



CEST

Centro de Estudos Sociedade e Tecnologia



Universidade de São Paulo

Bulletin - Volume 2, Number 5, November/2017

Open Education: rethinking education

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Open Education (OE) and Open Education Resources (OER) are experiencing an important moment in their trajectory, with the celebration of the 2^o World OER Congress and the Year of Open 2017. The term Open Education linked to the open movement that began with the open software and open source in the middle of the 80s, refers to an educational movement that aims at giving opportunities of free access to high quality learning, thus expanding the possibilities of education, which were traditionally offered by the formal educational systems.

Open Education is sometimes mistaken for Distance Education. It is observed, however, that there is a difference between both terms. While open education is linked to an educational policy, distance education refers to an education methodology (remotely transmitted) that may or may not be open.

It is important to emphasize that “open” refers to an attempt to eliminate all barriers that may interfere with or may curb the opportunities of access to equalitary and quality education for all, such as limitations of technological infrastructure, of access to technology, copyright issues, pedagogical, organizational and scalability matters.

Open Education encompasses several aspects, such as:

- Open education resources (OER);
- Open courses and programs;
- Open textbooks;
- Open researches;
- Open data.

As to educational programs, Open Education has wider implications than the adoption, development and disposal of Open Education Resources (OER), once it requires frequent and

systematic analyses of evaluation and of credentials, students’ support, curricular and or technological structure, among others, in order to make it possible or not to affect “openness”.

In the educational scenario, the Open Education movement already shows some signs of changes that are occurring: openness, flexibility (time/space), student autonomy, search for interaction, collaboration and knowledge sharing among peers, active and participative students in the teaching-learning process, which was reinforced in the debates and conclusions reached in the World OER Congress.

Collaboration is the fundamental issue in Open Education. Or better, in Education per se, where sharing knowledge and information allows and gives rise to the construction of new knowledge. It is possible to think that in collaboration the final product is the result of a collective knowledge where each individual reflects upon and “dialogues” with the other’s thinking. In collaboration, the greatest highlight is given to the dialogic process and to the interactions between the subjects, and not to the final result. Hence, the importance of collaboration in education.

Nowadays Open Education tends to be associated with Open Education Resources (OER) and to the offering of open courses and programs. OER is basically any type of educational material

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(presentations in powerpoint, podcasts, images, maps, classroom plans, videos, and so on) that is in public domain or with open license, allowing anyone, in a legal way and without costs, to copy, (re)use, adapt and (re)mix these resources. Several initiatives are found both in the national and international levels of OER creation of repositories, once the benefits from their use, as the access to up-to-date and quality resources, for example, are already known.

There are many materials and contents on the Internet. It is important, however, to remember that not just any content can be freely used and is in public domain. It is necessary to verify which restrictions have been imposed by the author for the content or material to be used, without breaking any copyright laws.

There are different types of Creative Commons licenses, from the most open to the most closed, with several use restrictions, such as the commercial use of a specific material. The most open licenses are the ones which are in public domain. Generally the Creative Commons licenses are the most used in Open Education Resources. In relation to the offer of open courses or open programs, the best known are the MOOCs (massive open online courses). These courses aim at offering a great number of people the opportunity to get or broaden one's knowledge about different subject areas. They are most of the time, free, do not require any prerequisites, do not give certification and have no tutoring. In some MOOCs, interactions, experiences and knowledge sharing are encouraged through the discussion forums, thus, aiming at building learning communities or communities of interests.

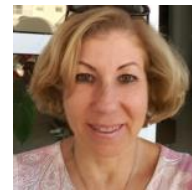
According to New York Times, 2012 was the year of MOOCs proliferation, once providers such as Coursera, Udacity and Edx associated with top universities. From then on, several known educational institutions, both in Brazil and in the world, are "opening" their courses and programs, allowing and making it more and more possible to people from all over the world to access and share knowledge.

It is important to mention that, despite the fact that courses and programs are being offered "openly", in most of them, their contents still have restrictions, that is, the professor's authorship rights about the work are maintained.

Another aspect that should be mentioned is the relevance of open researches, once this allows other scholars/researchers to have free access to them, to give opinions, suggestions, to make reviews, which contributes to their bettering, development and expansion. As to open data, they can be translated into higher levels of transparency and improvement. Despite the challenges that Open Education still faces, its potential cannot be neglected. As

demonstrated in the World OER Congress, Open Education (OE) and Open Education Resources (OER) are entering a "maturity" period, moving from a phase of mobilization and of articulation to a phase of implementation and this is the focus that stakeholders should prioritize. One cannot leave aside the International Congresses that discuss and deal with the theme, as the case of the congress held in October in Ljubljana: the 2nd World OER Congress +2017 Ljubljana OER Action Plan.

In Brazil much has been done by REA Brasil, which still has a community on facebook that gathers anyone interested in discussing and reflecting upon Open Education and Open Educational Resources and today by *Iniciativa Aberta*.



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This article is a result from the author's ascertainment and analysis, without compulsorily reflecting CEST's opinion.