

Interview given by email to Marcella Chartier on 23/02/2011 by Barbara Dieu - EFL teacher at the Lycée Pasteur (Franco-Brazilian school in São Paulo). Very much involved in new media and digital culture. [Website](#)

When and how did you discover OER? What experiences/projects and ideas have you developed?

I started using the Web and becoming involved in international collaborative projects in 1997. At that time, many of the participating teachers who were online already exchanged ideas, helped each other and produced content for their own use, which they openly shared on the Web, without necessarily knowing or thinking these could be OER and, without having much awareness of copyright licenses. There was an effervescence and dynamics which were very motivating.

Being able to have access, discussing options and possibilities, creating, remixing and sharing was for me like autonomous continued professional development, during which I gave myself challenges to be solved. From a more closed and restrictive perspective, I moved towards one that was more encompassing, open and flexible.

In 1999 I created a [website](#) so as to have quick access to interesting links which complemented my courses at the Lycée Pasteur and to give students and parents the possibility to read/work on the content and texts at home. I also wanted to share and discuss the material produced online with other foreign language teachers with whom I was in contact. I was interviewed about this for the [Lingua Estrangeira](#) in June 2003.

My first contact with authorship rights and the concept of closed/open, free and proprietary was around 1999-2000, when a well-known Brazilian educational portal snatched the content of my website entirely. Not only did they close it lock stock and barrel behind a password and frames, but also charged schools for it (I learnt this from a friend who sent me the screenshot). This was when I decided to place an explicit copyright sign at the bottom of the initial page and my name and school in the left column on all pages. It was after all, MY content, and besides investing money to buy the tools for the site and maintain it, there was also the time and creativity. I did not think it was fair for others to close that content and profit from something they had not participated in, did not belong to them and had not even asked permission to use it or given credit for it. At that time, the Creative Commons Licenses did not exist.

The second experience was in 2001, when looking for content on media and branding for a course I was preparing, I found:

- a) totally open and free material: a viral video produced by [Jason Diceman](#) about Naomi Klein's book No Logo;
- b) semi-open material (an article of the BBC about Naomi Klein: [Know Logo](#));
- c) totally closed material (the article Pro-Logo from the Economist)..

On Jason's video I had the freedom to build reading and listening comprehension exercises (which were later revised and transported to [my own server/domain](#) as the English Dept was hosted at Tripod and the free option messed up and did not display the Hot Potato java script).

The BBC material is semi-open in that it can be read and accessed freely on the Web. However, as it is under full copyright, it cannot be integrated into activities, re-distributed nor remixed. The links are still valid for this particular article but very often they are removed after some time or placed in different archives, which hampers later retrieval, should we need to use/refer to them again.

The Economist text, in turn, has its online access totally closed as in order to read it you must be subscribed to the printed version of the magazine. I managed to [copy](#) the article from the printed version and put it online (crediting the source) so that my students could read it. I am aware this is not 100% legal but hope this can come under fair use for educational purposes.

In September 2001, I wanted to use an article from the Times for a reading and grammar exercise. I wrote the magazine for permission and the first answer was that to be able to use it once I should pay \$1500. I argued that I was not doing it for commercial purposes and that I was producing added value and advertising for the company without receiving anything in return. I was given permission for specific use which was to be mentioned on the site. Thus, although [this resource](#) can be accessed through a link and used as is, it cannot be remixed or redistributed by others.

In January 2002, after a course at Senac, I created the webquest [Navegar é Preciso](#) with two other participants. Although we did not use a specific license, the intention has always been to share the resource online for other teachers to use with their learners. It just did not make sense otherwise. Bernie Dodge's methodology and templates were open and available at his site therefore, creating an open resource using them seemed natural to us. The webquest was given 5 stars out of 5 in [Merlot's peer review](#) (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching). It was rewarding to know that what we had created was quality material and that it was included among the other resources in the repository.

In 2003, I created [another webquest](#) to complement my classes and contribute to the [Viv@](#) project in France. As this time I was acquainted with the new licenses, I used for the first time a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike (CC BY NC SA 1.0 Generic). The license allows others to copy, distribute, transmit and create derivative work as long as credit is given to the author, it is shared the same way and it is not used for commercial purposes. While this license gives users more flexibility than full copyright, it is among one of the most restrictive CC licenses.

In January 2005, already on the Web 2.0 wave, I gave a bigger step when I co-planned, co-organized and co-moderated on the Web an open and [free course on blogs and wikis](#) that brought together more than 200 participants from the whole world. The same Creative Commons License was used but in its 2.0 version. (CC BY NC SA 2.0)

Right after the course, I collaborated in the planning and creation of Dekita, a blog which encourages open access, practices, production and the use of the open Web as a platform for learning English as a foreign language. It is also under a CC license: Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC 2.0) and does not require sharing alike (SA).

In 2007 and 2008 I co-moderated two more totally open courses online, this time on participatory media in the teaching of English: [Webpublishing in Open and Participatory Environments](#) (CC BY NC 2.5) and [Social Media in ELT](#) Attribution 3.0 Unported (CC BY 3.0).

All the trajectory exposed above is the fruit of an option and personal and collaborative work among teachers, which was not imposed, financed or supported by any educational, governmental institution or corporation.

At present times, I contribute to the OER community in the same way, experiment with what it is to be a learner in open courses (MOOCs), contribute a little to the [NMC Horizon Report](#), [Wikieducator](#), Wikipedia (in English and [Portuguese](#)) and [Wikimedia Commons](#), all under a CC BY or CC BY license and have also done some open subtitling and translations at Universal Subtitles.

What are OER for you?

OER per se are nothing more than a product that will be created, used, and remixed according to different perspectives and needs. As an educator, what interests me most is that OER give us the possibility to opt for a process in which the focus is learning, creating, sharing and remixing openly rather than closed proprietary products, purchase and sale.

An open resource is also an invitation to search, play, question, challenge, modify, weave, break,

correct and be able to share, verify, discuss, reflect on what we have collected, created or produced with others so that more can do the same, learn, create, remix, rebuild and better the cycle.

This movement is the praxis of the educational process from which we have been lately removed and alienated when forced to remain in closed systems, follow pre-packaged primers or participate in assembly-lines.

What do you see as next steps for OER in Brazil?

We have a number of work fronts. People who are active and interested in each should discuss personal and collective priorities, how and when to act in their fields, document and bring their perspectives, plans and actions to the community so that others can learn, adapt them to their contexts and practice them. This is already happening to a certain extent in the discussion list and in the OER blog. There is much to do, however.

In the public sphere, the major obstacles reside in the organization, coordination, political will and funding. There is a scarcity of OER in Portuguese which restricts the possibility of remix and creation of new ones. Many projects start and are abandoned, withdrawn from the circuit once there is no more funding. It is necessary to:

- flatten (if not totally remove) obstacles (legal, social and cultural) by means of awareness raising campaigns, building a base of support and action with different partners who can take the projects ahead in the long run;
- give examples of best practice and create incentives to stimulate the use and production of these resources continuously and persistently within a culture of transparency, openness and sharing;
- encourage partnerships between the public and private to bring together the know-how and resources from these two spheres, fund open quality projects that will allow, at different levels, the most ample access of all to knowledge and practices.

What would you say to educators who would like to start working with and for OER?

I believe that access to knowledge and research should not be denied to anyone nor restricted to those who can pay. What I can say is that educators should try to get informed, observe their environs in their complexity and how they are inserted in a larger world. Start with ideas and little contributions, dare a bit more everyday. Join a community of practice, collect, share and publish openly your links, your content, the result of your work, your students' and of the community you belong to, together with the reflection on the process and new suggestions and propositions for action.