

Use of Open Content in Creating Curriculum Materials for Distance Learning: Implications for Developing World Educational Institutions

Charles W. Evans

Keiser College, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Stephen H. Foerster

Southeastern University, Washington, D.C.

ABSTRACT

One of the most expensive aspects to beginning and maintaining an effective distance learning programme is the development of high quality curriculum materials. Nowhere is the balance between educational quality and financial responsibility more precarious than in educational institutions in the developing world.

In the last decade, resources collectively called “open content” have emerged that have the potential to reduce the cost of curriculum development without sacrificing educational effectiveness. These include both improved access and cataloguing of materials in the public domain, new curriculum materials that have been released royalty-free by their authors, and open access journals that promote use of their material. This paper seeks to provide an overview of these resources whilst commenting on particular implications for universities in the developing world.