

Call for papers – Special issue

Open Education in the Context of Digital Transformation

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About this special issue

With the proliferation of ubiquitous digital media, tools and devices the open education (OE) movement has gained momentum over the last decade. The majority of higher education institutions now use or explore educational technology of some kind to “enhance” on-campus learning or to offer “blended learning” programs to provide flexible learning opportunities. Open and distance learning has clearly moved from the fringes into mainstream higher education (XIAO, 2018). On the other hand, this expansion is accompanied by an internal and society-wide discussion on the impact of the digital transformation on higher education institutions.

To date, the open education movement consists on the one hand of resource-oriented initiatives and on the other hand on more process-oriented activities that foster openness. Digital media enable the boundless sharing, re-use and re-design of learning materials discussed under the concept of open educational resources (GESER, 2007). At the same time, millions of learners participate in open courses offered by hundreds of higher education institutions to increase chances in the job market (CASTANO-MUNOZ, KREIJNS, KALZ, & PUNIE, 2017) or for professionalisation (CASTANO-MUNOZ, KALZ, KREINS, & PUNIE, 2018).

While there have been several rather narrow attempts to define openness via licensing practices or use of resources BAKER (2017) conceptualizes open education from the perspective of a continuum of transparency and freedom. Objects in the open education space can consist of different combinations of these two dimensions and the product-oriented OER perspective is combined with the perspective of open courses.

Activities around the opening of education are driving forces of change in higher education that have an impact on teaching and learning, but also on research and higher education policies and administration. However, “openness in higher education” is not a new phenomenon (cf. PETER & DEIMANN, 2013). Providing access to higher education for non-traditional students throughout the lifespan has been the *raison d’être* of open learning and open universities which use educational media to provide flexible learning opportunities independent of time and space (TAIT, 2008).

A widely accepted framework for research into open or online distance education was developed by ZAWACKI-RICHTER and ANDERSON (2014) that describes three broad lines of research on the macro, meso and micro level. Along those lines, this special themed issue addresses aspects of OE in the context of digital transformation that include but are not limited to the following questions on...

...the macro level of theory and global educational systems:

- What are elements of OE (such as open learning, open educational resources, open educational practices) and how can OE be defined in the context of teaching and learning in higher education?
- What are the theoretical foundations of OE?
- How is OE related to the fields of distance learning, instructional design and educational technology?
- How do national higher education systems of open and distance education respond to the global process of digital transformation?
- What is the impact of technology infusion on social reproduction and equality in educational systems?

...the meso level of higher education institutions and organization:

- How can OE practices be integrated and facilitated in formal higher education institutions?
- What kind of support must be provided to foster the design and development of Open Educational Resources (OER)?
- How can new approaches of quality assurance for OER be integrated in institutional processes for evaluation?
- Which approaches to governance of technology-enhanced innovations of teaching and learning work best in higher education institutions?

...the micro level of teaching and learning in open education settings:

- Is there an “open pedagogy”? How can open educational practices be integrated into teaching and learning with digital media and tools?
- What are scalable approaches to feedback and assessment practices in OE?
- What are faculty members’ perceptions with regard to the use and development of OER for teaching in higher education?
- How can we create connections and bridges between open learning and OE?

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Guidelines regarding the journal

The ZFHE is a peer-reviewed online journal that publishes scientific contributions of practical relevance concerning current higher education development issues. The focus is on didactical, structural, and cultural developments in teaching and learning. Topics that are innovative and still regarded as open in respect of their design options are preferred.

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Submission information

English or German contributions may be submitted in two possible formats:

Scientific contributions within the main theme should comply with the following criteria:
The contribution...

- presents innovative perspectives, arguments, problem analyses etc. on the key topic;
- focuses on essential aspects of the key topic;
- is theoretically supported (i.e. it offers a clear connection to the scientific discourse of the topic under discussion);
- provides scientific insights with added value at least in some parts;
- clearly elucidates the methodology used to acquire knowledge;
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- comprises up to 33,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information)

Workshop reports comprise the instructional presentation of practical experience, good practice examples, design concepts, pilot projects, etc. Workshop reports should comply with the following criteria:

- demonstrates potential for knowledge transfer;
- describes illustrative aspects and factors for the purpose of theory formation;
- systematically and transparently presented (e.g., no incomprehensible clues to details in an area of practice);

- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- up to 21,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information).

Submission and review schedule

February 15, 2019 – Submission deadline for complete articles:

Please upload your contribution(s) to the ZFHE journal system (<https://www.zfhe.at>) in the corresponding section (scientific contribution, workshop report) of ZFHE 14/2 issue in anonymous format. To do so, you must first register as an author in the system.

May 3, 2019 – Feedback / Reviews: Scientific contributions and workshop reports are evaluated in a double-blind process (see below).

May 31, 2019 – Revision deadline: Where necessary, contributions may be revised according to feedback and recommendations from the reviews.

June 2019 – Online publication: In June 2019, the finalized contributions are published under <https://www.zfhe.at> and also made available in print.

Review Process

All submitted contributions will be examined in a double-blind peer review process to guarantee scientific quality. The editors of the current issue propose the reviewers for the respective theme and allocate individual contributions to the reviewers; they also determine which contributions will be accepted. The selection of reviewers and the review process for each thematic issue are always supervised by a member of the editorial board.

Formatting and submission

In order to save valuable time with the formatting of the contributions, we kindly ask that all authors work with the template from the beginning. The template can be downloaded from the ZFHE website under the following links:

https://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE_14-2_TEMPLATE_en.docx

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Since we must be able to edit the texts, they must be submitted unlocked/unprotected in in Microsoft Word (.doc), Office Open XML (.docx), Open Document Text (.odt) or Plain Text (.txt) format. Please do not submit any PDF files! Submissions in the “Scientific Contribution” and “Workshop Report” categories must first be made in anonymous format in order to guarantee the double-blind review process. Please remove all references to the author(s) of the document (including in the document properties!). Upon a positive review result, this information will be re-inserted.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the content of the issue, please contact the editors (olaf.zawacki.richter@uni-oldenburg.de or kalz@ph-heidelberg.de).

For technical and organizational questions, please contact Michael Raunig (office@zfhe.at).

We look forward to your submissions!

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