

Capacity-building for Public Health and Web 2.0 – the Peoples-uni





- Universities in the 'north' charge high overseas student fees, which limits their ability to contribute to capacity building in low- to middle-income countries
- Increasing amounts of open source educational material, as well as delivery mechanisms, are available through the Internet, but universities which offer open access to their materials do not offer teaching or assessment in association



- For capacity building in low-to middle-income countries, how about trying to make open source materials available, guide students through them and assess achieved competencies?
- And do this outside the traditional university system?
- This is the idea underpinning the ‘Peoples Open Access Education Initiative’



Open Educational Resources, open source educational delivery via the Internet, volunteer faculty

Course modules, certificate, diploma in Public Health

Skills for Public Health practitioners

Collaboration across countries

Improve health of the public

Career development for practitioners

Best practice



Web 2.0 and education 2.0

- “Web 2.0 refers to the evolution of Internet use from the one-way transfer of information (Web 1.0) to collaboration and participation among users. In the context of education, students are not just recipients of education but are involved in collaboration in learning activities, expressed as eLearning 2.0 or Education 2.0” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ELearning_2.0).
- “e-Learning that takes advantage of many sources of content aggregated together into learning experiences and e-Learning that utilizes various tools including online references, courseware, knowledge management, collaboration and search.”
- “e-Learning where students create content, collaborate with peers to form a learning network with distribution of content creation and responsibilities”



Pilot of course module

- A pilot of a course module on Maternal Mortality ran October -December 2007
- Moodle platform, 10 weeks, five topics:
 - magnitude of the health problem
 - implementation of improved data collection and accuracy
 - relationship of personal and environmental factors to cause
 - potential evidence-based solutions to reduce the burden of illness
 - policy-based solutions that can be implemented
- Three assessments (one formative),
- General and content expert facilitators



Pilot of course module

- 38 students from 8 countries after limited publicity, range from clinicians wanting Public Health perspective to policy -makers and programme leads
- 22 students participated actively in discussions and/or submitted assignments
- 19 returned evaluation survey questionnaires



Pilot module evaluation (n=19)

	Excellent	Good
General interest of the course	8	9
Academic value	11	4
Practical value	6	3
Input to the Discussions from other students	5	12
Input to the Discussions from the facilitators	11	2



Pilot module evaluation (n=19)

	Definitely	Probably
Would enrol in more course modules	12	4
Interested in continuing to Diploma or Masters	13	0
Was relevant to job or career	13	1
Would recommend to others	12	3



Progress to date (May 2008)

- Support and involvement have been offered by a number of organisations and individuals
- Encouraged by the response to the pilot, and taking note of the lessons learned, we have now started to develop a further 11 course modules
- More than 70 people have already agreed to join course module development teams – they include some of the students from the pilot and represent an international faculty from 24 countries
- Course enrolments are planned in September, with certificate and diploma awards through the UK Royal Society for Public Health
- The development phase continues and we are keen to receive advice and collaboration from individuals and organisations across the digital and geographical divides



Have we succeeded with the Web 2.0 philosophy?

- “e-Learning that takes advantage of many sources of content aggregated together into learning experiences and e-Learning that utilizes various tools including online references, courseware, knowledge management, collaboration and search.”
 - Yes
- “e-Learning where students create content, collaborate with peers to form a learning network with distribution of content creation and responsibilities”
 - Not yet
 - Distributed faculty are, however, working in this way



Key Messages

- There is a wealth of educational resource freely available on the Internet, but to be really useful it needs to be set in the context of an educational programme.
- Peoples-uni helps to build Public Health capacity in low- to middle-income countries, using volunteers to develop and deliver modules and courses which use Open Educational Resources, and which are of much lower cost than courses offered by universities.
- The experience of the Peoples-uni so far, suggests that this model of capacity-building has considerable potential, even if there are difficulties in realising the full potential of the concept of Web 2.0.



Finally

- All collaboration is welcome. Please join in or make suggestions.
- <http://peoples-uni.org>