

‘Why reinvent the wheel, when there’s great stuff out there?’

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on behalf of the OER Impact Study:

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Overview

- Background to the study
- What we did
- Some of our findings
- Activity 1 with Helen
- Commentary
- Activity 2



Background

- HEFCE investment in production and release of OER
- Lack of evidence of demand and use
'a major gap in understanding' (OER Synthesis project)
- Research questions:
 1. Benefits of OER to educators and learners in HE
 2. Factors conducive to uptake and sustained use:
 - Strategic
 - Attitudinal
 - Pedagogic
 - Logistical



So, what makes OER different from...

‘Stuff on the Web’?

- ‘teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or re-purposing by others’ (Atkins, Brown & Hammond 2007)
- ‘Big’ versus ‘little’ (Weller 2010)
 - Big = whole courses, explicit teaching aims, institutional OER initiatives
 - Little = ‘individually produced, low cost resources’



So, what makes OER different from...

Previous initiatives in reuse?

- Expansion of Web 2.0 (social) technologies (Lane & McAndrew 2010) →
 - Informal communities
 - Innovative use of technology by teachers in the classroom
 - Students' personal technologies
 - Open licences (of course!)



What we did:

- Mostly qualitative
- Semi-structured interviews & focus groups with:
 - Senior staff with strategic responsibility (10)
 - Teaching staff already using OER (9)
 - Students (17)
- Workshops with:
 - Experienced teaching staff new to OER (16)



Workshops

- Capture the process *in vivo*
- Investigate experiences of OER ‘novices’



<p>1. (i) What are you looking for?</p> <p>Something that explains Jakobson's theory of the poetic function language in as clear and simple a way as possible, suitable for beginners in this field</p>	<p>(ii) Where did you search for it? (<i>E.g. type "Search engine" or name of site, or paste the URL</i>)</p> <p>OER Dynamic Search Engine</p>	<p>(iii) What search term did you use?</p> <p>jakobson poetic function language</p>
<p>(iv) What did you find? (<i>Paste the URL</i>)</p> <p>http://oyc.yale.edu/english/introduction-to-theory-of-literature/content/transcripts/transcript-9-linguistics-and-literature</p>	<p>(v) Could this resource be useful to you? (<i>Select your response from the list</i>)</p> <p>Yes, definitely</p>	<p>(vi) How did you arrive at this decision? (<i>Possible criteria might be: subject matter, pedagogic fit, provenance, granularity, media</i>)</p> <p>subject matter and pedagogic fit</p>
<p>If you replied "Not really" or "No" to question (v), please go on to your next search.</p>		
<p>(vii) How would you embed this resource in your curriculum? (<i>Select your response from the list</i>)</p> <p>In this plan: as a supplementary resource</p>	<p>(viii) What would you need to do to this resource? (<i>Select your response from the list</i>)</p> <p>Adapt it to suit my context/students</p>	
<p>(ix) Any other comments about this resource:</p> <p>Firstly, possibly rather too advanced, and the bit that interests me is embedded in a larger pedagogic fit (26 classes/lectures!) that doesn't fit my teaching objectives or resources (time, principally). Would need to highlight or extract relevant section; and still would, I expect, need considerable class time to supplement it.</p>		

Perceived benefits

- ‘no copyright issues, there’s no worries; it’s freely available’
- ‘extra learning opportunities, for reinforcement and preparation’
 - ‘Engineers are very visually driven [...] so I need something for them to hang a concept off’
- ‘if I can pick up three visualisations for one I’ve created it means potentially I’m reaching the students in a deeper way’
- ‘to make sure that I was creating something that looked equivalent or better’
- ‘found a module on genetics of obesity’
- ‘put materials to be shared and distributed [...] in a way that then allows feedback to come, so it’s a two-way process; [...] you can then look to improve it’



Key points about benefits:

- Improve learner experience, not save time:
 - ‘...adding richness to your course. [...] I would never imagine it’d save time, it’s just that you carry on just getting it better and better.’
- Majority of materials (c80%) still their own:
 - ‘... if it’s relating to how you use a piece of software [...] to me that would be fine to pull something from somebody else [...] If I was trying to explain a concept to somebody [...] then I would need to think how to present that [...] how I would explain it to the student.’



Enabling factors:

Strategic

- Emergent; motivation varies
- Bottom-up/grass-roots initiatives:
 - Contacts with senior staff
 - ‘prove that there isn’t any open content that’s valuable’
- Implementing strategies:
 - Curriculum design initiative
 - Professional development
 - Customised workshops
 - Presentation of resources with ‘a social layer; it’s not enough to have just your content and just to present it’



Enabling factors:

Attitudinal

- ‘I think everyone in the university does this local sharing with colleagues, emailing things around: “Have you seen this resource? Use this presentation”’
- ‘...we need to be empowering students to understand that they can do exactly the same thing. If they have a learning problem, [...] then they can just find these things through Google’
- it doesn’t matter who’s actually giving them that experience but [...] they are getting it and they’re being directed to it
- ‘It’s a growing culture now. Well, actually, we can do this. We can share. I can put stuff out there’
- ‘...to be stimulated by my peers as to their orientations and perspectives’



...but no surrender of one's own teaching voice

- Lecturers are not 'neutral deliverers of objective content to passive recipients'
- 'If you just took something generic and delivered it you [...] wouldn't feel right with it; you want to put something of yourself into the design of the course.'
- 'We haven't made it and used our thought processes to make it. And the way somebody [else] delivers something is not the way you would naturally deliver it [...] And then you spend a couple of hours re-jigging it to sound like you; using the concepts but put it in your style because you don't like their style because we're individuals.'



Enabling factors:

Pedagogic, logistical

- Over to you to explore them: Activity 1



Activity 1

What features of *content found online* are important when choosing material to (re)use for learning and teaching?

Please group or place in order



Activity 1

What features of *content found online* are important when choosing material to (re)use for learning and teaching?

Which of these do you think are particularly features of **Open Educational Resources**?



Commentary on Activity 1:

Pedagogic factors

- Interest in activities as well as content
- Granularity: mainly interested in little OER:
 - More control over its use
 - Big OER for supplementary (optional) activities or teaching unfamiliar topic
- Balance between clear pedagogic intent (general affordance) and explicit teaching aims (designed for specific LOs/learners)



Commentary on Activity 1:

Logistical factors

- Volume:
 - ‘looking at 3,000 [...] you end up checking on them randomly’ vs ‘a general scarcity of decent resources’
 - Discipline-related; interdisciplinary resources also hard to find
- Discoverability:
 - ‘All roads lead to Google’
(61% success rate for general sites vs 38% for OER sites)
 - ‘I put two search terms into [OER sites], they’re nothing; and then went to Google and found those’



Commentary on Activity 1:

Logistical factors

- Poor indexing; simplistic search tools:
 - ‘are they using the same terminology I’m using?’
- Registration and/or download required:
 - ‘You had to click on and post your email address and various other things, as well, so I just didn’t bother’
 - ‘Couldn’t access it directly as download and email address involved’
- Lack of licensing:
 - ‘a US government video, so I assumed [...] it was open source’
- OER or not OER?
 - Only 50% of ‘successful’ searches of OER sites yielded clear OER



Concluding thoughts; lead-in to Activity 2

1. A belief in the value and validity of sharing and reusing resources, which may → enhancement of
 - the quality (and, hence, outcomes) of students' learning
 - lecturers' personal professional development
2. Using or encouraging others to use open resources...
3. ...within a supportive community:
 - 'Have you seen this resource? Use this presentation' vs '[I] think I would have stopped after 20 minutes or so on my own time'



Activity 2

What *open knowledge practices* are emerging in your context?

Use a **green post-it** to note:

- Yes, this is happening *or* is happening more
- Evidence or examples of this
- Opportunities for this to happen more

Use a **pink post-it** to note:

- No, this is not happening *or* is happening less
- Evidence or examples of this *not* happening
- Barriers to this happening



Links to the OER Impact Study reports

- David White & Marion Manton: [*Open Educational Resources: The Value of Reuse in Higher Education*](#)
- Liz Masterman & Joanna Wild: [*OER Impact Study: Research Report*](#)

