



**The International Academic Relations Division (IRD)**  
The Open University of Sri Lanka



Quarterly Newsletter  
January – April 2015

<http://www.ou.ac.lk/home/index.php/international-academic-relations-division>

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## **CEMBA/MPA Capacity Building Workshop on Open Educational Resources (OER)**

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) facilitated an Open Educational Resources (OER) workshop for Commonwealth Executive Masters in Business Administration (CEMBA) and Commonwealth Executive Masters in Public Administration (CEMPA) academics from 11 participating institutions. The workshop was designed to develop professional competencies of academics involved in revising and updating CEMBA/CEMPA course content. The workshop was hosted by the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015.



The main outcome of the workshop was to develop high quality, relevant, gender responsive and up-to-date CEMBA/CEMPA learning material. The main objective was to develop and enhance academics' skills/competencies

in using OER to revise and update CEMBA/CEMPA course content.



The workshop was the brainchild of Dr Godson Gatsha, Education Specialist – Higher Education at COL. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr Vijitha Nanayakkara, Vice Chancellor of OUSL and Professor Asha Kanwar, President of COL.



The principle facilitator of the five day workshop was Dr Ishan Abeywardena, Director, International Academic Relations Division of OUSL.



The participants of the workshop included Vice Chancellors, Deans, Professors and Senior Academics from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (GHANA), National Open University of Nigeria, Open University of Mauritius, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning, Allama Iqbal Open University (PAKISTAN), Bangladesh Open University, Open University of Sri Lanka, Wawasan Open University (MALAYSIA), University of Guyana, University College of the Caribbean (JAMAICA), and University of the Cayman Islands.



## International Training Program at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand

As part of its strategic management plan, the Open University of Sri Lanka organizes an international staff training program which provides the opportunity for academic and non-academic staff to undergo training at foreign institutions. The first batch was sent to Wawasan Open University, Malaysia in November of 2014. The second batch which comprised of 11 senior administrative staff underwent training at the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in Thailand from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015.



This training program was jointly organized by the International Academic Relations Division of OUSL and the International Relations Division of STOU under the longstanding MoU between the two institutions.



The participants of the training program were exposed to rich discourse on best practices in running large Open Universities. There was knowledge exchange as well as cultural exchange between the two Universities and Countries.



The next batch, which again will comprise of 11 senior administrative staff, will undergo the training in June 2015.

## **Distinguished Lecture #2: Developing Virtual Collaborative Learning Communities Harnessing the Power of Social Media**

The second lecture of the OUSL Distinguished Lecture Series was delivered by Professor Charlotte Nirmalani “Lani” Gunawardena on the topic Developing Virtual Collaborative Learning Communities Harnessing the Power of Social Media on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Prof Lani is a Distinguished Professor of Distance Education and Instructional Technology, and Program Director of the Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences Program at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, U.S.A.



During the lecture, Prof Lani pointed out that The 2014 Horizon Report for Higher Education from the New Media Consortium and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative has predicted the growing

ubiquity of social media, and the integration of online, hybrid, and collaborative learning as future trends in higher education. She then addressed how social media, developed with mobile and web-based technologies, which enables user-generated-content (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Forums, Blogs, Wikis, Skype, and Cloud Computing), can be utilized to create virtual learning communities that engage in collaboration and networked problem solving to support future trends in higher education.



Overall the lecture discussed a design model that supports a learning community's spiraling process as it moves from a given sociocultural context through discourse, action, reflection, and reorganization toward socially mediated metacognition.



The recording of the lecture can be viewed online at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKzUC1fugH8>

Drawing on recent developments in social media, Prof Lani shared, research on the sociocultural context of virtual learning, social presence, and collaborative learning, coupled with her own research experience in collaborative knowledge creation utilizing social media.

### **Distinguished Lecture #3: Current Status of the Japanese Institutional Repository in Open Access Activity and its Further Collaboration with Sri Lanka**

The third lecture of the OUSL Distinguished Lecture Series was delivered on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015 by Professor Kazu Yamaji who is an

associate Professor at the National Institute of Informatics (NII), Japan.



During his lecture titled “Current Status of the Japanese Institutional Repository in Open Access Activity and its Further Collaboration with Sri Lanka” Prof Yamaji explained how Worldwide activities on open access have triggered many Japanese universities to operate institutional repositories (IRs). He further elaborated on a homegrown repository software WEKO in addition to the supporting projects for IRs in accordance with university libraries.



Prof Yamaji mentioned that although current majority of contents are journal articles, however, IRs have a potential to preserve wide range of academic resources including research and learning materials. He shared a case study on the Open University of Japan which he hoped will inspire collaboration between Sri Lanka and Japan.

The recording of the lecture can be viewed online at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4N2bjOWuRUw>

## Workshop #1: Institutional Open Access Repository

A hands-on workshop on open access repositories was conducted at OUSL by Professor Kazu Yamaji and Mr Hiroshi Kato of the National Institute of Informatics (NII), Japan. The workshop was held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at the Staff Development Center (SDC).



Worldwide activities on open access have triggered many universities to operate institutional repositories (IRs). The National Institute of Informatics (NII) has led a Japanese IR project since 2014 and, developing homegrown repository software named WEKO as a module for the content management system NetCommons (NC). Concepts of WEKO are “High Functionality”, “Easy” and “As you like”. WEKO has almost all functionalities you need as a repository system, and these can be customized and operated by browser.



In addition, not only the repository functions but also variety of add-on can be utilized for designing your own web page. More than 250 universities in Japan are now operating WEKO as their IR. Since the WEKO has multilingual functionality, some of the Malaysian university has decided to employ it. In this workshop, participants were provide hands-on style training on (i) Introduction to WEKO; (ii) preparation for deposit contents; (iii) how to use deposit the single and multiple

contents; and (iv) how to use the additional add-on modules for designing the IR page.

## **Distinguished Lecture #4: The Essentials of “MOOC” Phenomena: The Prospects for “After- MOOCs”**

The fourth lecture of the OUSL Distinguished Lecture Series was delivered on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2015 by Prof Tsuneo Yamada, Professor and Chair, Department of Informatics, The Open University of Japan (OUJ).



During his lecture on the topic “The Essentials of MOOC Phenomena: The Prospects for After-MOOCs” Prof Yamada mentioned that while the hype for “MOOC” was over in North America, regional MOOC consortia are still launching in many countries and regions. He further stated that since the first Japanese MOOC in 2013 Japanese top-class universities, such as University of Tokyo and Kyoto University, started

MOOC projects by joining international consortia, that is, Coursera and edX.



Prof Yamada explained how Japanese Universities and corporates launched Japan Massive Open Online Course (JMOOC, <http://www.jmooc.jp/en/>) Consortium as a domestic MOOC platform. The lecture mainly focused on the Japanese challenges and outcomes on MOOCs while discussing the essentials of “MOOC” phenomena and forthcoming movements after MOOCs.

The recording of the lecture can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qt8F5lanZY0>

## **Workshop #2: Let’s try Japanese MOOCs: JMOOC platforms and content**

A hands-on workshop on the JMOOC platform was conducted at OUSL by Professor Tsuneo Yamada of the Open University of Japan (OUJ). The workshop

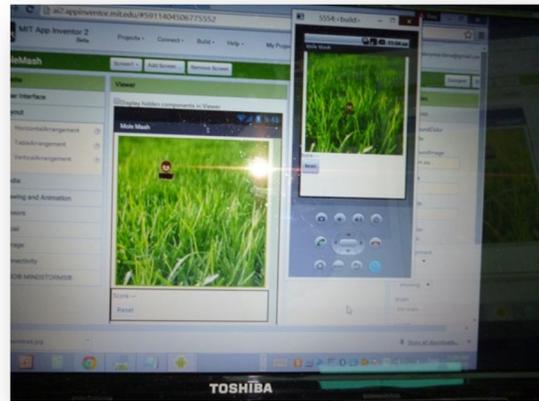
was held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at the Staff Development Center (SDC).



During the workshop, Prof Yamada mentioned that MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is expected to be a new sustainable model of open education. Different from many OERs (Open Educational Resources) in the past, MOOCs are not free content distribution but quality education itself; they include evaluation and certification. He further mentioned that while the basic concept and definition have not fixed, they are efficient and reasonable ways of flexible and autonomous learning practically.



In the hands-on workshop, each participant visited a couple of the MOOC platforms and experienced how to find, register, learn and utilize them in every-day life. Furthermore, the instructor introduced the JMOOC (Japan Massive Open Online Course, <http://www.jmooc.jp/en/>) platform and course packs using Web technologies and multimedia e-book packaging.



## Hands-on Workshop on Android App Development for Non-Programmers

A hands-on workshop on Android App Development for Non-Programmers was conducted on 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 at OUSL. The resource person for this technical workshop was Dr. Ishan Abewardena, Director of the International Academic Relations Division of OUSL. This is the third training workshop conducted by Ishan on Android App Development. The first workshop was conducted at the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU), Thailand in August 2014. The second workshop was conducted as a post-conference workshop of the 28th Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) annual conference held at the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) in October 2014.

The workshop was attended by around 20 participants from OUSL and other institutions consisting of students and staff. The workshop introduced basic and some intermediate concepts of Android app development on the AI2 platform.



By the end of the workshop participants learnt to use the Designer and Blocks Editor components of App Inventor to create apps which can be readily downloaded and used on Android smart phones or tablets. The hands-on sessions guided the participants on how to use features such as text-to-speech,

accelerometer, speech recognition, drawing, video, games and music playback.

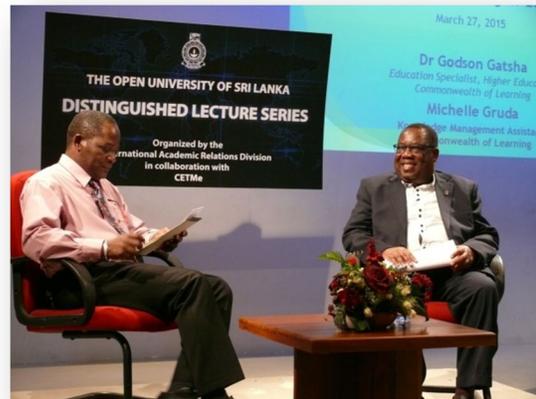
## **Distinguished Lecture #5: Learner support: reflections on paradigms, models and pedagogical approaches for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners in Higher Education**

The fifth lecture of the OUSL Distinguished Lecture Series was delivered on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 by Dr Godson Gatsha, Education Specialist – Higher Education, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada.



During his lecture on “Learner support: reflections on paradigms, models and pedagogical approaches for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners in Higher Education”, Dr Godson mentioned that learner support in any mode of delivery is an indispensable enabler for successful teaching and learning. Furthermore, he added that effective learner support

provision goes beyond physical needs by ensuring that learners’ social, emotional and intellectual needs are addressed in order to enable all learners to have an equal opportunity for success.

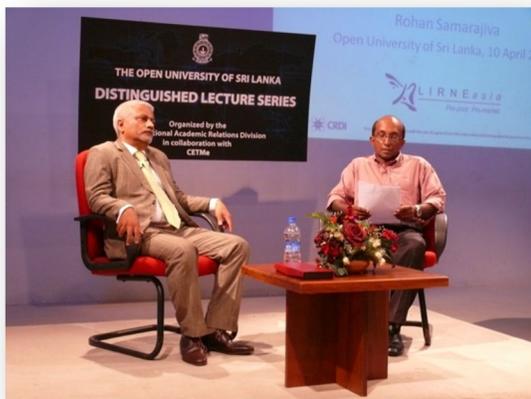


It was also highlighted that learner centric support services are more critical for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner than ever before given the dynamic environments, diversity and internationalization of higher education. The lecture focused on learner support trends and models while addressing key issues relating to the characteristics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner, their expectations, challenges and the changing roles of the educator in the light of the technological advancements, digital divide and the need for learning for sustainable livelihoods.

The recording of the lecture can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFWahzMaA-A>

## **Distinguished Lecture #6: Making the University Relevant**

The sixth lecture of the OUSL Distinguished Lecture Series was delivered on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 by Professor Rohan Samarajiva, Founding Chair of LIRNEasia which is an ICT policy and regulation think tank active across emerging Asia.



In his lecture, Professor Samarajiva stated that in an increasingly complex world where difficult decisions have to be made by those in government, there is demand for evidence to support political and policy choices. In this context the university is the default source where one looks for evidence or for those who can generate evidence. However, he further elaborated that on most occasions, scholars and policy makers do not connect. Professor Samarajiva highlighted that the demands for teaching and for increased publications results in even less incentives for the conduct of policy-

relevant research and engagement with policy makers. The lecture was based on analysis of over eight years of the activities of Communication Policy Research south, a multi-country initiative to develop policy intellectuals. An outline of the solution to improve the availability of policy-relevant scholarship was also presented.

The recording of the lecture can be viewed online at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fbfqzh4fBUs&feature=youtu.be>

## **Workshop on Educational App (Android) Development Toolkit for Teachers and Learners**

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) through the Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia (CEMCA) organized a three day hands-on workshop on Educational App (Android) Development Toolkit for Teachers and Learners at the Kulachi Hansaraj Model School (KHMS), Delhi, India from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015. 25 in-service teachers from seven institutions around Delhi participated in the workshop. This workshop was the first Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop organized by COL and CEMCA on educational app development. Dr Ishan Abeywardena, Director of the International Academic Relations Division at OUSL was invited by COL and CEMCA to facilitate the three day

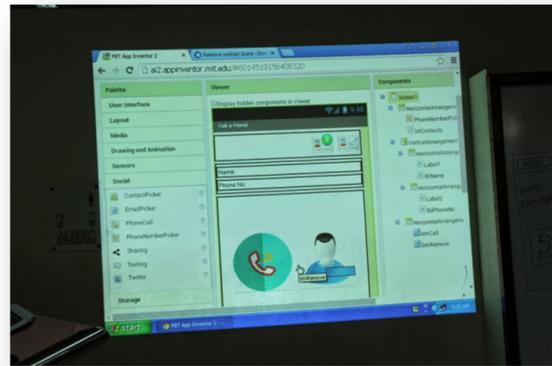
workshop strengthening the close relationship between OUSL, CEMCA and COL.



The outcome of the workshop was to provide training of trainers (TOT) in educational app (Android) development for teachers and learners. This workshop was aimed at introducing the basic and some intermediate concepts of Android app development on the MIT App Inventor (AI2) platform.



By the end of the workshop participants were able to use the Designer and Blocks Editor components of App Inventor to create apps which can be readily downloaded and used on their Android smart phone or tablet.



The hands-on sessions guided the participants on how to use features such as text-to-speech, accelerometer, speech recognition, drawing, video, games and music playback.



The participants also created six intermediate applications which will give them a solid foundation to develop more complex apps in the future. Finally they learnt how to package and distribute their apps on the Google Play store.

## **Exploratory meeting with the Virtual University of Pakistan on a Collaborative ODL Question Bank**

A meeting was conducted through video conferencing on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2015 between the Senior Management of OUSL and VUP to explore the possibility of hosting a collaborative ODL question bank. Professor Naveed Mallik, Rector of VUP and his Senior Staff demonstrated the homegrown online assessment system used by VUP for the past 8 years.



According to Prof Naveed, the system has been testing approximately 40k students each year from multiple centers across Pakistan. This first meeting was an attempt to explore whether OUSL can adopt the system, under an MoU, to provide online assessment to OUSL students.

## **Exploratory Meeting with Kristianstad University of Sweden on Joint Degree in Nursing**

A meeting was held between OUSL and Kristianstad University of Sweden on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 to explore the possibility of offering a joint degree in nursing.



Kristianstad University was represented by Dr Kerstin Samarasinghe, Program director, Master's programme in Integrative Health and Mrs Lena Larsson, Lecturer in Nursing. Further action is now being planned in the respective faculties at OUSL.

## **Exploratory visit by Professor Homer-Vanniasinkam, University of Leeds Medical School**

An exploratory meeting was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 with Professor S Homer-Vanniasinkam on the possibility

of launching a postgraduate degree program in Biotechnology in collaboration with the University of Leeds Medical School. Professor Homer-Vanniasinkam is Consultant Vascular Surgeon, The General Infirmary at Leeds; Clinical Sub-Dean, University of Leeds Medical School; Professor of Surgery (Founding), University of Warwick Medical School & University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust; and Honorary Professor, Division of Surgical & Interventional Sciences, UCL.



From OUSL, Dr Vijitha Nanayakkara, Vice Chancellor; Prof Anbahan Ariadurai, Dean of Engineering; Prof Shironica Karunanayake, Dean of Education; Prof Siti Iqbal, Dean of Natural Sciences; and Dr Ishan Abeywardena, Director of International Academic Relations participated in the meeting. Prof Homer-Vanniasinkam will be working closely with the faculties of Engineering and Natural Sciences to further develop this collaboration.

## The Team

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