

Open educational resources, a new approach to teaching.

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Since their inception, computers and portable devices, such as smartphones, tablets and laptops, have transformed the way we teach and learn. The ever-increasing availability of information on the Internet calls for substantial changes in education. Today, it is inappropriate to see the teacher as the only one responsible for curriculum planning and delivery of knowledge.¹

“Open Educational Resources” (OERs) were established in 2002 during the UNESCO Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware. The term was created to describe “the delivery of open educational resources, enabled by information and communication technologies, for non-commercial consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users.”² Unlike the generic open content that can be found on the Web, OERs emphasize the legal distribution and reuse of resources, the use of open licenses (*e.g.* Creative Commons) and the implementation of mechanisms for the evaluation of their quality. OERs have had significant success in promoting the idea that knowledge is a universal good, with a large number of initiatives under development.³ Since its inception, OERs have been consolidated as keys to the democratization of knowledge, gaining the support of institutions, governments and individuals around the world. Pioneering resources such as the MIT OpenCourseWare, or OpenLearn of the Open University of the United Kingdom stand out among other projects of this kind.

Most OERs available on the Web in the area of high-quality health care are mainly directed to English-speaking students, which results in a large deficit of quality educational multimedia resources and limited access for Spanish speakers.⁴ In Chile, the Ministry of Education through the program MECESUP (Improvement of the Quality of Higher Education) has awarded funding for the promotion and creation of OERs.

In 2015 Universidad Austral de Chile through the AUS1410 project, began promoting the development of OERs by academics at the School of Medicine. As a result, there are now more than 40 high-quality OERs freely available on the Internet available at: <http://rea.uach.cl/>.

I invite all students and academics to support this new approach to teaching and to form multidisciplinary teams in order to generate high quality OERs that may significantly and positively contribute to improving the educational process in an equitable, pluralistic and professional way.

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