Interviews with Badrul Khan

Interview with Jeoung-Keun Lee

Badrul Khan: The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) is active in helping developing countries in Asia to integrate information and communications technology (ICT) in education and training. Could you throw some light on how successful the process has been?

Jeoung-Keun Lee: ADBI is a regional think-tank whose main role is to train high government officials in reducing poverty and other areas that support long-term growth and competitiveness in developing economies in the Asia-Pacific region. As far as integration of ICT in education and training is concerned, I should mention that the capacity and training department of ADBI, in recent years, has been focusing on content development for face-to-face training programs, distance learning, blended learning, and online courses.

We have developed more than 200 CD-ROMs and various items of computer courseware over the last three years. Anyone can access these learning products at no cost through downloading, video streaming, or by mail. We receive numerous requests for these resources every day from government officials, students, business executives, and graduate students.

ADBI also regularly organizes conferences, seminars, and workshops on topics related to integration of ICT in education and training. A few of those organized in the recent past are the Mobile Learning course in Tokyo (2005), the E-Learning Policies course in Colombo (2006), the Workforce Development course in Phnom Penh (2006), and the Computer Courseware Development course in Kathmandu (2007). Participants were able to acquire the latest skills and knowledge on harnessing ICT in education through those courses. The results of the evaluation done at the end of each course showed encouraging feedback. ADBI courses are in high demand among government officials in the region. In the case of regular face-to-face courses, governments usually nominate more than three times the allocated quota. On the other hand, more than 700 officials (i.e., our limit) are registering for each distance learning course.

In 2006, an independent consultant did a formal study on the ADBI training impact evaluations. The results showed that between 90–100% of the participants achieved the training objectives. About 70% of participants shared the course materials with others, and 36% made presentations to colleagues. About 75% of participants and 74% of supervisors considered the impact of the training on their organizations either "Significant" or "Very Significant."

Do you think developing countries in Asia can bring meaningful learning to their people by using ICT? Can you share with us any successful ICT-based education and training programs in Asia?

I am a strong believer in technological intervention in

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Dr. Jeoung-Keun Lee is Director of Capacity Building and Training at the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) in Tokyo, Japan. Starting from his early days as a researcher at the Korean Educational Development Institute, Dr. Lee has worked extensively in the field of developing multimedia learning materials and integrating information and communications technology in education and training. He was an expert on Information Systems for the International Labor Organization (ILO), during which time he organized the Asian and Pacific Skill Development Information Network (APSDIN). As Executive Director of the Higher Education Research Institute in Korea, he coordinated a program to improve the quality of education at Korean universities. He has published on education and training issues and has developed more than 200 CD-ROMs in e-learning, e-business, and e-governance.

education to expand educational opportunities at minimal costs. Rapid innovation in ICT is transforming the way we work, the way we interact, the way we learn, and the way we live. In the education sector, e-learning has increased access to education by making it possible for students to fit education into their lifestyles and work schedules. They can choose from a wider range of courses and learning opportunities, not limited to their school or national boundaries. E-learning uses ICT to overcome barriers of traditional learning, which obviously exist in greater numbers in the developing world.

I think ADBI's distance learning program is one successful example of ICT-based training programs in Asia. Our past three distance learning and two online courses were very well received. This year we are offering four distance learning and three online courses. In each of these courses, we have some 700 participants from 60 different countries around the world. Due to limited resources, we normally close registration when the number exceeds 700. Otherwise, it is estimated that as many as 5,000 participants would be enrolling in each course. You can visit our distance learning Website **(www.adbi-dlc.org)** for more information on the courses.

What are international organizations doing to reduce poverty?

Our main goal is to make the Asia-Pacific region free of poverty, as we have more than 700 million poor people in the region. I myself experienced hunger during the Korean War. While I was preparing a Women's Employment Project in Cambodia, I witnessed the sad, impoverished state of the country. International donors are operating micro-credit projects, which lend $10–50 to women for income-generating activities, such as raising chickens or fish. Government officials of the Ministry of Education were also being sent out to teach much-needed skills.

I also saw many street girls suffering from hunger. They would sell their bodies for food, knowing the dangers of HIV/AIDS. They were reasoning that while dying from AIDS would take some years, their hunger could kill them in a matter of a few days. Simply providing food to the poor does not solve the problem. We have to educate them so that they are able to find employment or start their own businesses. Conventional approaches to education take a long time and tend to be expensive. We have to use modern technology to educate them more efficiently and cost-effectively.

I was honored to participate in the recent ADBI sponsored workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal. I was especially struck by the enthusiasm of the *participants. Have you thought of any follow-up activities for their professional development in e-learning by ADBI?*

Firstly, I would like to thank you for accepting our invitation and traveling to Nepal to give insightful presentations on different pedagogical and management issues in e-learning. As you pointed out, the participants are enthusiastic and hardworking. Regarding follow-up activities to this workshop, ADBI, being a small organization with limited resources, cannot play a major role. We functioned as an agent of change, introducing new concepts in educational technology to this remote country. The participants can enroll in our future distance learning courses and upgrade their skills and knowledge continuously. Also, we will be producing a proceedings CD-ROM of the workshop, which will include participants' courseware development plans and descriptions of the learning objects they developed. I believe this portfolio will help them and others in pursuing further development of these courseware titles for application in real educational settings.

What kind of future do you see for developing countries in Asia in the area of e-learning? Can ADBI play an important role in promoting e-learning?

By employing e-learning techniques, we can provide quality education and training to workers at significantly lower costs compared with any other method of delivery. It is estimated that the number of Asian workers that need to be retrained to meet existing and future needs of the knowledge economy is as high as 750 million. Only e-learning can make this possible with its mass training capability and flexible learning environment. Developing countries in Asia have to enter the new knowledge economy without any delay, if they want to meet the new developmental challenges. E-learning has opened up a new, low-cost way of equipping these people with the set of productive skill that are required in this new economy.

ADBI, as a regional think-tank dedicated to research and capacity building, can play a major role in catalyzing the development initiatives going on in the region. Aware of the enormous potential of e-learning, ADBI has already initiated distance learning and online courses. Also, through its learning products, ADBI is trying to reach a broader audience. As a subsidiary of the Asian Development Bank, which is the major international financial institution in Asia, we work closely with governments along with other stakeholders, investing about $6 billion a year to realize our dreams. But there is a lot more to do.

Can you share with us your past experiences as an educator, starting in Korea?

My career as an educator began as a teacher at a middle school in Korea. After that I focused more on technological intervention in education. I worked at the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) from 1973 to 1982, where I developed multimedia educational materials, ranging from instructional radio and television programs to computer courseware and textbooks. KEDI worked closely with Bob Morgan of Florida State University to introduce educational technology in primary and secondary schools in Korea. I focused on introducing industrial arts and home economics as compulsory subjects to young students in Korea, regardless of their sex, in efforts to prepare them for daily living in an industrial society.

I also drafted a 10-year university reform plan that was adopted by the Government of Korea. An accreditation system was proposed in this study, which contributed to enhance the quality of tertiary education in the country. As Executive Director of the Vocational Training Research Institute in Korea, my responsibilities included managing about 100 professional researchers, supervising vocational training operations at 30 polytechnic institutes around the country, as well as overseeing the technical qualification testing of over one million engineers, technicians, and skilled workers each year. I tried to systemize the human resource development activities, starting from career guidance, vocational training, qualification testing, job placement services, and upgrading (further) training.

During my doctoral study at the Ohio State University during 1975–1977, my main area of study was multimedia instructional package development for technical subjects. Previously, I had received a Master's degree in educational psychology from Seoul National University, where I studied concept formation in children, artificial intelligence, and instructional techniques suitable for different learning styles. The knowledge I acquired on how to deploy technology in education and my understanding of learner psychology helped me pursue what turned out to be a very fruitful career as an educator at the national, regional, and international levels.

Can you briefly describe your contributions in the regional promotion of ICT-based learning?

For almost twenty years, I have been in one way or another involved in the promotion of ICT and technology-based learning. I am very pleased to have played a key role in the establishment of two special grant funds of $20 million under the headings, "E-Asia Fund" and "Knowledge Partnership Fund," at the Asian Development Bank. These two funds constitute Korea's ICT contribution to Asia. The Korean government promised to expand similar funds for Africa and Latin America, such as the E-Africa Fund and E-Latin American Fund.

Moreover, I was an active member of the team that led the initiative for establishing a United Nations regional ICT training center in Incheon, Korea. The Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (UN-APCICT, *www.unapcict.org*) was established in 2006 with recommendations of one of our e-government workshops with UNESCAP in Bangkok in 2004. Its mission is to strengthen the efforts of the member countries of the UNESCAP to use ICT in their socio-economic development through building the human and institutional capacity for ICT.

Apart from this, I would like to put ADBI learning products and courses as our regional contribution as well. I am working very closely with such international organizations as APEC, Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education, UNESCO, UNESCAP, World Bank, etc., and private companies like Microsoft, IBM, HP, and SAP toward the promotion of ICT and e-learning in the region.

You will retire from your current post in August of this year. What are your plans after the retirement from ADBI?

Yes, I will retire from my present post, but not completely. I still have some unfinished business, so to speak. First, I intend to continue working toward providing quality education. Whoever wants to learn from anywhere should be given the chance to do so. Money (tuition or other expenses related to learning) should not be a barrier. I have the idea, expertise, technology, and passion.

Second, I want to provide upgrading training to overseas workers. I myself am a migrant worker. I would like to inform them of their rights, help them acquire new skills, and contribute to their developing a work ethic that would aid them in their careers. Also, I would like to see them better connected to their family and friends in their home countries; the less they are bogged down by worries concerning their homes and families, the more they will be able to accomplish and earn a better income. Employers also have much to benefit from this, as they will see increased labor productivity, a lower incidence of industrial accidents and product defects, and better quality of products, just to name a few.

By the way, my above two intentions can be

accomplished through the offerings of the Asian Virtual University *(www.AsianVU.com)*, as it is dedicated to offering world-class, high quality, facilitated, and flexible learning environments tailored to local circumstances and by using locally found appropriate technologies. The Asian VU offerings would greatly maximize the benefits and minimize the costs for learning with its strategies of involving local vendors who can provide experienced local facilitators and facilities for face-to-face class meetings. I am very interested in participating in the Asian VU initiative. I hope that governments of various countries and international funding agencies would support the Asian VU. ☐

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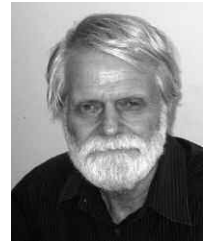
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Topics for Debate

Alexander J. Romiszowski

Instructional Design, Learning Objects, and SCORM Revisited

The ID+SCORM conference. As I begin to write this column, in April of 2007, the third ID+SCORM Symposium has just taken place at Brigham Young University, in Provo, Utah. Shortly before the event, I accessed the conference description and call for papers. I was directed to several URLs, including one to the article, published in this journal, that summarized the principal issues discussed at the first of these conferences, held in 2002 (Bush, M. D., Connecting Instructional Design to International Standards for Content Reusability, *Educational Technology, 42*(6), 5–13, November–December 2002). I had read the article at the time of publication, as I had been following, maybe with some skepticism, the growth of interest in the creation of learning object economies and application of standards that might facilitate their reusability. I was also directed to a critique of some of the points raised in Bush's article, which I had not read before, that was published by Stephen Downes in 2003, in his Blog. This was interesting, especially for Downes's claim that "…design and reusability are incompatible…design requires specificity, and specificity prohibits reusability…conversely, reusability requires generality, and generality prohibits design."

Is ID really dead? Or is the rumor of its death exaggerated? Downes also (in his own words) "shoots an arrow straight into the heart of the discipline known as instructional design…instructional design is *not* about considering different ways of presenting different types of materials, and different uses to which these materials may be put, in order to foster learning…the difference is…(like)…the difference between writing a play and creating a game…the difference between telling people what

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Alexander J. Romiszowski is currently a Research Professor in the Area of Instructional Design, Development, and Evaluation at Syracuse University, a director of the University's Training Systems Institute, director of TTS Global Educational Consultants, and a Contributing Editor to this magazine. In order to post any comments on the views expressed in this column, or to add any further contributions from your own particular vantage points, join me at the following URL: http://www.tts-global.com/blog/ .