

SCoPE 13.10 Seminar Summary

OERu: Developing An Agenda Together Summary

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Theme: OERu Points of Difference (74 posts)

Theme questions

- What is the OERu point of difference and does it need one?
- What differentiates the OERu collaboration from xMOOCs?
- What has contributed to the uptake and global interest in the cMOOCs and xMOOCs?
- What does this mean for OERu?
- Are there other contemporary developments which the OERu network should take into account?
- What questions should the OERu network be asking to inform its future?

Discussion summary

- Non-profit
- International membership of institutions
- Pedagogical knowledge in e-learning and open education
- Open governance - profoundly and demonstrably dedicated to transparent and participatory processes
- Taps into a larger collection of networked educators beyond the formal member alliance
- Courses assembled/built from OER
- The manner of course construction, using the wiki and (mostly) volunteer labour
- 4R permissions - open for all to use and adapt to their own needs and cultures
- Potential for personalized mass customization
- Focus is on granting credit - multiple means of assessment including PLAR
- Affordable assessment services towards credible credentials
- Collaboratively and openly provides learners with universal access to education
- Open file formats, open source software
- Distinctively Open

Theme: OERu Operations (5 posts)

Theme questions

- What are the institutional capacity development requirements for OERu operations? How do we address these?
- What are the lessons we are learning from prototyping?
- What technologies will bring us closer to achieving our goals and how do we implement them?
- What are the business models for scalable and sustainable operations?

Discussion summary

- Building capacity:
 - Build capacity around "openness" and how open communities function.
 - Talk about this as a model shift rather than capacity development.
 - As a change in principle, all Open initiatives describe the shift from delivering to co-creating their publicly-funded service
 - Open means public networks are moving from an institutional client/server to a inter-institutional collaborator/cloud model.
- Prototyping lessons learned:
 - Successful at selecting OERu courses to be assembled from existing OER
 - Difficult setting a reasonable timeline for each partners course contributions
 - OERu FTE contributions (29 partners at .2 FTE) not equating to equivalent effort or generating productivity needed
 - Need to improve knowledge on the design for open courses
 - Pedagogy of discovery, free range learning working well
 - Challenges around recruiting students and gateway processes (registration, payment, ...)
 - Learning how to leverage the cost advantages for OERu partners (not one example of an OERu course being reused at a partner institution)
- Technologies:
 - Wiki good for collaborative development of content but less so for collaboration among learners
 - Aggregating feeds work Jim Tittsler is doing needs to continue
 - LMS's will not work for OERu delivery
 - Focus on mobile delivery (maximizes global student access)
- Business model:
 - Being bootstrapped so very low cost base to meet fiscal sustainability
 - Need critical mass of courses to market pathways to credentials for OERu learners - a programme of study leading to credentials
 - Need student recruitment strategy
 - Open access business benefits include faster publishing, better citations, better peer review through more reviewers.

Theme: Microcredentials (88 posts)

Theme questions

- What are micro-credentials in the OERu context?
- What are the barriers and opportunities for implementing micro-credentials for the OERu?
- Are micro-credentials an effective way to individualize or customize the curriculum?
- What will they look like and how will they work?

- Micro-credentials should be about 1 credit in the NA system, 4 UK credits (2 ECATS), 40 learning hours, and run for about 4 weeks (10 hours/week)
- mOOC = micro Open Online Course
- Perfect for a model of course design which brings together learning from across many partners
- Allows learners to process at their own speed not at the speed of the 'education industry'
- Allows for learner designed curriculum within a broad framework, mix and match, dip and sip
- Micro credential approach provides a viable solution to resolving the "credit" differences between

North America, Africa, Europe and Australasia. Potential to use COL Transnational Qualifications Framework.

- OERu plans to build a Bachelor of General Studies and Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education qualifications out of micro-courses.
- Bachelor of General Studies not well received by employers (in UK). However the multi-disciplinary aspect and credits from institutions worldwide could be attractive to employers.
- OEUu needs more focus on employer friendly credentials. Need to have more to offer, up the game and speed up the process.
- Potential to integrate OERu micro-course open participants with regular registered students to create critical mass and improved retention rates for all participants
- Potential to share a mOOC hosted "centrally" but integrated into a number of local courses at partner institutions offered in parallel mode.
- OERu needs to orient practice around meeting the needs of volunteer course developer communities and the shorter development cycle of micro-courses is beneficial for that purpose.
- Micro courses may need to be taken in a certain order to progressively build skills and knowledge. Need to define prerequisites and recommended sequence.
- Designing and developing an OER based course is hard and time consuming work.
- Potential role for PLAR/RPL.

Theme: Textbook Zero (37 posts)

Theme questions

- Is the Textbook Zero approach a valuable structure to consider in the context of OERu development and implementation for institutional partners?

- In a "textbook-free" degree, the total cost for required textbooks is zero.
- Possibility of OERu creating a light open course framework matched to open resources and open textbooks that faculty could use when creating or updating a course. A kind of sub-library function.
- Textbook Zero model is similar to a wrap-around course in the distance education world - a learning pathway based on a "prescribed" textbook in this case an open one.
- Potential to leverage the BCcampus open textbook initiative.
- TB0 is simple to describe, economical to build, and sufficiently malleable to provide options for students, instructors and institutions to localize or substitute alternative open online resources to align with competencies or outcomes that could map to credentials, micro or otherwise.
- OERu needs a simple statement of what is is, what pain point it addresses, how it works and how it is evaluated in a quality assurance context - an elevator pitch describing value for learners.
- Odd Coursera Terms of Service preventing students from getting credit for learning without Coursera permission.

Theme: Quality Issues for the OERu (24 posts)

Theme questions

- How should the OERu partners promote and ensure quality?
- What are the issues associated with an institution with questionable quality standards joining the OERu?
- How do quality perceptions of the OERu model impact on standing with regional qualification authorities around the world?
- What advice can you offer the OERu move the quality agenda forward?

- Reuse and adapt existing tools and procedures from quality frameworks developed by the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning (EFQUEL) under the OPAL and OERTest initiatives and the COL Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF).
- Quality thresholds of developing open courses with open design approaches are an order of magnitude higher than closed courses because we can't hide poor quality behind password access
- Accreditation is more than certifying course quality. It involves more broadly defined standards across virtually every aspect of university governance and operations (admissions, student services, academic freedom, retention, etc.).
- OERu partner brands could be harmed by working with partners that don't meet rigorous standards.
- A strength of the OERu model is that partner institutions issue their own credentials.
- There is also a "competitive" element within the network which fuels quality. Individual partners would be concerned if their quality standards are not recognised for credit by another OERu partner.
- Consider a to two tier approach for the OERu
 - Work with organisations recognised by appropriate governmental body -- which is a necessary requirement, but not sufficient to guarantee quality.
 - Have the OERu network quality assure courses and processes

