

THE ROLE OF OPEN LEARNING MATERIALS IN BUILDING A LEARNING SOCIETY IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: *Building a learning society has become an inevitable trend for every country to ensure prosperous, humane, and sustainable development in the context of the 4.0 industrial revolution, globalization, and international integration. The better the knowledge-sharing platform implemented, the more developed and sustainable educational resources are. Open learning materials have become a potential resource, playing an essential position in the learning ecosystem with many advantages to exploit and use effectively in a learning society. By making education more accessible and adaptable, open learning materials contribute significantly to building a learning society. The government needs to develop policies to ensure maximum mobilization of society's resources and encourage the active participation of intellectuals and social communities to build and develop open learning resources under the State's management and coordination to ensure legality, common interests, and quality of education.*

Keywords: *open learning materials, open educational resources, learning society.*

I. Introduction

The 21st century is an age of intelligence with a knowledge economy; regular and lifelong learning has become one of the essential needs, and building a learning society is an inevitable trend of every country for prosperous, humane, and sustainable development in the context of the 4.0 industrial revolution, globalization, and international integration. Modern technology and open-source software are vital in sharing information resources

and exchanging knowledge, gradually becoming a mainstream trend in society. The better the knowledge-sharing platform has been implemented, the more developed and sustainable educational resources are. Learning materials play an essential role in a learning society by providing open, flexible, and accessible educational resources to various individuals. Open learning materials are an important source of potential to exploit and use effectively in a learning society. Recently, learning scientists have conducted many studies

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on open learning resources in general and the creation of open learning materials in particular. Therefore, the research aims to confirm the important role of open learning materials and their advantages in developing a learning society, especially digital transformation.

II. Learning society and building a learning society in Vietnam

2.1. Learning society

Today, learning society and lifelong learning in many countries in the region and worldwide are not mere concepts or research and become the key to promoting socioeconomic development. It is the inevitable direction for every country to ensure prosperous, humane, and sustainable development in the current context. Based on the rapid advances in science and technology and the acceleration of social change, initial knowledge is insufficient but must be updated regularly. Education covers

the entire community and takes place throughout every individual’s life. The scale of adult education is unprecedented. School-age definitions and types of formal or non-formal education do not exist.

In a learning society, it is possible for all people to learn, and they have an obligation to learn. Society creates favorable opportunities and conditions for all citizens to access learning, regular learning, and lifelong learning, in which the sense of self-learning, being learned, and learning possibility is the most decisive factor.

The philosophy of education in a learning society has affirmed its superiority for all countries, regardless of the rich or poor, developed or developing ones, based on the four pillars as stated in the UNESCO Committee’s Report on Education for the Twenty-first Century: *learning to know, learning to do, learning to live and learning to be* [1].

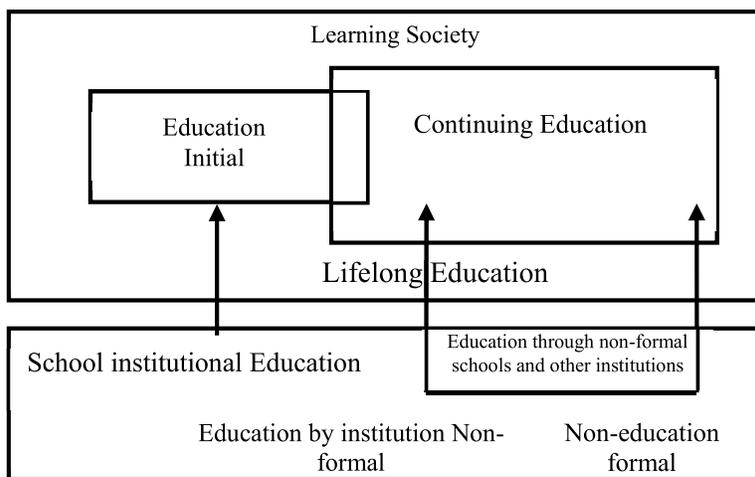


Figure 1: Learning society model

The learning society model is expressed as mass education, lifelong, comprehensive, and integrated learning, a society in which all learning requirements are met at any time.

2.2. Building the learning society in Vietnam

Building a learning society ensures a healthy and sustainable learning environment. Building a learning society

is a major and proper policy of the Party and the State, which is the basis for creating highly skilled and knowledgeable human resources to meet the target of industrialization and modernization of the country. This policy is completely consistent with the educational ideology of President Ho Chi Minh proposed in 1945: “*Everyone can get an education*”. TW2 Resolution (session VIII, December 1996) on education and training stated, “*It is possible for everyone to access learning, regular learning, and lifelong learning*” as a guiding ideology for the development of education and training in the period of industrialization and modernization in Vietnam. In particular, in Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW (term XI, 11/2013) on a fundamental and comprehensive renovation of education and training, the first key task clearly stated, “*Change the education system towards openness, flexibility, and connection between levels and methods. Seek international cooperation in education development to meet the requirements for lifelong learning and international integration*”.

On May 18, 2005, the Prime Minister approved the Project “Building a learning society for the period 2005-2010” with the general criterion of creating opportunities and favorable conditions for all people to access regular learning, continuous learning, and lifelong learning at anytime, anywhere, any level; mobilizing the combined strength of the entire society to participate in building and developing education; everyone and every organization has responsibilities and obligations in learning and actively participating in building a learning society. Summarizing experience and promoting the achieved results of the project, the government has continued to approve the

project on building a learning society for 2012-2020 and 2021-2030.

A learning society should meet the following requirements:

Firstly, creating conditions for everyone to access a high-quality learning environment, being provided with qualified educational infrastructure, teachers, and appropriate learning materials.

Secondly, creating a positive and fun learning environment to encourage learner participation and inquiry, designing activities and lessons that are interesting and close to reality so that learners can learn independently.

Thirdly, encouraging the development of learners’ self-learning skills and creative thinking, provide questions and exercises that stimulate critical thinking, discovery, and creative solutions.

Fourthly, it creates opportunities to interact with new, modern technology and science and provides technological equipment and open learning resources to facilitate learning.

Fifthly, developing an open and comprehensive learning system, including general knowledge, specialized knowledge, skill, and personality development.

In addition, it is necessary to create connections between teachers, learners, and the community, creating an open, flexible, and cohesive learning environment.

In building a learning society, developing open learning materials is a key factor in creating diverse learning resources for learners in the community and promoting links with international open resources—economics in a learning

society in digital transformation, globalization, and global integration.

III. Overview of open learning materials

3.1. Concept of Open learning materials

Open learning materials are qualified, digitized, and openly licensed learning materials. It is possible to access free courses for teachers, learners, and self-learners to use for teaching, studying, and self-studying. This initiative allows universities worldwide to participate in providing and expanding access to learning materials. They can be modified and reused without violating copyright laws.

It is necessary to have a foundation consisting of three basic components to build quality open learning materials with long-term value:

- Open source software for using, reusing, distributing learning content, searching and organizing content, learning management systems, content development tools, and online learning communities;

- Documents, books, and magazines published for study and reference;

- Resources for implementation include intellectual property licenses to promote open learning materials publishing, principles for implementing and localizing contents, and standards to ensure compatibility of different open learning source systems.

Building open learning materials with closely related components, including:

- Learning contents;
- Tools for developing, using, and managing open learning materials;

- System of regulations, instructions, and principles for implementing open learning materials;

- Publishing open learning materials;

- Storing open learning materials;

- Exploiting and using open learning materials.

The reality of building, exploiting, and using open learning materials in some countries worldwide shows that such a task requires a lot of professional skills and specific policies. With available high-quality open learning materials worldwide, mainly in English, localization is the fastest way for developing countries to get the desired learning materials.

3.2. Characteristics of open learning materials

Open learning materials are the core element in the open learning ecosystem and are developed with a number of superior features.

- The contents of open learning materials are scientific standards and meet diverse and rich learning needs in many socioeconomic fields and lifelong learning demands.

- Diverse and rich forms of open learning materials: books, newspapers, hard copy documents, soft documents, audio, video, materials recorded on CDs, VCDs, in files with compact size, easy-to-use and convenient materials for accessing.

- The interactivity of open learning materials is high with integrated user support. It is developed in the direction of strong application of information technology so that documents can reach readers quickly. Gaps in income, time,

and space are improved, and learning efficiency is enhanced.

- The important difference between open and other learning materials is that they allow everyone to access and use them. Therefore, when developing open learning materials, it is necessary to pay attention to developing both content and publishing licenses.

3.3. Principles for publishing open learning materials

According to David Willey (2014), publishing open learning materials must comply with five fundamental principles (rights), also known as the 5Rs. That is:

1. Reuse - Everyone can reuse part or all of the work for their purposes (For example, downloading videos for learning materials to watch).

2. Redistribution - People can share materials with others (For example, forwarding an electronic article to someone else).

3. Revise - Everyone can modify or translate the work (For example, translate documents into Vietnamese).

4. Remix - People can combine two or more different materials to create a new resource/created work (For example, take the voice material of this work combined with the text slide) and another table to form a new document).

5. Retain - Because there is no Digital Rights Management (DRM) law, people can retain document content as long as they want.

The provider/author can allow the use of all five rights or less. Also, according to Willey (2014), the number of licensed rights represents a certain source's more or less 'openness' [11].

3.4. Accessing open learning materials

According to the academic perspective, open access aims to make research results immediately available electronically, without charge and copyright or licensing restrictions. Therefore, it can be said that open access makes open research and resources freely accessible to everyone [9].

Open access improves research quality thanks to benefits such as allowing research to be disseminated quickly and widely, making the research process more efficient, and improving corporate understanding of research, government, and charitable foundations. The concept of open access must be connected to accessing online open resources. Therefore, there will be no limit to the research results that can be published. In order to promote the effects of open access, universities need to support open-access publishing methods and increase public access to research results.

Governments and national and international research funding agencies have recently encouraged a shift toward openness, including a preference for open access. It originated from the view that free access and use of research results significantly benefit authors, students, funding agencies, and higher education institutions. It is essential to make implementation plans and get widespread support to further the advantages of open access.

From the learner's perspective, open access makes learning resources available online and allows learners to access them freely without paying fees. Due to the nature of the free access process, learners will easily access new resources faster

and more. It contributes significantly to providing learning resources to help learners learn and hone their skills better.

IV. Open learning materials in the learning society in Vietnam

4.1. The place of open learning materials in the learning society ecosystem

A learning society with a learning ecosystem in the context of the 4th industrial revolution is composed of 4 elements, described as follows:

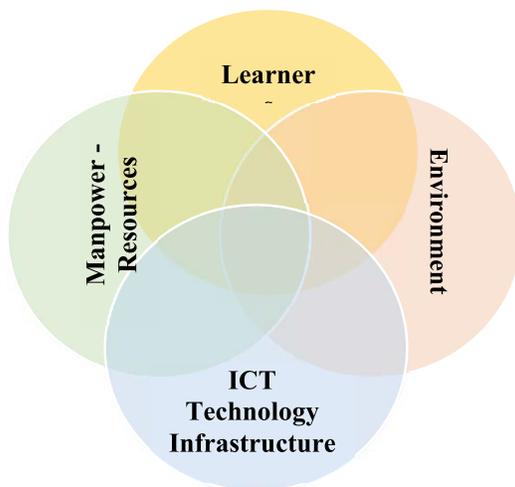


Figure 2: Elements of the social learning ecosystem in the digital era

* *Learner*: Anyone who needs to learn is a subject of the social learning ecosystem. Learners have the role of regulating and absorbing resources and/or regenerating them. They are the products of knowledge, the output of the learning and self-learning process. Learners in a learning society are diverse in level, age, awareness, culture, etc... They can create personal learning ecosystems or learning groups, learning communities, etc... according to needs and preferences and each specific condition and time.

* *Technology infrastructure (ICT)*: This element determines the structure, scope, and space of the learning ecosystem in the context of digital transformation with the role of distributing learning content and maintaining interaction activities, ensuring linking ability, interlacing and overlap relationships of factors such as environment, resources, learners, groups, learner communities, individual ecosystems, businesses, education managers, ministries, branches, etc. Depending on the level, extent, scope, and needs of the factors, ICT will be invested and developed following the relationship at each level of the learning society ecosystem.

* *Manpower and Resources*: This is essential to help the learning social ecosystem develop sustainably and effectively.

- *Manpower*: the internal forces within the ecosystem, including people participating in the ecosystem development process such as experts, scientists, advisors, sponsors, ... experienced people, financial sources, and sponsorship. In addition, businesses and economic organizations are also considered important resources in consulting, providing, supporting technology issues, orientating, and consuming knowledge products in the ecosystem. In a learning society, individuals participating in the learning process are also resources, creating knowledge.

- *Resources*: They are considered resources from training facilities, including learning materials, documents, textbooks, training program content, ... or from agents in the same ecosystem (learners, businesses, on the internet, ...). Resources can be recreated into new resources by

the learners during the interactive process (learners can create and share their content in the learning community).

* *Environment*: It is considered as all physical and mental conditions that affect the educational, learning, training, and development activities of learners. The environment contains sociocultural factors, institutions, and support services that ensure that the elements in the ecosystem are interconnected and operate effectively. On the other hand, the environment is also influenced by the region's historical, cultural, economic, and political factors, local institutions, and learning community awareness. A domain is considered good when it flexibly adjusts itself among opposites in a harmonious, friendly, balanced, unbalanced, consistent, and contradictory way.

4.2. Requirements for building open learning materials in a learning society

Building and developing learning materials is key to creating learning resources in a learning society. Learning materials are very diverse, designed to suit the characteristics and learning objects, not only paying attention to building content but also developing ideas, scripts, and methods of conveying content so learners can easily access and comprehend the content. Therefore, developing and sharing learning resources from schools, groups of schools, and the entire domestic education system is necessary. In the next step, focus on exploiting and providing diverse open learning resources for learners in the community and promoting links with international open resources.

4.3. Advantages of using and exploiting open learning materials in a learning society

Open learning materials play an essential role in a learning society by providing flexible and accessible educational resources for individuals. Open learning materials are an important source of potential to exploit and use in a learning society with specific advantages:

4.3.1. Saving costs

With the high price of textbooks and other educational resources, learners need support to obtain the necessary materials for their studies. Open learning is a cost-effective alternative to traditional educational resources, allowing learners to access high-quality learning materials without the financial burden.

Open learning materials offer an effective solution to the problem of access to education in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries, where access to educational materials is expensive because Open learning materials provide free access for everyone.

4.3.2. Increasing access to learning resources

- Open learning materials provide a fair and equal learning environment for everyone, regardless of subject. Students can access the latest and rich sources of knowledge with an internet connection.

- Open learning materials are provided for free, eliminating financial barriers that can prevent individuals from accessing quality education. It allows people from different economic backgrounds to participate in learning regardless of their financial resources.

- When learners can easily access many learning resources, they will search and choose materials that suit their learning needs. Thus, they will enhance learning

motivation and autonomy in researching and acquiring knowledge.

4.3.3. Flexibility, customization, and personalization

- Open learning materials are often designed to be adaptable and flexible, allowing individuals to learn at their own pace and convenience. Learners can access these materials anytime, anywhere, and adjust learning experiences based on their needs and interests.

- Open learning resources allow learners to customize their learning experience based on their interests and goals. Learners can choose among many different sources of materials, find the most suitable materials, and adjust their learning methods following their strengths, interests, personal conditions, and circumstances.

- Open learning resources provide a platform for educators to share their knowledge and expertise and create high-quality, relevant learning resources that others can adopt and improve. Therefore, learning materials will be updated to be relevant and engaging for all learners.

4.3.4. Building communities and learning networks

- Open learning materials create favorable conditions for sharing knowledge, experiences, and opinions among learning community members, which encourages exchange, connection, and support among learners.

- Open learning materials often promote collaboration and engagement among learners. Such resources can be used as a platform for group discussions, collaborative projects, and knowledge sharing, creating a vibrant learning community.

- Open learning materials can help close the education gap by reaching underserved populations, including those in remote areas with limited access to traditional educational institutions or individuals with special needs. It promotes inclusion and equal education opportunities.

- Open learning materials facilitate sharing of knowledge, expertise, and innovative ideas between learners, educators, and content creators. This collaborative environment encourages the development and dissemination of new teaching methods, strategies, and approaches in education.

- Open learning materials encourage collaboration among educators, allowing them to collaborate to create and share resources. It leads to innovation, creativity, and sharing of best practices in education.

4.3.5. Personal development and creativity

- Open learning materials not only help learners master professional knowledge but also develop important skills such as logical thinking, creativity, problem-solving ability, teamwork, and communication skills.

- Open learning materials also encourage the development and sharing of creative resources. Learners can create, compile, and share new learning materials, enriching the learning community's knowledge source.

- Open learning materials encourage lifelong learning by providing continuous improvement and skill development resources. Individuals can engage in self-directed learning and acquire new knowledge and skills throughout their lives, self-improvement, and careers.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, building a learning society is an inevitable requirement and trend in Vietnam and worldwide. Open learning materials empower individuals to access education, customize their learning experience, engage in lifelong learning, and promote collaboration and innovation. By making education more accessible and adaptable, open learning materials contribute significantly to building a learning society. The government needs to develop policies to ensure the maximum mobilization of society's resources and encourage the active participation of intellectuals and social communities to build and develop open learning resources under the State's management and coordination to ensure legality, common interests, and quality of education.

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