Opening up for OpenLearn: issues in providing open educational resources

Conference or Workshop Item

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Opening up for openlearn

Andreia Santos, Patrick McAndrew and Steve Godwin
Open Content Initiative: openLearn

• $10m+ two year programme
  – supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

• Strands
  – Academic
  – Technical: Production
  – Technical: Tools
  – Research and Evaluation
New to openlearn? Browse units and register for extra free resources. Returning to openlearn? Log-in now.

Welcome to The Open University’s openlearn website - free and open educational resources for learners and educators around the world.

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making educational resources freely available

Case Studies
Tony: a Technology Lecturer read more

openlearners say...
I think openlearn is a superb concept. I find the project exciting in a practical, philosophical and theoretical way!
Rachel MacDermot, Children’s Workforce Learning Network read more

spotLight on: William Wilberforce
March 2007 marks two hundred years since a Parliamentary Bill was passed to abolish the slave trade in the then British Empire, but how much do you know about William Wilberforce? Read more...
openlearn research

• Producing:
  – How to transform for open content?
  – What tools do we need?
  – Can we bring in content from the world?
  – Do we give new life to things the world values?
• Learning:
  – Do we have users?
  – Can we reach the world?
  – What do they do?
  – Does anyone learn anything?
Activity system (Engeström)
Design view

Tools: Workshops/meetings/guidelines/advice

Subject: Academic

Object: Open content

Rules: Models/Suitability/Research/Faculty satisfaction

Community: Open University/Colleagues/Hewlett/interested world

Division of Labour: openlearn team/Volunteers
Implementation view
Analysed producer contradictions

• Academic team/ Media team and OU staff – who has final sign off
• Users- XML Editor
• Models for unit production
• Proposal targets

• Remove the sign-off process: improve after release
• Add in other formats and models
• Include new factors in the targets
Does the analysis help?

- Behind the scenes: based on observation
- Presentation tool to others: feedback and refinement
- Method for recording factors: neutral view
- Applied in other situations and projects
- Remains to be validated for this case
open learn research

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How we will work with others

• Collaboration with Brazil:
  ➞ translation of openlearn units
  ➞ cross-cultural issues (context, language, institutional discourses and policies)
  ➞ Two phases: implementation 1 and 2
  ➞ Method: drawing on ethnography and action research
  ➞ Disruptive?
  ➞ Formal and informal learning
Summary

- Activity theory can provide a useful mechanism to understand complex practices within openlearn and help us to identify contradictions;

- The challenge for us is to balance applied research (fast feedback) and academic research in order to develop a greater understanding of the field.
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