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Executive summary: This document provides the version of the OPAL Guidelines for the target group "Policy Makers".

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1 Introduction

Openness is one of the most influential drivers of change in education and training today, especially for educational organizations both in adult learning as well as in higher education. In the form of open educational resources (OER) it is already impacting the operational environment of every educational institution.¹ OER take the once ICT driven change in education into a new level. It is not only impacting the role of a teacher and opening up new opportunities for learners, it calls for changes in organizational culture. One identified barrier for adopting open practices in organizations is quality – can we trust OER being first rate materials and openness being a strategic path for the future development educational organizations? The Open Educational Quality Initiative (OPAL)² has therefore developed this Guideline on Quality and Innovation through Open Educational Practices.

This guide was prepared for managers, deans, rectors, directors, etc. decision makers within education and training institutions to enable them to better understand the change and to make the most out of the new opportunities it brings.³

OPAL starts from the premise that it is necessary to raise awareness and build trust into the quality of how open learning ecologies, tools and content can support the use, creation and re-use of OERs. It is evident that the OER movement has begun to move well beyond an initial focus on mere access to practices. The initiative aims to provide guidance to learners, educators, leaders of educational institutions, and policy makers on how to strengthen Open Educational Practices (OEP) within their specific contexts.

Open educational practices (OEP) are defined as practices which support the (re)use and production of open educational resources (OER) through institutional policies, promote innovative pedagogical models, and respect and empower learners as co-producers on their lifelong learning path. They address the whole OER governance community: policy makers, managers/ administrators of organizations, educational professionals and learners. This guide includes concrete advice on how to strengthen OEP within education and training organizations.

2. What this guide is about?

The OPAL guidelines are based on a rigorous analysis of over 60 real-life case studies on the use of OER and various times, have been assessed by a group of experts on OER (see D4.5). The Guidelines move beyond the question of how to access OER into the question of how open learning ecologies, tools and content can support the use, creation and re-use of OERs.

The OPAL Guide to Open Educational Practices consists of three main parts that pave the way of transformation for education and training organizations. The three step process begins with an assessment exercise that helps us to understand the current situation with regard to organizational OEP development. The second step provides some guidelines to initiate the strategy process and assist in setting the goal. The third part includes advice on implementing the change. You will find the three parts accessible directly from this introductory section.

Step 1: Positioning your organization in the OEP trajectory

OEP consists essentially of the use of open educational resources in open learning environments/architectures. The maturity matrix allows for positioning your organization according to the uptake of OEP.

Step 2: Creating a vision of openness and a strategy for OEP in an organization

We believe that OEP can be supported through strategic planning. This second part of the OEP guideline helps you to better understand the strategy within your own context. This section is de-

¹ For a definition on OER please see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources

² <http://www.oer-quality.org>

³ There are in total four guides: For learners, for educational professionals, for leaders of educational organizations and for policy makers. All of them can be accessed from <http://www.oer-quality.org>

signed to analyze your strategic environment in relation to relevant dimensions of open educational practice strategy of your organization.

Step 3: Implementing and promoting OEP to transform learning

The third section contains dimensions, which are important to create a favorable environment for OEP within your context.

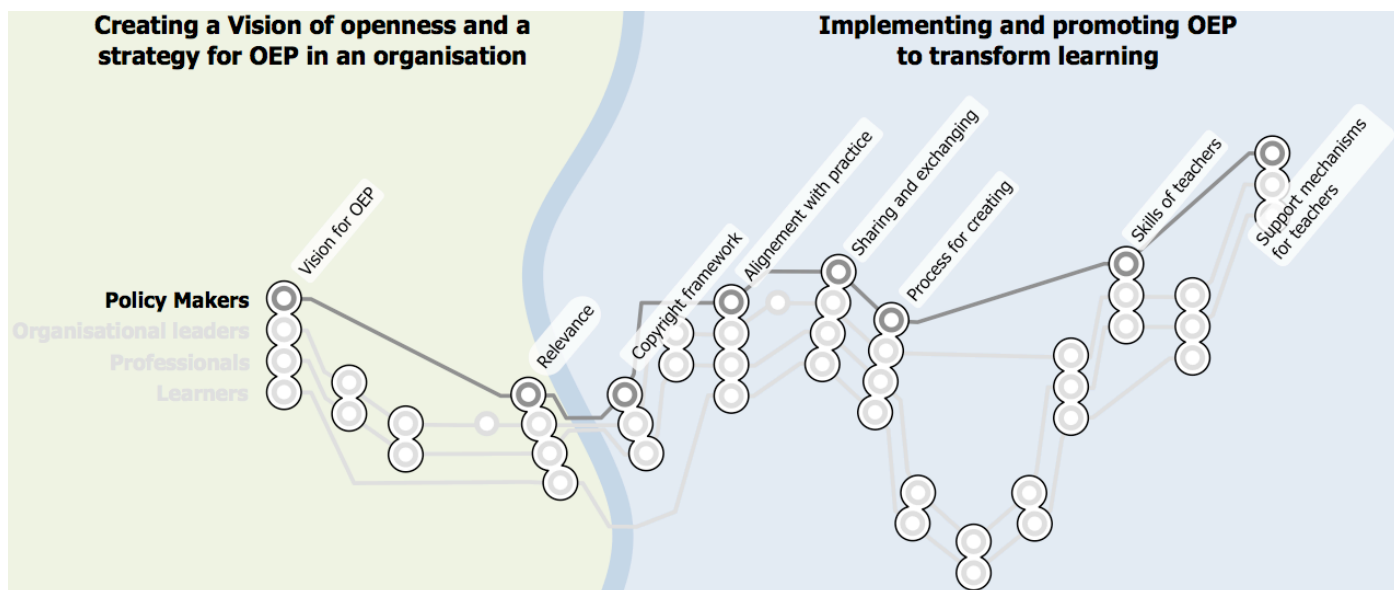


Figure 1: Your steps for the evaluation process⁴

In Figure 1, it is shown which criteria have been found within the OPAL project, which are relevant for Policy Makers. Reflecting on those criteria will help you to position your organization within the maturity matrix in order to determine your actual status quo and how to improve your Open Educational Practices.

3. Background

In 2012 it will be 10 years since the UNESCO has coined the term “open educational resources” (OER)(UNESCO 2002). A few years down the line the concept had become popular. The OECD suggested with their report in 2007 that the concept of “Giving away knowledge for free” had made a considerable carrier and outlined areas in which further work would be necessary to boost openness for educational resources, amongst them predominantly emphasizing to improve access to OER on a global scale (OECD 2007). The public debate on OER became more and more aligned with the UNESCO decade program “Education for All” which strives for universal access to primary education by 2015. It aims at building equal access for everyone to education.

Although (OER) are high on the agenda of social and inclusion policies and supported by many stakeholders of the educational sphere, their use in higher education (HE) has not yet reached a critical threshold.⁵ This has to do with the fact that the past, and largely also the current, focus in OER is mainly put on building more access to digital content. There is too little consideration of whether this will support educational practices, promote quality and innovation in teaching and learning. We consider that OER are moving from a first phase in which the emphasis was on ‘opening up access and availability’ to a second phase with the focus will be on ‘improving learning quality’ through OER (figure 1). We therefore suggest extending the focus beyond 'resource access' to 'innovative open educational practices' (OEP).

⁴ © The ‘OEP-Metro Map’ has voluntarily been produced for being freely used within the OPAL project by Dipl. Geol. Inga Richter from Simon Kucher & Partners, Marketing and Strategy Consultants. We thank her for her kind support of the project and her authorization to use, further develop and reuse the figure within the framework of this project. Contact: inga.richter@simon-kucher.com

⁵ There is a separated but connected debate ongoing if this holds true for developing countries as well. However, apart from infrastructure challenges – which are a necessary condition and not to be neglected – the issue of OER usage meets the same challenges there and could be facilitated through creating a culture of openness within institutions through a complementary focus on educational practices in addition to resources.

In short, open educational practices constitute the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) within open learning ecologies. The creation, use, and re-use of open educational resources, as well as the exploitation of open learning ecologies can be challenging for learners and educators, but also for leaders of educational institutions. Policy makers, as well, often need to be made aware of and understand both concepts, and can play a strategic role in fostering a rapid uptake of OER and enabling a timely adoption of OEP.⁶

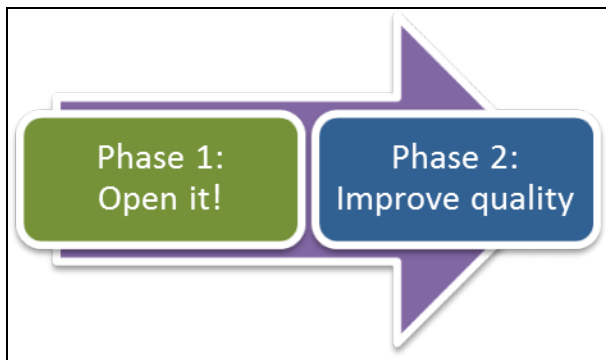


Figure 2: Shift from OER to OEP

In order to facilitate the shift from OER to OEP, it is important to outline all factors which are influencing the actual creation, use, sharing and reuse of OER for learners, educational professionals and organizational leaders in one common framework. The OPAL OEP Framework is such a framework. It outlines all dimensions which need to be taken into account when wanting to stimulate a vibrant use of OER and when aiming to transform education and learning in your organisation.

4. How to use the guide?

The guide has been structured in form of a maturity matrix. We believe strongly that every organization has some elements of openness already in place and that open educational practices is an evolutionary process happening over time. Therefore we have not just developed a set of recommendations but for each recommendation provides a maturity scale on which organizations can position themselves. This allows seeing what a next step of development would look like. In order to use the guideline for organizations you have two options:

- Option 1: Download the guideline document from our server and go through each of the maturity dimensions of open educational practices. Find the position of your organizations for each of them. This is your individual organizations current profile of open educational practices. In a second step then try to identify the most likely development steps – on which dimensions do you believe you can improve easily and which of those might have the greatest impact on your organizations.
- Option 2: Register your institution in the register of organizations committed to the concept of open educational practices (follow this link: <http://opal.innovationpros.net/oep-register/register-your-institution>) After registering your organizational data you can take part in a self-assessment which is exactly following the OEP guideline. The entire self-assessment is confidential and we will not share any data from it with third parties – unless you choose explicitly to share your achievements with others. After submitting the self-assessment, it will be reviewed by two independent experts. For the time until end of 2011 the review will be organized by UNESCO and will provide you with a learning report for your organizations outlining improvement potentials.

If you have any questions feel free to contact us through www.oer-quality.org

Further reading:

Go here for in depth explanation of openness and open educational practices: <http://d20ea7mklpzlrr.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/OEP-Scape-final.pdf>

⁶ In parts the concepts and ideas described in this document are developed as a collaborative exercise of 30 experts in an international workshop at UNESCO in Paris in November 2010.

The Open Educational Practice Maturity Matrix for Policy Makers

Step 1: Positioning your Organization in the OEP Trajectory

OEP consists essentially of the use of open educational resources in open learning environments/ architectures.¹ The following maturity matrix allows for positioning your organization according to the uptake of OEP.

Not yet started		Early stages/ awareness	Developing/ Commitment	Established	Embedded/ Advanced
1. Do you have a process for creating OER in your organization?	No process of creating OER is in place.	Individuals are starting to create OER.	Some departments or teams have created OER.	The organization's tools for creating OER are largely accepted and used in the organization.	A process for creation of OER is in existence, tools for creation are used and regularly maintained and tool use is supported by a policy.

Step 2: Creating a Vision of Openness and a Strategy for OEP in an Organization

We believe that OEP can be supported through strategic planning. This second part of the OEP guideline helps you to better understand the strategy within your own context. This section is designed to analyze your strategic environment in relation to relevant dimensions of open educational practice strategy of your organization.

Not yet started		Early stages/ awareness	Developing/ Commitment	Established	Embedded/ Advanced
1. Is a vision for OEP shared across organization?	Management, staff and learners do not share a common vision.	Different visions are emerging between management, staff and learners in the organization.	Management, staff and learners communicate about a shared vision for open educational practices within the organization.	Management, staff and learners share a clear and detailed vision of how OEP will develop in the next few years and how it relates clearly and closely to the organization's overall mission and aims, in particular innovation.	A vision for the development of OEP is shared with partners, clients, contractors and the community at large.
2. Are OEP perceived as relevant across the organization?	OEPs are not viewed as relevant to the teaching and learning context.	Some individuals view OEP as relevant to some extent.	Teams and groups within the organization start to view OEP as relevant to their own learning/ teaching context.	OEPs are organization-wide perceived as relevant and desired practices by professionals and learners.	OEPs are perceived as a relevant part of the organizations professional work and are communicated as such to learners, outside partners and clients.

¹ See description of 'open learning architectures' above or in 'OEP Scape', whitepaper from OPAL Project, 2010

Step 3: Implementing and Promoting OEP to Transform Learning

The following section contains dimensions which are important to create a favorable environment for OEP within your context.

	Not yet started	Early stages/awareness	Developing/Commitment	Established	Embedded/Advanced
1. Is an IPR, DRM and copyright regulation for OER in use?	No IPR frameworks/concepts are used to support use/re-use of OER.	Some individuals are informally developing OER and share them under free licenses.	Some departments and teams are using free licenses for sharing OER.	Educational resources are published under free licenses and practice, understanding and knowledge of how to use such licenses exists.	An institution-wide policy to create, use and publish educational resources under free and open licenses is embedded in the institution.
2. Do you have tools to support sharing and exchanging information about open educational practices?	No tools for supporting the sharing of open educational practices (e.g. social networks, blogs, etc.) exist.	Individuals are starting to use tools for sharing open educational practices (e.g. social networks, blogs, etc.).	Teams, departments and learners are adopting tools for sharing and exchange of information about educational practices (e.g. social networks, blogs, etc.).	Use of digital tools to support sharing and exchange about OEP are a widespread reality on an organizational level.	The use of digital tools which support sharing and exchange of information about OEP are embedded into organizational policies and infrastructures and are continuously reviewed and improved.
3. Do you apply quality concepts to OEP?	No quality, evaluation or assessment models for OEP exist within the organization.	Individuals are applying quality concepts for OEP.	The organization has started to apply quality concepts for some elements of OEP (e.g., quality guides for OER, assessment models for open learning.)	Specific quality concepts for OEP are applied organization-wide.	A policy for institution-wide agreed quality concepts for OEP is in use and regularly updated.
4. What level of knowledge and skills do teachers have in relation to open learning architectures and OEP?	Teachers have little or no understanding of open learning architectures.	A small number of teachers have sufficient knowledge to apply OEP.	Knowledge and skills to apply open learning architectures within the organization's educational programs are beginning to diffuse from a handful of to teaching staff more generally.	A significant number of teachers across the whole organization have the skills and confidence to successfully apply open learning architectures.	The vast majority of teaching staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to successfully and appropriately apply open learning architectures. New open learning architectures are actively developed within the institution.
5. Are support mechanisms in place to support the development of OEP?	There are no support mechanisms to support teachers in the development of OEP.	A small number of teachers are starting to informally assist each other in the development of OEP.	Support processes to develop OEP are starting to be provided at the team and department level.	There are support mechanisms within the organization to support teachers in the development of OEP.	Support mechanisms are embedded in the organization's policy in order to support teachers in the development of OEP.

Annex: Dimensions of Open Educational Practices

Many current OER initiatives focus overwhelmingly on access and availability of Open Educational Resources (OER) and not enough on helping individuals and organizations to develop Open Educational Practices (OEP) (Ehlers 2011). In short, open educational practices constitute the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) within open learning architectures. The creation, use, and re-use of open educational resources, as well as the exploitation of open learning architectures can be challenging for learners and educators, but also for leaders of educational institutions. Policy makers, as well, often need to be made aware of and understand both concepts, and can play a strategic role in fostering rapid uptake of OER and enabling timely adoption of OEP. The Open Educational Quality Initiative (OPAL) after considerable research, consultation and debate proposes the dimensions for open educational practices described below. They form the basis for successful learning with OER.

Area 1: Use of OER and Open Learning Architectures

1. Availability of a process for OER creation: In order for an organization to progress towards open educational practices it is important to define a process whereby educational resources are made available under free license schemes to become open educational resources. Only then will these resources be available for others to use and/ or repurpose –internally as well as externally. A comprehensive organization-wide process for open educational resources boosts progress towards open educational practices.

Area 2: Vision of Openness and a Strategy for OEP in an Organization

1. Organizational vision for OEP: A vision, expressed in written strategy or guidelines is essential. A vision for open educational practices would include reference to the production, sharing, use and/ or reuse of OERs. It would also aim to provide learning opportunities in open learning architectures, in which the aims and objectives of learning as well as learning methodologies are developed in consultation with learners. Such a vision should be communicated and shared within the organization by all stakeholders.

2. Perceived relevance for OEP: To achieve circulation within a given context it is important that learners, professionals and management perceive OEP as relevant. This can be supported through strategies and policies and also through measures to raise acceptance and understanding for OEP. An important factor often proves to be the degree to which OEP successes are communicable to others.

Step 3: Implementing and Promoting OEP to Transform Learning

1. IPR and Copyright regulations: One of the main focuses of OER lies in sharing, using and adapting resources. Copyright restrictions would negate the whole model. The four main legal issues associated with creating and making OER are copyright issues, ownership, intellectual property rights and permission for use. Many resources may be context-bound due to copyright issues in such a way that it is not possible to adapt the source to local prerequisites. Without the permission of the copyright holder it is strictly prohibited to copy, reproduce or change resources.

2. Tools to support sharing and exchange of OEP: Every organization wanting to make progress in the field of OEP needs to adopt a series of tools which can be used for finding, sharing, and repurposing resources, as well as tools like social networks to share experiences and good practices. The emergence of the Creative Commons license was a major breakthrough in terms of providing a means for sharing resources openly and freely

3. Quality concepts for OEP: Quality concepts for OEP often depend on the type of institution and their learning and teaching culture, the balance of importance of the ‘value’ of teaching (in comparison to research activities in the institution), the degree to which OEP activities are seen as activities in their own right, the level of digital maturity of the institution and the extent to which they had engaged with OEP work previously. QA models range from lightweight, user-defined models to strictly controlled hierarchical models.

4. Level of knowledge and skills: It is important to overcome educational professionals’ initial concerns about OEP and to help with skills development and support. These include: mechanisms to foster and support community engagement, provision of case studies of good practice, running of parallel events and workshops, and provision of specific training materials. It can also comprise marketing materials, guidelines and tutorials on OER, an open textbook adoption worksheet, OER needs assessment surveys, policies and models.

5. Support mechanisms for OEP: Support for the development of OEP includes technical support for development, use and re-use as well as re-purposing of OERs, and training in order to equip teachers with the skills to design open learning environments and/or help learners to become autonomous learners.