Emerging QA Issues in Online and Distance Education

Professor Asha Kanwar
President & CEO,
Commonwealth of Learning

November 1, 2012
Learning for Development
WHAT IS IT FOR?

To help Commonwealth governments and institutions use various technologies to improve and expand learning for development
Plan

- The context
- Trends in QA in ODE
- Emerging Issues for QA
- The COL Approach
CONTEXT
Exploding demand for HE

- 2007: 150.6 million tertiary students globally
- 2012: 165 million
- 2025: 263 million
Huge demand:

University of Dhaka
10,000 of 80,000

800 universities by 2020

Public universities
9,000 out of 40,000
Access to Higher Education

- **OECD Average**: 40-50%
- **Caribbean**: 25%
- **South Asia**: 15%
- **Sub-Saharan Africa**: 10%

Higher Education
Athabasca (1978)
IGNOU (1985)
UKOU (1969)
AICU (1974)
Bangladesh Open University (1902)
BRAOU, Hyderabad, India (1982)
UNISA, South Africa (1946)
Open Univ of Sri Lanka (1984)
BCOU (1978)/OLA (1988)
Tele-Universite du Quebec (1972)

1988 COMMONWEALTH OPEN UNIVERSITIES
IGNOU
UKOU
AIOU
Athabasca
Open University of Malaysia
Open University of Tanzania
National Open University of Nigeria
Netaji Subhash Open University
Bangladesh Open University
BRAOU, Hyderabad, India
YCMOU, Nashik, India
MPBOU, Madhya Pradesh, India
UNISA, South Africa 110,000
Open Univ of Sri Lanka
TNOU, Tamil Nadu, India
Kota Open Univ, Rajasthan, India
Open Univ, Uttar Pradesh, India
Nalanda Open University, Bihar, India
DBROU
KSOU, India
Open University of Zambia
Open University of Uttarakhand, India
Open University of Assam, India
Open University of Cyprus
K.K. Hadique State University, India
The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand
Wawasan Open University, Malaysia
Open University of Mauritius

2012 COMMONWEALTH OPEN UNIVERSITIES
Online enrolment in the US

- 6.1 million taking at least 1 online course in 2010
- 31% of US HE students take at least 1 online course

Babson Survey Group, 2011
ONLINE ENROLLMENT AS A % OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT
2002 TO 2010

A strange paradox

Distance education is expanding

BUT

faces a crisis of credibility
One bad apple spoils the bunch

Need for rigorous QA
QA & Accreditation: Commonwealth

- 44 countries have
  - QA Authorities
  - HE Councils
  - National Accreditation Boards
  - Tertiary Councils
  - National Commissions/University Commissions
TRENDS IN QA IN DE
Trends:
1960’s 70’s: Standards

- Quality of study materials
- Interactivity through tutorials & assignments
- Usability of ODL for subject concerned
1990’s: QA in Developed Countries

- Australia
- UK
- New Zealand
- Canada
- Adaptation to India, Hong Kong etc
2000-10: Cultures of Quality

- Convergence of external & internal QA measures
- OUUK: QAA & Internal validation unit
International

- Open University of Malaysia: ISO Certification accreditation
The front gate of the University campus in New Delhi.

Open University of Sri Lanka
Resource-poor contexts

Kyambogo University, Uganda

Culture of quality = culture of care
A culture of quality is an institutional culture that:

- Promotes an internal QA system where everyone takes ownership
- Values capacity building
- Stresses accountability to stakeholders
- Focuses on learning
EMERGING ISSUES IN QA
1. Open Education Resources (OER)
What are Open Education Resources (OERs)?

Materials that are

- Free and freely available
- Suitable for all levels of education
- Reusable
- Digital
World Congress on Open Educational Resources
Paris – June 20-22 – 2012

Paris Declaration
Paris Declaration

- Foster awareness and use of OER
- Foster strategic alliances for OER
- Encourage the development and adaptation of OER in a variety of languages and cultural contexts
- Encourage research on OER
18th CCEM Communique

Ministers emphasized the need

- ‘to set up a common platform for OER materials for...ease of access’
- ‘for the development and use of OER in providing quality teaching and learning for all’.
Can OER contribute to Quality?

- 611 institutions in India
  - KSS Women’s Engineering College, Andhra Pradesh
  - Maya Devi Educational Foundation, Uttarakhand
  - Bhilai Institute of Technology, Chattisgarh
OER: Advantages for ODE

- Access to OER can improve quality
- Availability of OER can release faculty time for more research
- Diversify provision from full services to services that the learner can choose, reducing costs and increasing flexibility
Issues in QA for OER

- Who is responsible for the quality of repurposed content?
- How do institutions ensure the integrity of content?
- What is the role of QA agencies?
Issues specific to OER

- Accessibility
- Localisation
- Technological barriers
- Discoverability
- Interoperability
2. Massive Open Online Courses: MOOCs

... a MOOC is a type of online course aimed at large scale participation and open access via the web. MOOCs are a recent development in the area of distance education, and a progression of the kind of open education ideals suggested by OER

Wikipedia, 20/09/12
Stanford 2011

- Artificial Intelligence course
- 160,000 registered
- 23,000 completed
- All countries except North Korea
MITx 2012

- Circuits and electronics
- 155,000 registered
- 7157 passed the course
- 160 countries
## Comparison of Coursera, edX and Udacity, August 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coursera</th>
<th>edX</th>
<th>Udacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>For-profit?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Students</strong></td>
<td>1,100,000+</td>
<td>155,000+ (MITx only)</td>
<td>739,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fees</strong></td>
<td>None yet</td>
<td>$100 for completion certificate after autumn 2012 cohort</td>
<td>$80 for Pearson test (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>$16m venture capital; $6m from partners</td>
<td>$30m each from MIT &amp; Harvard; $1m from Gates Fdn; more from private partners</td>
<td>Charles River Ventures, Sebastian Thrun (amounts unknown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2012
MOOCs are typically

- Free of charge
- Designed for large numbers
- Designed to encourage peer to peer learning
- Meant to award completion certificates rather than course credits

OBHE Report, 2012
Implications for QA: Will MOOCs

- Improve the quality of teaching?
- Encourage global mobility of students?
- Encourage the development of flexible frameworks for credit transfers, and recognition of qualifications?
Issues for QA in MOOCs

- Can one size fit all?
- Student verification and academic integrity
- Is a peer reviewed assessment acceptable?
- Is there a delinking of the institutions which teach and the institutions which credential?
- Will we see the rise of DGBs?
- What will be the role of QA agencies?
The Rise of Private Provision

- India and Malaysia: 52%; 54%
- Brazil and Indonesia: 60%
- Japan and South Korea: 73%; 60%
- Caribbean: 150 institutions: 60% public; 30% private; 10%, some govt support

A New Dynamic: Private Higher Education, UNESCO, World Conference on Higher Education;
http://www.albany.edu/dept/eaps/prophe/data/international.html
UNESCO Global Education Digest, 2010
Issues in QA

- Who regulates?
- Where do students complain in the case of deficient services/content?
- What are the standards of curriculum, learner support, assessment and certification?
- What of faculty quality?
THE COL APPROACH
Same Regulations for ODL & F2F

- Quality Assurance Agency, UK: assesses both campus and distance universities

From: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx
Focus on Outcomes
COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

PERSPECTIVES ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

Towards a Culture of Quality

Badri N. Koul and Asha Kanwar, Editors
Quality Assurance Toolkit
Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes

TRUST
ACCESS
INNOVATION
COST EFFECTIVE
FACULTY SATISFACTION
STUDENT SATISFACTION
LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
EXCELLENCE
LEADERSHIP

QA Toolkits

Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education Institutions
An Anthology of "Best Practices" in Teacher Education

Quality Assurance in Higher Education
Guidelines

National Assessment and Accreditation Council
Commonwealth of Learning

Quality Assurance Toolkit for Teacher Education Institutions (QATTE)
Mutual recognition & accreditation of qualifications
Self-improvement: COL RIM Steps

1. INITIATION
2. SURVEY
3. SELF REVIEW
4. VERIFICATION
5. FOLLOW UP
In summary COL RIM:

- A low-cost ‘do-it-yourself’ model
- Does not require a panel of external experts
- Develops systemic thinking and organizational learning
- Focuses on capacity building
What do agencies/institutions need to do?

- Be open to emerging provision
- Measure degree to which new developments facilitate student learning
- Encourage institutions to be relevant to the needs of the 21st Century
THANK YOU

www.col.org