



Teaching and Learning with Open Educational Resources

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Abstract

This presentation explores faculty perspective of Open Educational Resources (OER), the different ways this concept can be implemented and the implications for faculty and students. Rewards and barriers to implementation will be discussed.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to briefly discuss Open Educational Resources, what they are, how they can be used and the implications to the faculty, student and class.

Learning Objectives for OER

Objective 1: What it is.

Objective 2: How to use it.

Objective 3: What it does.

Synopsis – FREE

1. What it is.

Open Educational Resources, or OER refers to a set of resources, but also to a philosophy for education. With the growing concerns of accessibility and high cost of education, the OER movement has received considerable attention from many educators in the past decade. The term OER was first introduced at a UNESCO conference in 2000 with the focus on providing access to free educational materials and resources on a global scale. The idea can be summed up best around one word: Free. This refers to the idea of free handouts, free lectures, free textbooks and even free classes. These are offered online to anyone, anywhere. The definition was later broadened to include the aspect of adaptability (reuse and re-share) in teaching and learning contexts.

These resources require some expense to be produced (see Downes, 2007 for a discussion of different models of financing). We will focus on this cost to the university and the faculty member. OER is a global system and faces barriers and growing pain at that level (see D’Antoni 2007 & 2009 for global discussion). The topics of global network and financing are mentioned in case the reader wishes to go further in understanding broader implications. A 2010 Educause “7 Things you should know” article helps bridge this gap between the global and local views and focuses on a faculty member’s perspective.

Our purpose is to explore local use of OER in your classroom. This would include implementation, benefits, costs and effects.

2. How to use it.

OER implantation may range from accessing a few OER tools and materials to full engagement of writing and publishing a text online in adaptable format. Below are some different levels of engagement.

- *You may choose a single handout or activity.*
- *You may select a text for your class and use it without adaptation.*
- *You may select a text and adapt it to your class.*
- *You may write your own text and publish it for use without adaptation*
- *You may write your own text and publish it for use in adaptable format*

Each level requires a commitment of time and resources from the faculty member and from the institution (either a Creative Commons type host or the

university). Barriers to use will be considered and an applied discussion developed for our institution.

3. What it does.

The many benefits of OER use may include access to lower cost materials, exposure to the expertise and ideas of a diverse group of educators and use of these ideas to spark new creativity and innovation in our own teaching methods. Each faculty member needs to consider his/her situation and what open resources could add to the class and to the student's experience of that class. We should also consider what benefits this might bring to each department and the university.

Suggested Practices

- Decide to explore the costs/benefits of adding OER to a selected class.
- Select the most appropriate level of OER introduction for that selected class.
- Gradually increase OER application until maximum benefits are reached, or until barriers outweigh the benefits.
- Recruit and educate other faculty member about the use of OER.
- Develop a network and support system of recommended resources and guidance in implementation.

References

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