OEII - "Open Educational Innovation and Incubation"

Open Educational Innovation and Incubation

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1. Why open and online education? The drivers

Open and online education are seen as innovation drivers to improve our (secondary and higher) educational system. Other important drivers are employability, accessibility, costs of higher education and business model.

Therefore we recommend:

> ➢ To define what elements of higher education should be opened and why. Possible elements to consider are: free access, open accessibility/openness to learners, open licensing, open didactics/pedagogics, open credit transfer and virtual mobility schemes, openness for employability reasons, open networks.
> ➢ To develop a clear funding model.
> ➢ To develop a clear business model: possible elements are low-cost higher education, policy driven, implementation driven and identity driven (openness).

2. Recommendations regarding open education

2.1   On OER and open courses in general

The use of OER, OCW and MOOCs claim for new capacities and capabilities as it requires new ways of doing things that imposes changes in organization, legislation, evaluation and interaction between students, teachers and stakeholders outside higher education institutions. This demands from higher education institutions new ways of interfacing between humans, knowledge and technology to create new opportunities for knowledge flows and creation.

Therefore we recommend:

> ➢ To develop intensive collaboration on open education between European institutions and all actors involved.
> ➢ To create an EU-level stakeholder forum or expert-group on open education, open access material and courses, to map the field and report to the EU with recommendations on evidence-based policy actions.
> ➢ To create a Governmental group or lab that brings together rectors and directors, research centers, publishers, etc. from HEI's to debate about potential new academic and financial models that can help address quality issues and criteria, attainment gaps, evaluation of initiatives, benefits for learners.

2.2   On open education and accessibility as a driver

MOOCs, OER and OCW have a clear social mission of making education accessible to a large public by means of free on-line courses and materials. Organisors and providers are

convinced of its social and democratic importance. But there is evidence that MOOCs increase the accessibility to courses related to HE but are not open to all students by definition. Moreover, MOOCs and most OER are non-formal learning for which students can obtain a badge or certificate of completion. Rarely these are recognised as a formal credit in an accredited curriculum. For some, social responsibility and openness have become terms to sell business. For others, MOOCs are a symptom of the failures in our higher educational system.

Therefore we recommend:

3   To debate on the goals and the practices of open access and social responsibility. Special attention should be given to those student groups that do not have access to higher education.
4   To measure the actual outcome of the (changing) intentions of persons using OER, MOOCs and other forms of open education. The design of an open course should incorporate these changing intentions and allow multiple outcomes.
5   To establish mechanisms to ensure quality of OER, OCW and MOOCs as exist in formal education institutions.

2.3   On the importance of digital openness

Digital openness refers to free online availability AND open licencing. 'Open' also means the ability to create, rip, mix and burn material freely, i.e. material to be accessed, reused, modified and shared by anyone. Content/courses are more or less open depending on the number and kind of copyright restrictions or requirements that are placed on the user. In general online education differs in openness to learners as well as in openness of free online availability and their restrictive 'open' permissions or licensing in using materials.

Therefore we recommend:

➤   To clarify copyrights and define licensing schemes for making OER available, in line with the OER Paris Declaration of UNESCO encouraging the open licensing of educational materials produced with public funds.
➤   To specify (open) license policy for MOOCS regarding to the design and the educational content of a course, the learning community, feedback, qualification and exams.

2.4   On openness to learners

Openness to learners encompasses six dimensions: open entry, freedom of time, freedom of pace, freedom of place, open programming, open to people. Open education is an approach to education that seeks to remove all unnecessary barriers to learning, while aiming to provide students with a reasonable chance of success in an education and training system centred on their specific needs and located in multiple arenas of learning.

Therefore we recommend:

- ➢ To embrace a holistic approach in open education covering all dimensions of openness and provide flexibility to the learners in both on-campus education and distance education system.
- ➢ To reduce the push and drop outs by design of open courses beforehand such that the pedagogics and didactics becomes suitable for all students.

3. Recommendations regarding online education

3.1 On MOOCs specifically

Present MOOC providers are for now placed outside the (formal) university system. Universities can lead the change on system level as well.

Therefore we recommend:

4   To experiment with massive and open offerings to establish new relationships.
5   To collaborate with content providers/teachers from other universities, with relevant business partners like test and exam centres, publishers, platform providers and to encourage early discussions with potential stakeholders e.g. companies.
6   To develop within your higher education institution: a supportive educational policy framework (on financing, management and legislation), a supportive infrastructure (technical, instructional and library support services) and a supportive organizational culture (leadership commitment, awareness raising services, facilitation of formal and informal knowledge sharing, encouragement of collaboration between talented instructors, technologists, and entrepreneurs at national and international level).

3.2 On financing and legislation

The response of governments and institutions in Europe to the opportunities offered by online education has been slow and fragmented. The investments in Europe in this kind of education is falling behind compared to, for example, the USA and the BRIC countries. In Europe, the emerging possibilities of online education are only being embraced slowly.

Therefore we recommend:

- ➢ To analyse on the national level the financing of higher education, underpinning legislation and the accessibility of facilities of lifelong learning/online education.

3.3 On strategic leadership

Many higher education institutions are not fully equipped for the transition to online education.

Therefore we recommend:

➢ To develop strategic leadership in universities in linking online, open education and LLL to on-campus education. It must focus on (the role of) online education for full-time students of 18-25 years and online learning activities for people of the age of 25 and onward, in view of an integrated system-organisational approach.

3.4 On how to facilitate universities

Universities must be facilitated in their transition for on-campus to online or blended approaches regarding curriculum and course development. Crucial factors are hindering and/or stimulating development for online education at curriculum level (e.g. flexibility, pedagogical approach, academic community development, …) and at course level (e.g. benchmarking, educational strategy, course design process, …).

Therefore we recommend:

➢ To analyse for your higher education institution, these crucial factors and the organisation model at both curriculum and course level.

3.5 On services and marketing

Open and online courses by themselves don't attract enough students. Marketing of online education needs a strong (image) branding related to an integrated institutional strategy.

Therefore we recommend:

4   To invest in networked models (both regional and nationally and including companies) to promote flexible and online education. In addition online marketing is strongly needed next to traditional marketing of online education.

4. Recommendations on open innovation

The world of open and online education does change the way we innovate our education system, our programmes and courses. Leveraging open as an economic driver involves developing and delivering open products and services in partnership with others around Europe (and the world). Analysis results proof that different kinds of networking and

partnerships between different groups of stakeholders can be driving forces towards open education and open innovation. In this, factors as the quality of education, the link between education and research, a strong collaboration with the labour market and international relationships play an important role. But often the collaborative activities have no policy support behind them, are based on more accidental projects of collaboration or concentration that develop 'bottom-up', opportunities are not enough explored, …

Therefore we recommend:

- Universities to join a network of other universities to strengthen educational impact beyond its campus.
- To produce a framework agreement that can be used to propose the cooperation between companies in need of training and the university. In agreements on educational innovation, external actors should be involved to facilitate the match-making between companies in demand of training and academic institutions and to promote the feasibility of agreements between companies and distance teaching institutions.
- To stimulate academic staff to develop close conversation with labour market on education and to recognise and stimulate the use of a common and generally accepted language in conversation with all partners on educational topics.
- To diversify the typology of the didactic offer in order to fit the different students' needs in companies and to attract more students.
- To collaborate closely with open innovation/crowdsourcing environments, drawing on their social expertise and their capacity to reach audiences, which are not usually involved in higher education.
- To stimulate academic staff to develop collaboration with open social initiatives, thus generating a space for mutual feed-back and collective knowledge construction.
- To encourage students to engage in open social innovation, taking part in different activities and collaborative methodologies.