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A Quarterly of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia

From the Director's Desk...

Not a week goes by without an article, a feature, or an interview about the potential of new information and communication technologies to address the challenge of growth, reconstruction and change. During the one week I spent in Kabul, Afghanistan in June, I was witness and participant, both hopeful and fearful of the promise and the reality of the role of technology in our everyday lives. I used very high-speed Internet and state of the art computers while trying to develop a blueprint to reconstruct the educational radio and television service of a devastated country. I also suffered from the helplessness one feels when we are trying to reach the outside world by telephone. Having the Internet did not give me the warm body feeling that a phone call gives. Nor does it explain the pervasiveness of simpler media such as audio and videocassettes, VCDs and DVDs that have invaded that country. Such issues turned my thoughts to the more fundamental relationship between reach, access and audiences. We may have both, but in the absence of quality, we may lose both access and audiences.

And so, I realized that even in the rebuilding of the country, one cannot take our learners for granted. One needs to embed quality as a central feature. But what is quality? Is it an idea, a practice, a product or a service? Is it something or some aspect that can be imposed from outside? This debate about quality is what our guest column, written by Prof. V.S. Prasad, Vice Chancellor of BRAOU, engages in.

Quality underpins research and scholarship. Dr. Som Naidu writes about the opportunities and challenges of researching and publishing in distance education.

We profile the Global Knowledge Partnership, headquartered in Malaysia and doing pioneering work. We also describe the Commonwealth "Youth in Development Work" programme in this issue.

In our book reviews, we explore two very different books. And our other features are also there chronicling regional events; COL and CEMCA news, BiblioFile, Worth While Web sites.

We are also appreciative of the feedback we have received to our readership survey during the past issues of *EduComm Asia*. It is a validation of our efforts that this newsletter is read, on an average, by four persons per copy distributed.

But in all of our efforts, we are striving for that elusive element called "quality" as an intrinsic part of our daily work. We still are making mistakes and I am sure that you have found them. If quality is an inherent part of our work culture, then the other side of the coin would be accountability to you, our readers and to ourselves for the trust you have placed in us.

So would you please tell us about our errors of omission or commission so that we may take further corrective measures? I look forward to your responses.

Dr. Usha Vyasulu Reddi

Quality Higher Education



V.S. Prasad

Quality as Defining Element

Every age has its defining elements, which define the purpose and nature of social processes of that age. It is generally assumed that the tradition is the defining element of ancient society; religion is the defining element of the middle ages; reason is the defining element of modern society; and quality is the defining element of the knowledge society i.e., the society of the 21st century. Quality, in terms of fitness for purpose, excellence, perfection, standards, value for money, consistency, transformation and relevance, defines in different ways all the activities of knowledge society. Quality makes the knowledge relevant to social and individual needs. Quality also enables the persons, societies and nations to acquire the competencies required for living meaningfully in a competitive globalised world.

Education as Quality

Education, a process of creation, preservation and dissemination of knowledge, and development of skills and attitudes is an important

element and basis of a knowledge society. The quality of the knowledge society depends on the quality of education. The Chinese philosopher Confucius considered that the goal of education was to produce men of quality who combined competence with virtue. From this perspective we may consider education as quality. Quality defines the goal and purpose of education. Quality as fitness for purpose provides answers to the 'what' of education; Quality as excellence and standards in performance defines the processes of education; Quality as value for money provides benchmarks for the output of education and Quality as a

Quality as fitness for purpose provides answers to the 'what' of education; Quality as excellence and standards in performance defines the processes of education; Quality as value for money provides benchmarks for the output of education and Quality as a transformation gives us the indicators to judge the outputs of education. In this sense we may say that education is quality.

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The World of Work as anchor of quality education

Many educationists and other eminent scholars emphasize the unity of theory and practice in education. Somewhere we have missed this link in the practice of education, which is one of the

concerns, particularly in developing countries. More than unemployment, unemployable graduates are a serious concern in developing countries. How does one relate to the world of work is the key issue of concern and debate. Maybe an answer to this debate will provide the framework for describing quality education. There is a strong feeling that higher education graduates' skills no longer match the needs and the expectations of employment sectors. In one of the surveys in Britain, employers identified the top five skills required in the workforce as 1) Time management, 2) Ability to working under pressure, 3) Accuracy and attention to detail, 4) Oral communication skills and 5) Managing different tasks and obligations at the same time. Is the education system providing necessary training to students to acquire these skills? The answer in most of the cases is no. The UNESCO document on "Thematic Debate: The Requirements of the World of Work" critically examined this issue and made many useful observations and suggestions. To quote the report: "If we look in detail at the wealth of proposals made in various countries by employers and committees considering the future of higher education, and the majority of researchers analyzing the connections between higher education and work, graduates are expected to:

- be flexible
- be able and willing to contribute to innovation and be creative,
- be able to cope with uncertainties,
- be interested in and prepared for life-long learning,
- have acquired social sensitivity and communication skills,
- be able to work in teams,
- be willing to take on responsibilities,
- become entrepreneurial,
- prepare themselves for internationalization of the labour market through an understanding of various cultures,

- be versatile in generic skills which cut across different disciplines, and be literate in areas of knowledge which form the basis for various professional skills, for example in new technologies.

All the above can be the parameters /benchmarks to assess the quality of higher education. The curriculum design should include the teaching-learning process, which will enable the learner to acquire the skills and competencies required for the world of work.

Development as the anchor of Quality Education

A well-defined efficient education and training system capable of meeting the educational requirements of diverse sections of society is *a must* for development. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are considered as the basic directional framework for the educational institutions in the new millennium. Basic education, poverty alleviation, good governance, health care are some of the components of these MDGs. These goals provide the benchmarks for the quality of higher education in the new millennium.

Technology as an anchor of quality education

In this knowledge society Information Communication Technology (ICT) is extensively used for education and training. Sir John Daniel rightly observes that throughout history, education has been constrained by an eternal triangle of quality, access and cost. But we want wider access to quality education at low cost. But conventional teaching methods cannot deliver that combination. With conventional methods quality tends to go down when you increase access or cut costs. Sir John Daniel further says that open universities are revolutionary because they have broken this eternal triangle, by providing more

access to quality education at lower costs. The technology further enables access to education to everyone overcoming the limitations of space and time. This internationalization / globalization of educational processes has resulted in greater competition stimulating the drive for more quality. Intermeshing pedagogy and the quality of ICT enabled education and training is a challenging task. In the context of global competition only the best will survive. This leads us to discuss the place of best practices in quality assurance.

Best practices as images of quality

Best practices are the images of the system. Aristotle said that it is impossible to think without images. The best practices followed by different institutions not only provide images to the institutions, but also stimulate the replication of the process by other institutions. The National Assessment Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous accreditation agency has identified Healthy Practices as one of the seven parameters to assess the quality of higher education institutions in India. The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) strongly advocated the encouragement and consideration of good practices as one of the parameters of quality education. The University Grants Commission and Ministry of Human Resource Development have designed many schemes to encourage Best Practices in higher education.

The criteria for determining and describing Best Practices are a complex process. By and large, we have to make judgments rather than measure quality objectively. In the absence of proper criteria there is a danger of judging by appearances instead of *judging* appearances. The input factors, the process factors and the output factors should be taken into account in identifying the criteria of best

practices. The criteria of economy, efficiency and effectiveness may be also used in identifying the best practices. Another way of identifying the best practices is the inductive approach. The practitioners may be asked to describe their best practices and the criteria they have applied in their identification justifying their choices logically. From this, one can discuss the benchmarks of best practices as perceived by practitioners. The INQAAHE suggested some guidelines for the identification and application of good practices. The best practices:

- should be dynamic and revisited periodically;
- should recognize diversity and cultural and historical contexts;
- should not lead to dominance of one specific view or approach; and
- should promote quality of performance.

In addition to this complex problem of criteria/benchmarks of best practices, there are a few other concerns in the sharing and adoption of best practices by the institutions. Some of these are:

Recording of best practices

There is a strong oral tradition in the Indian education system. The recording of practices is very sketchy and mechanical. A reliable database is also necessary for preparing records. Proper recording of best practices is a pre-condition for assessment and adaptation. The NAAC self-study Report Format is useful to record practices. Maybe a more analytical format will have to be developed which will facilitate the better appreciation of the processes and outcomes of the best practices. The Peer Team Reports of NAAC also provide useful information on best practices of the accredited institutions.

Access to information on best practices

Knowledge is a social product and all institutions should realize that they have a social responsibility to

share knowledge with all interested persons. The willingness to share ideas and concepts and openness to discuss common areas of interest and concern should be inculcated among all the educational institutions. The MIT initiated and UNESCO supported project *Open Educational Resources* is a welcome development in the field of education. The ICT can be used extensively for sharing information and knowledge of best practices.

Contextualization of best practices

Every institution in some sense is a world in itself. The contextualization of best practices i.e., adaptation of the practices to suit the needs of the institution is a daunting task. Steve Rivrein and Fraser Seitel in their book *Idea wise* observe -- “the best ideas are borrowed ideas”. According to them the genius is in adapting someone else's solution to your problem. Your ideas need to be original only in their adaptation to the problem you are currently working on. Creativity in a fresh application of existing knowledge is required for contextualisation of best practices.

Institutionalization of best practices

One of the setbacks quality education receives is due to the fact that best practices are mostly leader-centric. It is true that the transformative leaders i.e., leaders who have the ability to translate intentions into reality, play a critical role in the development of any institution. But it should be also realized that it is equally important to institutionalize the best practices to sustain them. The institutionalization refers to a process of making the best practices an integral part of the institutional working. What is left after the leader has left is the merit of the leader and this, which brings credibility to the institution rather than what is done when he is present. V.C. Kulandai Swamy, distinguished former Vice-Chancellor of three universities and eminent educationist has rightly titled his essay on his contribution

to education as “My Legacy: Measure of My Merit”.

Internalization of best practices


Institutionalization of best practices is possible when there is an internalization of these practices among all the categories of staff from the top to the bottom. Men (including women) are the measure of everything of all practices. The best practices should become a part of the working culture of everyone in the institution. Learning should be a continuous process with openness to new ideas. Critical reflection and the spirit of innovation should be encouraged and cultivated. We must create consequences for our performance setting ourselves goals in concrete and achievable terms. Maybe we

One of the setbacks quality education receives is due to the fact that best practices are mostly leader-centric. It is true that the transformative leaders i.e., leaders who have the ability to translate intentions into reality, play a critical role in the development of any institution.

have to overcome our trained incapacities inherited from the burden of past, uncertainties of the present and the fear of the future. Sigmund Freud, master analyst of human motivation, rightly observes -- “internalization is possible if it is linked to the survival instinct”. Maybe taking a cue from this understanding of human nature, the University Grants Commission is contemplating the idea of introducing contractual appointments to teaching positions in Indian Universities. It is very disturbing however, to observe that quality is considered as a function of insecurity, rather than as a feature of positive motivation.

The Quality Culture Culture is a way of life. Educational culture is the way the education is practiced. There is a

need to develop the quality culture in our institutions. This refers to a set of beliefs and behaviours, doing things in a particular way i.e., the way of Quality. Quality is an attitude. More than the physical infrastructure, the mental infrastructure is required for quality. Mental infrastructure means a sincerity of purpose, of vision, a purity of heart and mind and a conviction about doing one's work with sincerity. The feudal culture of institutions, which are built on personal loyalty, may conflict with the Quality culture, which recognizes performance only. Action is the measure of success. In public organizations we are swinging from hierarchy to anarchy. Quality should act as the balancing anchor. The academic leadership has an important role in creating a work environment that encourages performance. Leadership has to set an example. Leadership means making a difference. When asked for a message Mahatma Gandhi is supposed to have said “my life is my message”. If we are asked what is Quality, how many of us will be able to say, “my work is my Quality”. Let me end with another quote from Mahatma Gandhi: “We must be the change that we wish to see in the World”.

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Educational Media Consultants

CEMCA is in the process of developing a database of Educational Media Consultants in the region to promote the exchange of professionals and utilise the expertise available within the region. For inclusion in the database send your resume to Director, CEMCA or register online at <http://www.cemca.org>.

Spotlight on...

Global Knowledge Partnership: World's First Multi-stakeholder Partnership in ICT for Development



The Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) is a worldwide network of organizations committed to harnessing the potentials of information and communication technologies (ICT) for sustainable development. It is the world's first multi-stakeholder ICT for Development (ICT4D) partnership at the global level, with members comprising governments, donor agencies, private sector companies, civil society, networks and international institutions.

Background to the GKP

In June 1997, development stakeholders from 144 countries came together for the first Global Knowledge Conference (GK97) in Canada. Hosted by the World Bank and the Government of Canada, and supported by a large group of public and private organisations, this was the first conference of its kind in the world to address Information Age challenges facing developed countries and the international community. Five months later in New York, the GKP emerged.

Building on the success of GK97, the Government of Malaysia hosted the second Global Knowledge Conference (GKII) in 2000, which saw a 75 per cent representation from developing countries. GKII effectively brought the voices of these nations to the attention of the development community, and areas for collective action were identified.

In 2001, the GKP Secretariat moved from the World Bank Institute to Kuala Lumpur under a new EXCOMM chaired by the Government of Switzerland, represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Partnership Principles

Commitment to effective partnerships sits at the core of the GKP. This is encapsulated in its core principles:

- All Partners maintain their own identity and autonomy have equal rights and are enabled to design their own future.
- Shared values and mutual respect are key.
- Transparency and trust are essential.



Areas of Activity

The GKP maximizes its impact by facilitating advocacy in global policy dialogues on ICT for Development, providing services that enhance its members' individual and collective efficiency and effectiveness, and increasing the availability of information and knowledge on ICT for development and empowerment.

GKP Thematic Focus Areas

GKP is harnessing the Partnership's knowledge and experiences on ICT4D programmes that focus on

gender, youth, media & communications, poverty reduction, governance, local content & indigenous knowledge, multi-stakeholder partnerships and financing ICT4D.

Selected GKP Milestones

Bridging the Digital Divide Consultation and Recommendations to the G-8 Dot Force

GKP conducted a member consultation which brought in lessons learned from concrete GKP-member projects on the ground from around the world. The GKP contribution helped the Dot Force consult non G-8 members, particularly those in the developing world and outside of official government channels, on the proposed Dot Force plan of action.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the GKP and the UN ICT Task Force

(www.unicttaskforce.org) in the third quarter of 2002 paved the way for future collaboration and joint action in various areas. These include the sharing of information and knowledge, including lessons learned by GKP members and joint regional thematic events. In addition, GKP members are represented in the UN ICT TF membership and the advisory panel.

GKP co-organized a Gathering of Stakeholders with the Global Digital Divide Initiative (GDDI) of the **World Economic Forum** (WEF) in conjunction with the East Asia Business Summit, held in Kuala Lumpur in October 2002. WEF expressed interest in further working collaborations with the GKP.

The Secretariat of the **World Summit on the Information Society** (www.geneva2003.org) has recognized the importance of the GKP as an organization that represents and embodies multi-stakeholder approaches and initiatives towards realizing an

information society. The GKP will bring its knowledge and experience to the WSIS process and events by channelling developing country views and concerns, facilitating the participation and advocacy of marginalised stakeholder groups,



providing thematic inputs based on consultations and co-organising thematic events.

The "**Youth Creating Digital Opportunities**" (YCDO) Coalition, the core component of the GKP Youth Strategy, was launched at a reception held in conjunction with WSIS PrepCom2 in Geneva on 20 February 2003. Spearheaded by GKP, TakingITGlobal and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the YCDO Coalition is comprised of organizations committed to realizing the potential of young people as leaders in using information and communications technologies (ICTs) to achieve more sustainable development in their communities and around the world.

At GKII in 2000, GKP enabled **gender issues in ICT4D** to be pushed to the fore in terms of the inclusion of a cross-cutting gender perspective as well as gender-specific recommendations. GKII outcomes were then channelled into the ASEAN Biennial Meeting of the Confederation of Women's Organisations and the UN Beijing+5 General Assembly on "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

Current/Upcoming GKP Initiatives

The e-Awareness Seminar Series for Asian Parliamentarians (e-ASSAP)

To sensitize high-level Asian

parliamentarians on the use of ICT for the development and transformations of their constituencies and nation, the GKP, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP) are organising 3 regional seminars in Hanoi, Vietnam (for Parliamentarians from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, China and South Korea) ; Colombo, Sri Lanka (for parliamentarians from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan) and Delhi, India (for parliamentarians from India).

Forum on ICTs and Gender

GKP is co-organizing this event along with the Commonwealth of Learning in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 20-23 August 2003 to foster a greater appreciation of the gender-related barriers that exist in developing and developed countries, to develop an



understanding of why women need access to ICT, and to discuss strategies for overcoming these barriers. This will translate into policies that support women's access to ICT and successful networking to enhance women's participation in the information economy, especially in the developing world.

ICT4D Platform@WSIS

GKP and the Government of Switzerland, represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are organizing an ICT4D platform at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, 10-12 Dec 2003, to encourage joint action in increasing access to knowledge and information through ICT,

strengthen the voice of the disadvantaged by promoting the use of ICT, facilitate networking and knowledge-sharing; and showcase worldwide ICT4D best practices and lessons learnt.

All stakeholders in ICT4D are invited to participate in the Platform. Stakeholders can present their programs, exchange experiences and build up new partnerships at the ICT4D marketplace, workshops, discussions and forums. More info: <http://www.ict-4d.org>

GKP Youth Award

The GKP Youth Award aims to reward and bring international recognition to the outstanding work of young people who have used information communication technologies (ICT) for the promotion of development around the world. The winner of the USD10,000 award will be honoured at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland.

GKP Gender & ICTs Awards

GKP and the Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) have initiated 'The Gender and ICT Awards'. Inviting submissions under the "Multi-stakeholder" and "Community-based/Individual" categories, the US\$8,000 per-category Awards aim to recognise gender and ICT initiatives globally and provide further impetus for others to mainstream gender in the



field of ICTs; and therefore support a number of internationally agreed recommendations for gender

equality, women's rights and empowerment.

GKP Seed Grant and Small Innovative Projects Fund (SGSIP Fund) Supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), GKP invites project proposals for pilot projects or from new or ongoing small-scale initiatives, not exceeding US\$25,000, with a focus on developing countries. Projects proposed should facilitate innovation using ICTs from the ground-up to further strengthen and promote the growth and maturity of civil society participation in the Information Society. Furthermore, they should promote and facilitate the fertilization of multi-stakeholder partnerships for the up-scaling and/or replication of small-scale and community-based initiatives.

ICT & Media Training Programme for Women's Journalists in South Asia As an outcome of the ICT & Media Workshop held during the GKP South Asia Regional Meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh (15-17 September 2002), a training



programme for South Asian women journalists was mooted to familiarise them to the potential of using new media, the internet, websites, mailing lists and discussion forums, newsgroups and multimedia for communications. **ECA**

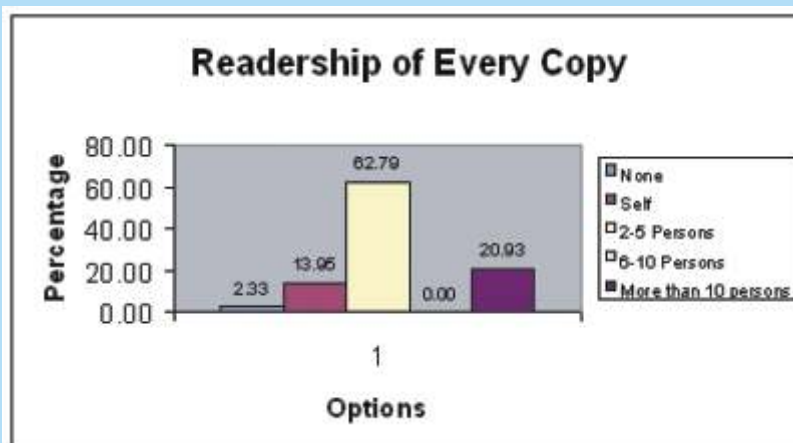
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Research shows...

EduComm Asia Reader's Survey

Results of the **EduComm Asia** reader's survey show very encouraging results, and endorse some of our understanding of the needs of the professionals working in the field of media and education. To our survey 81.4 % of male and 18.6% of female readers responded. Respondents indicated their areas of interests as: Educational Technology (11.51%), e-Learning (9.92%), Multimedia and Distance Learning (9.52%), Training and Development (9.13%) amongst others. Their main occupations are in the areas of: Education and Training (31.11%), Research (28.89%), Development (13.33%), and Policy-making (8.89%). All the sections of the newsletter received excellent and good ratings, and the most interesting sections were (in order): Guest Column, Case Study, Book Review and Worth While Web, and SMART Tips and Forthcoming Events. 57.5% of the respondents said they preserved the copy of **EduComm Asia** for future reference. The readership is quite satisfactory, as on average 4 persons read every copy of EduComm Asia.



Educational Media Database

As an ongoing project CEMCA has been developing and maintaining a database of educational audio and video programmes produced in the region. The database currently has more than 6000 records. The purpose of the database is to act as a reference point for sharing of information and resources. Educational institutions in the region are requested to continuously send us list of audio and video programmes produced by them for updating the database. By submitting information for inclusion in the database you are actually making it available to a wider community of users through our online website and the offline CD ROM. Now, it has also been decided to supply the database and its regular updates to participating institutions. Therefore please share information about your audio and video programmes and co-operate in updating this database. For further details contact: *Director, CEMCA*.

Case Study...

Youth in Development Work: Defining the Role of Youth

Prabha Chawla

Often courses are developed in a vacuum without defining clearly what the qualified person needs to know and be able to do (knowledge and skills) to operate effectively in their chosen field. In consequence, such courses tend to become a mixture of sociology, psychology, human growth and development and other subjects. A more systematic analysis of the needs of those who practice youth in development work, and those who employ them, points to:

- a broader academic curriculum including, for example, moral philosophy, ethics, social psychology, management theory; and
- more specific coverage of the skills required for the work and the range of settings in which it will take place.

These disparate elements are given coherence by the underpinning theory of youth in development work, which informs the students about what they are expected to familiarize themselves and to articulate clearly to others. Particularly in an emerging area such as 'Youth in Development Work', it is easy for language to obscure the nature of the tasks to be performed. There is a danger of assuming that a consensus exists about what they need to be able to do, and to juxtapose it against an allied field. To raise the profile of the work it is necessary to describe what is done, how it is done and why it is done. It is all the more important when establishing partnerships with other institutions to deliver or accredit training

programmes. The real requirements of the work to be done should control the curriculum.

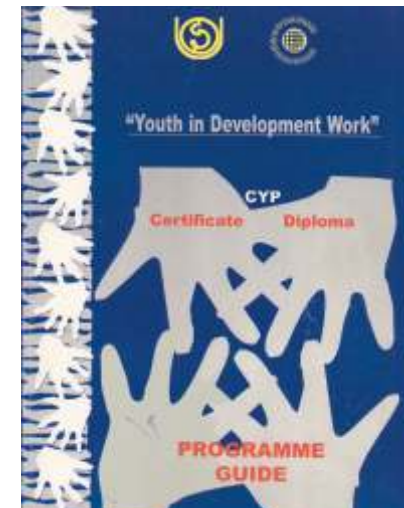
Although youth in development work will carry out their roles in a wide range of settings, it is possible to identify the generic core competencies they require if they are to be effective practitioners. These define distinctive character of the work not only the specific knowledge and skills required, but the ethos. Functional analysis is a useful tool to describe the many components of a professional role, but training needs equally to be animated by the spirit and the prevailing tone of the work. In order to achieve this, the generic core competencies for the programme are organized under three main functions. These are enabling, ensuring, and empowering:

- **Enabling** is about creating the conditions in which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than relying on other people and especially professionals to do things for them.
- **Ensuring** is about operating in accordance with the value systems which give a sense of purpose and meaning to how young people use their skills and knowledge.
- **Empowering** is about putting democratic principles into action in the fullest sense, so that young people can play an assertive and constructive part

in the decision-making that affects them at different levels of society.

These three functions are not value-free. They are rooted in the Commonwealth values and principles as set out in 'Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles' (1971) and the 'Harare Commonwealth Declaration' (1991). Keeping view these goals, and understanding the role of young people in shaping the future of the world, a training programme on "Youth in Development Work" was conceived by the Commonwealth Secretariat, London, under the 'Commonwealth youth Programme' (CYP). The main objectives of this programme are to equip the practitioners to:

- Effectively carry out needs assessments;
- Initiate and manage appropriate youth work responses;



- Help other workers in allied fields;
- Develop appropriate policy responses; and
- Secure the necessary resources.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme has been running face to face residential training in various parts of the Commonwealth for more than 20 years through its Regional Centres in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and South Pacific with the support of the Pan-



Commonwealth Declarations

The Harare Commonwealth Declaration, 1991

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/whoware/declarations/harare.html>

The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, 1971

<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/whoware/declarations/singapore.html>

Commonwealth Office. As a result, the CYP developed a wealth of expertise in the education and training of youth in development



works. The quality of the programme and a higher demand from Commonwealth member states resulted in the emergence of the idea of distance delivery of the programme. For this purpose the University of Huddersfield in the United Kingdom prepared the distance learning materials in consultation with experts in the commonwealth. In the Asian region the distance education programme on “Youth in Development Work” is being implemented in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka through National Open Universities. In India, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is delivering the programme through the distance mode.

The learning materials used for the programme are in 15 modules:

- Module 1: Commonwealth's Values informing CYP's Youth
- Module 2: Young People and Society
- Module 3: Principles and Practice of Youth in Development
- Module 4: Working with People in their Communities
- Module 5: Gender and Development
- Module 6: Learning Processes
- Module 7: Management Skills
- Module 8: Project Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation
- Module 9: Policy, Planning and Implementation
- Module 10: Conflict Resolution Strategies and Skills
- Module 11: Promoting Enterprises and Economic Development

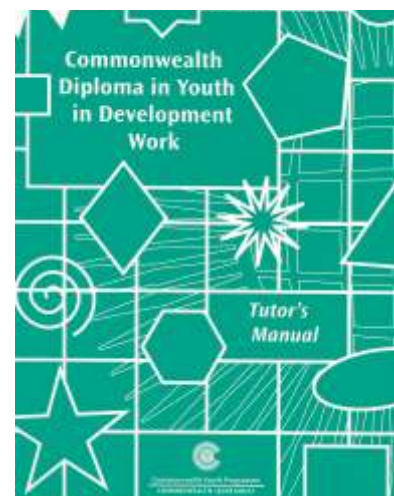
- Module 12: Youth and Health
- Module 13: Sustainable Development and Environmental Issues
- Module 14: Personality Development and Communication
- Module 15: Population and Family Life Education



At IGNOU the first project cycle of the programme completed in December 2001 with intake of 438 students, of which 131 were female. Though the basic minimum qualification for joining the programme is 10+2, all the learners in the project cycle have higher qualifications with 128 graduates and 192 postgraduates. There were 143 students from rural background, and occupation-wise 132 were working in NGOs, 114 in Govt. sector, and 157 in youth development organizations. The programme is now in its second offer. IGNOU's delivery approach for the programme is based on the concept of supported distance education, where regular face-to-face support is provided to all the learners through designated study centres and counselors. As the programme do not have any audio and video component, IGNOU conducts tele-counseling for supporting the learners from the headquarters. The programme has both continuous and term-end assessment for certification purpose. An interesting feature of the programme is that students and counselors meet in the beginning of the programme in a particular region. Thus IGNOU conducts regional induction programmes in East, West, North and South to facilitate meeting of youth in development workers from various parts of the country. The Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs, Government of India provides financial support to this induction

event under its national integration programme. So far 55 students from the pilot cycle have completed the programme successfully. These students receive certificate from the University of Huddersfield, UK and IGNOU separately. For completing module 1-6, IGNOU awards “Certificate in Youth in Development Work” and after completing all the modules Diploma is awarded.

Youth in Development Work is concerned with the personal and social development of young people in its broadest sense. It uses the methods of informal education, which seek learning opportunities that arise outside the formal worlds of education, training and work. It is influenced by community development in that it works with young people in the context of the community in which they live; it builds community by using its strengths and skills in the development of services; it accepts its accountability to the communities in which it operates.



The Youth in Development Work programme provides a framework for consultation and partnership amongst various agencies in implementing the programme, and since it is an international programme, it crosses the barriers and boundaries of ethnicity, gender, culture and language. **ECA**

Prof. Prabha Chawla is currently Coordinator of the CYP- Youth in Development Work at Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. This case study is based on the Tutor's Manual of the programme. She can be reached at prabhachawla@hotmail.com

BiblioFile...

Murphy, D. ; Shin, N. and Zhang, Weiyuan (eds) (2002) *Advancing Online Learning in Asia*, OUHK Press: Hong Kong ISBN: 962-7707-31-7

Rapid spread of online learning has had a radical effect on education across the globe. Yet until now, much of the literature on online learning has focused on the West. This book is a collection of papers, which highlight the great wealth of research being carried out in Asian countries to maximize the effective use of this new educational tool. Themes investigated in the book include: User attitudes towards online learning; Online students' need and expectations; Cyberculture vs campus culture; Student access to Internet; and Online communication and collaboration.

Reddi, Usha V. and Mishra, Sanjaya (Eds) (2003) *Educational Multimedia: A Handbook for Teacher-Developers*, CEMCA: New Delhi, ISBN: 81-88770-00-0

Multimedia has always fascinated the educationists for its strengths to communicate difficult concepts in simple ways. With the availability of more and more sophisticated computers with multimedia capabilities, the potentialities to use multimedia have also grown tremendously. In the world of Open and Distance Education dependent on self-learning materials, the use of multimedia enriches the teaching learning experiences by providing a multi-sensory perspective. While it has been acknowledged that multimedia can be useful in teaching and learning scenario in both face-to-face and distance learning, educators tend to have a notion that, developing multimedia requires knowledge of high-end programming. This is true only to some extent. But today, availability of software like Flash, Director, 3D Studio Max, etc enables us to develop multimedia lessons with little practice of the software. This handbook intends to help teachers in clarifying the basic concepts of multimedia and will take them through the various issues involved in development of educational multimedia.

Naidu, Som (2003) *E-Learning: A Guidebook of Principles, Procedures and Practices*, CEMCA: New Delhi ISBN: 81-88770-01-9

This guidebook will help you to systematically approach your engagement with e-learning, irrespective of the educational sector or level within which you may be working. The content of this guidebook has been carefully selected to enable you to consider all the issues in relation to e-learning. Besides the great deal of resources that you have access to in this guidebook, its unique feature is the opportunity it provides you to "tell us a story" about your experiences in relation to the issue or subject under discussion. Telling a story requires you to pause, slow down, reflect, learn, access and share your experiences or connect in a meaningful way with others. These are opportunities designed to remind you of relevant experiences, which will enable you to reflect upon your experiences and those of your colleagues. They will enable you to make better sense of what you are reading in this guidebook.

Bradley, Jo (Ed) (2003) *The Open Classroom*, Kogan Page: London ISBN: 0-7494-3131-8

This book features contributions from leading experts around the world, including the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, Canada and India. It outlines the crucial issues surrounding in- and out-of-school distance learning, provides best-practice examples and also inspiring case studies that illustrate both established success stories and the latest groundbreaking developments.

Littlejohn, Allison (2003) *Reusing Online Resources*, Kogan Page: London ISBN: 0-7494-3950-5

It offers an international vision on reusing online materials by providing valuable insights into this rapidly developing and critically important area of research and practice. The book covers theoretical perspectives, educational design issues, perspectives on educational resources, and strategic issues related to development and implementation of e-learning projects. **ECA**

Research Proposals Invited

In order to promote research in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) application in education and especially in distance learning, CEMCA invites research proposals from teachers and scholars for appropriate funding. Proposals

should focus on action research for institutional building. Appropriate duration of the research should be between 6-9 months. Funding will not be given for purchase of capital equipments, and salary of research staff. Research proposals can be submitted anytime during the year. The present thrust areas include, but are not limited to:

- Digital divide

- Multimedia applications
- Online learning
- Teleconferencing
- Appropriate media use
- Gender issues in technology
- Technology for people with disabilities


For application format and guidelines contact: Director, CEMCA.

Regional Roundup...

PhD Programme on Distance Education at BRAOU

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad recently launched its PhD programme in Open and Distance Education in a simple ceremony held on 19th May 2003. The PhD programme will be offered under the G. Ram Reddy Research Academy of Distance Education (GRADE) of the University. Prof. C. Subba Rao, Chairman, AP State Council of Higher Education, Chief Guest for the occasion, released the following publications of BRAOU:

- Open and Distance Learning in Andhra Pradesh
- Quality Assurance Series: Planning and Design of Academic Programmes
- Quality Assurance Series: Development of Curriculum and Learning Materials
- Quality Assurance Series: House and Print Style Manual

Referring to the publication on Open and Distance Learning in Andhra Pradesh, Prof. V. S. Prasad, Vice-Chancellor, BRAOU observed that the publication will go a long way in providing basic data about the ODL practices in the state, which has the distinction of being the first to start an Open University in 1982. 

IGNOU to Train Public Sector Staff

The Union Labour Ministry of Govt. of India will use the services of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in enhancing skills of employees, both in the public and organized sectors. This includes training of vocational instructors at the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across

the country. "Skill development is required for all sections of society. Lack of education shouldn't stop a skilled worker from excelling in his/her field. Distance education, with its scope for using facilities like teleconferencing and interactive electronic media support, alone can ensure proper training, testing and certification of the existing workforce in the country," Labour Minister Sahib Singh said recently. He was inaugurating a special interactive teleconferencing session at IGNOU's Electronic Media Production Center to explore the possibilities of collaboration between the Labour Ministry and the University in training employees of the institutions under the Ministry. IGNOU Vice-Chancellor H P Dikshit said the University was ready to take up the challenge of catering to the invisible, distant learner in the country and abroad.

Source:
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/holnus/02182010.htm> 

Jeevika 2003

The Centre for Civil Society, India invites documentaries for JEEVIKA 2003: A National Livelihood Documentary Competition. It is the first national level documentary Competition focussing on livelihood--an issue that affects us all.

People earn their livelihood in myriad ways: catch fish; collect medicinal leaves and fuel wood in forests; work on the farm or in the factory; pull a cycle-rickshaw, sell water, vegetables, or food on the roadside; market information, opinion, and entertainment; rent land, money, or property; run an enterprise of a repair shop or road construction. The economic freedom to produce and sell a product or a service is as critical as political and civil liberties. Its infringement affects as much a fisherman, a farmer, as a factory worker.

The documentary shall focus on legal and regulatory restrictions,

bureaucratic process of approvals and licenses with attendant extortion and harassment as well as social and cultural norms and religious practices that prevent or constrain people from earning an honest living in the vocation of their choice. These procedures and practices coupled with the lack of rule of law, absence of transparency and accountability in governance, and poor enforcement of individual rights including property rights take away the freedom to earn a living. Zoom in on a mode of livelihood and capture the struggles! Young Indian filmmakers are particularly encouraged to participate in the competition. For details, please visit <http://www.ccsindia.org/jeevika.htm>



Kerala to set up Virtual University

A Virtual University would be set up in Kerala, India, which would help the state acquire timely information on agricultural trade and marketing as per the recommendation of the M S Swaminathan Commission on WTO concerns on agriculture, K R Gowri, Minister for Agriculture, has said.

Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Govt. Of Kerala, K R Gowri recently said that a herbal bio-valley for conserving herbal plants would also be set up in the state and steps would be taken to protect the agricultural produce in accordance with geographical indications.

A high-level committee on biotechnology and IT had been formed to study the diseases affecting crops and the decline in agricultural production. The panel's recommendations would be submitted to the Government soon.

Source:
<http://www.keralanext.com/news/print.asp?id=10991> 

ADB Loan for Sri Lanka's Distance Learning Project

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is helping to modernize Sri

Lanka's postsecondary education system through a US\$45 million equivalent loan approved for a project to increase access to distance and on-line learning programs. The Distance Education Modernization Project aims to provide a full range of quality courses for secondary school graduates who lack access to conventional universities by setting up a national network of telecenters and affiliated facilities in existing schools. Over 18 years, the project will provide about 1.4 million additional students with access to postsecondary education. Less than 3% of the university age group in Sri Lanka is enrolled in public universities - compared with 8% for South Asia as a whole - even though 25% meet university requirements. "New learning technologies such as distance learning can deliver excellent yet low-cost academic programs to a


wider public that is currently excluded from the conventional system," says William Loxley, an ADB Principal Education Specialist.

The Government has been developing multimedia university programs on several campuses. Sri Lanka also has an Open University system enrolling about 10,000 students per year in certificate, diploma and degree programs. Building on this, the project will boost the enrolment, quality, and relevance of distance learning by supporting a Distant Education Partnership Program (DEPP) for up to 200,000 students over five years.

Building on synergies with other ADB and World Bank initiatives, the project is expected also to provide better online learning facilities for 165,000 existing external degree students of

traditional universities and more than 40,000 enrolled at private postsecondary education institutions.

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$60 million equivalent, of which the Government will provide \$10 million and the local beneficiaries will finance the remaining \$5 million equivalent. ADB's loan, from its concessionary Asian Development Fund, will meet 75% of the cost. It has a 32-year term, including a grace period of eight years, with interest charged at 1.0% per year during the grace period and 1.5% per annum subsequently. The executing agency is the Ministry of Policy Development and Implementation. The project is due for completion by mid-2009.

Source:
<http://adb.org/Documents/News/2003/nr2003084.asp> 


CEMCA News...

GDE Net South Asia Node Activated

The Global Distance Education Network South Asia Node was recently activated at CEMCA. The Editorial Advisory Board of the node met recently to discuss about the kinds of materials to be uploaded and how to develop the literature database and make it useful to the researchers in the region. Members of the editorial




board include: Dr. Usha V. Reddi, Dr. Neela Jagannathan, Prof. V. Venkaiah, Dr. Romesh Verma, Dr. Rozhan M. Idrus, Dr. Shironica Karunanayaka and Dr. Sanjaya

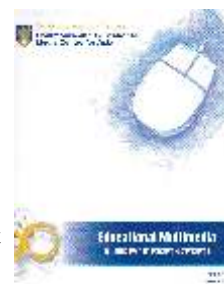
Mishra. Three literature uploading cycle (with due dates in October, February and June) have been decided to put the literature in the website in Acrobat Portable Digital Format. The GDE Net has been planned as a source of quality literature on distance education. Further details can be accessed at <http://www.col.org/disted>. Suggestions about any literature to be uploaded to the site may be sent to cegdenetsa@cemca.org. 

New Publications from CEMCA

As a result of our series of workshops on Multimedia and e-Learning, we have been able to bring out the following publications that can be used independently to learn about multimedia and e-learning without attending a workshop. However, these documents will enrich our workshops as basic reading materials and provide additional support for undertaking practical exercises.

- Educational Multimedia: A Handbook for Teacher-Developers
- E-Learning: A Guidebook of Principles, Procedures and Practices
- Educational Broadcasting in the Commonwealth

These documents are available free of cost for downloading from our website at <http://www.cemca.org>. For print copies please write to Director, CEMCA. 



Worth While Web...

*The Internet and its World Wide Web has become a great source of information. However, finding quality and reliable information is still a problem. In this issue we focus on **Mailing List Software and Services**. We hope these links would be useful to you in design and developments of electronic discussion groups. All the links were working fine at the time of going to the press.*

Free Mailing List Management Software

Listserv Free Edition: The Free Edition is a freeware version of LISTSERV Lite, limited to a maximum of 10 mailing lists with up to 500 subscribers each. This version costs absolutely nothing as long as the licensee does not derive a profit, directly or indirectly, from using the software. You can download the Free Edition from our WWW or FTP servers.

<http://www.lsoft.com/download/default.asp?item=listservfree>

Email2Group 0.5: Send HTML personalized e-mail for newsletters or others. Specify the compatible text version for older e-mail clients. Use Dreamweaver, Frontpage, or your favorite HTML editor to create the e-mail.

<http://download.com.com/3000-2367-10206768.html?tag=lst-0-14>

Npust email List Manager 1.01: Npust email list manager is a high performance mailing list management application that will allow you to manage your email lists faster and easier than ever before.

Npust email list manager is freeware for personal use. Commercial use is not authorized without agreement.
<http://download.com.com/3000-2369-10170842.html?tag=lst-0-16>

Mojo Mail is an easy E-mail List Management System to use on your website. It works on any site that can run CGI scripts, and can be set up in minutes.
<http://sourceforge.net/projects/mojomail/>

Mailman is the GNU mailing list manager. It provides standard list management features, integrated with a web interface.

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/mailman/>

Mailing Lists is a phpWebSite 0.9.x module that allows administrators to send out mass messages to visitors who have subscribed to various lists. This module is ideal for community news websites using phpWebSite.

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/maillinglists/>

ListProc is a UNIX based automated information distribution and retrieval system for electronic mailing lists and file archives. ListProc is intended to be easy to maintain, support and use.

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/listproc/>

Majordomo is a program, which automates the management of Internet mailing lists. Commands are sent to Majordomo via electronic mail to handle all aspects of list maintenance. Once a list is set up, virtually all operations can be performed remotely by email, requiring no intervention upon the postmaster of the list site.

<http://www.greatcircle.com/majordomo/>

Free Mailing List Services

The services listed on below provides free mailing list to webmasters, content providers, clubs, friends, colleagues, families, etc. Mailing lists will enhance the power of your email allowing your user group or community to communicate and share ideas quickly via email. Mailing lists are perfect for sharing files, collaborate for research and discuss issues of mutual interest worldwide.

Coollist

<http://www.coollist.com/>

Notifylist

<http://www.notifylist.com/>

QuickTopic

<http://www.quicktopic.com/>

Topica

<http://www.topica.com/>

YahooGroups

<http://groups.yahoo.com/>

Compiled from the World Wide Web by Sanjaya Mishra, PhD 

Encouraging Doctoral Research in Media

In order to promote doctoral research in educational media, CEMCA invites research scholars to undertake research on utilization of educational media, and in various other areas of media and learning. A modest funding will be given to cover survey and report writing work. Registered research scholars are requested to apply in the application format, which can be available from the **Director, CEMCA**

Technology Tracking...

The Art of Blogging - Part 1

Overview, Definitions, Uses, and Implications

George Siemens

Introduction

Innovations build on existing perceptions and structures - at least until the new ideas are fully manifested. Then, the innovation discards the shackles of the old model and stands on its own merits and strengths. The development of video is often used to support this phenomenon. Video was initially used only to tape existing live stage performances - a new concept built on the perceptual structure of the existing. True innovation in this medium did not occur until someone recognized the uniqueness of video, and the limitations of live stage shows. Through utilizing the characteristics of the new media, new approaches to entertainment and communication were realized. One-dimensional stage presentations were replaced with rich multi-angle, close up, edited, polished video enhanced through the use of special effects.

The Internet is still in the embryonic stages of standing on its own characteristics.

Communication and content presentation strategies still mirror existing models, particularly newspaper and magazine publishing. Email, for example, is merely an extension of existing mail systems. As such, it is about bending a new medium to an existing process.

BLOGGER

Blogging is using a new medium for what it is good for - connecting and interacting. Blogging is a first generation tool built on, and taking advantage of, the unique attributes of the Internet. It has been dismissed as a self-centered passing fad...and as the new model of interactive journalism, communication, and learning. This

article explores the uses, benefits, implications, and art of blogging.

What is blogging?

Blogging, as with any new (or in transition) concept, is difficult to define - it has not yet fully become what it will be. Here are some attempts to define blogging:

- "If we look beneath the content of weblogs, we can observe the common ground all bloggers share -- the format. The weblog format provides a framework for our universal blog experiences, enabling the social interactions we associate with blogging...These tools spit out our varied content in the same format -- archives, permalinks, time stamps, and date headers." (Meg Hourihan: <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/javascript/2002/06/13/megnut.html>)
- Dave Winer defines weblogs as being: personal, on the web, published, and part of communities (<http://newhome.weblogs.com/personalWebPublishingCommunities>).
- Halley Suitt details multiple characteristics, including: last place on earth to tell the truth, watching brains at work, a love letter, a diary, an open head - for the reader's convenience.
- "But what bloggers do is completely new - and cannot be replicated on any other medium. It's somewhere in between writing a column and talk radio. It's genuinely new. And it harnesses the web's real genius - its ability to empower anyone to do what only a few in the past could genuinely pull off. In that sense, blogging is the first journalistic model that actually harnesses rather than merely exploits the true democratic nature of the web. It's a new medium finally finding a unique voice." (Andrew Sullivan:

<http://newhome.weblogs.com/personalWebPublishingCommunities>).

- "The best description I've read regarding blogging is that "it's somewhere between writing a column and talk radio."" (Cass McNutt)
- "A blog is defined as a Website with dated entries, usually by a single author, often accompanied by links to other blogs that the site's editor visits on a regular basis. Think of a blog as one person's public diary or suggestion list. Early blogs were started by Web enthusiasts who would post links to cool stuff that they found on the Internet. They added commentary. They began posting daily. They read one another's blogs. A community culture took hold." (Jay Cross: <http://www.learningcircuits.org/2002/apr2002/ttools.html>)

Blogging, as detailed above, is a format constant (archives, links, time stamps, chronological listing of thoughts and links), personalized, community-linked, social, interactive, democratic, new model innovation built on the unique attributes of the Internet.

Uses for Blogging

As an emerging tool, blogging uses have still not been completely explored. Some current uses:

- Knowledge sharing and knowledge management - see Bottoms Up KM Development, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/klogs/message/322>
- Customer service - see Blogging Goes Corporate, <http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,52380,00.html>
- Interactive journalism - see Instapundit, <http://www.instapundit.com/>
- Communication
- Self-expression
- Learning - see SchoolBlogs, <http://www.schoolblogs.com/>
- Self-marketing
- Campaigning/social reform - see Tara Grubb, <http://www.tarasue4u.com/>
- Community building

- Experience tracking - A K-log Pilot Recap, <http://www.rklau.com/tins/stories/2002/11/11/klogPilotRecap.html>
- Storytelling - see Grassroots KM Through Blogging, <http://www.elearningpost.com/features/archives/001009.asp>



Most common uses for blogging are personal and, considering its origins as a

personal web-publishing forum, this makes sense. Emerging uses promise opportunities in corporations and education. Further application will also be realized as existing uses (communication, learning, knowledge management, interactive journalism, etc.) are adopted by various industries - notably entertainment, health care, government.

Benefits

Benefits of blogging are numerous (which explains its rapid growth!). An overriding benefit is the democratization of information. In classic models, knowledge flow was "stopped" and administered by news sources (paper, magazines, TV). Ideas in keeping with current zeitgeist

(<http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist.html>) or political agendas received top billing, while unpopular (though necessary for innovation and social transformation) ideas were ignored. Many of the benefits of blogging are listed above in "Uses for Blogging"...other benefits include:

- Fostering the fringe - ideas are evaluated based on merit - not on source of origin.
- Filtering - ideas with merit are filtered through various blogs. Significant thoughts or posts receive multiple-links and spread viral-like across the blogosphere (<http://www.microcontentnews.com/articles/blogosphere.htm>).

- Multiple perspectives - one-sided perspectives of newspapers are replaced by passionate debates exploring virtually every facet of an idea or concept.
- Barrier elimination - society is about barriers - actual or unspoken. For example, I don't run in the same circle as Bill Gates - a socio-economic barrier (at the absolute minimum!). In society, this generally means that I do not have the benefit of Mr. Gates' wisdom...blogging, however changes that.
- Free flow - any idea can be expressed...and accessed by any one. The process of blogging separates good ideas from poor ideas. The process itself has built in quality control - try that in traditional media!
- Real time - discussions and interactions happen right NOW. Waiting for tomorrow's newspaper or radio program seems like an eternity compared to real time blogging.
- Links and connections - the complexity of an information heavy society requires specialization. Yet specialization is futile if a process is not created to link specialties. Blogging serves this purpose extremely well. Disparate fields of interest and thought are brought together (and dissected) in the machinations of bloggers.




Implications

As a disruptive technology (<http://www.webcrimson.com/ourstories/blogdisruptivetech.htm>), blogging is altering (or perhaps responding to?) many aspects of information/content creation and use. These changes are not without impact. What are some of the implications of a tool that function at the same speed as the medium it serves? Here are a few:

- Content creation and consumption on the Internet has finally caught up with the

Internet itself. Traditional suppliers of content (publishers, media, news organizations) will face substantial pressures to respond appropriately, or cease being relevant.

- Decentralization of content and distribution. This is a trend well underway on the Internet as a whole. Napster capitalized on it...and blogging is the "canary in a mine" reacting to (and reflecting) it.
- The user is in control. The end user (or audience) of a service or product has acquired a central (rather than previous fringe) role. Disagree with a blogger? Tell him/her via "comments links", and initiate a dialogue with not only the author, but other readers as well. Disagree with a newspaper columnist? Throw out the newspaper...
- Conversation vs. lecture...I have a mind...I have an opinion. It counts. Just like yours.
- The pipe is more important than the content. By various estimates, bloggers number between 750,000 and 1 million. The ecosystem of blogging is more important than the content being generated. The content has a life (i.e. new technology becomes obsolete)...but the process for content acquisition (blogging) stays continually fresh.
- Shared meaning and understandings. Knowledge is acquired and shaped as a social process - resulting in spiraling: I say something, you comment on it, I evaluate it, comment and present a new perspective, you take it to the next level...and the process repeats until a concept has been thoroughly explored.
- Ideas are presented as the starting point for dialogue, not the ending point. 

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SMART Tips...

Research, Scholarship and Publishing in Distance Education: Opportunities and Challenges

Som Naidu

The changing nature of distance education

The practice of distance education (DE) has undergone significant changes over the past few decades. A few decades ago when our predecessors were blazing the trail in this field, what we know as "open and distance learning" passed by in the name of correspondence education, external or extramural studies. In those days also, these sorts of educational activities were generally confined to the periphery of mainstream conventional face-to-face teaching and learning. Things are quite different now. Open and distance learning (ODL), is being widely adopted as a valid and feasible alternative approach to teaching and learning across all sectors of our educational system.

Some of the forces that are influencing this rise in prominence of distance education over recent times include improving capabilities of information and communications technology, the changing conditions of the workplace; the changing composition of the student population and their improving learning capabilities. Although, these are also influencing conventional educational practices, they have had an even greater influence on open, flexible and distance learning because of its reliance on mediated forms for communication between the teachers and learners, and the flexibility of place and pace that it affords. Of all these factors, clearly advancements in information and communications technology have had the greatest impact on distance education practices. The printed text was clearly at the core of the correspondence mode of teaching and learning. The use of radio, telephone, and television came a

little later. We have come a long way from those days of the Gutenberg technology. The possibilities now include use of the printed text, audio and video communications, computer mediated communications, audio-graphic telecommunications, multimedia, the Internet and the World Wide Web (see for instance, Nipper, 1989).

Distance education has traditionally implied the physical separation of learners from their teachers for much of the duration of the study period (see Keegan, 1990). The basic tenets of print-based distance education systems have been textbooks, study guides, and local centers for private study and tutoring. For the most part, in such settings, communications between teachers and distance learners is non-contiguous. Increasingly more affordable, and accessible information and communications technology is changing this practice. These days, for better or for worse, the use of the Internet and the WWW is placing a much-reduced emphasis on local center support services that have been a basic feature of distance education systems. This transformation has brought about a change in the essential nature of distance education activity, much like the change it brought about in emerging as a viable alternative to conventional face-to-face instruction. For some observers, this is a cause for much concern but for others, this means a strengthening of distance education activity.

Newer information and communications technologies (ICT) are leveraging many learning and teaching activities in ways that were not possible via the print medium. Some of these include demonstrations of critical learning activities such as simulations and

laboratory experiments, and three-dimensional representations of objects and processes. The expanding capabilities of information and communications technology have enabled all sorts of learning opportunities. These developments have significantly influenced the way subject matter content is delivered to distance learners, and the ways in which they are able to access and use study materials. The print technology is a static medium. What is produced remains in the same state until it is revised. The WWW on the other hand, enables the housing of "live" documents, which can be revised easily and cheaply. These developments are influencing the nature of the teaching and learning transaction.

Information and communications technologies have also led to improvements in the capability of educational institutions both in terms of resources that they are able to use for distance education as well as empowering their teaching staff. These improvements in the capability of educators and educational institutions have been of particular interest to the changing workplace environment. A technology rich working environment is creating the need for continuing professional education and training. Educational institutions are under pressure to deliver education and training in innovative and flexible ways and "just-in time".

Opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of research in DE

Not very long ago there were a handful of peer-reviewed and other professional publications covering distance education. Today there are several focussed specifically on this field and many others that cover distance education as well, apart from their own core areas. These are too many to list here, and in any case the point is not the growing numbers of such outlets but their previous core focus and patronage. Some of these that have the potential for greatest impact on distance education practice are virtual/on-line learning and teaching, Internet and the World

Wide Web, and other technology-enhanced educational environments. Foremost, this means that there are a greater number of competing outlets for research and developments in the field of DE. That is certainly a good thing for research and as well as the researchers as it gives them and their work much broader exposure than was possible before. An increasing number of professional publications with converging goals has also meant that work being carried out in the field of DE is seen as having potential benefit to other areas of learning and teaching, including face-to-face conventional education. This has meant that competition for good research output from the field of DE is now more intense.

With increased competition for publication outlets we have seen significant improvements in the quality of research and researchers in DE. A cursory overview of the DE literature shows that in the past a great deal of attention was focussed on "descriptive" research, which was work that aimed to describe the status quo and take a critical look at the DE phenomenon. This focus led to some interesting work on defining the nature of distance education activity and theorizing about learning and teaching at a distance by the likes of Otto Peters, Borje Holmberg, Desmond Keegan, Michael Moore and David Sewart (to name a few). With experience there has been increasing focus on assessing the quality of learning and teaching experience in the distance education mode, and also on the numerous influences of technology in this regard. This research has drawn from what we already know about human cognition, learning and teaching, and about the effects of educational technology including how to go about ascertaining their effects validly and reliably. It has become apparent that any consideration of distance education activity, because of its fundamental differences from conventional teaching and learning practices necessitates a reconsideration of the learning and teaching process.

But despite these positive developments, it would not be erroneous to suggest that research and scholarship in this broad field of DE is still somewhat weak from several perspectives. Part of this may lie in the multidisciplinary nature of the field, which restricts the emergence of one or more clearly defined and widely accepted research methodologies. Researchers in this field tend to adopt research methods from other areas such as education or the social sciences, and sometimes applied less rigorously than in those disciplines. A recent study prepared by The (United States) Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington, DC for The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association (Phipps & Merisotis, April, 1999, <http://www.ihep.com/difference.pdf>) observed some serious limitations with existing research practices in DE.

This report is based on written material published during the 1990s, and it places particular attention on those types of technologies currently being used by the majority of institutions. It concentrates primarily on an evaluation of the original research including experimental, descriptive, correlational, and case studies and summarizes the key information and findings of the other policy papers, articles, and essays that dominate the literature. The authors claim that while this review of original research does not encompass every study published since 1990, it does capture the most important and salient of these works. From this limited group of original research they found that the three broad measures of the effectiveness of distance education usually examined are: student outcomes such as grades and test scores; student attitudes towards learning through distance education; and student satisfaction toward distance learning.

The authors claim that most of the studies they surveyed conclude that, regardless of the technology used, distance learning courses compare favorably with classroom-based instruction and enjoy high student satisfaction. For example, many experimental studies indicate

that students participating in distance learning courses perform as well as their counterparts in a traditional classroom setting. These studies suggest that the distance learning students have similar grades or test scores, or have the same attitudes toward the course. The descriptive analysis and case studies focus on student and faculty attitudes and perceptions of distance learning. The purpose of many of these types of research is to develop recommendations to improve distance learning. These studies typically conclude that students and faculty have a positive view toward distance learning.

The Phipps and Merisotis report claims that a closer look at this research, however, reveals that it may not be prudent to accept these findings at face value because of problems with the conclusions reached through this research. It claims that the most significant problem is that the overall quality of the original research is questionable and thereby renders many of the findings inconclusive. They suggest that findings of the original research must be read with some caution. Assessing the quality of the original research requires a determination that the studies adhered to commonly accepted principles of good research. They argue that these principles are essential if the results of the studies are to be considered valid and generalizable. If a study does not abide by these principles, the results can be erroneous or misleading. The report flags the following issues as the shortcomings of the surveyed literature:

- Most of the studies do not use randomly selected subjects.
- Much of the research does not control for extraneous variables and therefore cannot show cause and effect.
- The validity and reliability of the instruments used to measure student outcomes and attitudes are questionable.
- Many studies do not adequately control for the feelings and attitudes of the students and faculty what the educational research refers to as "reactive effects."

These are interesting observations of the report and worth some serious consideration by researchers in the

filed. Phipps and Merisotis go on to offer some useful guidelines for various types of research in the field. These are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Descriptive research

Descriptive research involves the collection of data to answer specific questions. In distance education, typical descriptive studies are concerned with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, and conditions. Data are usually collected through questionnaires, interviews, or standardized attitude scales. Some of this data can be collected through direct observations with the help of structured or semi-structured observation tools. An important component of descriptive research is the validation of these measurement tools in order to determine if they measure what they were supposed to measure.

Case study research

Case study research is an in-depth investigation of one "unit" or "course". The researcher can use a variety of methods to gather such data, however, the explanation of the unit is generally written in narrative form. In distance learning, the case study usually involves a class of students taking a course through some alternative delivery format. The problem with much of this type of research is that the bulk of the reports do not go beyond much more than a "dry" and boring description of the delivery technology. They lack any significant focus on any innovative learning design within that context, or a critical analysis of the experiences of stakeholders.

Correlational research

Correlational research involves collecting data in order to determine whether, and to what extent a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. In this form of research an estimate is provided of just how related two variables are. For instance, if two variables are highly related, a correlation coefficient near +1.00 (or -1.00) will be obtained; and if two variables are not related, a coefficient near .00 will be obtained. One example of a

correlational study might be determining the relationship (correlation) between student satisfaction with an instructor and the type of technology used. It is important to note that correlational research never establishes "cause and effect", it only reveals relationships. This is a trap that correlational studies fall into.

Experimental research

Experimental research is the only type of research that can truly test hypotheses concerning "cause and effect" relationships. In an experimental study the researcher manipulates at least one *independent variable* and observes its effects on one or more *dependent variables*. In other words, the researcher determines "who gets what", and which group of "subjects" will get which treatment (i.e., the independent variable). The groups of subjects in the study are generally referred to as experimental and control groups. Ideally, in experimental research the groups of subjects to be studied are randomly formed before the experiment to eliminate any bias due to sampling. This is a procedure that is not followed in other methods of research. The essence of experimentation is the concepts of "prediction" and "control". A researcher strives to ensure that the experiences of all the groups are as equal as possible on all the important variables except the independent variable. Experimental research is very hard to carry out properly in distance education contexts due to the difficulty of controlling for confounding variables in such "open" settings.

How can "Distance Education" help with research?

The stated aim of *Distance Education* is "to engender and disseminate research and scholarship in distance education, open learning and flexible delivery systems". The "dissemination" part of this aim is clear enough as the journal achieves this by publishing and distributing to its readership articles, reports, surveys and book reviews on the subject after these

have gone through a rigorous peer-review process. The goal of "engendering" research and scholarship is not all that clear. Currently this is achieved largely through the process of peer-review. The Editors and members of the Editorial Board play a major role in this regard. For instance, it is not an uncommon practice to have authors go through one or more iterations of their original submission for publication consideration *before* it is sent out for peer-review. Many of the papers go through some revision work before they are accepted for publication. Some of the papers are revised and resubmitted to its original reviewers if this had been suggested as part of the reviewers' recommendations. Some of the papers are revised so substantially that they are submitted for publication consideration and the complete review process all over.

The journal also accepts ideas, feedback and rejoinders on its contents. It also invites book reviews and suggestions for *Special Issues* of the journal. In these ways, the journal attempts to nurture a culture of research and scholarship among its subscribers and readership although this is not very systematically carried out. There are several other possibilities for achieving these goals more fully and which may or may not be congruent with the goals of a peer-reviewed journal. These include: a) running a "commentary" section in the journal which allows publication of comments to be made on a thread or theme, or in fact on any relevant issue and perhaps inviting guest editors to moderate this commentary; b) running an online discussion for members of the Editorial Board to discuss issues related to this agenda as well as other matters related to the editorial process (this could be moderated by the Editors of the journal).


Concluding Remark

This paper set out to explore trends, issues and future directions in research, scholarship and publishing in the field of open, flexible and distance learning. Its purpose is to trigger useful debate and discussion on the subject with the expectation that from such discourse would

emerge, an improved awareness of the issues that confront researchers in this vibrant multidisciplinary field. As such, this paper is somewhat conversational and purposefully open-ended with many of the issues it raises. This is to allow readers and participants in a discussion of its contents, to bring to it their own commentary and draw their own conclusions.

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Associate Professor Som Naidu is Head of Research and Evaluation, Department of Teaching, Learning and Research Support at The University of Melbourne, Australia. He can be reached at Email: s.naidu@unimelb.edu.au Dr. Naidu is Editor of Distance Education, the journal of Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA), published by Carfax.


News in Brief..

COL Attachment Programme



Dr. P.K. Biswas, Reader at Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education at Indira Gandhi National Open University visited

Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) under the COL attachment programme from 4-24 March 2003. The main objectives of the attachment were to study the course design and development process at OUHK; Online support services; tutor orientation and training; and research activities of Centre for Research in Distance and Adult Learning. Dr. Biswas visited all Schools of Studies, Divisions, Centres and Laboratories in the University and discussed various issues with faculty members. He participated in two seminars and presented a seminar on "Developing Distance Educators in India and abroad" during his visit. Dr. Biswas made use of the electronic library in the University. According to Dr. Biswas, the attachment programme sponsored by COL provided him an "opportunity to understand the OUHK practices in distance learning". Exposure to the working style and interaction with the academic and support staff of OUHK have made him more

confident in conducting research in Open and Distance Learning, he said. 

Lewis Perinbam Appointed Chairman of COL




Lewis Perinbam, O.C., a former Vice President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) who has represented the World Bank at

the United Nations and was sometime Secretary General of the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO and the World University Service of Canada, has been named Chair of the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for a three-year term.

Commonwealth Secretary-General, Donald McKinnon, on behalf of the organization's Board of Governors, made the announcement recently in Vancouver.


Perinbam is a Vancouver resident who, until he assumed this position, was Senior Adviser (External Relations) at COL. He succeeds Dr. H. Ian Macdonald, O.C., President Emeritus of York

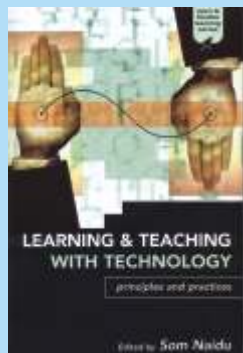
University, Toronto, and is the second Canadian to hold this post.

Perinbam was the Chair of the 2000 Federal Government Task Force on the Participation of Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien recently appointed him a Governor of the Canadian Centre for Management Development. 

Global Virtual University Opens

The United Nations launched the Global Virtual University at Arendal, Norway on 19th June 2003. Secretary General Kofi Annan has high hopes that this breakthrough project will bring students from developing countries into the age of information and communications technology. The Gvu is an international network of cooperating universities and institutions organised as a branch of the United Nations University (UNU) with an administrative center in Arendal, Norway. The participating, core institutions are UNU, UNEP, UNEP/GRID-Arendal and Agder University College (AUC) in Norway. It will deliver e-learning courses and programmes with a global outreach on environment and development. Headquarter and formal leadership is at the UNU in Tokyo. The University is an online institution focussing on sustainable development and the needs of the developing world. It will unite and promote an international network of schools that offer e-learning, concentrating on areas like the environment and development.

<http://www.gvu.unu.edu/about.cfm> 

Book Review...

Naidu, S. (ed.) (2003) *Learning & Teaching with Technology: Principles and practices*, Kogan Page: London & Sterling ISBN 0 7494 3776 6

Santosh Panda

With increasing use of ICT and CMC in education and training, it has become imperative to look at the core processes of such use for both teaching as well as learning. Books addressing such important concerns are very rare, and this book by Som Naidu is very much timely.

The book is divided into five parts each dealing with one aspect of learning technologies, viz. content representation, activation of learning, provision for socialization support, assessment of learning outcomes, and provision of feedback. These are preceded by an Introduction by the editor and followed by a Commentary by Andrew Higgins.

This book is certainly different, it looks into the core processes of information technology application in teaching-learning, both face-to-face and at a distance/online learning; and therefore, it provides for a serious reading. As the editor notes, the collection of chapters look into “the core processes of the learning and teaching transaction, specifically addressing how ICT can be used to leverage these core processes to achieve rich and productive learning environments” (p. 2).

The four chapters in the first part of the book discuss content representation: learning facilitated by models (ie using models to represent complex subject matter, and learning with models and

learning by modeling), formative evaluation of one of the important learning technologies, using graphical interactive simulations for modeling problem solving and promoting scientific enquiry, and the approach of multiple representation in multimedia object design for meeting varied and sometimes heterogeneous needs of learners. The second part of the book with four chapters is about activation of learning and learner engagement: using video-based multimedia on teacher-student interaction to scaffold teacher professional development, using medical triggers and multimedia-based strategy to engage medical students for problem-based learning, use of Quick Time video-shockwave movies-animation in teaching practice-based subjects like social work.

Part three, with four chapters, is about providing support in technology-enabled education for interaction and socialization: CMC for providing support to group project and socialization in second language learning, facilitating immediacy behaviour and social presence in asynchronous online learning and discussions, structuring computer-supported collaborative learning environments for socialization, and using scenario-based simulation and role play in computer-based collaborative learning for enhancing further collaboration and community building. There are four chapters in part four of the book, and deal with assessment of learning outcomes: new sets of assessment for student learning in online learning environments (including peer assessment, digital portfolio, online problem solving, team-based assessment), adaptation of conventional assessment strategies specifically for affective and meta-cognitive aspects of learning, online assessment for deep approach to learning, and formative assessment in the cognitive apprenticeship learning used in Byzantium intelligent tutoring system. The last part of the book has three chapters that discuss leveraging feedback in online learning: the actors model of feedback, factors facilitating effective feedback, and use of ICT

to provide feedback to isolated online learners. The book concludes with a fine commentary by Andrew Higgins on effective learning and teaching technology.

Though the chapters have been very well selected and organized, I found it difficult to relate the selection of some of the chapters with styles of content organization and presentation different from what the whole book intends to do. For instance, the chapter on social presence in online course discussions by Karen Swan is a research study (in fact, a revised version of her chapter in a Sloan Foundation publication), which could have been recast to cover the gamut of online discussion and social presence. Of course, as I know, Karen, a professor now at Kent State University in USA is doing very good research work on this area as also for the Sloan Foundation, and we at the University of New Mexico have recently applied her work/model on immediacy on social presence further in a cross-cultural online study of ours, drawn from the chapter of this book. Such detailed studies can go to journals, rather than books of this nature. This is though a personal suggestion, without any attempt towards generalization.

To extend the discourse on learning technologies further, this book must be read in combination with Liz Burge and Margaret Haughey's book *Using Learning Technologies* (RoutledgeFalmer, 2001). I think Som has done an excellent job in getting together the best-known international scholars in the field to put up a very well connected collection. I know myself how difficult it is to hold all together to a story while doing a book on planning and management in distance education (2003) within the same Open and Flexible Learning Series of Kogan Page.

I strongly recommend Som's book to teachers, designers, trainers, managers, researchers, and even graduate students of instructional technology/educational development and all allied fields. This book should be stimulating to you as has been to me. **ECA**

Professor Santosh Panda is currently Visiting Fulbright Scholar at College of Education, University of New Mexico, USA. He can be reached at pandask2003@yahoo.co.in Also see www.spanda.org



Mishra, Arun K. and Batram, John (eds) (2002) *Skills Development Through Distance Education, The Commonwealth of Learning: Vancouver* ISBN: 1-895369-81-9

C. B. Sharma

As the world gets more and more technology driven and mechanised the need to develop skills in work force is realised and given prominence. Depending upon the location of a worker his/her competence varies. Nearly every one of the two billion employed people (approximately one third of the world population) requires some sort of training. Some may require long and rigorous training while some may require half-a-day to a few days'/just-in-time/continuous/mid career training. A crucial factor in realising the importance of technical and / or vocational training is the way it helps people rise from one stage to another augmenting their income levels and thus improving the lives of all dependent upon their income. The size of the skilled workforce ultimately determines the pace of progress of any society.

This book is focussed on various areas like planning, development, implementation; selection of media and method; evaluation of skills development and the scope of distance mode of training. The book is divided into 13 chapters authored by people with long experience and expertise in their respective areas.

The 'Introduction' and the first chapter 'Economic Development

and Skills Development' have been authored by one of the editors Arun K. Mishra. Mishra through these two chapters explains the scope of the book i.e. the area of 'skills development', the key terms like 'sustainable development', 'open and distance learning', 'flexibility' in education and work etc. and their concepts and also various groups like the school drop-outs, children, women etc. for which TVET may be relevant.

Judith Calder has contributed chapter 2 entitled 'The Key Players'. As the title indicates this chapter discusses and describes the 'stakeholders' i.e. groups associated with the design, development, production, marketing, distribution or utilisation of TVET programmes. Calder reflects her extensive understanding of the area by mentioning examples from various parts of the world.

Magnus John in Chapter 3 on 'The Potential learners' besides identifying the various groups requiring TVET raises potent issues of curriculum design and delivery. John has examined the issue of learners from the viewpoint of relevant content and also delivery of programmes in a virtual or e-learning mode.

The issue that has been of concern to most is 'The Curriculum' of TVET, which is the topic of chapter 4 contributed by Keith Dunbar. Dunbar very skillfully develops the theme by describing the meaning of curriculum and discussing the philosophical approaches; skills and resources required for TVET curriculum.

Chapter 5 contributed by Neville Weal deals with 'Need Identification and Programme Evaluation'. The chapter clearly describes the stages of development of TVET programmes. The chapter delineates the various areas like needs identification, data collection and analysis; constituting research team and finally the chapter discusses the issue of quality control of such programmes.

The next chapter (six) written by Ved Goel discusses the crucial issue of 'Student Support in Open and Distance Learning for TVET' programmes. Goel divides the services into academic and non-

academic support provided through face-to-face and technology enabled support. He also discusses student support in a virtual education environment.

Coral Hampton and John Bartram (also one of the editors) have contributed chapter 7 on 'Delivering the Programme'. Besides mentioning the common places and methods the chapter mentions some very novel places like islands and method like partnership with industry.

The next chapter (eight) on 'Instructional Design' jointly authored by Dermot Moore, Annemarie Bates and Jean Grundling focus on developing effective instructional material through an understanding of learning theories and application of creative processes. The chapter presents a complete model of instructional design and also explains the various components like analysis, design, development and implementation and evaluation in detail.

Carl Hampton's chapter (nine) on 'Teaching Practical Skills' sometimes also referred to as 'competency', although not equivalent in meaning emphasises more on 'demonstrable' skills through use of hands etc. Hampton discusses primary conditions of developing such skills and also mentions media and technologies and learning environments useful for developing such skills.

Chapter 10 on 'Quality Assurance in the Delivery of TVET Programmes via ODL: The Case of a Small Island Developing State' is a case study of National Training Agency (NTA) from Trinidad and Tobago set-up in 1999. Besides discussing the context of TVET and basic issues of quality, the chapter mentions the relevance of 'national vocational qualifications', which highlights the lack of compatibility between the industry and the academia. TVET must lead to 'Mobility and Articulation' a facility, which is augmented by levels of education, and training is the subject of chapter 11 contributed by Adrian R. Haas. Haas defines these terms with the help of case studies from Australia, Jamaica, India, the Pacific and Singapore and also mentions barriers to mobility and

articulation. The European Union experiment is particularly interesting as this is also a good case of collaboration.

Chapter 12 on 'The Need for Staff Training and Retraining' by Marvin E. Lamoureux discusses the increased relevance and need of TVET in the fast changing world. Marvin also raises the issues of resources required for catering to the training and retraining of work force and the increasing importance of ODL for TVET in the present context.

The last chapter of the book entitled 'Connecting the Dots: Planning and

Management Strategies in TVET' has been written by Dick Scales. This chapter highlights some fundamental issues and provides a few handy tips to developing TVET programmes through ODL. The chapter also provides some success stories, which prove the point.

This volume on the *Skills Developments through Distance Education of the Perspective on Distance Education* series of the Commonwealth of Learning presents a complete analysis of the selected theme. Credit must go to the editors for identifying appropriate contributors. However, all chapters do not follow a strict

format. Some have more case studies whereas some concentrate on providing theoretical knowledge. Some chapters do not have any references, which may sometimes handicap readers who may like to do further research on the area. It can be said with confidence that the book is a valuable addition to the corpus of skills development area. This is a book worth reading by one and all interested in the area of technical and vocational education. **ECA**

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Software Review...

Hot Patatoes



The Hot Potatoes (http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/hotpot/) suite is a set of six authoring tools, created by the Research and Development team at the University of Victoria Humanities Computing and Media Centre. They enable you to create interactive Web-based exercises of six basic types: multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and gap-fill exercises. The exercises use JavaScript for interactivity, and will work in Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer versions 4 and above on both Windows (Windows 98/ME/NT4/2000/XP) and Macintosh (PowerMac/G3/G4 OS 8+) platforms. Two of the tools, JMatch and JMix, can also produce drag-and-drop exercises, but these will only work with more recent browsers, because they use the W3C Document Object Model. The authoring tools will also handle accented characters, so you can create exercises in any language based on the Roman character set,



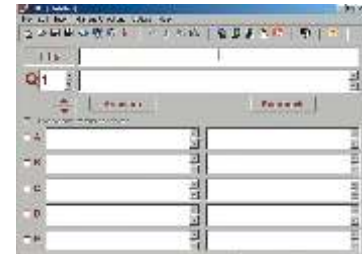
including French, German, and many other languages. The Windows version will also allow you to create exercises in any language, using Unicode.

Although the exercises are constructed using JavaScript, you don't need to know anything about JavaScript to use the programs. All you need to do is to enter your data -- texts, questions, answers etc. -- and the programs will create the Web pages for you. Then you can post them on your Web site. However, the programs are designed so that almost every aspect of the pages can be customized, so if you do know

HTML or JavaScript, you can make almost any change you want to the way the exercises work or to the format of the Web pages.

Once installed, the user can create the following interactive activities referred to as "potatoes."

Multiple Choice quiz (JBC): This program creates multiple choice answer quizzes of the sort that will be immediately recognizable to students. You can include a written text, with a reading time limit, and questions can have up to four answers. Feedback leading the student towards the correct answer can be included, although if none is



entered, the default message "try again" is received.

Short Answer quiz (JQuiz): This program creates short answer quizzes. The learner types the



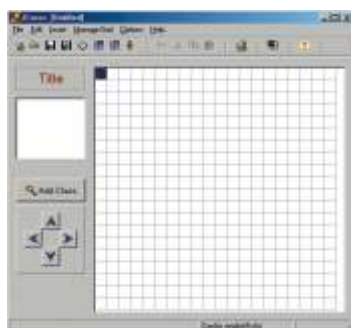
answer in the text-field and receives feedback from the computer. Up to four possible correct answers are available, assuming the teacher has included them. The computer tells you what part of your answer is correct, better involving students.

Jumbled sentence (JMix): This program creates jumbled sentence



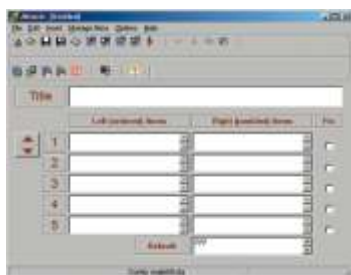
exercises. Again, what is good is that the teachers are able to include all combinations, so the learner isn't faced with correct suggestions being rejected by the computer.

Crossword puzzles (Jcross): This program creates crossword puzzles



20x20 letters in size. Clues can be either in word-form or as pictures.

Matching / ordering (Jmatch): This program can produce either



listing exercises or matching exercises. As with JCross, pictures can be used in place of words.

Fill-in-the-gap (Jcloze): This program creates gap-filling

Dear readers,

EduComm Asia is your newsletter of useful ideas, views and information. From one issue to the next, we aim strengthen the newsletter. The best way to do so is by keeping content diverse. You can help to do so by becoming a contributor. Write to us about educational media news and other events that you would like to see in the newsletter. All contributions shall be duly acknowledged and appreciated.

-Editors



exercises. The java-script looks for parts of right answers, but only one answer for each gap is accepted and feedback is limited.

There are three main steps in creating an exercise:

1. Entering data (questions, answers and so on)
2. Configuring the output (preparing the button captions, instructions, and other features of your Web pages)
3. Creating Web pages (compiling your exercise into HTML or DHTML pages).

Once an activity has been created, the program then generates a webpage that can be uploaded to a website. In case you have begun to panic, thinking that Hot Potatoes is too complicated for you, let me assure you...it is not. The software is very intuitive and user-friendly. The more you use it, the easier it becomes to create quizzes for your students. As the interface of all six potatoes types is similar, knowledge of one is easily transferred to any of the others.

If you work in a non-profit-making educational institution or context, and you are prepared to share your exercises by placing them on a publicly-accessible Web server, then you may use the Hot Potatoes suite free of charge. If you are working for a company or in a commercial context, or if you password-protect your exercises or distribute them only on an intranet, you will need to buy a licence (contact Half-Baked Software for information). However, whether you're commercial or otherwise, registration of the program is required; all you have to do is to fill in a form on the Website.

Download Hot Potatoes:
<http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/hotpot/index.htm#downloads> 

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Forthcoming Events...

ICTE 2003



Fourth International Conference on Information Communication Technologies in Education, July 3-5, 2003, on Samos Island, Greece. ICICTE 2003 will be an integrated event offering collaborative opportunities to educators, administrators, IT specialists, and others from all levels of education, from primary through post secondary. *For more information, contact:* conference Administrative Director, Nancy Pyrini ineag@otenet.gr Website: <http://www.ineag.gr/ICICTE>

NAWeb 2003



The NAWeb 2003 - The Web-Based Learning Conference to be held from October 18-21, 2003 at New Brunswick, Canada will focus on innovative and practical uses of the World Wide Web in teaching and learning, extending the reach of existing campuses and creating "virtual" campuses of a new and unique nature. *For more information, contact:* Rick Hall, Email: hall@unb.ca Website: <http://naweb.unb.ca/>

E-Learn 2003



Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education Conference: "E-Learn 2003: World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education" from November 7, 2003 to November 11, 2003 at Phoenix, AZ *For more information, contact:* Jennifer Gwaltney, Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education, P.O. Box 3728, Norfolk, VA 23514, Email: conf@aace.org Website: <http://www.aace.org/conf/elearn>

AAOU 2003

17th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open

Universities on "Networking and Partnership for Strengthening Collaboration in Open and Distance Education" to be held from 12-14



November 2003 at Siam City Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. *For more information, contact:* Assoc. Prof. Lapa Chintanaseri, Conference Director, Foreign Relations Unit, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Bangpood, Pakkred, Nonthaburi 11120, Thailand, E-mail: aaou2003@stou.ac.th Website: www.stou.ac.th/Aaou2003/index.htm

m-ICTE 2003

2nd International Conference on "Multimedia and Information & Communication Technologies in Education" to be held at Badajoz (Spain) from 3-6 December 2003. *For details visit:* <http://www.formatex.org/micte2003/committees.htm>

ALT-C 2003



ALT-C 2003 on "Communities of Practice" to be held at Sheffield from 8-10 September 2003

is aimed at practitioners and researchers at all stages in their careers. It will cater for those interested in the application of learning technology in further and higher education and other comparable settings. The conference will also offer the opportunity for practitioners to meet leading suppliers to find out what's new in the market, and for suppliers to keep in touch with their customers. *For more information, contact:* Email: ALT-C2003@sheffield.ac.uk Website: <http://www.shf.ac.uk/alt/index.htm>

10th Cambridge International Conference on ODL
The 10th Cambridge International

Conference on Open and Distance Learning to be held from 23-26 September 2003 at Cambridge on "The Future of Open and Distance Learning". *For more information, contact:* Cambridge International Conference 2003, The Open University in the East of England, Cintra House, 12 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 1PF, UK Email: Cambridge-Conference@open.ac.uk Website: <http://www2.open.ac.uk/r06/conference/conference.htm>

ICOOL



International Conference on Open and Online Learning on "Community Development and Networking for Capacity Building" to be organized by University of Mauritius from 7-13 December 2003. *For further details visit:* <http://vcampus.uom.ac.mu/icool2003/user/index.php>

Distance Education Clearinghouse:

Conference Database
The Conference Database of the Distance Education Clearinghouse identifies worldwide conferences, seminars, workshops, and other events of interest to distance education and related fields. Events may be on site or online, but in all



cases, the topic must always relate to distance education. You can find conferences by title, location, or date. Call for Papers information is also available in the Conference Database. Additionally, you are invited to submit a conference or call for consideration for this database.

Visit the websiteL
<http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conf/>