

Transforming Education through Open Approaches. Introduction to selected papers

Inés Gil-Jaurena 

Editor for Open Praxis. Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia - UNED (Spain)

editor@openpraxis.org

For a fifth consecutive year, *Open Praxis* has partnered with the *Open Education Consortium* for the publication of selected papers among those presented in the 2018 Open Education Global Conference, held in Delft (The Netherlands) from 24 to 26 of April, 2018 (<https://conference.oeconsortium.org/2018>). This follows a collaboration that led to the publication of special issues in previous years (Gil-Jaurena et al., 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

The papers submitted for publication in this *Open Praxis* special issue have followed a separate review process. The Open Education Global Conference 2018 Program Committee first reviewed the proposals for acceptance in the conference. Among those accepted for the conference, 58 had stated an interest in the publication opportunity in *Open Praxis*. Those best rated by the program committee, a total of 12, were then recommended for potential publication in this special issue. 8 of them accepted the invitation and submitted the full paper to *Open Praxis*. After following the usual submission guidelines and going through a double-blind peer-review process by two reviewers, additional revisions were requested to authors, and finally 7 papers were accepted for publication.

The theme of the Open Education Global 2018 Conference is “Transforming Education through Open Approaches”. Considering the conference tracks, the selected contributions cover various topics in relation to Open Education, and have been presented at the conference as follows:

- The [first paper](#), about learning from the past and the development of open and distance education research over time, has been included in the “Open Education Research” track.
- The [second paper](#), about the conceptualization of Open Educational Practices, has been presented in the “Open Educational Practices/Open Pedagogy” track, along with other two selected papers (6th and 7th in this special issue). We have placed it in second place in the issue, though, because it provides a general framework.
- The [third paper](#), about the case in Australia, has been included in the “Policies & strategies for Open Education” track.
- The [fourth paper](#), about the case in Kyrgyzstan, has been presented in the “Institutionalizing Open Education” track.
- The [fifth paper](#), about a professional development MOOC, has been presented in the “Innovation through opening traditional practices” track.
- The [sixth](#) and [seventh](#) papers, about a European project and about an international experience, have been included in the “Open Educational Practices/Open Pedagogy” track, as well.

In this special issue, the papers have been ordered from more general (those that provide an overview or cover a wider context) to more specific (those that report on concrete experiences).

Additionally, the OE Global 2018 Conference Program Chair, Robert Schuwer, has prepared an historical analysis of the contributions to the OE Global conference since 2005 ([Days of future passed, the history of OEGlobal in titles](#)). His analysis, included in the Editorial section, provides a valuable overview of the evolution of the topics and of the conference itself.

In the first selected paper, Martin Weller, Katy Jordan, Irwin DeVries and Viv Rolfe, from various institutions in the United Kingdom and Canada (*Mapping the open education landscape: citation network analysis of historical open and distance education research*), analyze published research in this field since the 1970's to 2017, highlighting most cited papers and their interrelations. The identification of 8 categories/topics and the analysis of their connections from a historical perspective are relevant inputs for anyone interested in research in open and distance education. The paper is also an invitation to acknowledge earlier works prior to the OER movement, and to link the topics, which have appeared as quite isolated clusters in the citation network.

From a conceptual perspective, Catherine Cronin and Iain MacLaren from the National University of Ireland (*Conceptualising OEP: A review of theoretical and empirical literature in Open Educational Practices*), undertake a literature review focused on the production derived from 4 international projects or initiatives related to open education, and on empirical studies related to OEP (including OER). The paper highlights the evolution and complexity of the topic and some underlying assumptions in the definitions of OEP, and provides a useful synthesis for those involved in Open Educational Practices.

In the first country-based paper in this issue, Carina Bossu and Adrian Stagg, from two universities in Australia (*The potential role of Open Educational Practice policy in transforming Australian higher education*), report on the case of Australia, where there are not national regulations of recommendations about OER and OEP. The authors explore the shift in the educational policies towards a neoliberal ideology that focuses on the economic role of universities, and reflect about the role of policies in the adoption of OEP. The authors raise their concern and proposals to engage with OEP in a context where ideologies collide.

In the second country-based contribution, Anita R. Walz and Jyldyz Bekbalaeva, from the USA and Kyrgyzstan respectively (*Assessing the Potential Toward Open Educational Practices in Kyrgyzstan*), present a survey-based study developed in the Kyrgyz Republic to explore the perception of university faculty, administrative and librarians about issues such as OER, copyright, and OEP. The authors identify areas that demand further action in order to increase the use of Open Educational Resources and Practices, as a first approach to the topic in the country.

Reporting on a specific experience, Shironica Karunanayaka, Som Naidu, J.C.N. Rajendra and S.A. Ariadurai, from the Open University of Sri Lanka and the University of the South Pacific in Fiji (*Designing Continuing Professional Development MOOCs to promote the adoption of OER and OEP*), narrate about the scenario-based course launched at the OU Sri Lanka for encouraging faculty to introduce OER into their teaching practice. The authors extensively describe the course design process, which involves different agents in a design-based research approach. The input is of interest to other practitioners involved in online course design.

Also focusing on design, Kate Helen Miller, Ronald McIntyre and Gary McKenna, from two higher education institutions in the United Kingdom (*Collaborative design of Open Educational Practices: An Assets based approach*), report on an ongoing Erasmus + project that, in a transnational partnership, is working on applying a collaborative and community approach to the design of OER. They explain the project framework, provide a practical example of co-creation and envisage the next steps in the project, which will finish in December 2018.

Finally in this special issue that presents selected papers from the Open Education Global Conference 2018, Laura Ritchie, from the University of Chichester in the United Kingdom (*Opening the Curriculum through Open Educational Practices: International experience*), describes an innovative practice that she promoted in partnership with a high school in the USA. The experience implied online and face-to-face collaboration between UK and USA students in the field of Music. The author highlights the benefits of the experience for the students' learning and points out some implications with regards to curriculum, management, etc., as well as some limitations.

With this diversity of papers, we wish *Open Praxis* readers an enjoyable and critical reading, which we hope will contribute to the debate about open education and to transforming education through open. We specially thank to the authors and the reviewers for their valuable contributions, and to the Open Education Consortium and the OE Global 2018 Conference Committee for the partnership and collaboration in the preparation of this special issue.

References

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