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TIPS FROM THE PROS

Expand the Walls of Your Classroom through International Course Collaborations

By Patrice Torcivia Prusko and Lorette Pellettiere Calix

With globalization impacting almost every field, internationalization of the curriculum has become a goal shared by many colleges and universities. Many institutions look to study abroad programs to increase students' awareness of and sensitivity to international issues and their understanding of different cultures and points of view. However, only a small percentage of students participate in study abroad programs, and many groups are underrepresented. A Globally Networked Learning Experience (GNLE) connects students in different countries using tools you already have and with which you are familiar, like your learning platform, blogs, and video meeting tools, with the goal of developing cross-cultural competencies and enabling all students to have a meaningful international learning experience. A GNLE can be as simple as a short-term shared discussion (minimum of two to three weeks) or as complex as a term-long, cotaught course. Here we provide the basic steps for planning

and designing a GNLE.

The first step is to find an international partner. If you don't already have a relationship with a faculty member abroad, we

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suggest you start by reaching out to universities with which your institution already has international agreements. The SUNY Collaborative Online International Learning Center (coil.suny.edu/) is also a good resource. Their website includes course examples, names of institutions that have participated in COIL courses, and case studies.

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Curt Bonk Talks about Open Education

Interview by John Orlando

Curt Bonk is one of the foremost authorities on open resources in higher education. A professor of education at Indiana University, he is known for his many hundreds of talks, books, articles, and videos on open education. For a good introduction to open education, find his 27 short video primers at TravelinEdMan on YouTube. He also has written the free e-book *Adding Some TEC-VARIETY*, which includes more than 100 technology integration activities you can use in your courses, available at tec-variety.com.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Curt by video about open education and how it is changing higher education. We covered a number of interesting issues, which you will find in the video recording of the interview at the end of this article. One point that struck me is that open education really breaks into two forms: open courses and open resources. Open courses are the MOOCs hosted on Coursera, EdX,

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and elsewhere. Open courses allow higher education to advance its fundamental mandate of serving the public good by making its faculty expertise freely available to the world. Traditional education serves only the small percentage of the population that can meet the entrance requirements, pay the costs, and take time off to be at a certain place at a certain time.

By contrast, open resources are free material from the outside world that higher education pulls into its teaching. For instance, studies show that an alarmingly high number of students never purchase textbooks due to their cost. But faculty can use open textbooks developed by organizations such as OpenStax (cnx.org) at Rice University to provide the same material at a fraction of the cost or even for free. As a result, a consortium of 38 community colleges has recently begun switching to open textbooks in an effort to save students over \$1,300 per year (bit.ly/25XyGad). Plus, the electronic textbooks can allow for student annotations, video content, and discussion forums that are not possible with paper-based textbooks.

MOOCs have tended to dominate discussions of open education, which generally fixate on their low completion rates. But judging a MOOC by retention rates is the wrong matrix, as it is not designed to fulfill a degree requirement. MOOCs require a new vision of how we assess the efficacy of a course.

The fixation on completion rates of MOOCs also ignores the open resource side of the coin by casting a shadow across open education in general. This is a huge oversight, as Curt suggests focusing on helping faculty see the ways in which open resources can enrich their courses.

This is a much easier step for faculty to take, and helps them see the value of open education.

We also need to broaden our view of open resources beyond textbooks. For instance, former students, alumni, and outside experts are a large untapped resource that are only a mouse click away. They can be asked to

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provide guest lectures by video, live discussions, or other forms of content that can enrich the course.

I think of the medical ethics course that I teach to future doctors and nurses. These students enter the medical profession within a few years of finishing the course, and so quickly acquire a wealth of experience on the issues that we cover. I could have current students interview my former students on the ethical issues that they face in their jobs, their work on ethics committees, and other topics related to the course. These alumni might even suggest that real life in a hospital differs somewhat from what is described in textbooks, and they can provide practical information to current students that will better prepare them to enter the profession.

Drawing open resources into a course can be hampered by an LMS

designed to be walled off from the outside world. But more flexible systems like Moodle and others could allow alumni to participate directly in the class via discussion boards. Another option is to host shared activities on outside systems such as VoiceThread, Padlet, and so on.

Bonk's central message is that the Internet allows us to break the traditional vision of higher education as something you acquire by leaving the real world for a number of years, only to return later. Higher education needs to be situated within the wider world both by making its resources available without barriers and by drawing from the wealth of resources available outside of it.

This also requires faculty to think of open courses as an opportunity to make their expertise available to a much wider audience than traditional students. Faculty often turn away from teaching open courses on grounds that they should not be giving away course content that they created for free. But why must they think of course content differently from the research they create? Faculty are expected to engage in research and publish that research for the benefit of the world in academic journals that rarely provide royalties.

Curt wants faculty to think of their expertise as something to share for the benefit of those both inside and outside of the class and to identify ways to bring outside resources into their courses. He practices what he preaches by creating open access books and free videos, and he would like to see more faculty do the same.

Hear more about what Curt has to say on open education in his interview at bit.ly/262qXnL. @