|  |
| --- |
| Mainstreaming OER at Africa Nazarene University |
| Pursuing a participatory action research journey – report 4 |
| This report outlines the process and outcomes of a 4th visit to explore how to mainstream engagement with OER to support the increasing demand for flexible higher learning opportunities at Africa Nazarene University using a participatory action research approach. |



21/05/2016

**Contents**

[Acronyms and abbreviations 3](#_Toc451527791)

[Executive summary 4](#_Toc451527792)

[Summary of revised short-term goals to May 2016 and progress 4](#_Toc451527793)

[Summary of medium term goals to August 2016 5](#_Toc451527794)

[Summary of long-term goals to August 2017 5](#_Toc451527795)

[1. Introduction and background 6](#_Toc451527796)

[1.1 Background to the current report 6](#_Toc451527797)

[2. Workplan, activities and findings 6](#_Toc451527798)

[2.1 Pre-visit planning 6](#_Toc451527799)

[2.2 Workplan 8](#_Toc451527800)

[2.2.1 Day 1/Day 5 ANU 8](#_Toc451527801)

[2.2.2 Day 2 OER Convening 1 15](#_Toc451527807)

[2.2.3 Day 3 OER Convening 2 16](#_Toc451527808)

[2.2.4 Day 4 19](#_Toc451527809)

[2.3 Post workshop 19](#_Toc451527810)

[3. Recommended next steps 20](#_Toc451527811)

[4. Concluding remarks 21](#_Toc451527812)

[Appendix 1: Draft workplan: 16-20 May 2016 22](#_Toc451527813)

# Acronyms and abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ANU | Africa Nazarene University |
| COL | Commonwealth of Learning |
| CPD | Continuous Professional Development |
| CUE | Council for University Education |
| DE | Distance Education |
| HoD | Head of Department |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| IODL | Institute of Open and Distance Learning |
| IPR | Intellectual Property Rights |
| LMS | Learning Management System |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| NADEOLKE | National Association for Distance Education and Open Learning in Kenya |
| NADEOSA | National Association for Distance Education and Open Learning in South Africa |
| ODeL | Open Distance eLearning |
| OER | Open Educational Resources |
| OUT | Open University of Tanzania |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| RC | Resource Coordinator |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| SME | Subject Matter Expert |
| SMS | Short Messaging System (short text messages for mobiles) |
| UFS | University of the Free State |
| Unesco | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UP | University of Pretoria |
| WIL | Work Integrated Learning |

Mainstreaming OER at

Africa Nazarene University

# Executive summary

In September 2014, Africa Nazarene University (ANU) agreed to become the fourth institution to work with OER Africa through a participatory action research approach to explore the implications of mainstreaming the use of OER at the university in support of pedagogical transformation. In a follow-up meeting in March 2015, there was a reflection on progress made, policy issues were explored further and the goals agreed previously were revisited. The third visit in November 2015 observed that progress had largely stalled due to unresolved issues regarding payment of materials developers, the absence of the Director for IODL who was on sabbatical and new demands from the CUE which needed to be addressed. It was agreed that OER Africa should develop a discussion document related to a possible new business model for the university ahead of a visit in early 2016. This fourth report therefore reflects on a fourth engagement which took place both on the ANU main campus as well as during the OER Africa Convening meeting in the week of 16-20 May 2016. The report concludes that further engagement with OER in support of pedagogical transformation is unlikely to proceed unless ANU adopts a resource- and activity-based model in which the costs of developing and renewing learning resources become part of the core business and costing model of the university.

Summary of revised short-term goals to May 2016 and progress

1. Approve IODL/OER Policy and publish as an OER (policy approved January 2015 and publicised through the Saide newsletter at <http://www.saide.org.za/resources/newsletters/Vol_21_no.1_2015/1_2015web.html>).
2. Publish first three revised IODL modules as OER (at least 6 modules in development but none yet published as OER even though one module on Christian Ethics has been complete since late 2014).
3. Publish a case study based on lessons from the first year of engagement on OER (a case study was completed and published at <http://www.oerafrica.org/resource/opening-learning-africa-nazarene-university-case-study>).
4. Establish an OER presence on the ANU website: OpenANU (created at <http://www.anu.ac.ke/anu-open/> but not yet populated; Mr Athoye now has the OER Policy, the Case Study and the Alara 2015 presentation and just needs authorisation to upload).
5. Establish a student tracking system (in March 2015 ANU was busy trying to synchronise student data between CAMS and eNaz, but it is not clear how far this has progressed).
6. Develop a post-graduate ANU higher education teaching qualification (this is in process using an action research approach; it is understood that one cohort has completed and a second is in process. There is potential for this to be written up as a research article).
7. Undertake research related to the following:
   1. Facilities to support distance students at regional centres
   2. OER readiness within ANU
   3. Comparative take-up of OER by students in four Kenyan universities
   4. Evaluation of the impact of revised study materials incorporating OER.

(A separate PhD study is in process in relation to C but there has been no progress on the other three initiatives).

1. Publish at least 1 article (presentation made at ALARA 2015 and appended to this report; paper was reworked for the journal).
2. Develop an IPR policy (policy drafted and discussed with Dr Abeka and Prof Ethangatta during the November 2015 visit but it seems there has been no further progress).

Summary of medium term goals to August 2016

1. Publish at least three more revised IODL modules as OER (no progress due to the payment issues).
2. Analyse data from student tracking system and revise learning support accordingly (no progress due to lack of full-time Director of IODL).
3. Implement and evaluate post-graduate ANU CPD teaching qualification (implementation in process at certificate level; it seems that a Diploma version is not yet approved; initial reflections indicate need for a better tracking system for progress; there is potential for a meta-reflection across the different case studies).
4. Host a conference to launch a national association to influence the national discourse (postponed indefinitely).
5. Review and update HR workload, promotion and reward systems based on literature and empirical evidence (will flow from business model discussions).
6. Publish at least 1 article on each main learning and development thrust. (Alara paper in process.)

Summary of long-term goals to August 2017

1. Publish at least three revised IODL modules as OER
2. Co-host a 2nd conference
3. Publish a case study based on lessons from the project as a whole
4. Ensure strategic plan 2018-2023 (and supporting policies, systems and budget) reflect the reality of a shift towards non-traditional modes of provision
5. Publish at least 1 article, M or D study based on the project.

# Introduction and background

This section of the report provides the background and context for the work that was undertaken.

## 1.1 Background to the current report

The work reported on here is the sixth in a series of in-country interactions between Africa Nazarene University and OER Africa and the fourth under the auspices of the PAR agenda.

The first workshop in August 2013 involved a review of current ANU distance education practice and included an introduction to OER.

The second workshop in March 2014 focussed on programme design integrating OER including iterative processes for curriculum development, course design and materials development for ODeL.

The third workshop in September 2014 explored activity-based learning as a follow-up on the March workshop and also introduced OER Africa’s new participatory action research focus for the period 2014-2017 and planning related to this.

The fourth workshop in March 2015 explored the research potential of the PAR initiative and identified several related research projects that ANU might undertake internally. The workshop also explored policy issues related to OER, copyright, IPR and QA.

The fifth visit in November 2015, involved reviewing progress towards goals agreed and issues raised during the March 2015 workshop, revisited goals and involved the first data collection point for a formal doctoral study related to the project.

The sixth visit reported on here was combined with a convening meeting in which all four of the OER Africa PAR institutions participated – ANU, Open University of Tanzania (OUT), University of Pretoria (UP) and University of the Free State (UFS) in South Africa.

# Workplan, activities and findings

As with previous visits, a three-step process was employed.

## 2.1 Pre-visit planning

Key findings of the November 2015 visit can be summarised as follows:

That ANU had a staff member involved in formally researching OER, had successfully initiated a CPD programme using action research processes to reflect on and improve practice and had researchers and students currently engaged in exploring the possibilities of e- and m-learning were all cause for congratulation.

However, it also seemed clear that much of the momentum built up around OER in particular and ODeL in general seemed to have been lost since OER Africa’s previous visit. This is both a testament to the sterling work that the IODL Director had previously done to try to unite diverse interests towards a common goal but also a reflection of the changed reality that ANU now finds itself in with increased competition on the one hand and more stringent criteria from the Commission on University Education on the other, which have tended to focus more on the requirements for traditional campus-based provision than providing an imaginative framework for future more flexible provision.

It seemed timely then that the DVC Academic had asked for support in helping ANU to conceptualise a new business model in which future growth would be premised on more flexible provision in niche areas. It was suggested that this should result in a draft report by end January and a hands-on workshop with key university management decision-makers early in 2016 to explore new possibilities. It seemed probable that IODL would continue to struggle to encourage staff to make appropriate use of eNAZ and to update learning resources until such time as there was a clear and sustained communication from the top that blended and distance learning constituted the new strategic direction of the university and that systems, procedures, budgeting and resourcing, conditions of service, performance appraisal and rewards and promotions would be adjusted accordingly.

In response to the call from the DVC for support in developing a new business model, the OER Africa consultant drafted a discussion document and course costing toolkit and sent them to the DVC for comment during January 2015. It was intended that a revised version of this document would serve as the basis for discussion during the next visit.

Here is an overview of the contents of this discussion document:

Contents

[Executive summary 4](#_Toc440027188)

[1. Purpose 5](#_Toc440027189)

[2. Background and introduction 5](#_Toc440027190)

[3. Need for ODeL in Kenya: opportunities, constraints and implications 7](#_Toc440027191)

[3.1 Organising the provision of ODeL in the context of Kenya 10](#_Toc440027192)

[3.1.1. Clarifying degrees of openness 10](#_Toc440027193)

[3.1.2 Understanding the changing practices of distance provision in a digital era 12](#_Toc440027194)

[3.1.3 Making strategic choices 15](#_Toc440027195)

[3.2 Curriculum sub-system 20](#_Toc440027196)

[3.3 Materials sub-system 22](#_Toc440027197)

[3.3.1 The importance of scale 22](#_Toc440027198)

[3.3.2 The choice of technology 23](#_Toc440027199)

[3.4 Learner support sub-system 23](#_Toc440027200)

[3.5 Assessment and certification sub-system 24](#_Toc440027201)

[3.6 Logistical sub-system 25](#_Toc440027202)

[3.7 Managing a national ODeL footprint 25](#_Toc440027203)

[3.8 Managing cross-border provision 25](#_Toc440027204)

[4. Sustainable ODeL provision 26](#_Toc440027205)

[4.1 Perspective 1 26](#_Toc440027206)

[4.2 Perspective 2 27](#_Toc440027207)

[4.3 Perspective 3 31](#_Toc440027208)

[4.4 Costing courses 34](#_Toc440027209)

[4.4.1 Planning issues common to all models 41](#_Toc440027210)

[4.4.2 Logistical Support 41](#_Toc440027211)

[4.4.3 Student support 42](#_Toc440027212)

[4.4.4 Faculty support 42](#_Toc440027213)

[4.4.5 Evaluation 43](#_Toc440027214)

[4.4.6 Laboratory/Practical/Work-Integrated Experiences 43](#_Toc440027215)

[4.4.7 Planning and costing assumptions 44](#_Toc440027216)

[4.4.8 Observations 51](#_Toc440027217)

[5. Conclusions and recommendations 51](#_Toc440027218)

[5.1 Managing and learning from a transition process 54](#_Toc440027219)

[*Phase 1. Project conception: exploring ODeL principles, practices and implications* 54](#_Toc440027220)

[*Phase 2. Pilot projects x 4* 54](#_Toc440027221)

[*Phase 3. Extended ODeL provision* 55](#_Toc440027222)

[*Phase 4. Institutionalising ODeL provisio*n 56](#_Toc440027223)

[5.2 Summary of Outputs and Activities 56](#_Toc440027224)

This report was complemented by two spreasheets – an academic time management tool and a course costing tool.

As noted previously, the May 2016 visit to ANU coincided with an OER Africa convening meeting. It also coincided with a mid-term formative evaluation process involving visits to ANU by Prof Ken Harley (external evaluator) and Ms Liz Levey (the latter being OER Africa’s key link person with the Hewlett Foundation). The draft workplan for the visit is provided in **Appendix 1**. This report focuses on the ANU OER work rather than the evaluation work.

## 2.2 Workplan

The OER Africa representative arrived in Kenya on the afternoon of Sunday 15 May 2016.

### Day 1/Day 5 ANU

Days 1 and 5 were spent on the ANU campus in Ongata-Rongai.

Due to traffic and rain delays, Day 1 started a bit later than planned. A five-part discussion was mediated through a PowerPoint shared separately with this report. The presentation and discussion were based on the discussion documents shared prior to the visit.

The purpose of the first session was to provide a shared base of common concepts and issues as the basis for focus group discussions that were to follow.

The following issues were identified by participants as key to shaping future practice at ANU:

* Consideration of how pedagogic/andragogic/heutagogic/metagogic assumptions shape practice
* Increasing trend towards problem-based and constructivist approaches
* A need to think more about wider graduate competences and increasing learning autonomy
* Increasing demand for just-in-time skills-based learning and/or short learning programmes rather than long degree programmes
* Increasing affordances of ICT but often internet and/or LMS is unstable and increasingly hard to access away from main centres
* Team approaches are needed in the design and development of more flexible and open, distance and eLearning approaches – upfront design and development costs that need to be properly costed and recouped from fees
* Even where decentralized contact sessions have been offered for distance learners, attendance has been low suggesting that this is not the most appropriate way to support such learners
* In a situation in which staff have multiple commitments, staff will tend to prioritise campus-based and immediate concerns rather than the needs of off-campus students
* An increasing number of students are employed and need support after normal university / work hours
* Materials development and other aspects of quality distance provision do not inform current budgeting but will need to do so if this is seen as a key growth strategy for the future
* Each different mode of provision – contact, part-time, school-based and ODeL – places different demands on staff and the HR implications need to reflect this – combining a contact and a distance education class may make sense on a financial spreadsheet but is not ultimately sustainable because of the incompatible demands it places on staff
* The data analytics capabilities of an LMS can and should be used to identify areas in which individual students may be struggling and to intervene pro-actively – thus creating increasingly personal learning journeys
* There is a need to do financial scenario planning to work out break-even, viability and sustainability issues before investing in design and development of new educational offerings – this must include the costs of monitoring, evaluation and renewal.

Following the plenary discussion, two focus group discussions were organized.

Focus Group 1 comprised:

* John Opiyo Finance
* Sindiza Durvine Marketing
* Faith Mwenda Head of Admissions
* Dr Janerose Kibaara Education Med. Coordinator
* Jeremiah Mwale Finance
* Samson Kimani Finance
* Norah Mumbo Marketing
* Anne Kikuvi Admin Admissions
* Stanley Mwasaru Marketing
* Esther Muturi Marketing
* Evanson Kariuki Registrar.

Focus Group 2 comprised:

* Rose Kiara IODL
* Kyallo wa Ngula Mass Communication
* Dr Emily Okuto Peace and Conflict
* Prof Isaac Kigatura Environmental and NR Mgt
* Dr Janerose Kibaara Education
* Simon Obwatho MBA
* Mutumma Thilange IODL
* Jane Ngura Counselling Psychology
* Desmond L. Otuma QA
* Catherine Maina IODL.

Focus Group 3 (full-time materials developers and DL providers) met on Friday 20th May and comprised:

* James Obukuma Computer Science
* Rose Kiaira IODL
* Elizabeth Yegon Library/Information Literacy
* Salome Kiura Library/Information Literacy & Research Methods
* Kimani Gichuhi Business School/HRM & Quantitative in Business
* Dr Patrick Kamau Religion
* Daniel Otieno Education/Educational Administration
* D G Stanton Religion
* Verna Stanton Community Development/Personal Health
* Dorothy Gwada IODL
* Catherine Maina IODL
* Charles Nyaranga Education/Human Growth
* Dr Kibaara Education
* Edward Ombui V Calc
* Desmond Otwoma Quality.

The following questions informed the Focus Group discussions:

* What are the current trends in terms of demand for ANU’s services – programmes and modes? And what do we anticipate regarding future demand?
* Should all programmes be offered in all modes or should we differentiate? If so, how?
* What does a SWOT analysis of ANU’s existing systems suggest regarding readiness to respond to 1 and 2?
* Does our current costing model need to change? If so, how?
* How can engagement with OER contribute?

#### What are the current trends in terms of demand for ANU’s services – programmes and modes? And what do we anticipate regarding future demand?

**Group 1** observed that from an enrolment high of approximately 4500 students in 2014, there were 3782 students in the previous trimester of whom 782 were distance and about 1000 were school-based. There continues to be a significant decline in school-based student numbers, it was thought because the focus of CPD for teachers has moved from certificate to diploma and degree studies.

It was reported that 50% of enquiries are business-related and that the majority of these relate to the MBA. This marks a growing trend in demand towards post-graduate and part-time studies also evident in the 50% of non-business enquiries.

It was noted that students have multiple commitments and often skip semesters.

It was suggested that the Kenyan higher education market has become saturated with providers and that future growth might lie beyond Kenya’s borders e.g. South Sudan, in fields such as Mass Communication and International Business.

It was anticipated that the decline in demand for campus-based provision for the traditional 18-24-year-old market would continue but that there was potential for further growth among mature learners following distance learning and mediated through eNaz.

**Group 2**, also observed an increasing demand for post-graduate provision and declining demand for under-graduate programmes and predicted a growing demand for short learning programmes related to continuing professional development and graduate competences that could be applied immediately. There is growing demand from those already in the workplace for whom part-time evening classes and ODeL are more convenient modes of provision. There has been significant growth in demand for Peace and Conflict studies through distance learning and also Mass Communication. There has been a worrying decline in demand for programmes in the Natural Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture, Mathematics etc. It was felt that with more than 60 higher education institutions now operating, ANU would need to find a new competitive niche. It was noted that while distance provision had continued to grow, the rate of growth was slow.

It was suggested that potential new markets existed outside of Kenya, and that there was growing demand for elearning opportunities in East Africa more generally. It was suggested that Psychology and Counselling were potential growth disciplines especially at Masters level. However, it would be necessary to improve the quality of ANU’s ODeL provision in terms of learning resources, etutorial support and use of data and learning analytics. It was felt that there had been a growing disconnect between distance learning providers within ANU, the IODL office and the part-time tutors with, in some instances, up to 5 weeks passing with no interaction between the various role-players.

**Group 3** noted the decline in demand for campus-based provision but indicated the following potential new programme possibilities based on a responsive institutional approach:

* Marketing and activating the already approved programme in Urban Ministries
* Blue collar/TVET programmes at Certificate and Diploma level
* Finding a niche programme in the field of health/medicine e.g. Health Systems Management through distance learning
* Computer Science programme in ICT Security and Forensics
* Education bridging programme from primary certificate to diploma; and
* 3-month CPD programmes in partnership with the Ministry of Education including support for development of primary curriculum content and ICT for educators
* Leadership training related to Security issues
* Lifelong-Learning programme for wives of Pastors.

#### Should all programmes be offered in all modes or should we differentiate? If so, how?

For **Group 1**, in general, the answer to the first question was no. It was noted that some potential students are looking for informal skills-based learning and work-integrated learning. Some potential audiences are very price-sensitive e.g. teachers and competitors have been able to offer similar programmes at lower fees. In general, there has been a decline in demand for full degree programmes, which is expected to continue. There is a growing expectation that programmes should be ICT-mediated as access improves, especially in Masters through distance learning.

**Group 2** felt It was suggested that ODeL provision is not well understood at senior management level, at lecturer level, by students nor by regulatory bodies. Thus marketing, needs to include advocacy and orientation regarding the mode of provision.

It was observed that the overall potential pool of new students keeps growing with 600 000 learners completing high school in the previous year – that’s a potential pool of 10 000 students for each institution. The question will then be what differentiates institutions from one another and what the attraction will be to study through ANU.

**Group 3** noted that some students already choose to move from one mode of provision to another. It was noted that there was no rebate to students for moving from a high cost mode like contact provision to a lower cost mode like distance learning but students wishing to move from distance to contact would need to pay the contact fees.

It was noted that programmes with a practical/workplace-based component could be offered in the form of a blended block programme e.g. students might study the theory through distance for two months, be resident on campus for two weeks for intensive practical sessions and then move into two-week work-placements where necessary.

It was noted that Law programmes were not allowed to be offered online but that the University Common Courses that form part of the curriculum can be offered online.

The revised school-based distance learning programme was outlined. It was noted that it would need to be costed in its own right; that depending on distance, it might be cheaper to recruit and train local part-time support staff than to send staff from the centre for the face-to-face components and that requiring a weekly online engagement would provide a means of tracking student engagement in the self-study and report phases.

#### What does a SWOT analysis of ANU’s existing systems suggest regarding readiness to respond to 1 and 2?

For **Group 1**, strengths include ANU’s early adoption of ICT and the creation of an IODL which other institutions have shown interest to learn from. Weaknesses include the wide diversity of use of eNaz by different faculties with Religion/Theology being more active users; but a tendency in some cases to use eNaz to dump content, including copyrighted content, rather than to create coherent and interactive learning pathways; it was suggested that distance learning had grown too fast and that many/most faculty are not experienced in this modality. Opportunities include declining costs of technology creating the possibility to bundle technology such as tablets into certain kinds of programmes. Another opportunity is the possibility of government-sponsored student loans even for study at private universities. A key external threat is the growing number of more agile competitors.

For **Group 2**, the internal strengths were that the eNaz platform had been established and was operational; that a CPD process had been initiated to encourage lecturers to improve teaching; that ANU retained a uniquely faith-based and character-building ethos; and that 5-8 modules have been reconfigured for improved ODeL provision. However, weaknesses identified were: too little investment in materials development and support for off-campus learners; lack of an integrated and properly-resourced QA framework and system; unstable internet in terms of bandwidth and access. It was noted that if it was difficult to maintain speed and access on-campus, it would be very difficult to roll out an ICT-based approach off-campus and especially to more rural/distant communities. Opportunities included the increasing overall demand for higher education and demand in external markets. Threats included the increasing competition; lower fees charged by some competitors for similar programmes; lack of product differentiation and a regulatory system unsupportive of flexible modes of provision.

It was felt there was need to strengthen ANU’s internal QA systems – this would require an audit of current practices and the development of new policy and procedures guidelines to cover all aspects of provision.

**Group 3** felt that ANU’s strengths were its ICT infrastructure, its eNaz platform, the IODL and the various training sessions that had been availed.

Weaknesses reported included: need for clearer roles and responsibilities between IODL and Departments offering DL – the former should deal with ICT and admin issues and the latter should deal with academic issues. Some regional centres are understaffed. Timing issues and the knock-on effect of not meeting agreed deadlines. Over-centralisation of administrative rights regarding logins and passwords resulting from system updates or forgotten or expired passwords – it may take up to 5 days to be resolved at the centre and more if bank verifications of payments are required. It was reported that IT are looking into these issues. This can result in students being unable to upload assignments by due date and then having their assignment submissions rejected because they are late.

It was noted that many students do not make use of the gmail account by ANU so orientation needs to show them how to forward email.

It was noted that 2 weeks into the current semester, resources had not been uploaded for some modules.

#### Does our current costing model need to change? If so, how?

According to **Group 1**, the costing of distance learning provision had not been very sophisticated and unexpected costs had then needed to be addressed such as tutors and materials renewal. It was felt that Faculty had become demotivated and were increasingly unwilling to develop supplementary learning materials even for contact provision. In general, fees have been set on the basis of tuition only as well as benchmarking among competitors and do not take account of the costs of materials, managing the LMS, or support for managing throughput. Some preliminary costings by Finance suggest that to cover the costs of quality distance provision, ANU would need a staff:student ratio of 1:67.

**Group 2** suggested that different modes of provision needed to be costed differently. However, it was felt that a better understanding was needed of how IODL and ODeL work, how ICT can best be used (including making provision for when eNaz is off line) and generally a need to budget for improved support.

#### How can engagement with OER contribute?

**Group 1** felt that OER could help with the renewal of eNaz and distance learning resources as part of a three-year curriculum review cycle, the sourcing of learning resources that promote more independent learning but there is need to provide motivation and incentives for staff to refine and review learning resources.

**Group 2** felt that the costs of developing learning resources should be covered by student fees, and this would include the costs of supporting the development process, evaluation and renewal process. It was noted that even if OER were used, it was rare to simply be able to adopt and that some time was usually needed to adapt – but that this time would be less than starting from nothing. The goal should be to ensure that appropriate materials are developed/sourced for every unit before the start of the unit.

**Group 3** had already noted a number of possibilities for new programme offerings. It was noted that having grappled with many issues related to ODeL provision, ANU could formalise training programmes on these issues to train staff in other institutions.

In closing remarks it was suggested that:

* Materials development might be undertaken by a mix of internal and external staff provided the budget catered for payment
* That there was need to audit current provision to decide which programme/mode combinations should be phased out and which upgraded
* ANU needs to identify its niche/ what is ANU known for? – in a competitive environment this will increasingly be related to the quality of provision and the quality of graduates and what they subsequently go on to do (e.g. Unisa makes a lot of marketing mileage from having Nelson Mandela as an alumnus)
* It might be useful to develop a basic ICT skills and eNaz usage video for all students (something they can take away and revise as needed)
* “We do want to learn and do better”.

In a reflection meeting with Prof Reed at the end of Day 1, it was noted that while 2010 to 2014 had been a period of growth, ANU was currently in a period of declining student numbers; although distance learning continued to grow, albeit slowly.

The MoU with OER Africa/Saide had been seen as one of the possible foundations for new growth and it was observed “we are not the same as we were before the collaboration”.

It was noted that while school-based learning had been initiated in 2007/2008 and distance learning only in 2009, it was now recognised that school-based learning was really a form of distance learning (with the attendant challenges regarding materials development and distribution and decentralised support and assessment).

It was observed that QA processes at ANU had been under-staffed and under-resourced in the past but that a new person was being transferred to QA and that the university intended to go through an ISO certification process. The university was in the short term preparing for a CUE re-accreditation visit.

It was noted that ANU, like most universities in Kenya, makes extensive use of part-time staff and this militates against continuity in materials development and learning support processes.

It was further observed that there was need to rationalise distance provision and that the combining of contact and distance classes had been for economic reasons only.

It was suggested that there was need to “change the ways we teach to align better with how students learn” and to move away from “over-reliance on one method and one resource”.

It was felt that realising ANU’s core values of character, competence and community would require a greater focus on real life authentic tasks and a blending of local and global perspectives.

Teacher-education should remain a core focus of ANU’s work because teacher education “is a critical society-builder”.

It was suggested that OER Africa might usefully support ANU going forward in the following ways:

* Help to develop an integrated QA model
* Provide mentorship to new IODL Director on ODeL provision.

It was suggested that Gift Mtukwa and Russell Fraser needed to be engaged with on these issues.

### Day 2 OER Convening 1

The 2nd day of the visit involved Day 1 of the OER Africa convening, in which Profs Reed and Ethangatta and Ms Gwada represented ANU.

In opening remarks, Catherine Ngugi and Neil Butcher observed that while OER could enable increased access to content and different ways of engaging with that content, university systems often militated against pedagogic transformation. It was noted that ICT access and connectivity remained constrained off-campus.

In a provocative and wide-ranging opening address on the need for pedagogical transformation, Prof Ahmed Bawa, CEO of Universities South Africa, argued for the need to find a balance between the inherent conservatism of universities (which seek to ensure “change doesn’t come too easily” but rather as a result of considered reflection), the need to engage with current changing contextual realities and needs, and the need to nurture “tomorrow’s digitally enabled workforce”.

He concluded that there was need to:

* See higher education in the context of post-schooling more widely (e.g. including TVET and adult education)
* Address the increasingly skewed gender balance in Higher Education participation and graduation which suggests the need for a greater “focus on the boys”
* Develop a “social contract between higher education and the people”.

David Wiley, CEO of Lumen Learning, then spoke about the ways in which OER can support pedagogical transformation by, for example, enabling more learners to learn by doing things with resources and also doing things that were not possible before such as remixing and revising them. He referred to Hattie’s meta-analysis of 800 studies on effective student learning as a useful resource.

Bawa suggested that the notion of “engagement” might usefully inform our decisions about teaching and learning, research and outreach, what we understood to constitute a graduate (a “complete” engineer rather than just someone who knows a lot of content about engineering) and the university’s relationship with regulatory authorities.

Partner institutions then identified some of the following ways in which OER is supporting pedagogical transformation:

* Increasing student access to content
* Enabling student development of content
* Sharing content through institutional OER repositories and creating links with other repositories
* Incorporating OER into materials and sharing back the remixed/reversioned materials
* Developing a basic skills portal which students can be referred to across programmes
* Revising existing materials to make them more activity-based
* Incorporating a greater variety of media to address a wider range of learning needs and learning styles
* Including engagement with OER in CPD processes.

The first day of the convening ended with a debate which helped to foreground the difficulty of trying to effect meaningful change in pedagogy in light of a host of other logistical, resourcing and capacity challenges.

### Day 3 OER Convening 2

The 2nd day of the OER Africa Convening began with an exploration of action research and participatory action research facilitated by Prof Pieter du Toit from the University of Pretoria. It was observed that whole brain analysis studies tend to negate the notion of a profile for a “typical” student or staff member and suggest that understanding is more likely to be arrived at through the use of a multiplicity of methods and encouragement of a multiplicity of viewpoints. Action research cycles may be informed by a deficit approach (emphasizing identification of problems to be solved in practice) or an asset approach (emphasizing possibilities to be explored in practice) and will likely lead to new action research cycles that may spiral up into enhanced understandings. In “participatory” action research the focus is on interpersonal rather than intrapersonal meaning-making in scholarly communities of practice.

This led into group and plenary discussions on the practical implications of seeking to use PAR to understand and support pedagogical transformation.

It was realized that PAR could be used not only to investigate ways of designing and developing better materials and courses but also in understanding and acting on a range of supporting issues such as policies, training, modelling, curricula, research, impact etc.

It was suggested that for this to happen effectively, there was need to address the following requirements:

* Clarity on the questions/issues to be explored
* Diversity of participants, viewpoints and contexts
* Ethical clearances
* Collaborative guidance from experts/more capable others
* Closing of evidence/data feedback loops
* A PRAXIS oriented culture
* A realization that student pass rates are not the only measure of success (we could make retention and throughput higher simply by making everything easier)
* A greater value and recognition given to quality teaching
* While focusing on OER policy and OER use being open to tangential research and learnings e.g. about governance and leadership.

Various challenges mitigate against using PAR, however, which include:

* Changing staff (although careful reporting on the process is useful, a report is not a substitute for a lived experience).
* Time constraints (due to political interference, funding constraints, increasing admin, extensive moonlighting) – although more inclusive job descriptions, conditions of service and better work allocation models can help, PAR remains a time-consuming methodology.
* Disciplinary research and publication by individuals is usually valued more for promotion purposes than group processes oriented to improved practices of teaching and learning.
* Marketplace perspective: ”If you are good at something, never do it for free.”

Partner institutions subsequently provided insights into the range of ways they are making use of AR and PAR approaches. However, key focus areas were:

* ANU is using action research in a CPD programme in which teachers reflect on, change practice and evaluate impact; those who complete and write up the process earn a formal qualification.
* UP veterinary sciences are primarily using PAR to evaluate the impact of their new block system of teaching in which there is a concentrated focus on one issue at a time instead of several in parallel.
* OUT has used a PAR process in developing a CPD programme for staff in digital fluency and in developing a supportive OER and Open Access policy framework;
* UFS uses a PAR approach in its module makeover processes which involve using data to identify a need for change, planning and implementing change, using data to evaluate the impact of the change and revising if needed. It was observed that sometimes student performance goes down initially because it takes time to adjust to a new approach and/or the new approach is more appropriately challenging.

Institutional groups then reconvened to revisit their OER-related research agendas.

It was observed that there had been limited progress on the ANU research agenda previously agreed. Seven key focus areas were identified:

1. Ascertaining who is using OER at ANU and how. It was observed that a casual inspection of materials uploaded to eNaz illustrates great diversity – no or few materials uploaded; notes, summaries, handouts only uploaded; extensive uploading but also including copyrighted materials. Although it would seem useful to try to quantify this and establish trends, it is not clear who would have the time and inclination to do so.
2. Evidence of impact of OER integration/changed pedagogy. We would hope that after we have worked on a course or set of materials to improve it, that student retention and pass rates would improve, students’ performance would improve and student and staff satisfaction would increase. It is currently not clear to what extent the current CPD programme is contributing to this kind of understanding.
3. Formal research in the form of PG studies, articles published, case studies written, papers delivered that relate to OER and/or improved pedagogy. It is understood that Dr Ngari, Eric Osoro and others are busy but there does not seem to be any formal tracking of outputs from these initiatives. (Note that in the same time period, OUT reported 20 papers/articles and development of a complete 5-module CPD programme in digital fluency.)
4. Student take-up and satisfaction with OER. It is understood that this is central to Eric Osoro’s study but since he is paying for his own studies, it is an individual rather than an institutional output.
5. Library holdings/capacity/curating of OER (this is a new area that might usefully be written up and linked to OpenANU).
6. A write up of the CPD programme would be something worth sharing; and in time a meta-analysis of trends across the various studies.
7. Research into trends in student demographics will be important for future planning.

In a plenary panel discussion at the end of the day a number of take-away messages were shared, of which the following seem most pertinent to the work at ANU:

* Institutional and personal transformation go hand-in-hand
* Internationally, there is recognition of the need for continuing professional development of faculty and tutors
* Institutions need to become responsive in terms of what they offer and how
* The key purpose of pedagogical transformation is enhanced student success – but that’s more than just pass rates – it’s about graduate competences and the ability to work at the upper levels of Bloom’s taxonomy (across all domains – knowing, doing and being)
* Institutions need to put measures in place to recognize excellence in teaching
* Institutions need to adopt a PAR approach that it fit for purpose for them
* A systematic focus on moving towards resource-based forms of teaching and learning is needed
* We need to encourage discipline-based pedagogical research e.g. Mathematicians making contributions to our understanding of Mathematics Education
* Openness is complex
* Transformation and innovation are not the same – we are often have too much of the latter at the expense of the former
* Openness involves building on what has gone before
* We need to identify and overcome the systemic barriers to good teaching and learning.

### Day 4

Day 4 was devoted to an internal OER Africa Working Group meeting.

## 2.3 Post workshop

Following feedback from the ANU team on the draft report, it will be revised and updated as a final report on this engagement.

# Recommended next steps

It was noted that since the last visit, Drs Ooko and Abeka had resigned and the QA portfolio was in process of being re-assigned. At the time of the visit, ANU was also busy preparing for a CUE re-accreditation process. It seems clear also that the quality of distance learning provision has declined further, even though this is the only modality that has shown consistent, if slow growth. The following recommendations flow from these realisations and the foregoing discussion.

* There is urgent need for senior management to convene a meeting of relevant HoDs to address the current distance learning modules for which resources have not been uploaded. At the very least, it should be an easy task to upload the course outline that has been developed for the contact provision as well as the assignments required for the trimester. Part-time staff and/or post graduate students could then be trained by IODL to source and upload some relevant OER. Satisfied graduates are by far the best marketing agents for future enrolments but conversely unhappy students who feel they are not getting value for money can do considerable reputational damage through social media.
* In the medium to longer term, it is advisable to audit current provision and identify programmes that have not been and show no prospects of being financially viable, to close enrolment in these programmes and to teach them out.
* Current programmes that have potential if re-invested into and new programmes with apparent potential need to be costed before investment in order to work out the breakeven numbers required and a judgement made about whether the market could likely sustain this number of students. This requires costing to take cognisance of initial design and development costs, implementation costs (including updating of assessments each trimester), and monitoring, evaluation and renewal costs for each mode of provision. It will quickly become apparent that not all programmes will be viable in all modes.
* It is suggested that all programme offerings at ANU adopt a resource- and activity-based approach with eNaz as the backbone for all modes of provision. This has the advantage of ensuring that there is equivalence of content, level and demand across all modes of provision; it also means the costs of this development and subsequent renewal can be amortised over all students enrolled in all modes of provision over a three-year cycle. It would mean that contact sessions in all modes of provision can shift from content transmission to interactive engagement and problem-solving that will help to develop a wider range of graduate competences.
* It is suggested that the focus of ODeL provision should shift to shorter CPD programmes and away from long undergraduate programmes for the short to medium term. Shorter programmes tend to have higher retention and pass rates and generate greater numbers of repeat students. One-year full-time equivalent programmes in management for different sectors have proven to be very lucrative in South Africa e.g. Management training for school HoDs and Principals, Management training for Senior Nursing Staff, Management training for Senior Police and Army officers. Also, trimester-long certificate programmes in various aspects of business can be very lucrative ways to address the growing demand for just-in-time learning e.g. Certificate in Writing a Business Proposal or Basic Financial Management or Quality Management – if these certificate programmes can be offered as partial credit towards a BCom, some students will make the transition into the degree. Once ANU has established a reputation for quality ODeL provision, and built the supporting systems to do this, it can then begin to diversify.
* It seems likely that the demand for full-time provision and residence on the main campus will continue to decline. Contemporary students are multi-taskers who function best amid the hustle and bustle and not in contemplative retreat. However, this opens up the opportunity to offer a new kind of blended programme. If the STEM, ICT and possible new TVET programmes with a strong practical element were reconfigured so that all the practical work could be done on campus in residence in a concentrated 2-3-week block, with the more theoretical aspects covered through well-designed and supported ODeL, it would create a more flexible study option that would allow even workers to take leave to engage.
* Considering the problems of access and bandwidth in some contexts, consideration might be given to providing students with a Poodle version of their ODeL/eNaz course to work on when they are not connected.
* Also, following a discussion over lunch on Friday 20th, it is felt that the campus lends itself to third stream income through event hosting. If this were tied to an MBA programme and maybe some shorter programmes in events management, it might be possible both to offer a high quality practical programme and generate revenue since most of the work would be done by the students.

# 4. Concluding remarks

It is fully understood that ANU finds itself in a difficult place at the moment and that this has militated against taking forward many of the things that had been planned. It is suggested that engagement with OER could be a partial solution to a short-term crisis in current ODeL provision but that further progress will be dependent on the decisions made about a new set of strategic goals and business model.

There is scope in the OER Africa budget for 2-3 more visits to support ANU’s progress on this journey assuming that engagement with OER will continue to be seen as part of that strategy.

In addition, once a new Director is appointed for IODL, I would be happy to host a visit to the Unit for Distance Education at the University of Pretoria and to facilitate similar visits to Saide and Unisa to deepen understanding of the issues and possibilities.

Report prepared by:

**Tony Mays, OER Africa**

**May 2016**

# Appendix 1: Draft workplan: 16-20 May 2016

Draft schedule of visits at ANU 16 and 20 May 2016

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date/time** | **Prof Ken Harley and Ms L Levey** | **Tony Mays** |
| 16/05/16 |  |  |
| 0830-1000 | Interviews with:  **Prof Linda Ethangatta**  Purpose, nature and examples of action-research CPD programme. Possibilities for OER focus and open access publication on OpenANU  Progress on other proposed OER-related research projects e.g. regional centres, take-up across departments.  **Mr Eric Osoro, Education lecturer**  Rationale for and preliminary findings of PhD study on OER take-up by students in Kenya. | Workshop chaired by Prof Reed to explore a new business model for ANU involving:  Registration  Finance  IODL  Academic Deans  ICT  Examinations and certification  QA  Marketing  Management Information System (MIS) |
| 1000-1030 | **Break** |  |
| 1030-1115 | **Interview with Prof Reed, DVC Academic**  ANU context  Work in progress and plans iro OER  Reflection on engagement with OER Africa | Focus group interview  Finance |
| 1130-1215 | **Interview with IODL team**  IODL context  Work in progress and plans iro OER  Reflection on engagement with OER Africa | Focus group interview  Registration, Marketing |
| 1215-1300 | **Interview with Library services**  Library context  Work in progress and plans iro OER  Reflection on engagement with OER Africa | Focus group interview  Academic Deans, QA, IODL |
| 1300 – 1345 | **Break** |  |
| 1345 – 1430 | **Focus group interview with materials developers**  Materials development at ANU  Work in progress and plans iro OER  Reflection on engagement with OER Africa | Focus group interview  Examinations and certification, MIS, ICT |
| 1430-1500 | **Interrogation of Tony’s reports/ issues to pursue during convening** | Prelim feedback to DVC |
| 1500-1530 | Courtesy meeting with Principal and VC | |
| 17/05/16-18/05/16 | **OER Africa convening meeting**  1.      ***Day 1 - Session 1*:** Nominate a representative from your respective institutions to offer a 5-minute reflection on keynote presentations: Dorothy Gwada  2.      ***Day 1 – Session 4:*** Group discussion based on experience so far including Tony’s focus group interviews on the 16th. Report back: Dorothy Gwada  3.      ***Day 1 – Session 5:*** Nominate a representative from your respective institutions for the debate: Dorothy Gwada  4.      ***Day 2 – Session 3:***  Prof Ethangatta provides a 10-minute report on action-research-based CPD programme at ANU  5.      ***Day 2 – Session 4:*** Group discussion. Prof Ethangatta to report back | |
| 19/05/16 | **Internal OER Africa meeting** | |
| 20/051/6 | 0830 – 0930 Tony meets with materials developers  0930 – 1230 Tony’s follow up interviews based on discussion with Prof Reed on 16/05 and issues emerging from convening  1230 – 1730 Tony returns to hotel to write report for comment by ANU | |
|  |  | |