OPEN PRAXIS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Open Education. Introduction to selected papers

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Following a collaboration that led to the publication of special issues in 2014 (vol. 6 issue 2), 2015 (vol. 7 issue 2) and 2016 (vol. 8 issue 2) for a fourth consecutive year *Open Praxis* has partnered with the Open Education Consortium for the publication of selected papers among those presented in the 2017 Open Education Global Conference (Cape Town, South Africa, 8-10 March, 2017).

As stated in the conference website (http://conference.oeconsortium.org/2017/about-oe-global-2017),

> The Open Education Global Conference is where the world meets to discuss, plan, reflect, collaborate, innovate and celebrate openness in education.
> We're particularly excited to have Cape Town as the venue in 2017 conference, since it marks the 10 year anniversary of the Cape Town Open Education Declaration. 2017 actually marks several important milestones in Open Education, including the 15 year anniversary of the term "Open Educational Resources" and the 5 year anniversary of the Paris OER Declaration. (…) we'll have the opportunity to celebrate and reflect on these and other achievements (…).

Papers submitted for publication in *Open Praxis* have followed a separate review process. The Open Education Global Conference 2017 Programme Committee first reviewed submissions for inclusion in the conference. Those accepted for presentation and best rated by the committee, among the 89 submissions that stated an interest in the publication opportunity in *Open Praxis*, were then recommended to *Open Praxis* for peer review and possible inclusion in this issue. 12 contributions were preselected and invited to submit the full paper; 9 did so. These papers followed the usual submission guidelines in *Open Praxis* (i.e. double-blind peer review by two reviewers); additional revisions were requested during the peer review process, and finally 7 papers were accepted for publication.

The selected contributions cover various topics in relation to Open Education:

- The first three papers present *conceptual approaches* to the adoption of open education.
- The next two papers address *survey-based studies* in specific contexts (Kenya and Japan) with regards to the use of OER.
- The last two papers focus on *postgraduate students'* experiences and perspectives in relation to MOOCs and OER.

Michael Paskevicius, from the University of Victoria in Canada (*Conceptualizing Open Educational Practices through the Lens of Constructive Alignment*), undertakes a literature review to present a model for instructional design that considers and promotes open educational practices. This framework is of interest to anyone involved in higher education that wants to understand and put open education into practice.

Also from a conceptual perspective, Rajiv Sunil Jhangiani, from Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Canada (*Pragmatism vs. Idealism and the Identity Crisis of OER Advocacy*), analyses the tensions faced by the open education movement, including the one between OER and OEP. He proposes an integrated approach that values diversity within the OER advocacy and identifies different types and stages in the adoption of open education. This lens can help to raise self-awareness within the open education movement and thus be critical with regards to the next steps in the advocacy commitment.

Dealing also with the adoption of OER, Glenda Cox and Henry Trotter, from the University of Cape Town in South Africa (*An OER framework, heuristic and lens: Tools for understanding lecturers' adoption of OER*), explore three analytical tools they have used when researching the use and/or creation of OER in three universities in South Africa. With a special focus on the institutional cultures and readiness, the framework they suggest is valuable for other researchers and institutions willing to adopt OER.

Judith Pete, from Tangaza University College in Kenya, Fred Mulder, from Open Universiteit in The Netherlands, and Jose Dutra Oliveira Neto, from the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil (*Differentiation in Access to, and the Use and Sharing of (Open) Educational Resources among Students and Lecturers at Kenyan Universities*), present a study developed also in the ROER4D project that details the state of the art around OER in Kenya. Through questionnaires to lecturers and students, they explore quantitative descriptive data and provide an overview of the use, perceptions and intentions about OER in that context. They conclude with a set of recommendations derived from the study.

In a different context, Katsusuke Shigeta, Mitsuyo Koizumi, Hiroyuki Sakai, Yasuhiro Tsuji, Rieko Inaba and Naoshi Hiraoka, from various higher education institutions in Japan (*A survey of the awareness, offering, and adoption of OERs and MOOCs in Japan*), provide an overview of the situation in their country, as a follow up of another previous survey-based study. Their detailed report covers universities and colleges all over Japan and explores awareness, use and intention about OER and MOOCs, highlighting some significant findings when comparing perception about MOOCs between institutions that provide them and those that don't.

Tasneem Jaffer, Shanali Govender and Cheryl Brown, from the University of Cape Town in South Africa (*"The best part was the contact!": Understanding postgraduate students' experiences of wrapped MOOCs*), use the Community of Inquiry framework to analyse a blended learning space that combined MOOCs about soft skills and a local face-to-face group with postgraduate students. The characteristics of the programme –supplemental and voluntary– made them incorporate a 'learner presence' category to the CoI framework and consider structural factors, as well.

Finally in this section that presents selected papers from the Open Education Global Conference, Thomas William King, also from the University of Cape Town in South Africa (*Postgraduate students as OER capacitators*), explores a project developed in his university where students were involved in adapting lecturer's materials and transforming them into OER. The successful experience is clearly described so the different steps, challenges and findings can be useful for other programmes.

This *Open Praxis* issue also includes three innovative practice papers.

Juan García-Gutierrez and Marta Ruiz-Corbella, from UNED, and Araceli del Pozo Armentia, from Universidad Complutense in Spain (*Developing Civic Engagement in Distance Higher Education: A Case Study of Virtual Service-Learning (vSL) Programme in Spain*), present a service-learning experience developed in virtual mode involving students from UNED and from a university in Benin. The authors introduce this new modality of practical learning with a civic commitment and report on this specific experience, highlighting the success and the challenges faced, as well as the potential of this type of programmes in distance education institutions, and claiming for its promotion.

Carmel Haggerty, from Whitireia Community Polytechnic & Wellington Institute of Technology, and Trish Thompson, from Ara Institute of Canterbury in New Zealand (*The challenges of incorporating ePortfolio into an undergraduate nursing programme*), report on a experience with the Mahara platform. A group of tutors and students used this ePortfolio, and the paper explains the process, results and difficulties encountered in the progressive introduction of this electronic tool in a context –nursing programme– where paper-based portfolio is more commonly used.

Finally, José António Moreira, Susana Henriques, Maria de Fátima Goulão and Daniela Barros, from Universidade Aberta in Portugal (*Digital Learning in Higher Education: A Training Course*

for Teaching Online - Universidade Aberta, Portugal), discuss the progress of an online course addressed to professors who work at higher education institutions in Portugal and in other Portuguese speaking countries. They describe the course and the innovations they have incorporated, such as e-portfolios, interaction and collaboration, providing an example that could be of interest for other higher education institutions concerned with professional development.

We wish *Open Praxis* readers an enjoyable and critical reading of this issue, which aims to contribute to the ongoing debate about open education.

We specially thank from *Open Praxis* to the authors and the reviewers for their valuable contributions, and to the Open Education Consortium for the partnership and collaboration in the preparation of this special issue.