

BOOK REVIEW

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES: Policy, Costs and Transformation

Edited by Fengchun MIAO, Sanjaya MISHRA and Rory MCGREAL

Lecturer Can GULER
Department of Distance Education
Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey

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This book presents 15 case studies contributed by researchers and policy makers. The Open Educational Resources (OER) implementations are expressed through different point of views. This book focused on three themes: policy, costs and transformation. Policy theme is related to the establishment of priorities for supporting the decisions made by an institution or organization. Costs theme explores the funding of OER, particularly in the sense of cost effectiveness. Transformation theme provides examples that demonstrate how OER can be used in ways that go beyond replication of current teaching and learning models. The editors in the Introduction elaborately describe these three themes.

In Chapter 1, C. Bossu provides information on Open Educational Practices (OEP), which had become popular in Australia in the near past and affected institutions in various terms, such as collaboration, resource and infrastructure development, open policy, teaching-learning and research etc. Australian government and its organs mostly dealt with open access closely via 3 different initiatives. These are the policy of Australian government on Open Source Software, administrative reflections of Web 2.0 facilities (Government 2.0), and open access and licensing framework of Australian government (AusGOAL). Although Australia has open licensing for the information that is financed by several institutions that adopted Australian public and OEP, copyrights of authors continue to constitute a problem in terms of open content development. Furthermore, other impediments that are faced in terms of OEP may be listed as lack of policy in national and organizational context or insufficient financing.

In Chapter 2, N.E. Al Khater, H. Amer and F. Tallaq determines the difficulties that are faced in terms of education in Bahrain, particularly the ineffectiveness of student-centered learning practices, lack of Arabic education materials and lack of lifetime learning facilities. Also, it is emphasized that OER has begun to be used in Bahrain in order to develop learning and teaching quality. OER Policy is expected to solve such problems. OER Policy covers 4

basic areas. These are as followings: 1- Teaching and learning at all levels, 2- Teacher training and professional development resources, 3- Educational observation resources and 4- Content produced by students. On the other hand, it is estimated that several complexities shall emerge by pursuing this policy as well. These complexities are as follows: establishment of cultural and linguistic relationship, quality assurance, copyrights and licensing, content production costs and accessibility of education content; validity of digital devices, internet access speed and production and downloading of digital content. In the study, information is provided on the goals of the government for 2020, such as provision of fund support, legalization of content sharing, infrastructure, sufficiency of teachers, development of an evaluation mechanism for course books and learning materials etc.

In Chapter 3, C. Rossini and O. Castro argue the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement, which is a grassroots initiative with regards to the educational, legal and politic system of Brazil. National and regional OER policies and processes are explained. Two projects (community based OER project and corporate based OER project) are developed in the direction complexities (such as adaptation of learning materials due to legal reasons) that emerge as a result of usage of OER. Authors also declare their ideas on how OER projects shall be developed in terms of increasing access to education materials. They emphasize such thoughts as provision of local contents suitable for being developed, provision of a good proceed for the resources financed by the public in terms of public investment accountability and taxpayers, and combination of technologic and methodological innovations.

In Chapter 4, R. McGreal, T. Anderson and D. Conrad explained the development of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in Canada. Following is reported in the Chapter; OER adoption status, efforts, policies and programs of those, who adapted test practices in relation with innovation after secondary education. In the Chapter, while provincial and organizational initiatives made for Open Higher Education and OER are mentioned, OER movement and development level are also emphasized. In the study, following are emphasized as national open education initiatives; Open Data pilot project of the Government, 2012 Paris Declaration on OER, which is supported by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), Canada CC license and Open Access Policy, on which three Canadian institutions agreed. Furthermore, OER of the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan is supported on regional basis as a fundamental part of Open Training initiatives.

Chapter 5 includes a study where A. Moore and S. Hoosen introduce the model of Antigua & Barbuda of ICT in development of Education Policy and explain how Caribbean OER project is initiated within the scope of Education Policy. In the study, preparation of an online math course book is discussed as an OER Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) deployment prototype and qualified OER. 3 different strategies are introduced as distribution strategy. These are listed below; Minimum (minimal) Deployment Strategy, which is open to public access, but in which contents may not be organized or changed, and which is teacher referenced, and Standard Deployment Strategy, in which learning contents may be changed by educators in order to be re-used for another purpose, and Developed Deployment Strategy, in which students may play a part as content writer. Authors also draw attention to a requirement in terms of realization of educational changes effectively during application of OER projects. In this chapter, both the role that OER may play in order to support pedagogic transformation at school level and approaches towards transformation in conventional school system are assessed. Based on this issue, steps that are taken for preparing an ICT infrastructure according to the policies of the government, providing assistance to development of a supportive policy and developing school ICT integration in order to meet the ICT requirements of a school.

Chapter 6, Includes an interesting study of U-D. Ehlers on how OER is perceived in Germany. Author emphasizes that, although OER was not of top priority in Germany in

2012, several OER projects are currently being implemented in the country. Author emphasizes that, although open access is supported extensively, it is not popular in the country since German academicians do not consider resources innovative. Author also determines that digital learning materials are not sufficient. On the other hand, author emphasizes that there is no problem in terms of access to course books in Germany, a country that has a free university education policy, states that institutions currently tend to move towards Open Educational Practices (OEP) explicitly. OEP covers the dimensions of the deficit both in terms of resource usage and creativity, and pedagogic models. Author determines that both of these dimensions may be of benefit to the individuals and institutions in terms of self-assessment and position in itself.

In Chapter 7, M. S. Krishnan explains how one of the largest OER databases of the world is created by initiating and adopting open licensing. In this chapter, author emphasizes how progress is made in National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) in India by development of content by specialists, support of public funds and approaches to adopting OER. In this content, author indicates that opening up of education has officially become active with the usage of ICT in India thanks to Gyan Darshan TV channel, which became active under the management of Indira Gandhi National Open University in 2000 and NPTEL, which became active under the management of seven Indian Technology and Indian Science Institutes in 2003. Author of this chapter also emphasizes that both of the above are supported by funds provided by the Indian government. It is emphasized that NMEICT was initiated in 2009 thanks to 1 billion dollars of government approved financial support and combination of the same with NPTEL project, which has become the first project to receive fund support. Author indicates that, as a result of these progresses, it is ensured that the copyrights of OERs are reviewed again and that all of the NMEICT projects that receive fund support are united a single roof. In the conclusion chapter of the study, it is determined that, similar to the licensing in Wikipedia, CC BY-SA (Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike) license is established not only for India, but for the entire world.

In Chapter 8, P. W. Bodrogini and M. Rinaldi assess OER development in Indonesia since 2012. Authors emphasize in this chapter that governments must develop "Open Learning Resources" as stipulated under Higher Education Law 2012. This is considered as a common policy for OERs, although there is no open licensing. Authors indicate that Indonesia provided support to adoption of 2012 Paris OER Declaration of UNESCO thanks to its OER initiatives in 2012. They emphasized that this also lays the foundation for OER policies. Development of the OER program of the country, its benefits, difficulties and opportunities are explained in the study in general. In the first section of the study, OER policy is revealed in terms of explaining more developed laws and regulations at higher education level. In the second section of the study, information is provided on how the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia publishes rich online educational contents at primary and secondary education. Therefore, Indonesia has several OER projects, including materials that are published by Terbuka University and Ministry of Education and Culture. These materials also provided guidance to OER initiatives of Indonesia. In the third section, fundamental benefits are emphasized, such as scalability, synchronicity and opportunity to learn at any time in anywhere etc. Authors also provide advices to decision makers and education stakeholders in terms of OER policy and its practices.

In Chapter 9, T. K. Liew assesses the use of OER in Wawasan Open University (WOU). Author indicates that WOU preferred OER, as an economically sustainable option, for developing and delivering courses within the scope of open education. Furthermore, author emphasizes that WOU developed a policy for usage of OER and that it benefits from the same for development of teaching and learning materials. In the chapter, it is emphasized that the demand for low cost higher education increases rapidly and that WOU is aware of increasing inflation ratios. Therefore, since WOU obtained successful results in terms of developing OER based course materials in 2012, WOU has increased its studies on adopting and adapting its OER in terms of development of course materials. Three models are adopted to accelerate production of course materials. These are as below: 1) Using pre-

developed proprietary course materials under license from more established ODL institutions, 2) Developing course materials using the “wrap-around textbook” model, 3) Developing course materials as stand-alone resources without making any reference to a particular textbook. In this chapter, it is assessed, how quality control mechanisms may be of benefit in meeting the requirements of quality control committee in OER development processes and in providing cost efficiency. Following are discussed in brief; adoption of WOU’s OER, development of quality OER based course materials, benefits of OER usage and WOU’s corporate policy on its cost.

In chapter 10, W. Macintosh emphasizes the incremental design, disaggregated service approach of OER universities (content, interaction, credentialing, technology, support, assessment services) and how sustainability may be achieved in financial terms. In this chapter where development and incremental design of the OER universities consortium, which is established with the collaboration of post-secondary education institutions is assessed, it is emphasized that OER courses are used for providing more suitable access to higher education. Author finally bases the success of OER collaboration on the following key principles:

- Responding to a compelling vision that is well aligned with the core values of the contributing institutions
- Open sourcing everything
- Respecting the decision-making autonomy of partner institutions
- Generating a viable value proposition for partner institutions
- Avoiding the temptation to innovate on too many fronts simultaneously
- Minimizing risk while maximizing impact
- Guaranteeing recoupment of future operational costs of contributing partners
- Adopting an incremental design model combined with rigorous strategic planning
- Designing for sustainability from inception using a low-cost base.

Chapter 11 is related with Oman, which developed OER policy in 2013. M. A. Abri and S. H. H. A. In this chapter, Busaidi discusses the strategies that shall be pursued for development and implementation of policy. Authors determine that the Oman Government turned towards development of sustainable development strategies due to the problem of trust in oil revenues. Therefore, government planned to take necessary steps in order to diversify the economy, which requires a powerful labor force that possesses the skills required in 21st century, to support industrialization and in terms of expropriation. In this direction, authors emphasize that the Oman Government decided to benefit from the skills of ICT in order to bring in innovative practices in teaching and learning while selecting the approaches that shall be adopted for sustainable development and to increase technology literacy. It is indicated in this chapter that an OER policy was developed in 2013 under the guidance of UNESCO with the vision to ensure high quality learning for all of the citizens of Oman and to establish a sustainable information society. This policy aims to fight against various difficulties related with education. These difficulties are listed as increasing the quality of learning outputs, development of teacher performance, increasing ICT perception of the society in education approaches, providing education that is consistent with the labor market and supporting research and education studies. In conclusion, authors emphasize that, with the implementation of OER policy, there are expectations for increasing the performances of practices and teaching performances of teachers, enrichment of digital Arabic sources and providing support to information production.

In Chapter 12, A. Tarkowski examines the development of OER in Poland with the usage of information and communication technologies (ICT). He makes such examination by narrating the development of open e-textbooks. It is determined that OER has begun to be used within the framework of plans that mainly aim for strengthening education via various initiatives, such as modernizing education or providing cheap access to basic education resources in Poland. Author highlights openness as an effective concept in this context. In

this chapter, it is determined that the educational content of Digital School Program has begun to be used 5 years ago, and that it was introduced as a tool that provides accessibility to larger masses. Furthermore, it is determined in this section that openness concept is not the main objective of political efforts and that there was no solid political support during implementation of program. Author determines that the Digital School Program approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2012 is comprised of 4 components. These are as follows: e-Teacher, e-textbook, e-school and e-student. The program meets various requirements in terms of a multi-platform approach, flexibility, modularity, security and scalability. In the chapter, openness mode, which is developed as a part of the program, is also explained. Also, public discussions on the program and its effects on the market are examined. Finally, it is argued whether a general policy may be developed in Poland with regards to openness of education resources.

In chapter 13, S. Knyazeva and A. Sigalov present a detailed examination of OER, which was included to copyrights law in Russia in 2014 and which has a legal provision for open license. This law defines availability for educational purposes and in terms of being treated as OER. In this chapter, a series of projects applied in Russia Federation are examined in order to establish a national education portals system. In this chapter, authors emphasize the initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia Federation, which support production of open license education resources. One of the main goals of these initiatives is to support usage of OER in higher and secondary education institutions by a larger population. Authors determine that projects are financed by MES of Russia Federation and are implemented under the leadership of Russian universities and research centers. Furthermore, authors emphasize MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) initiatives as new projects in open education and they also determine that various categories of open online courses are developed for learners. Also, it is emphasized that MES organizes annual events to promote usage of OER. Authors determine that amendments were made on Russian legislation as a result of the open license law that became effective in 2014. It is determined that it has become an obligation to obtain permit from authors and title holders, and that this situation shall provide various other opportunities for usage of resources. Opportunities shall increase for both open education and corporate e-learning systems in higher education institutions in terms of ensuring legal usage of online courses particularly.

In Chapter 14, T. Welch and J. Glennie reviewed language development project related with early childhood period in connection with the local languages used in Kenya, South Africa, Lesotho and Uganda. It constitutes a problem that there is no sufficient number of suitable material in order to enable African children to learn reading. This is the main reason behind the low ratio of literacy observed in African children. Authors determined that African Story Book project is planned to provide a solution for this problem. It is believed that this project shall accelerate development, shall promote translation of stories to local languages, shall provide assistance to protection of languages culturally and shall also provide assistance to keeping languages alive. The web site that is used in African Story Book project provides open licensing, and it is also observed as a tool that ensures translation of stories and creation of stories. Since contents may be used with an open license, it is easy to translate contents, to change illustrations and diagrams and to adopt stories to local contexts. Authors emphasize that the difficulties that are experienced in the project in relation with Kenya, South Africa, Lesotho and Uganda are not restricted with internet connection, electricity access or lack of ICT skills in target audience. In addition to these problems, it is observed that another variable is the readiness in adoption of OER. However, it is believed that the project shall be beneficial in terms of making people love reading and producing quality stories in local languages. Furthermore, approach for publishing digital open license in African Story Book initiative shall also be beneficial in terms of meeting a necessary requirements, as well as motivating teachers. It is also observed as a critical component of sustainable literacy development.

In chapter 15, B. Chae and M. Jenkins present a systematic strategy for adoption of OER in the system of Washington Community and Technical Colleges. In this chapter, authors determine their opinions, which indicate that development of a strategic plan in terms of policy development shall ensure determination, funding, design and development of OER projects. In this chapter, authors analyze how open policy is used in terms of providing fund support to the system and providing support to implementation of open projects, how the system is designed properly in terms of duty and planning support and how coordination is established in such studies. Authors determine that the open initiatives of Washington are categorized under three levels, i.e. development, application and outreach. Authors also present a model for research and policy development in terms of supporting open initiatives. This is a general model that may be adopted to OER development and promoting by any institution.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUTHOR



Can GULER is a lecturer in Distance Education at the College of Open Education of Anadolu University. Guler undertook undergraduate (Department of Computer Education & Instructional Technologies, 2002) and graduate studies at Anadolu University, Turkey (Department of Distance Education, 2007). He is currently studying for a PhD in Department of Distance Education. His research interests are instructional design, open and distance learning, educational technology, innovation and change, Interaction and communication in learning communities, and social media in education.

Lecturer Can GULER

Anadolu University, College of Open Education

Distance Education Department, 26470, Eskisehir, Turkey

Phone: +90 (222) 3350580 Ext: 2431

eMail: canguler@anadolu.edu.tr

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