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Open educational resources



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What is open education?

Historically, 'open education' has involved making education more accessible, whether by lowering cost or by enabling delivery at a distance.¹

In our technological age, open education has become a global sharing of knowledge and ideas through the Internet.

What are open educational resources (OERs)?

OERs are learning materials such as textbooks, presentations and quizzes shared under an **open copyright license**, such as Creative Commons, or placed into the **public domain**. This means that both educators and users (learners/students) can have access for free, and educators can directly reuse, adapt and republish content without having to seek permission from the original author.

The benefits of open education and OERs

- **Promotion and re-use of existing high quality content and practice.** This means not having to re-invent the wheel.
- **Breaking down barriers** (age, culture and cost). OERs on the internet reach greater number of people which increases impact.²

Cobhi CC-BY-SA 3.0



Creative Commons licenses are used around the world, such as pictured here in Cambodia.

- **Continuous quality assurance.** By sharing materials as OER, educators can work collaboratively to improve their material and set quality benchmarks.³
- **Career development.** By inviting comment and collaboration, educators gain access to new ideas for practice and career enhancement.¹
- **Equalising access.** OERs support educational facilities with limited faculty and infrastructure.

What is ICEH doing in open education?

Using an open education approach and with support from Seeing is Believing, the International Centre for Eye Health (ICEH) adapted content from its existing training programmes and from the *Community Eye Health Journal* to create an OER called 'Global Blindness: Planning and Managing Eye Care Services'. The purpose of this OER is to equip and support eye health providers to plan and implement local

strategies to eliminate avoidable blindness and visual impairment, particularly from cataract and refractive error.

The OER was pilot tested with success in Kenya, Ghana and Botswana, and then launched on Future Learn as an Open University partnership. It ran as a six-week interactive course with over 3,500 participants in more than 80 countries and comprised videos, articles and quizzes.

Using the Global Blindness OER in your setting

To get access to the OER content, email us on eyeplan@lshtm.ac.uk.

- Do the course as a team project in your hospital/clinic to improve services.
- Introduce and adapt the OER into your medical and post-graduate curriculum.
- Provide us with feedback to improve the content.

The fact that the course is an OER means that you do not need to worry about plagiarism or copyright issues and learning can be shared. ICEH has plans to develop and deliver further OERs funded by the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust.

References

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- 4 Peter, S., & Deimann, M. (2013). On the role of openness in education: A historical reconstruction. *Open Praxis*, 5(1), 7-14. doi:10.5944/openpraxis.5.1.23 <http://openpraxis.org/index.php/OpenPraxis/article/view/23/8>

OBITUARY

Eye care 'giant' dies

Professor Brien Holden, CEO of Brien Holden Vision Institute and Professor at the School of Optometry and Vision Science at UNSW Australia, passed away on 27 July aged 73.

One of Professor Holden's most significant scientific achievements was co-developing the silicone hydrogel contact lens, which now makes up more than half of all contact lenses used worldwide. Income from such research and innovation is used by the Institute to fund humanitarian work, in particular in blindness prevention.

Interim CEO, Professor Kavin Naidoo, spoke on behalf of the organisation: 'Brien was a man of extraordinary vision who devoted himself to the service of mankind. He demanded that research be indivisible from service to society. He was truly an intellectual giant in eye health

and vision, a powerhouse driving change by mobilising teams that are globally united in science and service to the disadvantaged of our world.'

Brien Holden was dedicated to refractive error education. He was a regular contributor to the *Community Eye Health Journal* and the Brien Holden Vision Institute has kindly sponsored the Refractive Error series in the *Community Eye Health Journal* for the past year – part of the organisation's commitment to global refractive error and optometric education.

Clare Gilbert, Co-director of the International Centre for Eye Health (ICEH), which publishes the *Community Eye Health Journal*, said: 'Brien was a giant of a man in many ways: in vision, heart and stature. He helped put correction of refractive errors firmly on the



global agenda, insisting on high quality services, establishing the Brien Holden Vision Institute and raising funds to support the cause. He will be sorely missed, but his legacy will live on.'

We extend our condolences to Brien's family, friends and colleagues.