in Africa including the Open University UK, the BBC World Service Trust and COL that are collaborating to improve the quality of teaching in primary schools and teacher education in Africa. The consortium has developed an extensive range of multilingual open educational resources (OERs) that are appropriate for all primary school teachers, including those with little or no formal training. Over 100 teacher educators and 1,000 teachers have been involved in the creation of the TESSA resources. It's estimated that half a million teachers are working with these materials.

COL has been involved with TESSA as a partner since the consortium was established in 2005.

www.tessaafrica.net



THE TQF CLUSTER MEETING IN PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA IN APRIL 2009



MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS FOR OPEN SCHOOLS

COL and the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) are encouraging the use of multimedia learning materials in open schools by making newly developed materials freely available.

NAMCOL is introducing multimedia materials through a strategy developed for them by Mindset Network. This strategy considered issues such as investment in equipment, most effective approaches and how to combine media. Following training in how to develop multimedia materials, the NAMCOL team developed learning materials for five subjects using print, video and audio elements. These materials are being piloted, and an evaluation report will be written.



MULTIMEDIA STRATEGY WORKSHOP AT NAMCOL

COL will make these learning materials freely available for educators to adapt, use and share. Open schools will also have access to the strategy document to help in planning their own strategy, the evaluation report so they can learn from NAMCOL's implementation of their multimedia materials and training from NAMCOL so they learn how to incorporate multimedia elements in their own learning materials.

"Most open schools rely exclusively on print materials because integrating multimedia into learning materials can be a challenge," said Ms. Frances Ferreira, COL's Education Specialist, Basic Education and Open Schools and formerly a director of an open school. "Through this initiative we are delivering a model, materials and training so that other open schools can more easily develop quality materials that enhance learning through the use of different media."



THE CS-DRMS eLEARNING PROGRAMME TEAM MEETING IN VANCOUVER, CANADA IN MARCH 2009



NEW eLEARNING PROGRAMME FOR COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

COL has developed an eLearning programme to support the Commonwealth Secretariat's Debt Reporting and Management System (CS-DRMS). The COL eLearning for International Organisations team has converted a face-to-face training workshop for the proprietary software into a distance education programme on CD-ROM supported by online tutors.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has been assisting its member countries in the area of debt management for over 20 years. The CS-DRMS software enables countries to track external and domestic borrowings and supports a wide range of financial instruments including loans, bonds and securities. It also provides a suite of reports, reporting utilities and analytical tools to support borrowing and debt restructuring decision making. More than 50 countries use CD-DRMS,

which is recognised as a leading debt recording and management system.

With a growing number of workshops required to train users in CS-DRMS, the Commonwealth Secretariat decided to explore introducing an eLearning programme with COL, according to Mr. Walton Gilpin, Debt Management Advisor with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

"The main advantage of this course is the ability to offer anytime, anywhere learning," he said. "We'll be able to provide on-demand training for new users and existing users who need to refresh their skills."

Learner support will be provided through eModerators, who will communicate with learners online. The CS-DRMS eLearning programme will be piloted at the end of 2009, with roll-out scheduled for early 2010.

www.col.org/COLeLIO

STRENGTHENING LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNANCE

COL's work in governance is focussed on partnering with local groups to strengthen the skills and knowledge of elected officials. In Papua New Guinea, COL has played an important role in bringing together post-secondary training institutions along with all levels of government through their work with the University of Papua New Guinea to develop training for district, local and village government officials. Reaching individuals with various levels of formal education represents a new area of work for the University of Papua New Guinea. Seven training modules have been developed and are being piloted.

In Bangladesh, COL is supporting Rupantar, a local non-governmental organisa-

tion that has developed training for local government officials through use of traditional drama and songs in addition to other more common development tools. Rupantar has developed four modules and hopes to augment this material through mobile telephony and radio. As this is Rupantar's first venture into open and distance learning (ODL), COL is helping to build capacity by supporting training for 300 Rupantar employees and development of an ODL policy. To further train their own staff and other non-governmental organisations interested in learning about ODL, Rupantar is opening an ODL training institute and radio training studio in southwest Bangladesh.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ATTACHMENTS

Q & A WITH MS. FRANCES FERREIRA

COL's Professional Development Programme includes Executive Secondments – opportunities for senior officials/academics in Commonwealth governments or institutions to live in Vancouver, Canada for up to three months and work on specific projects related to COL's mandate. Sponsoring organisations and recipient individuals must commit to a return to full-time employment for a minimum of one year following the placement with COL and sponsoring organisations/institutions are also expected to continue to support the salary and benefits of the individual during the secondment.

Ms. Frances Ferreira is a current COL staff member who has benefited from Attachments, including an Executive Secondment to COL in 2005.

She shares her thoughts about this experience.

Q: How did you find out about COL's Executive Secondment Programme?

A: I didn't know about it; I was just told one day that I was going! I was attending the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Edinburgh in 2003. I was Director of the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) at the time and was accompanying the Namibian Minister of Education, the Hon. Nahas Angula, who is now Prime Minister. The Minister was speaking with COEs then President, Raj Dhanarajan, asking why COL didn't offer more professional development for Namibians. Raj offered to host someone at COEs office in Vancouver under its Attachments Programme, the Minister suggested me and it was a done deal!

Q: How was it helpful to be in the Vancouver office?

A: First, it was a huge advantage to have protected time where I could fully focus on research and planning. As the head of an institution, I got so caught up in day-to-day activities that I found it difficult to think strategically. My three months in Vancouver gave me the opportunity



MS. FERREIRA HITS THE SLOPES AT WHISTLER MOUNTAIN DURING HER SECONDMENT AT COL IN 2005

to reflect from a distance – not just on my subject, the cost and financing of open schools, but on all the different areas. My discussions with colleagues at COL, the meetings that were arranged and the reading I did all contributed greatly to my work.

Q: How did your secondment help your organisation?

A: While in Vancouver, I gained a broader understanding about the real cost of distance education. It's not just materials; it's also learner support, professional development and other issues. So I brought a whole new dimension to the discourse on the cost and financing of open and distance learning in southern African educational institutions. I think I assisted NAMCOL as an institution and the country.

Q: Did you expect to be employed with COL after your secondment?

A: Not at all! I didn't even know such a position (Education Specialist, Basic Education and Open Schooling) was going to be open when I left COL. I certainly thought I'd love to live in Vancouver one day, but I didn't know the opportunity would come so soon. I joined COL a year and a half later. The work I did during my Attachment led to a major study on the cost and effectiveness of open schools, which has in turn resulted in the development of several tools for open schools. So I would say it was a beneficial experience in many ways!

UNESCO LAUNCHES TVETIPEDIA



UNESCO's International Centre for Technical and Vocational Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC) has launched TVETipedia, an on-

line portal for the exchange of information on technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The portal offers:

- general information on TVET,
 - examples of good practices and lessons learned, and
 - opportunities to collaborate on TVET projects.
- The aim of TVETipedia is to provide information about TVET, engage stakeholders and increase awareness of the importance of TVET. Anyone involved or interested in education for the world of work can join the TVETipedia online community and contribute information.

www.unevoc.unesco.org/tvetipedia

NIOS ONLINE WINS AWARD



India's National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has been awarded the Government of India's National Award for E-Governance 2008-2009 in the category of Excellence in Government Process Re-Engineering.

The award recognises the Ni-On Project (NIOS Online), which involved the use of information and communication technology to transform NIOS into an advanced open distance learning system with greater openness, flexibility, transparency and efficiency. The Ni-On Project was launched in July 2007.

www.nos.org

NEW EDUCATION CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE AT ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY



Through a partnership with Sun Microsystems, Athabasca University in Alberta, Canada is opening a new education centre for excel-

lence. As an open university, Athabasca delivers most of its courses online. The centre will enable academics, students, schools and communities to develop virtual world-style online learning platforms. The digital environments will be built on Sun's Project Wonderland, an open-source toolkit for creating collaborative 3D virtual worlds, and on Sun's Project Darkstar platform

www.athabascau.ca

COL'S NEW THREE-YEAR PLAN: BUILDING



The Commonwealth of Learning presented its new Three-Year Plan for 2009-2012 to Commonwealth Ministers of Education and received their endorsement this month at the 17th triennial Conference (CEM) in Kuala Lumpur. Through its new plan, COL remains committed to “Learning for Development” while narrowing the focus of its work to two programme sectors: Education and Livelihoods & Health. The result of extensive evaluation and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, the new plan maps out how COL will help governments respond to the global economic downturn while also addressing people’s needs to adjust to change by expanding opportunities for education, training and learning.

COL's first response is to tighten the focus... The second response is to scale up its impact.

The theme of this plan, Learning for Development, which is the same theme as for 2006-2009, expresses a vision that reaches beyond formal education to embrace areas of learning that are vital for better health, greater prosperity and a safer environment. Understanding development as the process of increasing the freedoms that people can enjoy, COL pursues this vision operationally within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the campaign for Education for All (EFA) and Commonwealth values.

As part of its monitoring and evaluation strategy and the planning process for its upcoming plan, COL commissioned an evaluation report that examined activities in its 2006-2009 Plan. Conducted by an external consultant, Dr. Patrick Spaven, who interviewed a large variety of stakeholders, the extensive report provides valuable insight

into the effectiveness of COL's various activities.

The 2009 Evaluation has measured COL's achievements against the 15 corporate performance targets set in the 2006-2009 Plan. It found that eight of these targets had been exceeded; one was met and six were partially met.

Some of the conclusions of the Evaluation Report include:

- ODL is increasingly relevant to development, its potential contribution to extending the reach of formal education is well understood and it is needed more than ever.
- COL has shown that ODL can deliver benefits in less formal learning contexts, for example in farming. This may be COL's greatest contribution to development in the last six years.
- COL is relevant to development because it has a unique combination of assets that enable it to perform a niche role close to governments and other important institutions, especially those of small states.
- Scale and sustainability are COL's main challenges.

The Evaluation Report supported COL's decision to focus on fewer sectors and initiatives. It emphasised the importance of assessing partner readiness and capacity for scale and sustainability when considering new work. The areas where COL most needs to re-appraise its work are national ODL policy promotion and ODL for non-farming livelihoods, according to the report.



A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO PLANNING

While building on the extensive pan-Commonwealth consultation conducted for the previous triennium, COL has refreshed its understanding of current development priorities through various formal and informal channels including:

- A Board retreat that determined COL's future focus (June 2008),
- COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (London, July 2008),

- Meetings of COL's country Focal Points, and
- Input to COL's website in response to posting of drafts of the Three-Year Plan.

Through the external evaluation, internal programme evaluations, and these consultations, COL refreshed its understanding of current development priorities and its role in responding to these priorities. Its first response is to tighten the focus. COL's two programme sectors, Education and Livelihoods & Health, embrace just eight initiatives (instead of the current 15) that will help governments pursue the twin goals of expanding access to learning and using public funds cost-effectively.

The second response is to scale up its impact. Working with its country partners COL has developed powerful models for applying technology to learning for development. These models must now be applied at scale and extended to new countries.

ON PREVIOUS SUCCESSES, GREATER FOCUS

EDUCATION

The Education sector will deal primarily but not exclusively with formal education institutions. There are four Education programme initiatives:

Open Schooling: Growing success in achieving universal primary education is creating a surge of demand for secondary schooling that many governments have not the resources to satisfy by building more schools. Open Schooling can deliver quality education cost-effectively at scale.

Teacher Education: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All will require millions of new teachers and training for millions more unqualified teachers already in post. Teacher education institutions will not be able meet these demands without adopting the methods of ODL. COL will help them do this.

Higher Education: Many universities face burgeoning demand after a period of neglect and some countries are creating open universities. COL will facilitate the expansion of quality higher education and share programmes among institutions, including imaginative courseware to promote the Commonwealth agenda of Respect and Understanding.

Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth: Hundreds of teachers and officials have acquired advanced information and communication technology (ICT) skills through this network. It produces and shares eCourses in skills-related areas within a new Transnational Qualifications Framework and links them together in a common portal.



LIVELIHOODS & HEALTH

The Livelihoods & Health sector will work to promote non-formal education and training but this does not preclude the possibility of linkages with formal institutions, where appropriate. There are four programme initiatives in this sector:

Skills Development: COL assists with the development of policy for the use of ODL in skills development, and works with partners to design and deliver quality courses

that are increasingly rich in ICT. Partnerships among institutions at different stages of development operate in a spirit of south-south cooperation.

Learning for Farming: Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) is a successful grassroots model for increasing rural prosperity that uses ICT to link banks and universities to village communities to exploit new economic opportunities. It is now being implemented at scale by extending the use of knowledge info-mediaries.

Healthy Communities: COL's Media Empowerment model has proven its effectiveness for bringing health messages to communities. It will now be scaled up by training health groups and communities to create and share learning materials and make effective use of community media.

Integrating eLearning: Countries are eager to raise levels of digital literacy and deploy eLearning in their education systems. To build capacity COL is training educators to develop eLearning materials, to conduct

SNAPSHOT: COL'S THREE-YEAR PLAN 2009-2012

- **Increased focus:** two programme sectors (Education and Livelihoods & Health) instead of three; eight programme initiatives instead of 15.
- **Scaling up** programmes by working with country partners.
- **Building on success** through programmes such as the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), Lifelong Learning for Farmers and eLearning for International Organisations.
- **Continued input** from country Focal Points.
- **Expanded partnerships** with international agencies, non-governmental organisations and educational institutions.

COL's Three-Year Plan 2009-2012 and related documents such as Dr. Spaven's Evaluation Report and individual country reports are available online.



www.col.org/3yp
www.17ccem.com

eTutoring, and to share materials as open educational resources through communities of practice.

The cross-cutting themes of gender, quality and appropriate technology are pervasive throughout the programme.

STAFF NEWS



MR. PAUL WEST, COL'S DIRECTOR, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, WAS THE MACE BEARER AT THE COMMONWEALTH DAY OBSERVANCE IN MARCH 2009 THAT CELEBRATED 60 YEARS OF THE COMMONWEALTH. AS COL'S NOMINEE FOR THIS HONOUR, MR. WEST PRECEDED HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH INTO WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

COL Vice President **Professor Asha Kanwar** has been awarded the Individual Prize for Excellence from the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE). The prize, which recognises attainment of the highest possible excellence in the fields of open, distance, virtual and flexible learning, was presented at the ICDE's World Conference in Maastricht, The Netherlands on 9 June 2009. Prof. Kanwar was saluted for her work for the cause of open and distance education, as well as her significant contributions to gender studies.



KANWAR

Ms. Rebecca Kinakin has joined COL as Project Manager, Child-Friendly Schools, an initiative between COL and UNICEF involving ten countries in Africa and Asia. She is co-ordinating the development of training materials



KINAKIN

and teacher training workshops to support the mainstreaming of Child-Friendly Schools into teacher education programmes. Ms. Kinakin has worked with several non-governmental/non-profit organisations including the David Suzuki Foundation, Oxfam America and the World Wide Fund for Nature. Most recently, she spent five years in Cambodia where she co-ordinated and advised on projects involving community-based natural resource management, capacity building and networking, and participatory action research.

www.col.org/rkinakin

Dr. Wayne Mackintosh, most recently COL's Education Specialist, eLearning and ICT Policy, has been appointed Founding Director of the International Centre for Open Education at Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand. See "Wiki-Educator goes independent" on page 2.



MACKINTOSH

www.col.org/wmackintosh

COL'S NEW THREE-YEAR PLAN: CONTINUED

Each sector pursues its aims through five core strategies:

- 1. Partnerships:** Fostering sustainable partnerships and networks in support of these aims
- 2. Models:** Refining and sharing models for applying teaching and learning technologies to development challenges
- 3. Policies:** Assisting countries and organisations to develop and implement policies that support technology-mediated learning
- 4. Capacity:** Facilitating training and organisational development to increase the overall ability of partners to deploy learning systems and technologies effectively
- 5. Materials:** Working with partners to co-create learning materials and make them widely available

These strategies focus on co-creating value with COL's extensive network of partners and stimulating new developments. To be

more present at the regional level COL has its own unit in India, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). In Africa, COL works with RETRIDOL (Research and Training Institute for Distance and Open Learning) in West Africa and SADC-CDE (Southern African Development Community Centre for Distance Education).

To adapt its programme to fit the unique needs of each country COL develops individual Country Action Plans after extensive consultations with Ministers, Focal Points and partner institutions. These are monitored and updated regularly.



COL in the Commonwealth, a compendium of individual Country Reports, is published at the end of each triennium.

COL practices results-based management. This is summarised through a logic model that lays out the expected long- and intermediate-term results (impacts and outcomes) over the three-year period. Outputs and activities, and the inputs needed to achieve them, are set out annually in log frames that are integrated with the logic model and are specific to each initiative. The

log frames are regularly updated and have more detailed performance indicators.

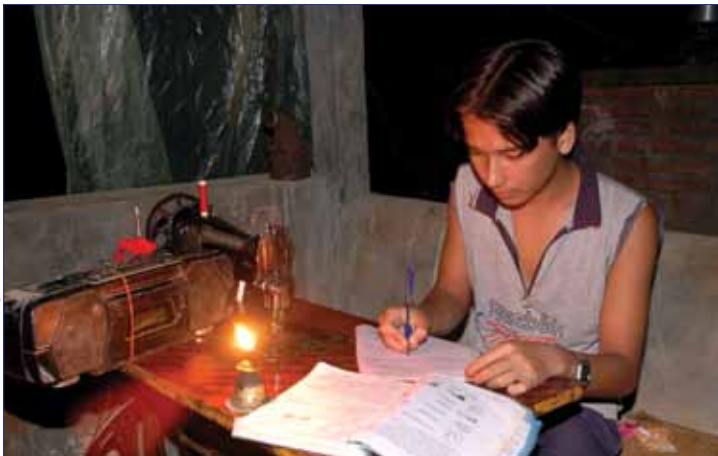
STANDING BY PONDS



John Baggaley
Professor of Educational
Technology
Athabasca University,
Canada

Excerpted with permission from the Editorial of the International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, Vol 9, No 3 (2008). www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/588/1135

You can't step in the same water twice, said Heraclitus. He may have been correct in the literal sense, but even Heraclitus must have had those *déjà vu* moments when his life seemed to be repeating itself. Standing by a pond while making a video download recalled identical experiences filming by ponds in 1975 and 1996, and prompted some thoughts on how little institutional policy ever really changes in the world of media-based education.



Credit: UNESCO/M. Bogati

In the mid-90s, television was on its way out as a medium of choice in North American and European education. It had been struggling for credibility for almost as long as it had been in use. The Open University in the U.K., for example, started broadcasting course materials on television in the early '70s, in the middle of the night and often for surprisingly small student enrolments of a few dozen. In 1978 the cost-effectiveness of this effort was questioned at a London University conference with the provocative title "Is anybody there?" It turned out they weren't, at least not in justifiable numbers, and that many courses could have been delivered to the students more efficiently in the mail on audio-tapes.

Since the late '90s, the same question has been asked about the World Wide Web, at least in regions where only tiny proportions of the population have Internet access. Turning a blind eye to the inaccessibility hurdle, developing world institutions have pressed on developing web-based ODL materials anyway, with an eager "If we build it, they will come" attitude. They appear motivated to adopt the most modern techniques available, regardless, and are encouraged in this by Western distance educators who apparently regard media older than the web as strange and obsolete. But "Is anyone there, or likely to be so?" Actually not for the foreseeable future.

Web-based education has polarised world society into elite and have-not groups far more than TV and radio ever did; and its adoption in the developing world appears oblivious to the fact that today's students would derive greater benefit from media that are actually available to them. Are the hundreds of millions of would-be students who cannot access the Internet a kind of "untouchable" class, whose problems and needs have become invisible?

Fortunately, in India and other developing countries, the needs of disadvantaged students remain very much in focus, and offer inspiration for all educators. For example, the University estimated by that bastion of source credibility, Wikipedia ("mega-universities" entry), as having the seventh largest student enrolment in the world, is named after Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who devoted his life to erasing untouchability from Indian society and to implementing open learning methods for the benefit of all. Today Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University maintains its commitment to these ideals by preserving far-reaching uses of radio, TV, and audio/videotape, while other Asian universities struggle and fail to harness more elitist forms of Internet-based education.

Having recently returned to Canada from a four-year tour of distance education initiatives in 21 Asia-Pacific countries, I deeply sympathise with institutions in their attempts to harness eLearning – but I especially sympathise with their students.

Consider, for example, this *cri de coeur* by a student recounted by Stephen Asunka (2008). The student is pleading with the instructor for an extension to an online project deadline. "This is because my project has been affected very much by the power fluctuation we are experiencing in both on campus and at home...This has not only caused low performance (but

I am facing some sort of a psychological battle at the moment, because I really did take the paper." As Asunka stresses, many students are loath to make such pleas, and only do so "in their moments of desperation".

How long will we continue to ignore such bewilderment and frustration on the part of our students, while seeking to implement novel but patently inappropriate technologies purely for the sake of it? And how long will we ignore the obvious fact that it is the blind eye being turned to Internet inaccessibility by institutions and funding agencies that is failing the students, rather than an intrinsic lack of motivation and application on the students' part?

Institutional and agency support for Internet-based methods is not just a matter of attempting to think ahead to a day when the new technologies will have become appropriate for all, but a culpable and dishonest disregard for the present, and for the students' needs within it.

Reference

Asunka, S. (2008) Online learning in higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Ghanaian University students' experiences and perceptions. *International Review of Research in Open & Distance Learning* 9(3). Retrieved from: <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/586/1130>

Web-based education has polarised world society into elite and have-not groups far more than TV and radio ever did

PEACE BUILDING IN SOLOMON ISLANDS



COL sponsored two workshops for youth and community representatives in Isabel Province, Solomon Islands, where participants identified and developed content for a local learning network. An initial planning workshop held in March brought together local youth to build awareness of the opportunities offered by the island's eight radio and email stations as well as a distance learning centre. Youth representatives identified four areas upon which to develop learning programmes to address the underlying causes of conflict in their communities: environmental and natural resource management, drugs and substance abuse, reviving cultural traditions, urbanisation and birth control. In a second workshop held in April, participants learned how to develop digital content themselves.

"Isabel Island's radio and email stations have tremendous potential to facilitate learning for peace, health promotion, livelihoods or other community needs, but they have been massively underutilised," said Mr. Ian Pringle, COL's Education Specialist, Media. "We are helping stakeholders to build a network of community partners who will

collaborate to create content for broadcast as part of larger learning programmes."

"Engaging youth in this initiative will demonstrate the potential of using integrated, inter-modal communications in learning programmes," said Dr. Tanyss Munro, COL's Education Specialist, Governance. "This work will add valuable insight into applications, training needs and sustainability issues for the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development as they develop their Distance and Flexible Learning policy over the coming year."

COL has brought together a wide-ranging group of partners in this initiative: the Commonwealth Youth Programme, the Isabel Provincial government, several Solomon Islands ministries, the Distance Learning Centres Project and two local non-governmental organisations, People First Network and Solomon Islands Development Trust. The partners are continuing to collaborate and develop learning content that responds to community needs.

www.WikiEducator.org/Learning4Peace/Solomon_Islands

SUPPORTING TEACHER EDUCATION IN WEST AFRICA

Seventeen teacher educators from the The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone took part in a COL-sponsored meeting in February 2009 in Abuja, Nigeria. The purpose of the meeting was to reactivate the West African Consortium for Teacher Education Development (WACTED), which had been formed several years earlier but has been inactive.

In addition to agreeing on a Constitution, objectives and upcoming activities, participants developed Country Plans for the dissemination of open educational resources (OERs) developed by the Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) consortium. See page 3, "Supporting Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa" for an update about TESSA.

Participants at the Abuja meeting agreed that the following projects should be undertaken in 2009-2010 with support from COL and other agencies:

- Improve quality assurance by training teacher educators how to adapt and use COL's Quality Assurance Tool Kit for Teacher Education,
- Build capacity of teacher education institutions in information and communication technology (ICT) and materials development, and
- Conduct a situation analysis with a view to building a West African teacher education data base of training needs, programmes, facilities, personnel, materials and expertise.



Professor Jophus Anamuah Mensah (Chairman of the Open University of Ghana's Planning Committee) volunteered to serve as Chair of WACTED's Executive Committee.

MEDIA FOR LEARNING IN MALAWI

COL helps media and development organisations and their partners to design, develop and operationalise non-formal ODL programmes using appropriate technologies. A key element of COL's approach is collaboration between media and knowledge-based groups.

A good example is unfolding in Malawi where media and health groups are working together to create a community learning programme about maternal and child health. The lead partner is the MaiMwana Project, a community-based health initiative established in rural Mchinji District, Malawi by the University College London's Centre for International Health and Development. The MaiMwana Project aims to reduce mother and child mortality and morbidity by mobilising communities, through women's groups, to take control of mother and child health issues. Their work eventually led them to the Mudzi Wathu Community Radio in Mchinji and also to Story Workshop, a media production agency in Lilongwe. It also led to COL, specifically COL's work using radio and other local media for community learning programmes. COL helped

articulate both the programme and capacity development approaches and funded workshop costs. A series of workshops are taking place for representatives of MaiMwana's 200 women's groups.

Mr. Mikey Rosato, Technical Advisor for the MaiMwana Project in Mchinji, provides this report about the initial workshop:

On 30 March 2009, representatives from Mudzi Wathu Community Radio Station, communities in Mchinji District, Mchinji District Health Office and the MaiMwana Project came together for a radio programme development workshop in Malawi. The representatives each brought expertise to the partnership – radio broadcasting, community needs, community mobilisation, and knowledge of mother and child health issues. Under the guidance of Story Workshop, the partners spent five days learning radio development and production skills and sharing their expertise and ideas.

The workshop resulted in the development of Phukusi La Moyo (Bag of Life), a series of programmes on mother and child health that is being broadcast across Mchinji District on community radio station beginning in April 2009. The pro-



grammes provide communities with a "bag" of knowledge and skills about health, which they can draw on to address problems affecting mothers and children. It is hoped that this will help to improve the health and reduce the high rates of mortality of mothers and children in Malawi.

SCHOOL REPORT NEWS DAY

COL supported the participation of students at three South African schools for the BBC's School Report News Day on 26 March 2009. Students received training in interviewing and radio production techniques from Open Learning Systems Education Trust (OLSET) and BBC producers. The students then created their own reports, which were broadcast on the global news discussion programme "World Have Your Say" on the BBC World Service. The topics were tied to school curriculum and included social networking, the football World Cup in 2010 and school initiations. The South African students joined thousands of students from more than 500 schools in the United Kingdom who provided reports for School Report News Day.



STUDENTS AT RANDBURG HIGH SCHOOL IN SOUTH AFRICA
PREPARE FOR SCHOOL REPORT NEWS DAY

In addition to introducing technology in the classroom and providing a new way to engage students in learning, the experience provided students with skills and new-found confidence. COL plans to expand its support of the programme to more schools next year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DETA 2009 Conference

3-5 August 2009
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast, Ghana
"Issues and challenges in education in Africa – the need for a 'new' teacher"
www.deta.up.ac.za

The Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Learning

22-25 September 2009
St. Edmund's College,
Cambridge, UK
"Supporting learning in the digital age: rethinking inclusion, pedagogy and quality"
www2.open.ac.uk/r06/conference

OBHE 2009 Global Forum on Cross-Border Higher Education

21-24 October 2009
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
"Global Connections, Local Impacts: Best Practices, Models and Policies for Cross-Border Higher Education"
www.obhe.ac.uk/the_obhe_global_forum_malaysia

Sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF6)

24-28 November 2010
Kochi, India
"Access & Success in Learning: Global Development Perspectives"
www.col.org/pcf6

INTRODUCING COPYRIGHT: A PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE TO COPYRIGHT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By Julien Hofman



As computers and the Internet transform how we produce and distribute information, copyright struggles to keep pace with these changes. While authors rely on copyright to protect what they have created, many authors and those who use their work are unclear about what copyright allows and what it prohibits.

Published by COL, this book explains copyright protection and what it means

for copyright holders and copyright users. “Introducing Copyright” introduces readers to digital rights management, open licences, software patents and copyright protection for works of traditional knowledge. A final chapter predicts how technology will change the publishing and entertainment industries, which depend on copyright.

www.col.org/IntroducingCopyright



PERSPECTIVES ON DISTANCE EDUCATION: OPEN SCHOOLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Edited by Dominique A.M.X. Abrioux and Franc-
es Ferreira

The newest title in COL’s “Perspectives on Distance Education” series explores how open schooling can help solve the world’s most pressing educational challenge: expanding secondary education. Aimed at policy makers and educational planners, “Open Schools for the 21st Century” shows how open schooling can be adopted for a range of purposes and in different ways, using a variety of technologies and approaches. With contributions from educators with extensive first-hand experience in open schooling, the book confirms that open schools can provide good quality secondary education as long as senior policy-makers, bureaucrats and administrators are well informed about the key factors affecting success in open schooling, and that they use this knowledge to plan, implement and monitor their own open school initiatives.

www.col.org/perspectives/openschooling



OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN A CHANGING WORLD: SELECTED SPEECHES OF SIR JOHN DANIEL AND COLLEAGUES, 2007-2008

In addition to making speeches and presentations by Board members and staff available on its website, COL periodically publishes a selection of speeches in print format. This selection includes an open letter to

the next US president and six speeches delivered in different countries at various events.

www.col.org/speeches



THE GLOBAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT 2008-2009: MOBILITY IN A NETWORKED WORLD

Soumitra Dutta, INSEAD
Irene Mia, World Economic Forum
Editors

The Global Information Technology Report 2008–2009, the eighth edition in the series, presents an updated picture of the state of networked readiness in the world. Under the general theme of mobility, the Report notably highlights the remarkable role of mobile telephony – possibly the most revolutionary information and communication technology (ICT) – in economic growth and offers success stories of countries able to leverage ICT for increased competitiveness.

www.weforum.org/pdf/gitr/2009/gitr09fullreport.pdf



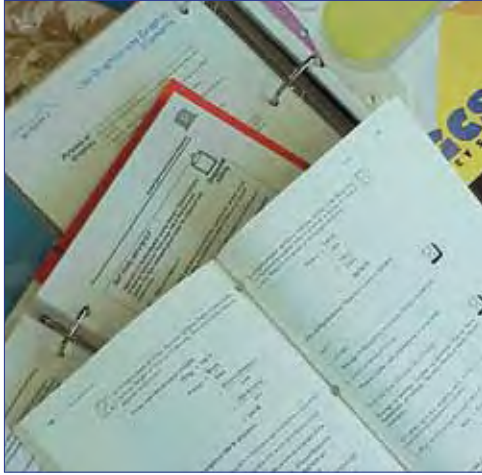
OPEN LEARNING: SPECIAL ISSUE ON OERs

Open Learning: The Journal of Open and Distance Learning has published a special issue focussed on open educational resources. This issue is guest edited by UNESCO’s Ms. Susan D’Antoni, who collaborates frequently with COL, and includes an article on The Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth, by Mr. Paul

West and Sir John Daniel of COL. In recognition of the nature of the subject and its importance, the publisher, Routledge, is providing open online access to this issue of *Open Learning*.

www.tandf.co.uk/journals/opl (click on: “Free access to *Open Learning*’s Special Issue: *Open Educational Resources*”)

NEW COL SEARCH SERVICE FOR OPEN COURSEWARE



COL has introduced an online search tool for open courseware (OCW) and open educational resources (OERs). Anyone can use it to search for open learning materials from higher education institutions and OER repositories.

The new COL service uses two search engines: Yahoo Pipes and Google Custom search to access OCW and OERs from dozens of institutions throughout the globe. In the past, if somebody wanted to find a course or module on a particular subject, they would normally have

to search individual websites. In addition to being very time consuming, this would rarely yield the best results. COL's new search tool will do a combined search of a large number of websites and present all results at once.

In addition to being useful for course designers and teachers, the OCW/OER search engine will also help learners find appropriate learning materials. More information is available on the COL search page.

www.col.org/ocw

Connections

JUNE 2009 | VOLUME 14, 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 knowledge, resources and technologies.

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His Excellency, the Honourable
Burchell Whiteman, O.J.

President & CEO: Sir John Daniel

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NEW WIKIEDUCATOR TEACHER COLLABORATION PORTAL

WikiEducator has introduced a new online portal to enable collaboration among teachers. The platform will help teachers:

- share expertise and information,
- develop, share, adapt and reuse open educational content and lesson plans,
- collaborate on projects, and
- hold professional development workshops.

The WikiEducator community hopes the teacher collaboration portal will develop into an active, creative and international platform of teachers for teachers who can meet and learn from each other and create open educational resources for wide-spread use.

Within three weeks of the portal's launch in April 2009, 770 educators from 26 countries had registered to be part of this collaborative effort. By June, there were 950 participants from 49 countries.

www.wikieducator.org/Teacher_Collaboration



WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY LAUNCHED

The U.S. Library of Congress and UNESCO have launched a digital library of primary documents and authoritative explanations from the planet's leading libraries. The World Digital Library includes many one-of-a-kind documents including a Japanese work that is considered the first novel in history, the Aztecs' first mention of the Christ child in the New World and the works of ancient Arab scholars exploring the mysteries of algebra, each accompanied by learned commentary.

www.wdl.org



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MOBILE PHONES FOR EDUCATION

Two-thirds of mobile phone subscribers live in the developing world, with subscriptions in Africa growing the fastest, according to research from the International Telecommunication Union. And it is not only adults making use of this technology. While evidence indicates that many of these mobile phone users are teens, what this means for the delivery of education is less clear.

One of the best known initiatives incorporating mobile phones into education is text2teach in the Philippines, which enables teachers to request educational videos via text message, with the videos delivered to a television at the school via satellite. Anticipating a significant price drop for smartphones, Dunia Moja is a joint initiative of Stanford University (USA) and partner universities in Africa that is exploring how to facilitate communication and joint research

between students and faculty on environmental issues. And educators in India are piloting a programme that uses mobile gaming to support literacy.



Read more in “What do we know about using mobile phones in education”, a posting on the new World Bank blog dedicated to ICT and education issues:

<http://blogs.worldbank.org/edutech>

* * *

COL also recently commissioned two consultants’ studies on Using Mobile Technology for Learner Support in Open Schooling, one covering Europe and one covering the developing world:

www.col.org/consultancies

MOBILE PHONES WIKI

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Mobile Web for Social Development Interest Group has developed a new online collection of case studies, papers and reports that focuses on the deployment of information and communication technology (ICT) using mobile phones in developing countries. The wiki is divided into three sections:

- **Mobile content and usage:** projects on the use of mobile phones in development, ethnographic studies and general articles on the use of mobiles in development
- **Technology:** different technologies existing to deploy content and application on mobiles
- **Capacity building:** initiatives around enhancing expertise in mobile technologies in developing countries

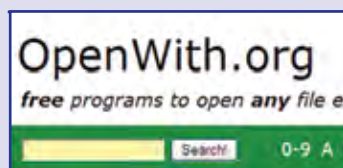
www.w3.org/2008/MW4D/wiki/Stories



FIX PHOTOS FOR FREE

A freely distributed open source software programme is available to correct imperfections in digital photos. GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP) provides software that enables you to retouch photos, compose images and author images. It works on many operating systems in many languages. GIMP’s fullscreen mode allows you to preview your artwork and do editing work using most of your screen estate.

www.gimp.org



OPEN THAT FILE WITHOUT EXPENSIVE SOFTWARE

Faced with the challenge of opening obscure file types, you don’t necessarily need to purchase new software. Openwith.org provides detailed information about most file extensions and links to free, open source programmes that can open and create each type of file.

www.openwith.org



TWITTER TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Twitter offers opportunities for teachers and students to communicate, connect and collaborate. This posting offers 100 tips, computer applications and resources for teachers, ranging from a beginner’s guide to Twitter and Twitter etiquette to educational applications and how to link up with other classrooms.

<http://onlinecollegedegree.org/2009/03/19/100-tips-apps-and-resources-for-teachers-on-twitter>

EDUCATION CONTENT ON YOUTUBE

The popular online video site YouTube has launched an educational hub that features content uploaded by colleges and universities. More than 100 colleges have set up channels on YouTube; this new section brings together all that content in one area, making it easier to find college lectures. The site now features more than 200 full college courses ranging from computer science and biology to psychology and law. Users can also see which college-produced videos are most popular.

And see COL’s videos at www.col.org/videos and Commonwealth TV at www.the-commonwealth.org/tv

www.youtube.com/edu