Developing OER-supportive ICT in education policies for higher education in smaller countries

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POERUP: summary

- Inventory of more than 400 OER initiatives worldwide
- 30 country reports – 3 more ongoing – all being updated
- 7 case studies including ALISON, OER U and FutureLearn
- 3 generic policy documents: universities, VET and schools
- In progress: Policy documents for UK (x3), Ireland, France, Netherlands, Spain, Poland – and Canada
- Project finishes end June 2014, reports 1 September 2014

Overview of seminar

- What is a "smaller country"?
- Which are the smaller countries, in/near EU?
- How do they differ?
- Some examples of policy formulation mechanisms

Definition

A "small country" is a country with less than 10 million people

Alternative definitions

- Small countries (COL) < 1.5 million

- Microstate (Wikipedia) < 0.5 million

- We follow "orthostates" (Re.ViCa) < 10 million
  – full details of this categorisation at
  http://virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/All_coun
  tries_by_population

Small EU countries, under 5 million

Country (9 in total)	Population '000
Ireland	4662
Croatia	4258
Lithuania	2956
Slovenia	2062
Latvia	2011
Estonia	1283
Cyprus	888
Luxembourg	542
Malta	419

Small EU regions and nearby countries

Region (9 in total)	Population '000
Flanders (Belgium)	6351
Wallonia (Belgium)	3546
Wales (UK)	3064
Scotland (UK)	5295
Northern Ireland (UK)	1811
Bremen (Germany)	611 (and 10 more under 5m)
Lower Saxony (Germany)	7914 (only 3 Länder above 10m)
Norway	5019
Moldova	3383 ? (2004)

Factors relevant to smaller countries

- less money for extensive research and policy analysis – quantum of action is fixed
- more influence of regional and isolated areas (paradoxically?)
- easier decision-making among universities, at least in theory
- lack of economies of scale, if the national language is country-specific
- greater interest in collaboration on education with some nearby states
- smaller set of institutions, causing issues with generating or maintaining institutional diversity of mission across the HE sector
- potentially greater danger of dominance by private sector interests
- potentially large edge effects of student flows from nearby states, made worse if teaching, funding and regulatory regimes are attractive to incomers

Lifelong Learning Programme

Top educational aims: smaller countries

- Foster the language

- Foster the culture

- Foster research, within the constraints of much research being global and much research in science being published in English

Developing policies

for smaller countries
(and with a focus on higher education)

Another constraint: universities are universal

But university culture is specific
(as is pervasiveness and use of IT)

A worked example

Wales, in the UK context

Scotland, Wales and Ireland

- Brief pen-pictures

- Only Wales gone into in detail – as it has the most interesting outcome – so far

- POERUP analysis complemented by recent work for UK Higher Education Academy on Flexible Learning Barriers and Enablers in HE

Scotland

- Population: 5.295 million
- Semi-autonomous part of UK, full autonomy in all sectors of education
- **Scottish Independence Referendum in September 2014 – all HE policies are on hold** and some HE questions unanswered
- Universities: 15 (and three other HEIs)
- Hegemon: no overall hegemon but the "ancients" wield much influence
- Significant cross-border flows including in distance learning
- No recent investment in operational aspects of IT in HE from the Ministry
- No major involvement in UK (actually England) JISC/HEA OER programme, except for evaluation
- No member of OER U
- Some Scottish research-led universities now in FutureLearn

Scottish Open Education Declaration

- Broader than OER (wise, increasingly done)
- Based closely on UNESCO OER declaration
- Not owned, yet, by Ministry or sector actors
- Not visibly correlated with SFC policy related to the HE area
- But a useful start to a process, which no doubt will accelerate, in one or other direction, after the Referendum in September 2014

Ireland (Eire)

- Population: 4.593 million
- Separate nation, but some Eire-UK associations e.g. SCONUL, and Ireland-wide associations also
- Universities: 7 Universities, 14 Institutes of Technology, 7 Colleges of Education, and some specialised HE providers
- Hegemon: no overall hegemon, nor in distance learning
- Little IT-based educational innovation in public sector HE, but note the private Hibernia College – and next…
- One Eire HEI in FutureLearn, one other in OER U
- The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 makes no mention of OER or open education, few mentions of e-learning

And now to… Wales

- Population: 3.064 million
- Semi-autonomous part of UK, full autonomy in education
- Universities: 8 (was 11) – directive former minister
- Hegemon: no overall hegemon though in distance learning the UKOU is dominant
- Significant cross-border flows
- Substantial (for Wales) recent investment in IT in HE
- Significant policy development also

General approach of POERUP

- Try to work with focal points within the country interested in OER and policy

- Be open as to our mission of writing an OER in HE policy for the country,

- but say you would prefer it if they drew on POERUP resources and advice to write their own

Wales vs New Zealand

Wales

- Pop: 3.1 million – part of UK
- GNI/c: $29420
- OER U members: 1 (uni)
- OER WG: yes
- Nat'l e-learning prog: recent
- Policy supportive of eL: yes
- Policy supportive of DL: yes?
- Coursera members: no

New Zealand

- Pop: 4.4 million – on its own
- GNI/c: $35,950 (UK)* 0.92?
- OER U members: 7 (1 uni)
- OER WG: no
- Nat'l e-learning prog: no
- Policy supportive of eL: no
- Policy supportive of DL: no
- Coursera members: no

Lifelong
Learning
Programme

Leverage on relationships

- Led the HE Academy team benchmarking e-learning for Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Swansea Met, Aberystwyth, Bangor and Glyndŵr in Benchmarking and Gwella Phase 1
- Gwella Phase 2 consultant for Aberystwyth and Glamorgan
- JISC Capacity Building consultant to Trinity St David
- Consultant to Aberystwyth on e-learning research
- External consultant member of e-Learning Steering Group, Glamorgan: recent focus on strategy, VLE selection and OUE market research
- Consultant to Wales study on *Definition of Open, Distance, Drop-in and e-Learning in post-16*

Existing HE policy in Wales #1

- Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Technology: a Strategy for Higher Education in Wales: "a ten year strategy for the enhancement of learning and teaching through technology for higher education (HE) in Wales from 2007/08 to 2016/17"

Existing HE policy in Wales #2

- HEFCW Corporate Strategy 2013-14 – 2015-16:
  - "increased emphasis on innovative **flexible learning**, community and work-based provision"
  - "we will implement our **part-time** action plan and develop new innovative approaches for supporting **flexible and part-time provision"**

POERUP-specific interventions

- JISC Regional Support Centre webinar – 24 May 2013 – Open Educational Resources and Practices: moving forward, looking outwards – co-presented with Lou McGill (JISC Scotland)

- And may need to play a long game that does not fit well with EU project timescales: The Online Learning Innovation Fund – implications for Wales - 14 October 2009, Cardiff

Open & online: Wales, higher education and emerging modes of learning

Report of the Online Digital Learning Working Group (set up by the Minister), March 2014

Recommendations to the Minister

1. **Widening access to higher education to sectors with low participation**
   – Fund the development of O&O resources for use in schools and colleges, with the aim of raising aspirations of learners from low participation backgrounds.
   – Investigate the use of Hwb as a host for the O&O resources developed, with the intention of establishing a central repository
   – Extend the work of the Open University OpenLearn Champions project to cover the whole of Wales via the Reaching Wider Partnerships.

2. **Developing skills for the workplace and the Welsh economy**
   – Examine how online learning should be integrated into the approach for programmes funded through the European Social Fund.

3. **Developing Welsh language skills for employment**
   – Develop a Welsh language skills MOOC at higher education level so that students and work-based learners can develop their professional Welsh language skills and potentially seek certification for those skills.

Recommendations to HEIs

4. **Reviewing institutional policies, monitoring developments and exploiting opportunities**
   – Agree what the institution's overall approach to open and online resources should be, monitor external O&O developments, and exploit opportunities to produce and use resources.

5. **Strengthening institutional reputation and brand**
   – Exploit open and online resources in appropriate circumstances to showcase the quality of learning opportunities.

Recommendations to Minister & HEIs

6. **Improving the skills of higher education staff**

- Institutions should provide academic staff with the skills and support they need to make most effective use of open and online approaches to learning.

- HEFCW should continue to contribute to the costs of Jisc's programme on open and online resources and take advantage of Jisc's expertise.

7. **Licensing and sharing open educational resources**

- The Government should encourage the systematic adoption of open licensing for open educational resources produced by HEIs in Wales

- Where possible staff and institutions should release open educational resources using an appropriate Creative Commons licence

- Institutions should make open educational resources widely available, including via the Jorum repository.

Now *you* think about it?

- Funding
- Purpose/projects
- Costs and business case
- Licenses
- Accreditation of prior learning
- Quality
- Staff development
- Further research
- Local aspects – languages, culture, inclusion, rural etc

Any questions?

Speak now

"Developing OER-supportive ICT in education policies for higher education in smaller countries"
Thank you for listening

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