CONCEPTUALISING OPEN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN EAST AFRICA

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Conceptualising Open Educational Practices in teacher education in East Africa

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ROER4D: Impact of Open Educational Resources on Education and Training in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa www.roe4d.org

Our work

Interested in practitioners' reactions to use of OER as a resource for their practice

Exploring data generated from practitioners (surveys, observations and interviews)

Analysis of institutional and state/national documentation

What this has illuminated for us *for* their practice and in terms of forms and shifts *in* their practice?

BP Marketing Men saw one customer read the instructions several times, scratch his head, push a pound note up the nozzle and shout at the pump through cupped hands 'Four gallons of commercial please'.

(The Times, 17 August 1972, p. 23 quoted in Paul du Gay, 2008: *Organising Conduct, Making up People, p22*)

'One of my colleagues just came from – we were together in the UK – and she came earlier than I and you know the experience there even the teacher before teaching already posted in the Moodle, the power-point and so many materials we just go to that account and see what is going on. So when she came here she prepared materials and power-points and the students wanted the power-points printout or soft copy, and when they were given she found after one or two months somebody's teaching the same thing she prepared in other universities in a different region. So that's very scary, that limits us maybe sometimes to just give the students even those power-points.'

Teacher Educator, East Africa 2016

Tensions and challenges in the field

- Underpinning OEP frameworks

Current OEP literature

Multiple frameworks / matrices/dimensions of practice for OEP

Eg OPAL project (2011), Beetham (2012), Shreurs (2014),

But

- almost exclusively draw on experiences in highly connected environments (Global North)

- most limited by only looking at 'elite' HE institutions

- lack of shared definition of terms in the frameworks

Tensions and challenges in the field

- Underpinning OEP frameworks

- Understandings of pedagogy in OEP frameworks

Open Pedagogy…..

How is pedagogy being understood?

Ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning this concept?

How does it relate to other pedagogic models, particularly those advocated in policy?

Changes in student – teacher relationship frequently envisaged as occurring through a shift in the modality of learning (eg use Web 2.0)

Key ideas in Learner-Centred/ participatory pedagogy:
       Positioning students as knowledgeable
       Eliciting what they know
       Negotiation of meaning to support participation in learning
       Structuring of learning opportunities through the creative use of learning resources
       Developing dialogic interactions

Tensions and challenges in the field

- Underpinning OEP frameworks

- Understandings of pedagogy in OEP frameworks

- The 'how' of movement to OEP

Pedagogic intentions leading to open practice emerging between teachers and learners

Hindered by

- vague ontological and epistemological assumptions
- lack of attention to building competency of practitioners
- insufficient in-depth understanding of how practitioners achieve agency with OER

Our position

- No to dichotomy of agency and structure

- No to reduction of agency as a property of the person as unique entity

- Agency as an emergent phenomena

- Capacity to exercise agency with open practices emerges in practitioner – situation transaction

- Identity and demands of practice can impact on possibilities for action

Indicators for OEP: Sharing

'When we share something there are things which I don't know very well but my colleague may have a lot of knowledge or information about it so when we exchange ideas then we come to a conclusion of understanding better of what we are trying to achieve and it helps us to grow.'   *Teacher Educator, Tanzania, April 2016*

'Teachers out there in the remote areas don't have the kind of resources to support learners and the practice of sharing build a network and there were a lot of resources that were so interesting … very simple but practical… 'Teacher Educator, Uganda, March 2016*

My department is a very young one and when we started to work we said that OK we are going to keep all the Fridays for sharing whatever we have been learning and then slowly we became a kind of learning organisation. Then we didn't need to have a day fixed for learning because everything that someone found it was immediately shared, there was a discussions, chat around it and so on…'   *Support Unit Head, Mauritius July 2015*

A Block and District-wide WhatsApp group (including Mr. Singh and Sunita) circulates videos, photos, messages and suggestions. 30% teachers access this group using android phones at the moment and this number is increasing.

Field notes, Bihar, February 2017

Indicators for OEP: Sharing

Characteristics	Enabling Factors (Teacher educators/ academics)
Sharing ideas /content / technology	Access to technology
Valuing others' resources; recognising multiple sources of expertise	Digital literacy skills
Reviewing / rating others resources through networks (social; outside formal institution structures)	Access to different networks including personal networks (social media)
Crossing to other communities eg outside the institution	Organisational /Departmental structures and practices
Critical reflection on practice – seeing oneself as a lifelong learner	Belief in universal participation in education
	Endorsement by authorities

Indicators for OEP: Inclusive practice

So the group work will require them to select one resource which can be used in a primary school context in Mauritius and they adapt and try out in school but …Only at times we get access to the school.. you know Mauritius Is very exam driven and we have to be very careful of that..

Teacher Educator, Mauritius, July 2015

I've worked with teachers and CRCCs to gather local stories and songs to use with the OER. We are gathering these into a book for everyone to use…

Teacher Educator, Odisha, India, February 2017

In my context for my students the resources available have to be adapted and changed drastically… so it is time consuming but rewarding. I have created resources for a local network.

Teacher Tutor, Tanzania, April 2016

Indicators for OEP: Inclusive practice

Characteristics	Enabling Factors (Teacher educators/ academics)
Improving learner participation /making available opportunities for learner participation through ways of use of resources. Modification of resources to meet learner needs (enacted curriculum) / Attempting to provide greater authenticity drawing on funds of knowledge / culture Greater dialogue between teachers and learners to negotiate the curriculum	Technology capabilities / digital skills Time Characteristics of learning site Belief in universal participation in education Understanding of learner needs and purpose (shifts in Ontological position)

Indicators for OEP: Growing open content commons

'I work with students and inservice teachers to create content – we hope to produce some videos and upload on YouTube.'

Teacher Educator, Mauritius, July 2015

'*There is a site which has ICT in Education where you can upload materials as you produce them. I put some stuff there myself..the kinds of materials we are teahing to see if people would be interested and make comments and a few have done … but I haven't checked it in the last six months…*' *Teacher Educator, Uganda, March 2016*

I am a teacher in a school, and I am also doing the ODL course. The major change for me, after teaching in a school for three years, is how to access OER through various sites online, not just TI but the big range of resources which are online for teachers. There were many things in the MOOC that were new to me. Now I have uploaded my language resource to YouTube and it has thousands of hits! I had 59 comments to my comment in a MOOC activity, this made me feel part of a community of educators.

Teacher, Bihar, February 2017

Indicators for OEP: Growing open content commons (highly emergent)

Characteristics	Enabling Factors (Teacher educators/ academics)
Producing resources - individually or co-construction and making available to others Making broader range of resources available to learners beyond the classroom /formal learning space (enlarging the potential learning footprint) Enabling learners to contribute to the broader knowledge base through creation or critique of OER - dialogue between learners and between learners and their outputs becomes shared content	Motivation (academic reputation and criteria for academic esteem) Identify as educator Access to technology Collaboration with students Time Technology capabilities Collective responsibility Policy framework

Our questions

OER or just free: does it matter?

Often very small groups or individuals trail –blazing in each institution: how to support?

'people who are more engaged in OER come and meet but when you go back to institutions like when you said what am I doing to promote, I feel very lonely to be able to promote this on my own and if there are people in my institution who have written about OERs it doesn't mean that they believe in the OER thing or agenda especially because of institutional structures or challenges they might have… so I think OER's a luxury eventually….'

Project and practitioners working across the boundaries of practice: how can this be brokered?

1. Teacher educators at state/district level desire to know what is happening and to contribute in elementary education across the globe – they know Indian system but want to feel connected to the wider world and international trends in education. They want to see their practice in relation to what peers do in other parts of the world.

2. *Field notes, Bihar DIET, February, 2017*

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