

ARTICLE

Exploring Initiatives for Open Educational Practices at an Australian and a Brazilian University

Carina Bossu* and Marineli Meier†

This paper explores some key developments in Open Educational Practices (OEP) in higher education in Australia and in Brazil. More specifically, it focuses on the analysis of two individual universities: the University of Tasmania, in Australia; and the Federal University of Paraná, in Brazil. They are both public and mostly face-to-face universities trying to engage with OEP to enhance their blended learning offerings, and more generally learning and teaching. However, these institutions are distinctive in terms of their student numbers, their blended learning approaches, their role within their own communities, and their OEP strategies and initiatives. We will present some of the key policies and strategies adopted by these universities to support OEP, as well as the impact and the opportunities at present. The discussion in this paper will then attempt to make some recommendations for future directions of OEP adoption not only in these two countries, but also elsewhere.

Keywords: Open Educational Practices; Open Policies; OEP; OEP Australia; OEP Brazil; OEP Brazil and Australia

Introduction

Open Educational Practices (OEP) have already impacted education at all levels around the world. In higher education more specifically, it has benefited learners and educators and influenced the way educational institutions approach their strategic plans, policies and business models. It has brought equity and access back to the discussion, including strategies on how wealthier nations could assist less advantaged ones to increase access to free and open education (Willems and Bossu, 2012). Despite the fact that OEP has the potential to “affect all aspects of higher education”, it has not yet reached mainstream education (Weller, 2014, p. 2).

The concept of OEP is a shift in thinking and a development from the open educational resources (OER) movement. Current literature offers a range of definitions for OER and for OEP. However, for the purpose of this study, the OER definition developed by the OER Foundation (2011) is adopted, which states that OER are:

Educational materials...licensed in ways that provide permissions for individuals and institutions to reuse, adapt and modify the materials for their own use. OER can, and do include full courses, textbooks, streaming videos, exams, software, and any other materials or techniques supporting learning (p. 1).

The growing diversity of OER initiatives, coupled with a better understanding of the limitations of adopting open content without open practices, have influenced the development of OEP (Bossu and Stagg, 2018; Cronin, 2017; Open Educational Quality Initiative, 2011). Some of the key principles of OEP include:

- Engagement among all of the stakeholders in the OER process (authors, users, managers and policy makers).
- Support to guide creation and use of OER, and technologies to assist storage and dissemination.
- An understanding of the context in which OEP is adopted and implemented (Open Educational Quality Initiative, 2011).

In her most recent work, Cronin (2017) incorporated these principles into a helpful definition of OEP, which situates OEP as “collaborative practices that include the creation, use, and reuse of OER, as well as pedagogical practices employing participatory technologies and social networks for interaction, peer-learning, knowledge creation, and empowerment of learners” (p. 10).

Existing approaches and initiatives to open up education are increasing exponentially around the world, in size and numbers. Despite the successful developments and continuing growth of OEP initiatives worldwide, there are still many countries that seem reluctant to recognise the potential of OEP to enhance learning and teaching in higher education. This is also true for Brazil and Australia; two countries in the Southern Hemisphere.

* University of Tasmania Hobart TAS, AU

† Federal University of Parana, BR

Corresponding author: Carina Bossu (carina.bossu@gmail.com)

This paper provides some context about OEP in higher education in Australia and in Brazil, including recent policy developments and initiatives. It then focuses on the OEP initiatives of two individual universities: the University of Tasmania, in Australia; and the Federal University of Paraná, in Brazil. They are both public universities trying to engage with OEP to enhance learning and teaching not only for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of their communities and globally, while also dealing with internal institutional issues and pressures.

However, they are distinctive in terms of their student numbers, their blended learning approaches, their role within their own communities, and their OEP strategies and initiatives. We will discuss some of the key policies and initiatives adopted by these universities to support OEP, as well as the impact and the opportunities at present, followed by the challenges that still remain within these universities for the OEP moment to be fully recognised and embraced. The discussion in this paper will then attempt to make some recommendations for future directions of OEP adoption in these two countries and elsewhere. This study is underpinned by qualitative research, and adopted exploratory comparative case studies to provide the basis for “comparison within and across contexts” (Goodrick, 2014, p. 1), which enabled the authors to explore the differences, and also the similarities between the two countries and universities discussed in this paper (Merriam, 2009). The methodological approaches adopted in this study are discussed next.

Methodological approaches

This paper is the result of a collaborative undertaking between the two authors during Carina’s study leave visit to the Federal University of Paraná in mid-2016. As mentioned earlier, this study is predominantly qualitative and uses exploratory comparative (or multisite) case studies as they allow a much more comprehensive understanding of the problems (cases) being investigated through in-depth description and the consideration of the cultural circumstances, and the experiences of the people and institutions representing each case, including the researchers (Merriam, 2009).

Most of the data collection occurred during a period of approximately one week. Data was collected through existing national and institutional policies, and other artefacts such as websites, and online and digital resources. We adopted a thematic approach to data analysis, which has helped us to confirm themes and concepts identified in the literature, as well as those that emerged during data collection. This form of analysis helped us to identify patterns and to reduce, refine and compare the data among the two case studies into themes, and to facilitate interpretation as an “inductive inquiry” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 5). Ethics approval for this research was obtained through the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval H0015789).

Open Educational Practices in Australian higher education

Higher education in Australia is a relatively small sector, in comparison with many other countries around the world, and is made up of 40 universities (most fee paying

public universities) and approximately 130 other higher education providers. However, it plays an important role in the Australian economy, with revenues exceeding \$27 billion (AUD) in 2013 (Norton and Cherastidtham, 2014). Similar to other higher education sectors worldwide, the Australian sector is expanding. There are approximately 1.3 million students currently enrolled in the higher education sector across a whole range of degrees, including bachelor degrees, postgraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates. This number also comprises face-to-face and distant, domestic and international students (Norton and Cherastidtham, 2014).

Nevertheless, formal higher education still does not reach all students wanting to pursue it; mostly those who live in rural and remote areas and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, including indigenous people (Bossu, Bull and Brown, 2012). Another issue affecting participation in higher education in Australia is the high cost of tuition fees as Australian higher education has one of the top three most expensive tuition fees in the world on average (OECD, 2012). OEP is one of the solutions not only for those excluded from formal education in Australia, but also for lifelong learners wanting to pursue additional professional development.

As in many countries around the world, earlier OEP initiatives in Australia took place through open access, as well as other government focused initiatives such as Government 2.0 (<http://www.finance.gov.au/policy-guides-procurement/gov20/>) and AusGOAL (<https://www.facebook.com/AusGOAL/>) (Bossu, 2016). However, these initiatives are mostly concentrated on government agencies, as well as being related to research data and outputs, and are not focused on opening up education through openly licensed educational resources and practices. In fact, at the time of writing, Australia does not have a specific programme, framework, policy or regulation that supports the adoption of open educational resources (OER) and practices specifically in higher education (Bossu, Brown and Bull, 2015).

Despite the lack of a national framework for higher education, there have been some important OEP developments in higher education in Australia in the last decade or so. Some of these initiatives are institutionally based, while others are undertaken through national and international collaboration projects, and several more fortunate ones have been funded by the Australian Government Department of Education (Bossu, 2016). Unfortunately, most of these initiatives tend to be project-based and when finished, activities tend to discontinue. Without national level support, institutions find it difficult to maintain the provision of such activities (Bossu and Stagg, 2018).

Open Educational Practices in Brazil

Brazil has a much larger higher education system than Australia, but it is also a much more populous country, as Brazil has more than 207 million people (IBGE, 2017), while Australia has approximately 24 million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). According to the last census (Brasil, 2015), there are approximately eight million students currently enrolled in a diverse range of programmes and degrees across the higher education sec-

tor in Brazil. Almost 33,000 undergraduate courses are offered across 2,368 higher education institutions; where 87.4% are private and 12.6% are free public higher education institutions (Brasil, 2015). Similar to Australia, higher education in Brazil continues to grow, including enrolments in distance education courses, which have reached 1.34 million in 2014, representing 17.1% of total enrolments in higher education (Brasil, 2015). It is interesting to note that the number of enrolments in distance education offerings in Brazil alone is equal to the total enrolment figures for the whole HE sector in Australia. Currently, there are no dedicated distance education/open universities in both countries; thus distance education has been offered by dual/blended/mixed mode universities.

Despite having a larger higher education system than Australia, enrolment rates among 20–24 year olds are only 29%, while in Australia enrolments in this age bracket are at 59% (OECD, 2017). Similarly, 31% of young people from the 15-to-19 year age group, were not attending high school or were not studying in Brazil, which could indicate that young Brazilians are abandoning their studies much earlier than their counterparts in Australia where the rate is only 9% (OECD, 2017). This could have a direct impact on Brazilian youngsters' future careers, income and quality of life.

Although there is only one Brazilian higher education system, there are dramatic differences between private and public educational institutions. Public universities are funded by federal, state or municipal governments, and provide free education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, but places are very limited and consequently highly competitive. The private higher education sector, composed of religious, non-profit and for-profit institutions, operates mostly by full fee payment with only a limited number of scholarships and grants being provided by some private institutions, and by the federal government, to low-income students. But, these grants have never been sufficient to guarantee access at an affordable price to all students wanting a higher degree. Brazil has one of the “least accessible tertiary education systems” in Latin America (Murakami and Blom, 2008, p. 26). However, this scenario could be transformed and OEP have the potential to assist this transformation by increasing access to free and/or low-cost higher education in Brazil. Fortunately, this potential has already been realised by some government agencies in Brazil through the development of key national initiatives. One example of this is the National Guidelines and Norms for the Offering of Higher Education Programs and Courses in Distance Education, developed by the National Council of Education and the Board of Higher Education (CNE/CES, 2016), which states that:

Higher education institutions, as well as government agencies and entities that are directly or indirectly involved in funding and/or promoting distance education, shall ensure the creation, availability, use and management of open technologies and open educational resources through the adoption of open licenses, which facilitate the use, revision, translation, adaptation, distribution and free sharing of these resources by citizens, taking

into consideration relevant copyright of creators (CNE/CES, 2016).

Another important national initiative has been the recently created eduCAPES Portal (<https://educapes.capes.gov.br/>), which is a repository of OER to enable access to free and openly licensed content developed by the Open University System of Brazil (UAB) and partners (Brasil, 2016). The UAB system is a consortium of public institutions, including federal, state and federally funded technological and vocational institutions. The majority of publicly funded tertiary distance education offerings in Brazil have been linked to the UAB system, which was instituted in 2006. These strategic actions and developments by the government, in combination with the guidelines supported by the eduCAPES repositories, will hopefully encourage institutions involved in distance education within the UAB to openly share the publicly funded resources they develop as OER and thus further increase the adoption of OER and have a greater impact on the democratisation of knowledge in Brazil (Brasil, 2016a).

OER Brazil (<http://aberta.org.br/>) is also a not-for profit initiative worth mentioning. OER Brazil, or REA Brasil in Portuguese, is a nationwide community of practice that is dedicated to issues related to OER and OEP in Brazil, and also internationally. Despite all these important national level developments in OEP and OER, like in Australia, OEP and OER have not yet reached mainstream higher education in Brazil. Also similar to Australia, institutionally focused initiatives in Brazil are incipient (Santos, 2013), have a lifetime of the project and have no financial support from public policies (Amiel and Soares, 2015).

OEP at the University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) is the only university in the domestic state of Tasmania, Australia, balancing a strong research tradition with the need for a comprehensive course offering to meet the needs of Tasmanians. UTAS is a public university and currently has approximately 34,000 students enrolled across a range of programmes and modes of study, including in face-to-face and blended learning (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Tasmania). UTAS has developed its Blended Learning Model, which aims to provide students with a learning experience that reflects the innovative adoption of learning technologies. One of the core features of the UTAS Blended Learning Model is the development and adoption of high-quality online resources, and it explicitly suggests the use of OER created by staff and by the students themselves (<http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/unit-design/blended-learning-model>).

The model also encourages sharing of academic resources and collaboration with the broader academic community. As discussed before, students' engagement and co-creation of content, collaboration and sharing of learning resources are key elements of OEP (Cronin, 2017). This model also suggests that all UTAS units should have an online presence in the university's Learning Management System. This online presence is guided by the “The Blended Learning Model 1–5 Framework”, where Level 1 represents a unit which has only online content

to supplement on-campus learning or situated activities, while Level 5 means the UTAS Blended Model was fully embedded in the unit design, including unit peer review (<http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/unit-design/blended-learning-model>).

The promise of OEP has been recognised by UTAS as a way to meet key institutional priorities and purposes such as enhancing reputation and brand, increasing enrolments, contributing to areas of social and community need, and enhancing curriculum offerings. Next, we explore some of the key OEP initiatives at UTAS.

Policies and Strategies for OEP at UTAS

One of the first documents developed recognising the university's willingness to engage in OEP was the Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching White Paper (2014–2018) (Brown, Kregor, Williams, Padgett, Bossu, Warren, and Osborne, 2013). It was through this White Paper that the conceptualisation and focused dialogue on how the university might start engaging and implementing OEP within its activities began. Other documents include the 2016–2020 Strategic Plan for Learning and Teaching, where staff are encouraged to engage with OER and OEP (http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/268160/Strategic-Plan-for-Learning-and-Teaching-2016-2020-Final.pdf), and most importantly, the Teaching Performance Expectations, which recognises staff engagement with OEP, including the use, creation and review of a range of learning resources such as open educational resources and MOOCs, in promotions and probations (<http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/continuing-professional-learning/teaching-performance-expectations-tpes>).

OEP Developments and Initiatives at UTAS

UTAS, like a few Australian universities currently engaging with OEP, has invested time and resources to increase OEP adoption within the university. Informed by the principles of OEP, one of the strategies used by UTAS to encourage the adoption of OEP has been to develop the capacity of academic and professional staff through workshops, seminars, one-on-one consultations, and through short courses such as the *Curriculum design for open education* course (http://wikieducator.org/course/Curriculum_design_for_open_education/). The latter is an open and online professional development short course focused on developing the capacity of academics to adopt OEP as the basis for innovative, engaging and agile curricula (Bossu and Fountain, 2015). Also, in most major teaching and learning-related events, the university and its OEP advocates make sure that open practices are always showcased and discussed. One example of this is the yearly conference organised by the university titled *Teaching Matters*. Since 2013 there have been several workshops and presentations to showcase OEP developments not only taking place at UTAS but also those that are undertaken in collaboration with other universities. UTAS also hosted the first Australian OER Symposium in 2014 (http://wikieducator.org/OERu/Australian_National_Symposium_on_OER), which attracted

researchers, practitioners and advocates nationally and internationally.

UTAS has also invested in infrastructure for OEP and created an open instance (open source version) of its already existing Learning Object Repository (LOR). This open repository was developed as part of the Sharing Learning Resources Project, which was internally funded. The project's aims were to establish a culture of sharing learning resources through the use of a UTAS LOR, as well as further supporting learning and teaching through OEP within the institution (Padgett, Bossu and Warren, 2014).

UTAS has also engaged in OEP through collaboration with other Australian and international organisations. Collaboration, besides being one of the principles of OEP, has also been recognised as one of the greatest opportunities of OEP (Commonwealth of Learning, 2015). One example of this collaboration is the OERu (<https://oeru.org/>), which is a consortium of currently 39 international educational institution partners, spread across five continents. In Australia, six universities are part of this network, including UTAS. The OERu's vision is to make education accessible to everyone and provides affordable ways for learners to gain academic credit towards qualifications from recognised institutions (McGreal, Mackintosh and Taylor, 2013). UTAS has been involved in a range of projects to promote awareness, build capacity, and encourage research and wide adoption of OEP institutionally, nationally and internationally.

Opportunities that OEP can bring to UTAS

OEP can bring several opportunities at institutional and individual levels, including staff and students. At an institutional level, OEP can contribute to higher institutional reputation through the showcasing of educational content as well as raising an international profile and attracting more students (Bossu, Bull and Brown, 2015). The flexibility and innovative pedagogical approaches promoted by OEP could also further support UTAS's Blended Learning Framework (<http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/unit-design/blended-learning-model>) by providing access to a whole range of existing OER, and by creating additional pathways to students into UTAS degrees and programmes. Another opportunity is that OEP has the potential to assist UTAS to meet one of its social inclusion agendas, which is to increase access to knowledge and widening participation. At the individual level, OEP can create opportunities for further collaboration not only among teachers but also between teachers and students within UTAS and beyond. Specifically for students, OER and OEP opens up incredible opportunities via more flexible study modes, co-creation of educational content and alternative pathways to education (Smyth, Bossu and Stagg, 2016).

Challenges faced by UTAS

Despite these developments and range of opportunities, there have been many barriers to overcome so that full implementation of OEP at UTAS takes place. One of them is to continue to raise awareness of OER and OEP among educators and students, but most importantly among

senior executives. A lack of understanding among senior executives means that support through policy development and financial assistance will not be available, thus uptake and implementation is unlikely to happen (Smyth, Bossu and Stagg, 2016). Even though the number of academics attending capacity-building workshops and interested in adopting OEP into their practices is considerably positive, this interest is not reflected in the number of OER uploaded into the institutional Learning Object Repository (LOR). There is still an overall lack of understanding about the use of open licences and institutional practices in terms of copyright permissions. As OEP policies and initiatives at UTAS are relatively new institutional developments, perhaps a future challenge will be to fully understand the impact of these policies and initiatives on the enhancement of learning and teaching at UTAS and more broadly.

OEP at the Federal University of Paraná

The Federal University of Paraná (UFPR) is a public university, directly funded by the federal government. It is one of the oldest universities in Brazil and is an important symbol of Curitiba city and the State of Paraná. Since its foundation in 1912, it has represented a reference in quality teaching, research and extension at state and national levels. UFPR currently has approximately 36,800 students enrolled across a diverse range of degrees and programmes including undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational courses (UFPR, 2016).

Similar to UTAS, programmes are offered to students through mostly face-to-face and blended modes. However, blended learning offerings at UFPR are very different from those at UTAS. UFPR has developed a policy that mirrors the national offering of blended learning, where all contact units are allowed to have a maximum of 20% of study time offered online (http://www.soc.ufpr.br/portal/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/resolucao_cep_29102010-497.pdf). This policy is focused mostly on UFPR contact units that have not been included in the Brazilian Open University (UAB) system. Despite having some limitations, this is an important policy for UFPR and its OEP strategy as it enables educators not only to experiment with blended learning, but also to learn about and adopt OER and OEP. UFPR is one of the few Brazilian universities, either public or private, that has an institutional strategy to promote and disseminate OEP across its community, including academic and professional staff, students and the broader society. This strategy also contributes to the university's mission to develop, construct and disseminate knowledge, as well as to support the society and its citizens through sustainable human development and access to education.

Policies and Strategies for OEP at UFPR

One of the first OEP-related strategies at UFPR was the establishment of a formal partnership between UFPR and the Federal Technological University of Paraná (UTFPR) to formalise an already existing collaboration, in particular to officialise the state-wide "Paranaense Program of Open Educational Resources and Practices", also known as REA PARANÁ (UFPR, 2016). This was a pioneering and innova-

tive strategy in Brazil aimed at increasing the access and development of OER, as well as establishing a culture of sharing, with the purpose of enhancing teaching and learning. It was also foreseen that REA PARANÁ would promote the development and dissemination of OER and OEP not only within these two institutions, but also across Paraná state, nationally and internationally (REA PARANÁ, 2016). Its success attracted further partnerships, and in 2016 five other state public universities and two state public agencies joined the REA PARANÁ programme through a formal agreement (UFPR, 2016a). At that time, this programme was the largest formalised OEP collaboration of public universities in Brazil.

Similar to UTAS, UFPR has also developed other strategies to encourage OEP engagement among academic staff. In 2014 a key policy was created which recognises, for the purpose of career promotion and progression, the creation and upload of OER into the open instance of the institutional repository (discussed next in this paper) (UFPR, 2014a; UFPR, 2014b).

OEP Developments and Initiatives at UFPR

UFPR, in partnership with UTFPR, has developed an open instance of its institutional repository (SIBI) (<http://www.portal.ufpr.br/rea.html>), as part of the REA PARANÁ programme. The repository has a self-deposit model, providing users associated with the institutions with information to perform the upload of resources by themselves. Despite the fact that only members of the institution can upload the resources, the resources can be accessed by the broader community (UFPR/SIBI, 2016). The repository has an easy-to-use and intuitive self-publishing process, and provides users with information on open-licence, storage, access, distribution of resources, analytics, and evaluation of the resource by users.

In addition to the repository, and informed by some of the OEP principles presented earlier, UFPR has developed several strategies to raise awareness and build capacity in OEP across the institution, among their partner institutions and beyond (Meier, Silva, Fornari and Leal, 2016). From 2013 to 2016, a series of events including talks, workshops, seminars and consultations were offered to build capacity of professional and academic staff, and students in a range of learning technologies including OEP, OER and Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) (UFPR, 2014; UFPR, 2015; UFPR, 2016). These events included the 1st Open Educational Resources and Practices Meeting of UFPR in 2014, and the celebration of Open Education Week (which is an annual event, normally a week in March, that celebrates openness in education around the world) in 2015 and 2016, among others. In addition, a series of informative resources have also been developed to further assist those interested in adopting OEP. These resources include a Handbook of Best Practices in OER (http://reaparana.com.br/portal/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/REAPARANA-manual-de-bolso__6.pdf) and four bulletins explaining different aspects of OER and OEP, and how to get engaged (<http://reaparana.com.br/portal/materiais-de-divulgacao/>) (REA PARANÁ, 2016).

Another important OEP development at UFPR was the development of a short course (40 hours of study) on OEP. This was an externally funded initiative by the Carolina Foundation, and all the resources developed were openly licensed (UNED–Canal, 2015). The course has been offered three times: two offerings in 2015 and one in 2016, with 1,000 places available in each iteration. The course was targeted, in the state of Paraná, to academics and professional staff from public tertiary institutions including higher education and vocational institutions. Also, the second offering was in partnership with other educational institutions in Paraná state, which contributed to the management and facilitation of the course, while in 2016, it was offered to UFPR's staff only (UFPR, 2015).

Opportunities that OEP can bring to UFPR

OEP can bring many opportunities to UFPR and its partner institutions within the REA PARANÁ consortium. Perhaps a key opportunity is that OEP challenges existing traditional educational models within these institutions as it promotes student-centred educational practices, student co-creation of resources, flexible learning and open pedagogies (Smyth, Bossu and Stagg, 2016), thus exposing educators and students to innovative approaches to learning and teaching that can be adopted across different modes of studies. Another opportunity for the institutions within the REA PARANÁ consortium is to continue collaborating with each other to develop, share and disseminate OER through their open repositories. In addition, as the REA PARANÁ consortium is a pioneering initiative in OER, it will certainly serve as a model for other educational institutions in Brazil and around the world to follow, thus building a culture of openness in higher education, increasing access to education, and further enhancing learning, teaching and research. Particularly for UFPR, OER and OEP have the potential to innovate their blended education offerings by utilising existing resources available elsewhere, saving time and creating economies of scale.

Challenges faced by UFPR

One challenge facing UFPR is to develop appropriate institutional open access policies in order to enable the development and sharing of OER. Another challenge is to continue raising understanding and awareness about OEP among teachers and students. Despite the fact that many teachers have been adopting OEP in their teaching practices, the large majority do not know that OEP exist, while others are totally oblivious and sometimes in denial that their students routinely access additional educational resources (openly licensed or not) available on the internet to complement their studies (Meier and Silva, 2018). In terms of the REA PARANÁ consortium, perhaps one of the biggest challenges is to consolidate and expand the partnership, so that these universities can continue developing and sharing OER collaboratively and consistently through the adoption of OER repositories and appropriate metadata. Another issue of concern for the REA PARANÁ consortium is the quality of the openly licensed resources created by the partnership and also

available elsewhere. This is an issue that has concerned many in the wider OEP movement (Camilleri, Ehlers, Pawlowski, 2014). However, it is also known that “OER have tremendous potential to improve the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of education, while serving to restore a core function of education: sharing knowledge” (Butcher and Hoosen, 2014, p. 18).

Discussion

As discussed above, despite the fact that Brazil and Australia have very different higher education systems, they both seem to be struggling to understand, and also to recognise, the potential of OEP to meet some of their government agendas, including the need to increase access to education to those students who are most in need. However, OEP developments at the national level in Brazil appear to be progressing fast due to a strategic combination of policy and infrastructure development. This strategic combination includes a requirement that all resources created for and by the institutions who are members of the Open University System of Brazil (UAB) are openly licensed, coupled with the development of the eduCAPES Portal, where these resources can be uploaded and made freely available to all. This example follows the OEP principles discussed above and follows some recommendations for OEP adoption at national levels, such as the dedicated OEP policies and adequate infrastructure (Bossu and Stagg, 2018). This is also a model for Australia, and for other countries trying to implement national OEP strategies.

It can also be seen from the discussion in this paper that both UTAS and UFPR OEP initiatives have been informed by the principles of OEP presented earlier, including stakeholders' engagement, support through infrastructure and capacity building based on the context of each institution. While both universities have developed institutional policies to promote OEP engagement, UTAS policies have been internally focused, and UFPR's approach has been focused on building a state-wide partnership with other publicly funded universities and government agencies. One element that might facilitate this partnership is the fact that Brazilian public universities do not compete with each other like Australian ones do. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, higher education in Australia is big business and generates large revenues, while in Brazil public universities do not make a profit, nor aim to. Although the approach of investing in partnerships builds momentum, creates critical mass and engages a whole range of stakeholders (which are key elements for change in education) the lead institution (UFPR) needs to have solid institutional policies to sustain continuous OEP development. On the other hand, having mostly internally focused policies can put OEP at UTAS in an unstable and delicate position, meaning that it would always be at the mercy and goodwill of the university's constantly changing board of executives.

In terms of initiatives, both universities have invested in a range of capacity-building activities to raise awareness and understanding among academics, professional staff and students. These are also strategies supported

by research in OEP (Bossu and Fountain, 2015). The universities have also realised the importance of having an institutional open repository so that creators of open content have a place to share their resources within their institution and beyond. These repositories are open instances of existing ones. This can be a good strategy to keep software updates and maintenance at a lower cost. Despite the efforts to build capacity and to develop dedicated OER repositories, uptake and adoption of OEP has been slow and irregular in both institutions.

As for the opportunities that can emerge through OEP, both universities see the adoption of open content and open practices as a way to further support and enhance not only their blended learning, but also their traditional offering. UTAS, however, also sees OEP as an opportunity to diversify its degree structures and offerings by providing learners with a range of additional options to study, including micro-courses and alternative recognition of prior learning. This could be a general move towards resource-based learning, which could further enable dual, mixed and multi-mode forms of provision of equivalent learning programmes. Likewise, the two universities seem to be facing similar challenges, including the lack of awareness and understanding about OEP adoption by senior executives, staff and students. While UFPR seems to be concerned about the future of REA PARANÁ and its institutions, UTAS seems to concentrate its efforts on fully understanding the impact of OEP-related policies and initiatives on the enhancement of learning and teaching at UTAS and more broadly. These opportunities and challenges have also been explored in the current literature in OEP (Bossu and Fountain, 2015; Butcher and Hoosen, 2014).

Conclusions and future directions

In response to the growing demand for more affordable, accessible and flexible HE provision, increasing numbers of institutions are already offering programmes in different modes, such as face-to-face, blended and distance learning (Taylor and Newton, 2013). Experience at UTAS and UFPR suggests that OER and OEP can support such provision. This paper provides an overview of some national-level OEP developments in Brazil and Australia applied at mostly the domestic state level. Despite these developments, mainstream adoption of OEP appears a long way away, mostly due to the absence of explicit government policies and incentives. Important developments are also explored here, including key OEP policies and initiatives at two public universities: UTAS in Australia and UFPR in Brazil. Despite the differences, these two universities have many things in common. They share the fact that OEP is a new institutional enterprise and that institutional culture, funding, institutional priorities and strategies can play a major role in the future direction of their OEP initiatives. However, similar to many experts, researchers, international bodies and governments around the world, OEP advocates at UTAS and UFPR believe that the adoption of OEP in higher education institutions worldwide is just a matter of time; it is not a case of whether it will happen, but when. This adoption is also encouraged by the

increased use of learning technologies in higher education, the diverse modes of delivery, and the paradigm shift from a scarcity model to a model where free and openly licensed content is abundant (Weller, 2014).

These elements and changes have already been transforming and challenging the core values and structures of higher education around the world. From the way learners are now experiencing learning, to how learning should be designed to maximise these experiences, to the current role of educators and the new strategies and support required from educational institutions to recognise and accredit such learning. Therefore, to finalise this paper, we would like to make some recommendations to senior executives of higher educational institutions wanting to explore the potential of OEP. We believe that one important step towards OEP adoption is to undertake an institutional policy review to establish a level of institutional commitment through existing policies and strategies. Policy development and review should identify and address the policy barriers that may need to be confronted and to concentrate on the benefits that open content licensing of university-generated content may bring to the university, among other things (Commonwealth of Learning, 2015).

Another factor to be closely considered, and that is also underpinned by OEP principles, is resourcing. Senior executives should reflect on the additional investments, such as human, financial and technological organisational resources that might be required for effective implementation of OEP. In addition, as evidenced by the two case studies presented here, building capacity and raising awareness about OEP could encourage wider and deeper institution-wide adoption of OEP. Also, understanding the OEP landscape and undertaking systematic planning are important strategies to pursue. For OEP to get traction and flourish within educational institutions, it is also important that the organisational culture is taken into consideration and that planning, development and implementation of OEP is done in consultation with all stakeholders involved.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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