

MODULE: 6d) ODL Example: Open University of Indonesia (Universitas Terbuka: UT)
CONTRIBUTORS
TO THIS SECTION: Ludivica Endang Setijorini and Irma Adnan, UT
UPDATED ON : 31 May 2008
SPONSOR: Pan Asia Networking (PAN) Programme Initiative of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC: www.idrc.ca), under a 2005-08 grant to the Virtual University of Pakistan (VUP) for the project 'PANdora: Distance and Open Resource Access'

This section contains one of a series of open and distance learning (ODL) institutions in Asia. The range of ways in which ODL is provided by these institutions provides useful models for other organisations to consider.

EXAMPLE/D: The Open University of Indonesia (Universitas Terbuka)

Indonesia is an archipelago with over 15,000 islands. It is one of the largest countries in Asia with a population of approximately 215 million in 33 provinces, 268 regencies, 73 municipalities, 2,004 sub-districts, and 69,065 villages. With such a large population and challenging geographical situation, finding the most appropriate system to promote equity of access to quality higher education for all citizens was not easy. The Indonesian government would probably not have had the capacity to establish as many conventional face-to-face (f2f) universities as would be needed to cater to the population in all of its inhabited islands. DE was considered to be the most promising system to enhance the equity and accessibility of high-quality higher education in Indonesia.

Indonesia started using a DE system in 1955 with the establishment of a correspondence diploma programme for upgrading teachers. It was not until 1981, however, when two DE projects were started to provide in-service training to secondary and tertiary level teachers, that the DE system was widely used. The teachers' upgrading skills could only be met with DE, since regular training was too expensive and replacing teachers while they attended further training was difficult. These programmes became part of the Indonesia Open University (Universitas Terbuka: UT) when it was established in 1984.

UT is a state university and the only university in Indonesia using the DE mode of teaching. It was designed to be a flexible and inexpensive university focusing on serving people who lack the opportunity to attend f2f higher education institutions owing to lack of funding, living in isolated and rural areas, and full-time work. The establishment of UT was both an educational and political event, as shown by the national televising of the opening ceremony with the President of the Republic of Indonesia. The original missions in establishing UT were:

- to widen access of Indonesians to quality higher education;
- to provide second-chance education for Indonesian adults who were unable to pursue their education previously; and
- to improve in-service teachers' qualifications.

In the University's Strategic Plan for 2005-20, those missions have been elaborated:

- to expand opportunities for quality higher education throughout the DE system;
- to produce competent academics and professionals who are able to compete globally;
- to increase participation in continuing education so as to create a 'knowledge-based society';
- to increase the quality and quantity of research and development in the DE system, especially in distance-based higher education;
- to disseminate and share information about DE, especially in distance-based higher education;
- to strengthen national unity and integrity through the broad and equal provision of higher education;

- to increase cross-cultural understanding and networking through local, national, and global partnerships; and
- to produce academic products in distance-based higher education and other fields of knowledge.

Organisational Structure and Infrastructure

Before UT was established, a national working committee was given about six months to prepare everything before recruiting students. In that short time, the committee created an organisational structure that basically followed the usual f2f university system. It soon became obvious, however, that the system used in f2f education would be inadequate for the operational duties of a DE system. So UT added a series of institutes, centres, units, and regional offices for this purpose. This structure has been used ever since though was only formally recognised by the government in 2004.

The Head Office (HO) consists of several units or centres that respond to the distinctive needs of DE institutions. These include the Institute of Learning & Examination Materials Development, and the Information System, *Lembaga Pengembangan Bahan Ajar, Bahan Ujian dan Sistem Informasi* (LPBAUSI). These centres under LPBAUSI are at the heart of UT's operational system, and are responsible for producing and distributing all the above materials as well as for maintaining UT's information system via the Computing Centre.

As one of UT's missions is to widen access to higher education, it has to operate on a nationwide basis, and has established 37 Regional Offices (ROs) located throughout the country. While the HO formulates institutional policies for the development and production of course materials, test/examination items, and examinations data processing, the ROs are responsible for activities including daily operations. Those activities include student registration, f2f tutorials, administrative counseling, and examinations. Thus, the ROs are important parts of UT's internal network infrastructure.

The HO and all the ROs are connected electronically through the University's wide area network (WAN). This still uses a public Internet connection, though will soon be connected with all state universities using the national higher education network - the Ministry of National Education's Intranet system called INHERENT. The student records system is centrally managed and maintained at the HO's Computer Centre, and data are updated regularly by the relevant units and ROs.

Collaboration with external institutions is an important part of UT's organisation. Long-term collaboration has been established with institutions including the National Postal Service (PT Pos Indonesia) and many courier agencies for distributing registration forms and course materials; also with Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) and Bank Tabungan Negara (BTN) for accepting student tuition fees; and with provincial and district governments for providing school buildings for f2f tutorials and examinations. Most importantly, UT is strongly supported by state and private universities, which allow the University to hire their professors and lectures as content specialists in the development of course materials and examinations items, also tutors and supervisors/instructors for tutorial and practical work and as proctors in examinations. With such a large area of coverage, it is impossible for UT to carry out its missions without such collaboration with institutions that already have the necessary support infrastructure.

Student Body and Profiles

Access and equity is also enhanced by various study programmes, designed to meet the needs of different types of students. UT offers nearly 1,000 courses through 29 study programmes under 4 faculties: Economics (FE), Social & Political Sciences (FISIP), Mathematics & Natural Science (FMIPA), Teacher Training & Educational Sciences (FKIP), and three Graduate Programmes. The FKIP offers in-service training programmes for practicing primary and secondary school teachers, while the other three faculties are open for high school graduates as well as for working adults. As a result of changes in government

policy about teachers' minimum qualifications, FKIP has become the biggest faculty in the University. Table 1 shows that 84% of the 343,481 students who registered in the second semester of 2006 are teachers who are taking courses at FKIP. Of that subgroup, 86% (246,930 out of 287,185 students) are primary school teachers who are up-grading their qualifications to bachelor's and 2-year diploma levels.

Table 1. Universitas Terbuka student body (Semester 2006.2)

Faculty/ Programme	No. of Students	%	No. of Students		%
FMIPA	4,095	1	Male	142,716	42
FISIP	32,355	9	Female	200,765	58
FEKON	19,554	6	<25 years	81,813	24
FKIP	287,185	84	25-29	59,667	17
Graduate programmes	292	0	30-35	56,784	17
			36-40	64,215	19
TOTAL	343,481		>40 years	81,002	24

As the Table shows, UT has more substantially more female than male students. This ratio changes from semester to semester. Time-series data indicates that UT has equalised the higher education opportunities of both genders. Seventy-seven percent of students are adults (i.e. 25 years old and above) and in full-time employment.

Instructional System

The main consideration in both designing instructional system and selecting media for delivering learning materials has always been emphasised on the issue of accessibility, which is also related to the issue of affordability. UT was intended to be a flexible and inexpensive university so that it would be accessible and affordable to all Indonesians. It is based on this consideration that printed materials form has been selected as the main learning medium. The instructional system was then developed around this concept

1. Registration

The enrollment and registration system are designed to be flexible and open. There is no entrance test except for graduate programmes, and anyone who holds a high school diploma/certificate is eligible to enroll regardless of age and high-school completion year. Once students register in a study programme for the first time (enrol), their data is stored and maintained in a central computerised student records system. After enrolling and receiving an ID number, students are formally admitted and register for courses. Students' registration status remains active as long as they register for at least one course in four consecutive semesters. Enrolments and registrations can be made at any time of the year.

2. Learning/Course Materials

Students are not obliged to purchase learning materials if they can borrow or buy used materials from other students. For students in the graduate programmes and for teachers with scholarships, learning materials are included in their fees/scholarship package. All (100%) of syllabus content is delivered through printed learning modules. Non-print materials are developed in support of the print materials, in the form of audio, radio broadcasts, video, TV broadcasts, computer-based and web-based materials. In addition, 25% of course materials are multimedia packages consisting of the print materials and one type of non-print material. Each set of course materials is developed by a content development team (CDT) and a production team (PT) coordinated by a course manager from the study programme or Faculty. The CDT consists of at least one content specialist (authors and reviewers hired from the other universities), an instructional designer (usually acts as course manager), and a media specialist (UT full-time staff). The PT contains a lay-out specialist, illustrator, and copy editor.

3. Learning Support System

Although students are expected to study independently, UT provides various types of learning support using different media. These include tutorial services in f2f, online and radio modes. In Semester 2006.2, UT provided f2f tutorials for 292 courses, online tutorials for 354 courses, and radio tutorials for 539 courses. These represented 29%, 36%, and 54% of all 989 offered courses. As with UT's policy on learning materials purchase, tutorials are only compulsory for graduate students and undergraduate students with scholarships. Self-funded undergraduate students are encouraged to participate in the free online tutorials, to listen to free radio tutorials, or to attend the f2f tutorials with an extra charge.

UT currently has more than 7000 trained and accredited tutors. F2f tutorials are organised locally by the Regional Offices, and taught by local university specialists. Online tutorials are managed by the HO and taught by full-time UT academic staff using a learning management system based on *Moodle*TM. Radio tutorials are broadcast by the government-owned National Radio Station Network. UT also provides academic counseling, f2f in Regional Offices and online. All online support services can be accessed by students through the *UT-Online* portal, which contains online tutorials and exercises, web-based learning materials, streamed TV programmes, a digital library with journals and transcripts, academic counseling, e-book store, and online registration and examination facilities. Owing to students' limited Internet access, however, only about 5% of them are so far taking advantage of these online services.

4. Student Assessment

Student assessments are conducted through tutorial assignments and a final examination at the end of each semester. The final examinations are scheduled twice a year at weekends, always simultaneously throughout the country. Since 2006, UT has also provided online examination services by request and appointment, for students who cannot take written examinations at the scheduled times. Each semester, UT conducts simultaneous examinations for about 900 courses in 745 examination locations (8,217 examination rooms) in 572 cities. To support such a large-scale process, UT has developed an item-banking system with a large collection of examination items so that unique examination manuscripts can be generated for all courses. The value of the examination items is analysed based on examination results and can be continually revised. Students' final scores are calculated based on assignment and examination scores and delivered by mail, regional offices, UT web sites, and Short Message Services (SMS).

Conclusion

UT's DE system is an example of how a large and populous country such as Indonesia can adopt and contextualise DE principles in practice. Its instructional system has been designed in accordance with the students' situations in order to optimise the system's flexibility, accessibility, and affordability for all Indonesians. The new variety of ICT-enhanced DE that has developed since the mid-1990s has significantly influenced UT's development. As at all DE institutions, UT has been trying to use increasingly efficient technologies so as to enhance its learning system's interactivity. Nonetheless, ongoing surveys show that students still regard print as the most accessible, affordable and preferred medium, and the instructional system still relies predominantly upon it.