

Introductory note to EURODL special issue on Creativity and Open Educational Resources

It is my great pleasure to write a note of introduction to the latest special issue in our journal, edited by leading scholars in the field of OERs, Elsebeth Korsgaard Sorensen, Graíne Conole and Asger Harlung. This is the third of the special issues the journal has published, and it is our intention from the side of the Editorial Board that we seek to continue to supplement our regular 2 issues per year with these special issues that focus on a particular topic.

OER's have been on the scene more than 10 years at the time of writing, and have attracted direction and drive during that period from major Foundations, above all the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, from IGOs such as the EC, the Commonwealth of Learning and UNESCO, from individual institutions such as the Open Universities of the Netherlands, Athabasca University, Canada and The Open University UK and support from a now wide range of researchers and practitioners. Nonetheless, there has been an uneasy question after all this work that the potential of OERs has not much influenced the realities of access, nor of the practice of learning and teaching, nor have OERs found a financially sustainable model outside philanthropic funding. There has been the observation, more implicit than explicit, that OERs have been a solution looking for a problem.

The special issue presented here begins to place the development within a wider context of ideas as well as examples of practice. As the editors of the special issue write in the introductory paper, OERs respond to wider currents in our societies of openness of knowledge necessary for the pace of change and fluidity of social structures within which we in Europe all live and work. The development and use of OERs – and of course in the conception of OERs these two activities should find integration – represent possibilities to sustain the creativity that we assert that our societies need, and which in turn serve to construct a deeper and richer notion of democracy than those with which we are familiar. The special issue then proposes not that OERs are primarily an intriguing innovation in learning and teaching, nor primarily a valuable offset of the crippling costs of the text book market, but more than all that represent pathfinder solutions to new ways of learning which deliver new ways of living. This is made clear not only in the introductory chapter but also in papers where the creation of OERs is not restricted to resources produced by educators, but includes the dimension of those produced by learners, thus fruitfully challenging the sharp boundaries between teacher and learner that have defined pedagogy for millennia.

It is a privilege for EURODL to host this special issue and we are grateful to our Guest Editors and the authors whose writing they have brought forward for what they have done to take forward thinking in this area of work.

Alan Tait
Editor –in – Chief
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