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How Can ICT Enable Open Education Towards Inclusion, Fairness and Equity in our Societies?

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Abstract

It is our general conviction that ICT can offer unique opportunities to improve teaching and learning for students of every age. To date however, and despite several studies and initiatives to harness this potential undertaken at national and international levels over the years, research has been limited, and such efforts have been mostly anecdotal and small-scale efforts without much coordination, and suffered from fragmentation, short-termism, and poor scalability.

In our view, the teachers/instructors are key actors in facilitating this change towards more Open Education and they should be encouraged, enabled, and empowered to be the “agents of change”. This can be achieved by providing appropriate and effective teacher training focused on more digital literacy skills, more independence and control on the educational process, e.g. allowing for more social context-relevant or personalised forms of learning, and cultivating sharing and collaboration, and needs to be actively supported by policy makers and governments.

If we are aiming to close the “education divides” in our society, and in particular, then it is clear to us that open access to (open) content/resources is not enough, and is only a part, although a necessary part, of the equity equation.

In our view, two important enabling factors to e-inclusion are (1) access to and ownership of technology (personal devices, broadband access, cloud storage services etc.), and (2) quality use and social relevance of technology use (i.e. relevance to daily lives of students and the wider social context/networks, collaborative/shared experiences and learning practices, collaborative learning, collaborative teaching and collaborative teacher training through grassroots learner and teacher communities). For example, in the public school systems, the new paradigm of BYOD should ideally be replaced by GBDY (get the best device for You) for free – i.e. students should be enabled to own the best devices for their own, personal needs – and access to devices (including personal, OWN devices) and other infrastructure should be universally transparent; another potential enabling factor for societal and educational equity would be universal-coverage, high quality and free access to broadband internet. But a very important, widely recognised, factor towards e-inclusion is the level of digital literacy for both learners and teachers.

This session aims to explore these issues, and discuss potential actions towards

the goal of Open Education for All, focusing on the development of digital literacy for both learners and teachers.

Biographies



Dr. Lampros K. Stergioulas is Reader at the Department of Information Systems and Computing, Brunel, UK. He has published over 150 scientific publications and has numerous PhD dissertations in CS. He has held many national and EU Grants and projects in educational information systems, ICT in education, digital literacy, human-centred communications and computing, and intelligent systems. He is Chair-elect of IFIP's Special Interest Group in Digital Literacy and e-Inclusion (TC-3: Education).



Prof. dr. Valentina Dagiene is a professor at the Vilnius University, Lithuania. She has published over 150 research papers, the same number of methodological works, and has written about 60 textbooks in the field of informatics and ICT for secondary education. She is member of IFIP WG 3.1 and 3.3 and SIG 3.9 and vice chair of IFIP TC3. She is Editor-in-Chief of international journals "Informatics in Education" and "Olympiads in Informatics".

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