3rd session Summary

International Collaboration in Content Development and Distribution

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Moderator of Session 3

Backgrounds and purposes of the session

With the progress of globalization and internationalization in various areas of human activities, borderless collaboration and competition are taking place in higher education. Some institutions are developing overseas campuses and providing online courses while the planning of international consortia for sharing courses and educational content is under way in higher education worldwide. In this session, we focused on the aspects of the co-development and distribution of e-Learning content and clarified the problems to be resolved in international collaboration. In response to the globalization of higher education, we not only need an international quality assurance system and standardization for courses and content, but we must also have strategies for reorganizing them to suit each local culture. In this session, we had invited experts from Japan and abroad, share practical examples in distributing and localizing educational content and learned from their experiences and strategies for globalization and localization.

Speakers and presentations

In the third session, we had three invited speakers, who had excellent research and practice in these fields. Professor Makiko Miwa (NIME, Japan) presented a paper titled with "Key issues for educational/learning resource sharing networks: Standardization, globalization and localization in the ICT environments". Professor Allan Herrmann (Senior Lecturer in Alternative Modes of Educational Delivery and Manager of Educational Design and e-Learning, Learning Support Network, Curtin University of Technology, Australia) discussed "E-learning: collaboration, contextualization and globalisation in higher education- An example from Africa and Australia". Professor Youngsoo Kim (Professor, Ewha Womans University, Korea) presented a paper on “Connecting with international learners by globalizing and localizing e-learning contents through collaboration: Lessons from higher education institutes in Korea”.

Prof Miwa focused on the aspects of sharing and distribution, and introduced two consortia for sharing learning/educational resources, that is, GEM Consortium in the United States and ARIADNE Foundation in Europe. Both consortia are typical advanced cases, which function actively at present. She analyzed their backgrounds and characteristics and compared them. While both consortia have similarities in the
main characteristics, they also have differences in details. Such comparison was very suggestive to potential providers and users in other countries who plan to launch a similar regional/national consortium and/or to participate in international consortia.

Prof. Hermann focused on the aspects of co-development of courses and learning materials, and introduced international collaboration in African Virtual University (AVU) Project. Curtin University of Technology and Prof. Hermann have many years of experience both in open, distance and flexible learning and in training consultancies in developing countries. Taking this project as a case study, he overviewed the possibilities of ICT-based education in the African context, and discussed some issues for "contextualization" in international collaboration.

Prof. Kim also introduced advanced cases in Korean universities and/or private training sectors on the international co-development of courses and learning materials. From the more microscopic view, she mentioned various strategies for localization, which should be selected adapting to each content and context. Especially, the audience was deeply impressed with new challenges by Korean cyber universities, which started from FY2001.

**Prospects**

To realize the knowledge-based society, broad accumulation and sharing of knowledge are required. While necessities of co-development, distribution, sharing and re-use of digital learning content, which is also a form of knowledge, have been recognized widely, both examining the requirements and shaping consensus have just begun. In this session, the following essential and significant issues to be addressed were proposed:

- What kinds of collaboration and cooperation are possible between higher education institutions that are potentially rivals each other?
- What conditions and/or environments are necessary to promote such collaboration and cooperation?
- What strategies and/or frameworks for the sharing and distribution of digital learning content are suitable to the multicultural society and equitable co-existence?

In this symposium, we found ourselves on the desirable starting point for an international sharing framework of digital learning content. Towards its realization, it is important for us to continue to have opportunities for exchanging and sharing ideas and experiences.