

Call for Submissions: Themed Issue of the Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning

The *Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning* is a refereed journal published annually by the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (www.deanz.org.nz). It publishes articles relating to primary research investigations, literature reviews, the application of distance education innovations, and the experiences of teaching at a distance.

This is a call for submissions for the themed issue to be published in late November 2011 on the theme: *Beyond Open Educational Resources: Open educational practices in formal education*

Focus of the themed issue:

In highlighting the role of open content, Open Educational Resources (OERs) have drawn attention to *open educational practices* as a means to increase access to educational opportunities, widen participation in education, promote social justice and potentially transform formal education via the concept of 'openness'. The recent OPAL Report (<http://oer-quality.org/>) by the Open Educational Quality Initiative argues for the use of open content in the form of OERs in combination with open educational structures in order to transform learning. The suggested transformation implies shifts toward both open education and open learning, including:

- a. innovation in the adoption of open educational practices within relatively 'closed' educational institutions and structures;
- b. changes in the form of policy or regulatory interventions across a broad range of educational contexts in order to not only support but also *promote* openness on the part of educators in sharing what they have, e.g. knowledge, resources, networks, etc.; and
- c. increased attention to learner choice in the content, pacing and mode of study in formal education as part of the 'opening' of learning in formal and informal learning situations.

Credentialing, for example, is one area of education where the interests of formal education, open education and open learning converge. In formal education, institutions (colleges, universities, polytechnics) are officially accredited as being able to recognise and certify learning related to acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities, amongst others. Formal qualifications represent milestones in more extensive learning journeys. However, openness challenges existing credentialing policies and procedures and sets up conflicts between formal structures built upon the definition and evaluation of 'quality' and open structures which emphasise flexibility, choice and (sometimes) idiosyncratic achievement.

Submissions:

The proposed issue of JOFDL seeks to advance understanding of the intersection of formal education, open education and open learning with reference to OERs, open educational practices and open learning architectures. Contributors will focus on one aspect of the challenges of 'opening' relatively closed educational systems.

As a guide, submissions that address the following areas will be considered for publication in this special issue:

- a) The nature and impact of the adoption of open educational practices within (relatively) closed educational institutions
- b) Policy or regulatory changes required to promote openness in educational practice-- the changes can be considered from within the institution (i.e., institutional policy frameworks) or outside (e.g., state or national policies which impact on education)
- c) The impact and consequences of the 'opening' of educational practices on learners and/or teaching staff
- d) The nature of and need for quality assurance in an open learning environment
- e) The challenges to formal credentialing policies and procedures created through the adoption of open educational practices.

Ideally, submissions will include a carefully developed argument in response to a single issue. Such responses may include empirical work; critical literature reviews which form scholarly responses to relevant questions regarding 'openness'; or contextualised accounts of open educational practices in formal education which are linked to established theory in open education or open learning. Engagement with recent scholarly publications is expected. All submissions will receive a minimum of two reviewers undertaken following a 'double blind' peer review process.

Prospective authors will need to register with JOFDL and make all submissions online:
<http://journals.akoatearora.ac.nz/index.php/JOFDL/>

Articles should be submitted by August 31, 2011 for consideration and review.

Questions and/or one-page article abstracts for preliminary feedback can be directed to the issue editor Ben Kehrwald (ben.kehrwald@unisa.edu.au).