



The Higher Education Academy (HEA)/JISC Final Report

Project Information			
Project Identifier	<i>To be completed by HEA/JISC</i>		
Project Title	The FAVOR project (Finding a Voice through Open Resources)		
Project Hashtag	#favor		
Start Date	1 st October 2011	End Date	1 st October 2012
Lead Institution	University of Southampton		
Project Director	Alison Dickens		
Project Manager	Kate Borthwick		
Contact email	K.Borthwick@soton.ac.uk		
Partner Institutions	Aston University, University College London (SSEES), School of Oriental and African Studies, Newcastle University		
Project Web URL	http://thefavorproject.wordpress.com/		
Programme Name	OER phase 3		
Programme Manager	David Kernohan		

Document Information			
Author(s)	Kate Borthwick		
Project Role(s)	Project manager		
Date	Sept 2012	Filename	FAVOR-final-report.doc
URL	<i>If this report is on your project web site</i>		
Access	This report is for general dissemination		

Document History		
Version	Date	Comments

Table of Contents

1	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
2	PROJECT SUMMARY	3
3	MAIN BODY OF REPORT	4
3.1	PROJECT OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES.....	4
3.2	HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT ACHIEVING YOUR OUTPUTS / OUTCOMES?.....	6
3.3	WHAT DID YOU LEARN?	9
3.4	IMMEDIATE IMPACT	14
3.5	FUTURE IMPACT	19
4	CONCLUSIONS	20
5	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	22
6	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE	23
7	REFERENCES	23
8	APPENDICES (OPTIONAL)	23

1 Acknowledgements

This project was funded under JISC's OER Programme Phase 3, and the project team would like to offer thanks to the JISC programme manager, David Kernohan, for his support and guidance during the project.

The project was directed by Alison Dickens, Assistant Director of the Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS), and managed by Kate Borthwick, academic coordinator at LLAS – both based at the University of Southampton. Other LLAS staff involved in the project: Erika Corradini and Sue Nash.

Project coordinators at each partner institution were:

Elizabeth Andersen, Andrea Wilczynski, Franck Michel	Newcastle University
Joanne Eastlake	School of Oriental and African Studies
Sarah Hayes, David Pollard	Aston University
Marta Jenkala	School of Slavonic and European Studies, University College London
Julie Watson	University of Southampton

Resources for the project were published and created by part-time, hourly-paid language tutors working in each partner institution:

Kumi Casey, Linda Cheng, Lucy Hill, Longbiao Hu, Dan Li, Nuria Lopez	Newcastle University
Ruqia Farah, Helen Salvatore, Yoseph Mengistu, Wambui Wa-Ngatho, Berhane Woldegabriel	School of Oriental and African Studies
Jean Darvill, Richard Galletly, Ghizlane Lafdi, Angela Morris, Raquel Navas, Kat Stevenson, Qiaochao Zhang	Aston University
Christopher Moseley, Dragan Milovic, Riitta-Liisa Valijarvi, Olga Willett, Eszter Tarsoly	School of Slavonic and European Studies, University College London
Bianca Belgiorno-Appleyard, Katy Heady, Denise Kaltschuetz, Livia Schanze, Lucie Vowles	University of Southampton

The LanguageBox repository, which was used for the project, is hosted and managed by the School of Electronics and Computer Science (ECS), at the University of Southampton. Technical developments on the site were managed by Matt Taylor, within ECS, who also provided general technical support and advice.

Our thanks go to Dr Jules Newman, based at the National Institute for Health Research, University of Southampton, who has acted as external evaluator for the project, and who has been a great help in shaping the evaluation process.

And finally, the project team offer a huge and heartfelt 'thank you' to all of the tutors who took part in the project: their enthusiasm and dedication to achieving and expanding on project aims was a continual inspiration to the whole coordination team.

2 Project Summary

"It has been a reinforcing, motivating and inspiring experience. It feels good to be part of this project." - FAVOR tutor

There is strong government and societal acknowledgment of the importance of learning languages, and the FAVOR (Finding a Voice through Open Resources) project has worked to showcase the

excellent and often unrecognised work of part-time, hourly-paid language teachers in universities, by engaging them in activities which enhance the student experience and contribute to the academic life of their institutions.

The project sought to understand how open practice might benefit the working practices of part-time, hourly paid language tutors working in universities. Teachers of language are usually on teaching-only contracts and have low status compared to their research-active colleagues. They tend to have intensive teaching timetables, allowing little time to pursue research interests, professional development or maintain professional profiles. As a result, such tutors are often a reservoir of untapped knowledge and experience and can feel a sense of alienation from their own institutions.

The project worked with part-time language tutors across five universities (Aston, Newcastle, UCL SSEES, SOAS and Southampton) to create and publish more than 340 new open educational resources for students. Resources are in at least 18 languages and are free to download, use and adapt. Materials include teaching activities and new resources which give prospective students a 'flavour' of language study at university.

In the process of becoming 'open practitioners', tutors have learnt new technical skills, shared pedagogical ideas and learnt from others, and adopted new approaches to creating materials. Their project work has raised their profiles within their universities and the community and made a lasting impact on their teaching.

"I've learnt a lot...thank you very much for the project because for me it was great...now I'm so motivated to learn more." - tutor comment

The resources created for the project benefit the education community by increasing the pool of high quality teaching materials openly available; archiving useful content at a time of cuts and consolidation in language departments, and promoting the benefits of studying languages. Resources and information can be found at www.languagebox.ac.uk

3 Main Body of Report

3.1 Project Outputs and Outcomes

Output / Outcome Type (e.g. report, publication, software, knowledge built)	Brief Description and URLs (where applicable)
Outputs:	
340+ newly released OERs relating to language study at university	www.languagebox.ac.uk > tagged 'favor' These resources comprise existing teaching materials which have been licensed for release as open content, and newly-created resources to assist prospective university applicants understand the nature of language study in HE. Materials cover at least 18 different languages and are in a range of formats including video, audio, text, images and online activities.
Institutional interest groups created on the online repository	http://languagebox.ac.uk/view/groups_all/ Each institution has created a group under which their resources are published. Some tutors have also created their own individual interest groups.
A virtual community of OER users	This community consists of the tutors who took part in the project and others who have joined in over the year. This group is geographically spread across the UK and in a fledgling way, have begun sharing and reusing each other's work.
Enhanced teaching and learning repository	www.languagebox.ac.uk has been tweaked and improved in response to user comments; a group function has been created and a discussion forum implemented.

A 'blended OER' model for engaging, motivating and including hourly-paid tutors in academic life	The essential model of the project: to unite hourly-paid staff around a project/focus with strategically relevant aims, which will enhance their practice and profiles and benefit their institutions, has been appealing to external observers of the project.
Project blog and website	www.thefavorproject.wordpress.com this blog site is maintained by the project manager but includes submissions from tutors. www.llas.ac.uk/favor is the project website on the LLAS site.
Information and guidance materials	http://languagebox.ac.uk/3097/ This collection includes guidance and promotional material created by the project manager during the course of the project (e.g. a guidance ppt file for partners to use http://languagebox.ac.uk/2537/ . It also includes presentations by other project members which were given at internal meetings and presentations given at national events (e.g. the LLAS Languages in Higher Education conference, July 2012 http://languagebox.ac.uk/3029/).
Promotional articles and reports	The project has featured in internal bulletins and emails, and an article on the project was included in the recent LLAS magazine: http://www.llas.ac.uk/news/6652
Evaluation report	A written report created by the external project evaluator (see Appendix A).
Reports by project partners (text and video)	Final reports from project partners detailing experiences and outcomes of their own engagement with the project are collected at http://languagebox.ac.uk/3118/ . See Newcastle's video and written report at: http://languagebox.ac.uk/3100/ ; UCL final report at http://languagebox.ac.uk/3102/ ; SOAS final report at: http://languagebox.ac.uk/3114/ ; Southampton presentation at http://languagebox.ac.uk/3098/ and video at http://languagebox.ac.uk/3120/ ; Aston final video report at http://languagebox.ac.uk/3119/
Project interim report and final report	Official reports required by JISC
Outcomes:	
Knowledge acquired	Tutors developed new skills in digital literacy (understanding issues around open practice) and in the use of different technologies to create learning material. They also benefitted from discussing their work with each other and sharing ideas on pedagogical practice and learning design. Project coordinators gained a greater understanding of the challenges faced by part-time, hourly paid staff in engaging with small projects and activities outside of their normal teaching hours. They also gained understanding in how open practice could be of benefit to such tutors.
Awareness raising	Internal promotional work at each partner institution has helped to raise awareness of the work of hourly paid language tutors. The public online profile that each tutor has created is raising awareness of their work beyond their institutions. Attendees at project presentations have indicated that the project is "inspiring" and will seek ways of replicating it in their own contexts.
Improved institutional working practice	The tutors reported feeling more integrated into their institutions and valued for the work that they do. They were gratified by opportunities to meet with other colleagues and share their work.
Increased professional	A large number of tutors had the opportunity to attend subject

opportunities	conferences and to present their work on the project. This enriched their knowledge and initiated a new and welcome dimension to their professional lives.
Quality enhancement of teaching	Tutors have reported that participation in the project has resulted in practice change: the incorporation of new ideas, approaches and methods; reflection on and alteration of practice, and consideration of how students can be involved in the creation of teaching materials.
Student engagement with open practice and resource creation	Many of the tutors involved their students in the creation of materials for this project. This entailed raising awareness of open practice amongst students and also including them in the design, planning and realisation of new resources.

3.2 *How did you go about achieving your outputs / outcomes?*

Context

The FAVOR project sits squarely within the landscape of language learning and teaching in higher education in the UK today. A significant amount of language teaching in universities is delivered by hourly-paid or part-time staff, and yet this is a group whose excellent work and contribution to academic life is often unrecognised. Many tutors are on 'teaching-only' contracts, are in Language Centres rather than academic departments, often do not have access to permanent working space (desks, computers), and are on intensive teaching schedules leaving no time for research or professional development. All of these factors reinforce a sense of low status. (Coleman, 2004; Howarth, 2011; Klapper, 2006). In addition, recent years have seen many language departments downsizing or disappearing, thus reducing the breadth of language provision in UK HE and increasing demand for language teachers on fractional or temporary contracts.

Aims and objectives

Our project sought to address the issues outlined above through open practice, specifically the sharing and creation of open education resources (OERs). Our plan was to engage a number of hourly-paid language tutors, from 5 different HEIs, in publishing their language teaching resources as open content, and in creating a suite of new open educational resources designed to assist prospective students in understanding the nature of language study at HE level. This material would also provide 'language tasters' which would promote interest in language learning among a wider group of potential learners. The project also wanted to work with languages which are less widely taught and to engage the wider community in language learning. Our key objectives in asking tutors to participate in the project were to raise awareness of the work of the tutors within their own institutions and the wider academic community, and enhance their professional profiles; to train and upskill tutors in open practice and use of technology, and to establish an online community which would then offer mutual and on-going support for the development and sharing of language teaching materials. These aims did not change throughout the lifetime of the project.

Methodology

i) Project management and stakeholder engagement

The project was managed centrally by the LLAS Centre at the University of Southampton and extensive use was made of an online project management tool called Basecamp. This tool allows users to email each other as a group, share files, work collaboratively on wikis, set mutual and individual deadlines. Basecamp was a highly effective community-engagement tool and project partners used it regularly as a central point of reference for information and updates about the project, and to discuss and share ideas.

An early meeting of all project partners was held at UCL SSEES, in November 2011. At this meeting, the project timetable and activities were discussed and finalised. Initial training in use of the LanguageBox repository was given, alongside an annotated FAVOR powerpoint which partners could use to explain the project. At this point, project partners returned to their institutions to recruit at least

5 hourly-paid tutors each and get them started in sharing resources in LanguageBox. Partners used a range of methods to recruit tutors including face-to-face meetings, and general and targeted emails. Their enthusiasm and belief in the project aims helped persuade tutors to take part and most institutions recruited more than 5 tutors to the project.

From this point on and throughout the duration of the project, each institutional coordinator played a vital role in achieving project aims. Each coordinator became an effective champion of the project, open practice and the tutors' work. This methodology (using champions as key facilitators within their own institutional contexts) has worked effectively in many LLAS-led community projects before, because it enables partners to have ownership over the project and also to work within a wider community. It was a particularly potent force in the FAVOR project, where one of our key aims was to reinforce and enhance institutional working.

Project coordinators took responsibility for recruiting tutors, liaising with payroll and legal departments, dealing with questions on a local basis, offering pedagogical support and advice, arranging local meetings, in some cases providing technical training, promoting the project within their institution, and motivating their teams to meet deadlines. The LLAS management team offered a strong core of support for all of these activities and advice where required, especially on technical issues related to using the LanguageBox, and gave training sessions for tutors in Newcastle, London and Southampton, on the use of the LanguageBox and the LOC tool (<http://loc.llas.ac.uk> a tool for authoring online materials). Where required, the project manager held additional training sessions for tutors and gave specific technical assistance. Regular skype meetings between LLAS and all project partners were held to update on progress and share ideas/issues with each other. As resources began to be published online, LLAS project officers checked them for copyright, metadata and licensing issues.

ii) The repository

The project encouraged tutors to publish their resources on the LanguageBox, a repository which is hosted at the University of Southampton and managed by LLAS. The project management team decided that we would ask tutors to use *only* this repository in the first instance, for a number of reasons: firstly, we were very familiar with it and have technical and managerial control over it which means that we can offer technical and administrative support; from a management perspective it would help us keep track of FAVOR resources; the site itself is very simple to use and we did not wish to overwhelm people who are new to open working by offering a plethora of other options to use (although we made clear from the outset that we intended resources ultimately to be published in a range of online spaces); the site is focussed around a particular community of practitioners (language teachers) and so represents a 'disciplinary comfort zone' for tutors, and finally, the site itself is designed to support a community of practice.

LanguageBox was developed in collaboration with the language-teaching community (Borthwick et al, 2009) and its key feature is its user-friendly design: it is simple for depositors to use and easy for browsers to access content. It is similar to a social networking space which allows for user profiles, comments, bookmarking, creation of collections, and email contact through the site. The ethos of LanguageBox is that individuals are responsible for their own engagement with the site (and with open practice). There are a range of creative commons licences available on the site to use, but tutors were advised to use only the licences which allow for adaptation of materials. The LanguageBox site itself, however, has a wide general user community who make use of all of the licences on the site, and so FAVOR resources will sit alongside other materials which may be licensed for download only. This is appropriate as the LanguageBox serves to facilitate all levels of engagement with open practice but it is hoped that seeing the FAVOR resources will encourage other users to use more open licensing where appropriate. Part of the training given to tutors was in understanding which licences may be appropriate in different contexts, and this included a discussion of when a 'no derivatives' licence may be advisable (e.g. when publishing a resource with external content – there are examples of this type of resource on LanguageBox). However, as previously stated, the ethos of the project was about sharing resources and so tutors were advised from the outset to use licences which allowed for this.

Two significant technical changes were made to the LanguageBox for the project: the addition of a group function and a discussion forum. The discussion forum has not been used, but the group function has played an important role in local community-building with each partner creating a group for their institution and some tutors creating interest groups for their own languages. The group function allows users to publish their work as part of a group of users and so gives a level of coherence to different collections of materials. In addition, minor technical changes were made to the interface of the LanguageBox based on tutor feedback (e.g. a link was put on each profile page to enable users to see all of the resources deposited by that user).

iii) Promotion and dissemination

All the project partners were encouraged to promote the project within their institutions through any means they felt were appropriate including newsletters, e-bulletins, lunch meetings, and internal emails. For example, coordinators at Newcastle updated the wider Modern Languages Department on project progress at regular departmental meetings; Southampton publicised the project through an internal faculty e-bulletin and UCL wrote about the project for their news blog. LLAS promoted the work of the project through its own UK-wide network via its magazine and e-bulletin.

Promotion of the project at subject conferences was encouraged from an early stage, and all project participants were invited to take part in this activity. A number of tutors had the opportunity to present their work and experiences at national events, such as 'Sustaining a Global Society: Languages of the Wider World,' 29-30 March, in London; 'Languages in Higher Education', 5-6 July, in Edinburgh; the Cercles conference, 6-8 September, London.

The aim of all this promotional activity was to give tutors the opportunity to attend and speak about their work at an academic event, and to recruit other teachers to the online space to join in with project activities. Promotion of the project will continue beyond the official close of project activities, with planned presentations by tutors and project coordinators at: the BALEAP PIM meeting on 10th November, 2012 (http://elanguages.ac.uk/baleap_pim.php) and the 8th LLAS elearning symposium, January 2013 (<http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/6636>). In addition, each partner institution is planning at least one internal promotion and dissemination event for staff and/or students, to be held before Christmas.

The management team is also working with the SESAME project (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/ukoer3/sesame.aspx>) and the Evaluation and Synthesis team to produce a case study on OER and part-time staff.

iv) Evaluation

The project was monitored on a day-to-day basis by the manager to ensure that targets were being met. Minutes were kept on the Basecamp wiki of each skype meeting and this provides a valuable document of project activities and thinking at different points over the year.

The main bulk of evaluation activity has taken place at the end of the project year. An external evaluator was appointed and worked with the project manager to design an online survey which was circulated to all project participants. There were two versions of this survey: one for tutors and one for project coordinators. The evaluator then followed up this survey with telephone interviews to some respondents.

In addition, tutors and coordinators who attended a final project meeting on 20th September, 2012, completed a second questionnaire about their experiences of the project in relation to staff development, and took part in discussion groups to talk about their feelings about the project and open practice. Presentation sessions on this day were videoed and focus groups annotated and audio recorded.

Finally, project partners provided a mixture of written and videoed reports outlining their experiences on the project. These reports inform the findings in this report.

3.3 What did you learn?

"I really enjoyed creating my resources...I really enjoyed it. I got a lot out of the project"

Evidence in this section comes from a range of sources: online/paper-based surveys, focus group interviews, written reports, videoed reports and videoed reports given at the final project meeting, which took place on 20th September, 2012. Partners reported in public and confidential formats. Participants are quoted directly where possible.

Lessons learnt:	Evidence:
Hourly paid/part-time tutors are an enthusiastic group who will embrace opportunities to enhance their professional practice	<p>From the outset, the project was embraced with enthusiasm by all involved in it. Feedback about the experience of taking part in the project, from participating tutors, has been extremely positive, with tutors repeatedly noting how much they have learnt from the experience and frequently thanking the project team 'for the opportunity'. Our feeling is that this indicates how hungry such tutors are for recognition, professional development and opportunities for practice sharing with colleagues, e.g.:</p> <p><i>"I really enjoyed creating my resources...I really enjoyed it. I got a lot out of the project"</i> – (focus group)</p> <p><i>"I was excited...it wasn't like 'oh, I have to do this'...I was excited because I was learning so much...I'm very motivated to see how people present some of their resources and I have been looking as well at the resources that they have uploaded in the Languagebox, and they are great and sometimes I say 'wow, wow, they are so good!"</i> – Newcastle video report</p> <p><i>"...incentive to join FAVOR was the opportunity to get together with other language teaching colleagues to exchange ideas and look at each other's materials...everybody cherished the chance to develop themselves further."</i> – Newcastle final report</p> <p>It was also inspiring to note that tutors challenged themselves when completing project work, by specifically learning about and making use of new technologies – in no way did they take an easy route to complete project objectives. <i>"Many [tutors] had specifically gone out of their 'comfort zone' to prepare resources in a different format to what they would usually do"</i> (Appendix A, evaluator's report).</p>
Open practice can be an effective way for such tutors to expose their work and learn from others	<p>All of the tutors reported that there were benefits of engaging with open practice particularly through use of an open repository as a place to view other people's materials. This is important because most tutors have few opportunities or time to meet together. The profile-raising aspect of open practice was also reported as valuable, as it is positive for tutors and also for their institutions (see all final reports). It was noted that using a repository that operated <i>"beyond departmental boundaries"</i> was <i>"particularly stimulating."</i> (see final reports)</p> <p>The public nature of open practice was motivating:</p> <p><i>"It gives you motivation to keep on doing new resources, especially when you see how many people have downloaded what you did – and they may like it or not, but at least there is a bit of interest there, so I think that is a huge motivation."</i> – Newcastle video report</p>

	<p><i>“Open practice has stimulated my interest in online resources.” – UCL final report</i></p> <p>Preliminary download data on each resource (see ‘favor’-tagged resources on www.languagebox.ac.uk) shows that many resources are already being viewed and downloaded by users.</p>
Engaging with open practice and the publication/creation of OERs can lead to quality enhancement of teaching	Tutor feedback has been overwhelming on how much they have learnt through taking part in the project. Tutors have repeatedly impressed the management team by their enthusiasm to put their new knowledge immediately into practice with students and to reflect, evaluate and improve on the teaching resources that they are creating, using and sharing. This activity, driven by the focus of the project, seems to have made a real and lasting impact on the way they work: in preparing resources, seeking out new methods of working, involving students in preparing resources and in delivering content. These activities have taken place alongside discussions about teaching work with peers, which have fed into the cycle of reflection and reworking (see ‘impact’ section for more details and final reports).
A ‘blended’ approach to open practice is effective in encouraging engagement	The model that the FAVOR project employed seems to have been effective in building communities of practice around OER and also in maximising the impact and benefits of open practice. The model consisted of a local champion coordinating a local group of peers who shared training, ideas and good practice offline, and then shared their work online in LanguageBox, under their institutional profile. This made contact with the wider community. The effectiveness of this finding in community-building came out strongly in the external evaluation report which termed the FAVOR partners as ‘blended OER communities.’ (see Appendix A)
Intra-institutional collaboration is satisfying and rewarding but rare for part-time tutors	<p>All of the project partners noted how satisfying it was to bring colleagues together to work on the project. Language tutors across different departments (and even in the same department) do not often meet, and hourly-paid tutors are usually present in the department only to teach their classes.</p> <p><i>“I think what I liked the most was having a Newcastle group, because I might know what Lucy is doing because she is in the Spanish section, but of course I couldn’t know what other people teach in German, Chinese or Japanese...what they are doing with their classes and I think that is really nice. It makes people to feel more like part of a community...it makes language teachers come together.” – Newcastle video</i></p> <p><i>“The FAVOR project was welcomed and supported as a relatively rare opportunity for language teachers to work together and develop professionally.” – UCL final report</i></p>
Engaging with open practice can offer an opportunity to share resources for less widely used languages; however the situation is complex	Tutors of what are known as ‘less widely used languages (LWUL)’ (such as African and East European languages – these are not widely used in the UK) often work in relative isolation compared to their colleagues teaching more widely used languages, and such tutors reported that it was satisfying to share in a space which was not necessarily dominated by the main European foreign languages. (focus group)

	<p>The external project evaluator noted that LWUL tutors “<i>clearly appreciated the opportunity to act as an ambassador for their language and expose it to a greater audience</i>” – external evaluator report.</p> <p>Tutors could also obtain teaching ideas from looking at resources in other languages:</p> <p>“<i>...we have seen the emergence of a different kind of sharing – looking at what has been uploaded in other languages and using those ideas and formats for oneself. For the languages taught at SSEES, which are relatively under-resourced when compared to mainstream ones such as French and Spanish, this is a considerable benefit.</i>” – UCL final report</p> <p>However, another partner institution noted that ‘<i>the process of preparing materials</i> [for a less widely used language like Hungarian or Bengali] <i>is necessarily distinct qualitatively to the process of</i>’ preparing for e.g. Spanish or French, due to the range of high quality materials available to use as inspiration. Tutors of ‘less widely used languages’ work hard to create authentic resources. “<i>In the context of national and metropolitan language-teaching markets, where the numbers of teachers are finite, where those teachers are known personally to one another, and in which those markets oblige the teachers to compete with one another for fractional contract hours, such arduously compiled and constructed materials are not happily surrendered for the simple reason that they are commodity forms and not reducible to use-values: they are capital investments that enable teachers to obtain and maintain competitive market positions.</i>” SOAS final report</p>
Hourly paid tutors have a range of motivations for engaging (or not) with open practice	<p>Many of our tutor-recruits were attracted by the idea that participation in the project would raise their profile within their institution and beyond; that they would have a public professional profile which would be held outwith any institutional affiliation, and that they could participate in a research project and attend conferences; however other potential recruits were not so persuaded by these ideas. We found that the nature of part-time, hourly paid work was both an obstacle to engaging with open practice AND a motivator. During the recruitment process, coordinators reported that while some tutors may wish for greater integration into the academic life of their institutions, others may not. It quickly became clear to us that many such tutors choose their working patterns (rather than being forced by circumstances within an institution) and so do not necessarily have a particular interest in a professional profile or greater integration into their institution – and so were not that interested in open practice and the FAVOR project. Similarly, the lack of job security felt by tutors disinclined them to share their work generally.</p> <p>Conversely, another coordinator reported that these factors <i>inclined</i> the tutors she had approached to share their work. She noted that her tutors were experienced teachers of long-standing and had a wealth of material ready to share with others. They were happy with their working conditions and not insecure about their work situation, and therefore saw no reason not to share work.</p>

	Ref: http://thefavorproject.wordpress.com/2011/12/02/update-on-recruiting-part-time-tutors/
Time is a significant factor in enabling tutors to engage with small projects and with open access	<p>Time impacted on tutors' abilities to engage with the project in various ways. Part-time and hourly-paid tutors often take on work as, and when, it is offered and cannot always schedule for this in advance, or they work part-time due to other commitments. In some cases, this meant tutors had to pull out of the project entirely:</p> <p><i>"There were also time constraints: We lost two (of the original 8) tutors, as they found it difficult to work on the project in addition to other commitments (in this case completing an MA and looking after children)." – Newcastle final report</i></p> <p>All of the coordinators commented on the difficulty of getting all of the participating tutors in one place at the same time due to their varied schedules: <i>"We had to fit around the schedules that they had because they teach in different institutions sometimes juggling things, as you do, on a sessional basis. We weren't able, ever, to get all the tutors together."</i> – Aston video report. This meant that most coordinators held meetings on a 1-2-1, or small group basis.</p> <p>Several tutors noted that the timing of this particular JISC project (October – October over one year) put strains on their ability to contribute, because <i>"there are parts of the year when you can't do anything else, like exam time"</i> – tutor. In addition, focus groups reported that there had been a steep learning curve between phase 1 of the project (publishing existing materials) and phase 2 (creating new materials) and <i>"tutors found it intense...a huge amount of new material has been uploaded at the last minute,"</i> as a result. (focus group) It was noted that it would have been preferable to have more time for planning in phase 2. (Southampton video report)</p> <p>Tutors reported that engaging with open practice was time-consuming in itself: <i>"[you must] think about learning objectives, how you teach, how you present your materials, but it is very rewarding"</i> – tutor comment</p>
The nature of part-time, hourly-paid working can hinder ability to engage in activities other than teaching	<p><i>"Part-time, hourly-paid tutors have to be financially secure and so you take things on. You can't afford to refuse work...and you never know what student demand will be so it makes it difficult to take part in projects."</i> – tutor comment. This was true of all tutors, but some tutors experienced particular difficulties committing time to the project, as in many cases, they are the only experts in their particular languages in the UK. As a result, they are frequently asked to work at very short notice, on varied projects for important stakeholders (e.g. government). This makes time management problematic.</p> <p>In addition, one institution noted that the proliferation of <i>"zero-hour contracts makes it difficult for teachers...to plan and organize their work in the medium- and long-term. Under such a regime, work is offered sporadically and at short-notice..."</i> [zero-hour contracts allow employers to pay only for hours worked and</p>

	<p>do not guarantee set working hours].</p> <p>It was noted that had the project timescale been longer, then “<i>you could stagger project engagement and other tutors could have come in later, and you would have ‘rolling inspiration’</i>.” It was felt that a longer project timescale would have suited the nature of part-time working, when tutors have availability at different times of the year and could schedule their workloads with a small amount of advanced warning. (focus group)</p> <p>In addition, many tutors are simply not on site for long periods of time in order to engage in other activities outside of teaching: “<i>Part-time language tutors do not spend lots of time in the university; for some the only time spent there is for teaching (some tutors do not even have a desk and a computer)</i>.” – Southampton video report</p>
<p>Institutions' policies, procedures and attitudes play an important role in enabling and encouraging engagement from hourly paid staff with small projects</p>	<p>High-level support and encouragement from institutions can maximise the benefits of staff participation in small projects (and open practice). This is evidenced by the contrasting experiences of the institutional partners (see final reports). At one institution, for example, a significant amount of senior level support enhanced their tutors' experiences of the project, by increasing collegiate feelings of belonging to an 'ML team,' and building on opportunities offered by the project (e.g. the department paid for all tutors to attend a major conference as part of the project work). – see final reports</p> <p>In contrast, another partner institution suffered from a lack of executive support for its hourly-paid staff, and a lack of appropriate institutional systems to contract and pay such staff for work on small projects outside of their teaching contracts. This meant that despite great enthusiasm from tutors for the project, they inevitably prioritised other work throughout the year and were not able to complete project commitments. The project coordinator at this institution was forced to spend virtually all of her project time in negotiations about administration, contracts and payroll, and this inevitably impacted on the time she could spend with her team of tutors. The presence of such institutional obstacles to joining the project had a negative impact on tutors' commitment to FAVOR (detail in Appendix B, confidential).</p> <p>Other partner institutions experienced minor issues in terms of administration, particularly, a lack of appropriate systems to pay hourly-paid or part-time staff for extra work (outside of teaching). (ref: final reports and minutes of meetings). Our experience indicates that institutions' general attitudes and policies towards dealing with part-time, hourly-paid staff can impact significantly on their ability to engage in activities outside of teaching, and therefore on their job satisfaction and professional development.</p>
<p>Institutions' policies and attitudes towards the ownership of materials created by their staff are important in facilitating engagement with open practice</p>	<p>All of the institutions who took part in the FAVOR project understood the ethos of the project: i.e. it involved engaging in open practice. Accordingly, most institutions exhibited a relaxed policy towards their staff publishing their teaching resources as open content; however, one institution reported historical issues in this area which impacted on the current project. This institution</p>

	<p>reported that managers have historically considered all teaching materials to be the institution's intellectual property and even now, actively prosecute this claim: "<i>periodically demands are issued for materials to be surrendered in print form, and the use of the VLE is aggressively promoted as a method of materials dispossession.</i>" Tutors at this institution "<i>experience the uploading of materials to a repository as a loss of intellectual property</i>". Inevitably, this situation affected tutors' readiness to engage with creating new materials for FAVOR. (detail in Appendix B, confidential).</p>
Community-led repositories which require individual engagement can be more appealing and user-friendly than institutional, centrally-managed sites	<p>One of the project partners who has had experience of using both LanguageBox (a community repository) and also a centrally-managed institutional repository made these comments: "<i>I think the easy publication of resources and the fact that people have control over what they publish, when they can edit, has been very empowering in terms of LanguageBox...the empowering aspect of really being able to manage your resources is so valuable. I think that motivates people and can only be of benefit.</i>" - comment made by project partner at meeting, 20th September, 2012</p> <p><i>"The other thing I liked was that it [LanguageBox] allows you to see all the things that you have done altogether instead of...saving documents in lots of different files on your computer and you never know where they are...you can see all of your materials together, and it also gives you an idea of how much work that you have produced and that is very motivating as well."</i> – Newcastle video report.</p> <p>Tutors also reported that in their usual teaching, they are bound by a requirement to follow established curricula (which in language teaching is often focussed on grammar learning), but that Languagebox allows them to be creative and to present their work in other ways. (external evaluator's report).</p> <p>The fact that online community repositories operate outside of institutional structures was also appealing: "<i>LanguageBox helps to render materials accessible to students especially evening class students, to whom Moodle is not available, and so one would only like to see it expand and improve even more in the future.</i>" – UCL final report</p> <p>It was also noted that "<i>...finding and exchanging ideas in a central place and beyond departmental boundaries is interesting.</i>" – Southampton final report</p>

3.4 Immediate Impact

Impact on tutors	Evidence
New skills acquired	Most tutors acknowledged that they were not familiar with open educational resources, open practice or even elearning prior to working on the project (see external evaluator's report). They testify to learning a huge amount through participation in the project and they report that they will continue to use their new knowledge in their teaching.

	<p>Tutors learnt new skills in relation to open practice, e.g. <i>“It is a challenge producing materials for publication – not knowing who will use it.”</i> (focus group)</p> <p><i>“The project helped me to understand how to design and describe material that could be or will be used by others, without my personal involvement.”</i> – tutor response to survey</p> <p><i>“Copyright law...All the people on the team are much more aware of what you can and can’t do.”</i> - comment made by project partner at meeting, 20th September, 2012</p> <p>Looking at other OERs for inspiration or adaptation led to new approaches: <i>“everybody feels that they have developed their creative thinking through this project.”</i> - comment made by project partner at meeting, 20th September, 2012</p> <p>Many tutors reported learning new technical skills by looking at others' resources: e.g. <i>“Thanks to your slides I discovered how to do transitions!”</i> or <i>“It was something new to see powerpoint with sounds!”</i> (focus group)</p> <p><i>“I enjoyed taking pictures of students [for my materials]...and uploading them. I didn’t know how to do that, but I learnt. I then tried to send the powerpoint to the students but it was too big...the files were too big. So...I asked them to go to the LanguageBox and they could find it, and they were very happy.”</i> – comment made at meeting, 20th September, 2012</p> <p><i>“I’ve learnt a lot. I say thank you very much for the project because for me it was great...now I’m so motivated to learn more.”</i> – comment made at meeting, 20th September, 2012</p> <p>In addition, the project management team delivered training in the LOC, learning object authoring tool to all of the tutors. Creating online learning materials was a new activity for many tutors, but they nonetheless went on to create suites of learning objects for the project, e.g. http://languagebox.ac.uk/3043/ or http://languagebox.ac.uk/3049/</p> <p>The team at Aston University gave training in the use of other software to their tutors, such as screencasting, who then went on to create resources using this software: e.g. http://languagebox.ac.uk/2178/</p>
Improved practice	<p>Tutors testified to the fact that preparing their work for open practice, looking at others' work and reflecting on their own had improved their own work, e.g. <i>“I will be using resources with students. It has opened my horizons and now I can see how I can improve (in technology). I’m so motivated. I want to go to workshops and use powerpoint – get new skills. I didn’t know I’d enjoy preparing materials so much.”</i> (focus group)</p> <p><i>“I know that now, I am more confident in creating my own resources, so I know...I can go and do it faster and more efficiently”</i> – focus group</p> <p>Publishing work for a wide audience liberated tutors' from institutional and curricula constraints, and they reported that this led to more creative thinking: <i>“Taking part in FAVOR was an opportunity to be creative rather than following the prescribed curriculum dictated by the institution”</i> (see external evaluator's report)</p>

New opportunities taken up	<p>The project gave all tutors the opportunity to attend conferences and to speak about their work on the project. <i>“For some this was the first opportunity to engage in conferences, talking about their experiences on the FAVOR project – not just attend conferences but present at them. And some of them have voiced to me that they would like to continue to find opportunities to do this, as a form of professional development.”</i> – Southampton final report.</p> <p>In addition to having new opportunities to speak at conferences, tutors were able to attend events and learn from other colleagues – an opportunity not often afforded to part-time staff who do not have the research budget that full-time staff may have access to.</p>
Enhanced feelings of belonging and contribution to their institution	<p><i>“It helped that we had a Newcastle Group in LanguageBox as well, because it gave everyone a sense of pride and identity”</i> – Newcastle video</p> <p><i>“It has made me feel part of the university”</i> – Southampton final report</p> <p><i>“... it was great to be able to compare your resources with those of your colleagues”</i> – UCL final report</p> <p><i>“...the opportunity to create a group on LanguageBox [created] a sense of cohesion and motivation to expand the group beyond the limits of the project”</i> – UCL final report</p>
Enhanced feelings of community	<p>One of the benefits of the project was <i>“realising that...part-time language teachers are not alone in the challenges they face; it was cathartic to be able to discuss these issues with colleagues from other institutions who are in a similar situation!”</i> – detail in Appendix C, confidential</p>
Enhanced confidence and pride in their work	<p><i>“It was rewarding...seeing tutors bloom [through working on the project].”</i> – project coordinator, focus group</p> <p><i>“I got encouragement from the team to believe in my resources.”</i> (focus group)</p> <p><i>“We'll encourage colleagues to publish once the project has ended. Initially it was difficult to know what to put into LanguageBox, but it has come into its own through our use of it...I'm sure I would be jealous of us if I looked at what we'd done now.”</i> (focus group)</p> <p><i>“My resource has got a high number of views...I was surprised...seems to be a demand – it made me think I could upload my whole lecture series.”</i> (focus group)</p> <p><i>“The mere existence of the project helped boost language professionals' confidence and well-being at work, in circumstances which are uneasy these days in higher education.”</i> – UCL final report.</p> <p><i>“It has been a reinforcing, motivating and inspiring experience. It feels good to be part of this project.”</i> – tutor response to survey</p>
Change of practice	<p>One tutor noted that the <i>“exchange of ideas and finding different approaches, had really motivated her to try out new things in her classes, so this was an example of an actual change to her practice...as a result of the FAVOR project.”</i> Another tutor reported that she had created material in a ‘reusable format’ which she could reuse herself – and that this was a new way of working for her. (Southampton final report).</p>

	<p>Many tutors reported new ways of thinking about teaching, as a result of project work: “<i>the project has started me thinking about teaching in a new, visually oriented way.</i>” (see Appendix A, evaluator’s report)</p> <p>One tutor has been inspired to create her own website through which to share her work, and noted that she is more savvy about where and how to share her work and build a ‘digital presence’. (focus group) Another tutor has started to share his screencapture videos on YouTube as well as LanguageBox, and notes that he will continue to create the videos to support his teaching: “[the project] <i>has been a very valuable experience for me.</i>” (Aston video report).</p> <p>Other tutors noted that they would certainly continue the new activity of publishing their resources through LanguageBox: “<i>I can envisage getting some ideas and maybe adding/replacing something. It will be enhancing what I’ve got planned.</i>” (focus group)</p> <p>“<i>Tutors have constituted themselves as a small community of practice as they now meet more regularly for professional inquiry and discussion and they have committed themselves to meeting regularly beyond the life-time of the project</i>” – SOAS final report</p>
Change of attitude towards open practice	<p>From sceptical beginnings, many tutors have become evangelists for open practice or using LanguageBox: “<i>We need to promote what we’ve done so it becomes more endemic and people start taking it up. It needs to be a natural thing [open practice] and this will take time. [We need to] keep the ball rolling with promotion.</i>” (focus group)</p> <p>“<i>We’ll encourage colleagues to publish once the project has ended.</i>” (focus group)</p> <p>After initial hesitation about publishing OERs, one tutor said: “<i>I am so happy to upload and let everybody else to see them [resources]. I don’t have reservations, they can go and have a look and do whatever they want with them.</i>” - focus group</p> <p>“<i>You asked me about what I liked about the project and for me it was sharing. You spend so much time doing this [creating resources]...the more people who can use it, the better.</i>” – comment at meeting, 20th September, 2012</p> <p>“<i>Engaging with open practice made me realise that there is a lot to be learned online.</i>” – comment at meeting, 20th September, 2012</p> <p>“<i>I feel that this project has progressed things [in respect of understanding open practice]...we discussed how we could edit or rethink our existing resources with a view to publication...This did change teachers perceptions of sharing their output with others.</i>” – video presentation, UCL.</p> <p>“<i>Tutors have committed themselves to materials sharing and development beyond the life-time of the project</i>” – SOAS final report</p>

Impact on institutions involved in FAVOR	Evidence
Improved understanding	All of the project coordinators reported an improved understanding of the

of the issues facing part-time hourly paid tutors	challenges and issues which part-time language tutors in HE face. They were all impressed with the enthusiasm and professionalism of the tutors and have reported their intention to find ways to continue working together and to find opportunities to engage tutors in the academic life of their institutions - beyond simply teaching. (external evaluator's report)
Enhanced collegiate feelings and connections made	<p>It is evident that bringing part-time tutors together to work on this project has enhanced collegiate feelings within partner institutions. Project coordinators have recorded how satisfying it was for colleagues to meet each other and share experiences and ideas – and how unusual this is in daily working life. Each institutional FAVOR team has made connections which are likely to endure and affect their working situation for the better. (see all final reports)</p> <p>In addition, there is a sense of belonging to the wider FAVOR team through the virtual connection of the LanguageBox.</p>
Enhanced student experience	All of the FAVOR tutors are engaged in a large amount of teaching throughout the academic year. They began to put their project knowledge and experience into practice with their students immediately by re-evaluating their teaching resources and creating new resources – and this activity continues into the new academic year. Tutors also involved students in the planning and creation of resources, which students greatly enjoyed (tutor comment, meeting, Sept 20 th). This is bound to have a positive impact on the student experience within each partner institution. Evaluation sessions with students in the next few months will capture this more clearly.
Re-consideration of practices and policies	At one institution, the project coordinator aims to establish a working party to look at creating an improved system for dealing with projects involving hourly paid, part-time tutors. (SOAS final report)
Increased engagement with open practice from other staff	All the FAVOR tutors have indicated that they intend to continue using the LanguageBox and continue open working. They have begun to disseminate their work amongst colleagues and already new people are joining the site and the institutional groups. Dissemination will continue through the 'blended OER communities.' (external evaluator's report, Appendix A).
Teaching staff with new skills and enhanced working	Tutors have testified to the amount learnt through participation in the project, and this will have an immediate impact on teaching and learning in each partner institution as tutors begin to teach in the new academic year.
Raised profile of language tutors' work	Tutors' work on the project has been reported in partner institutions' internal communications, and presented at national and European events.
Raised profile of LLAS and the lead institution, Southampton	The LLAS Centre, based at the University of Southampton, has managed the project. LLAS has publicised the project through various channels: its ebulletin, magazine, events. LLAS/project staff have also talked about the work of the project at conferences.

Impact on the wider community	Evidence
Increased pool of language learning and teaching resources	More than 340 new OERs have been published through the project including a range of types of resources for 18 different languages. These resources enhance the collective knowledge pool on language learning and have begun to be viewed and downloaded already.
Increased interest in sharing resources from other language teachers	Since the creation of a group function on LanguageBox, and the establishment of institutional groups, several other tutors have joined their institution's group and begun publishing resources under that banner (see e.g. groups for Newcastle, Southampton). Other interest groups have also been created by external teaching organisations or departments.
Dissemination of project	The project work has been disseminated widely at European and national

model and findings	events thus spreading the project model of collaboration and ideas around engaging part-time tutors. The project was represented at: EuroCALL, Gothenburg, Sweden, August 2012; EuroCALL SIG meeting for teacher education and technology, Bologna, March 2012; 7 th LLAS elearning symposium, Southampton, January 2012; 'Sustaining a Global Society: Languages of the Wider World,' 29-30 March, in London; 'Languages in Higher Education', 5-6 July, in Edinburgh; 'OER and Languages,' UCLAN, June 2012, and the Cercles conference, 6-8 September, London. Audience feedback from these events has been extremely positive and several attendees have indicated that they wish to pilot their own versions of the FAVOR project for their own tutors (e.g. the coordinator of lifelong learning tutors at Southampton found the project "inspiring" and possibly a method for engaging her own tutors in professional development. This will be explored in collaboration with LLAS).
--------------------	---

3.5 Future Impact

Future impact	Planned tracking methods
Use of FAVOR resources on LanguageBox by the wider public	LanguageBox generates internal tracking data to show views and downloads of individual resources. The site is also monitored by GoogleAnalytics and this data will be periodically checked by staff at LLAS.
Continued and expanded engagement with open practice by FAVOR tutors	Most tutors note that they intend to continue to use LanguageBox and publish their work. Some tutors intend to use LanguageBox with students. (see final reports) Usage of LanguageBox is generally monitored by LLAS, who will keep in touch informally with all FAVOR participants to track their ongoing engagement with open practice.
Expanded adoption of open practice by other language tutors	Staff at LLAS will monitor the creation of new interest groups within the LanguageBox and monitor the activity-levels of all groups.
Publication of resources on other websites	The project aims to publish the resources on institutional-partner websites and also on LLAS-run websites targeted directly at students (e.g. www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk). Tutors are also being encouraged to publish their work elsewhere too. Institutional and LLAS sites are monitored for views/downloads and LLAS will keep in touch with FAVOR participants.
Increased interest from prospective students in learning languages at university	Newly-created transition resources will be published on LLAS's two websites aimed at new students (www.whystudylanguages.ac.uk and http://www.studyinglanguages.ac.uk/). Resources will also be promoted through the Routes into Languages network (a project which LLAS manages which promotes language learning in schools.) The Routes project has its own monitoring and evaluation processes which will give LLAS staff an indication of how useful and popular the resources are.
Adoption of a FAVOR-type model by other institutions	A generic 'how-to' guide to setting up this kind of 'blended OER' project will be created by staff at LLAS, and it is intended that this will be piloted (on a non-funded basis) with a different group of hourly-paid tutors at Southampton. At conferences, senior language staff outwith the project have mentioned a desire to trial a mini-FAVOR project in their own institutions, and this will be followed up by LLAS staff to find out how it is implemented and with what success.
Expansion of FAVOR project to Europe	LLAS is planning to work with colleagues from the project (coordinators and tutors) and in other EU institutions to run an EU-wide version of FAVOR. We are currently formulating a plan for this.

4 Conclusions

General conclusions:

- **Open practice offers an effective vehicle for professional development of part-time, hourly-paid language tutors.** Over a relatively short period of time, tutors engaging in open practice through the project were able to develop professionally by learning new skills, methods and approaches, and by making contact with new colleagues, sharing ideas and reflecting on their own work. Open practice is a low-cost option, available to all to engage with at times, locations and levels of their own choosing, and which requires no third party support to make engagement possible (if using a community-based repository like LanguageBox). It allows for simultaneous affiliations to particular institutions and also to other organisations or wider interest groups. These factors make it particularly relevant to the working practices of part-time tutors and tutors realised this: "*open practice is a way to work as a teacher, sharing not only resources but ideas, opinions with other teachers and learn from each other.*" (tutor comment)
- **Engaging with open practice can enhance teaching quality.** The experience of FAVOR tutors demonstrates that the critical self-evaluation inherent in preparing materials for open publication has led to improvements and changes in tutors' teaching practice. Publishing work as OERs can be empowering and motivating as tutors share materials and ideas, and see how their work is appreciated by a wider audience of viewers and downloaders. In addition, tutors have adopted new skills and ideas from seeing the OERs of others, and many have also lost their reluctance about using third party materials in their own teaching after realising the quality of OERs available. This reflection on teaching materials and activities inevitably leads to improved practice.
- **'Blended' communities of practice enhance and maximise the benefits of open practice.** We have found that a mixture of face-to-face, local community-building and online, wider community-building is powerfully effective when fostering communities of open practice. Tutors unanimously reported that it was pleasing and motivating to be able to meet their colleagues to discuss how they approached the publication and creation of open resources. At the same time, situating this local activity within a wider, online community of practice was additionally motivating. This 'blend' of offline and online seemed to enhance the impact of the project on tutors by encouraging them, motivating them and boosting confidence.
- **Part-time, hourly-paid staff constitute a considerable reservoir of knowledge, experience which could be utilised better by HEIs.** Part-time tutors bring a range of experience to their teaching which is often gained from working outside of the education sector either as part of their employment portfolio, or as prior experience. Many also work across several institutions. This means that it is often difficult to incorporate research or professional development activities into their lives. However, this wealth of valuable experience tends to be unrecognised and therefore unexploited by institutions. This knowledge has great potential to enhance the student learning experience (a key aim of all universities) through offering insights into how different disciplines can be used in the work place. Staff working across different institutions can also provide alternative perspectives on teaching methods, curricula and pedagogy. In addition, many part-time tutors have an unwitting ambassadorial role for their institutions, as they often teach on lifelong learning programmes which recruit adult learners from outside universities. In this way, tutors' teaching has a direct impact on the wider public and on their impressions of particular institutions and of universities in general.
- **Part-time, hourly-paid staff relish the opportunity to improve their practice, learn new skills and make contributions to the academic life of their institution.** The project has demonstrated that such tutors are enthusiastic to develop themselves professionally and will embrace such opportunities. The FAVOR tutors grasped this opportunity for professional development and of their own volition, extended it by challenging themselves to go beyond

the bounds of project expectations. In this context, we feel that a small amount of resource and endeavour would have a significant impact and improve job satisfaction and overall performance. Giving professional development to hourly-paid and part-time language tutors has an immediate impact on teaching and learning because of the high number of teaching hours such tutors often have: language tutors are able to put their knowledge into practice immediately with students (as many FAVOR tutors are doing as the new term starts). Tutors working on the project have welcomed the opportunity to represent their institutions, as this gives a feeling of inclusion in institutional life which they do not often feel.

- **Institutional policies play a crucial role in enabling part-time and hourly paid staff to access professional development opportunities**, either through participation in small projects, conducting their own research, taking part in staff training or getting involved in open practice. This project has demonstrated that institutional policies have a huge impact on part-time tutors' capacity and willingness to get involved in work outside of their standard teaching contracts. There were five institutions involved in the FAVOR project and all of them experienced (to a greater or lesser degree) issues with how their institutions deal with part-time tutors. Institutions create situations which make it difficult for part-time tutors to engage with professional development: from the issuing of intensive teaching-only contracts, or alternatively, 'zero-hour' contracts which offer work 'as and when' it is available; the lack of working space often offered to part-time tutors within institutions; a lack of systems to pay part-time staff for work other than teaching; a lack of time and funds devoted to part-time tutors' development, and other bureaucratic eccentricities which serve to reinforce the notion that part-time tutors are somehow not part of the institution which employs them. The hunger with which tutors embraced this project speaks loudly of the lack of recognition and support they typically encounter, as one tutor noted: *"The mere existence of the project helped boost language professionals' confidence and well-being at work, in circumstances which are uneasy these days in higher education."* Correspondingly, it is no coincidence that the FAVOR institutions which offered their tutors the most support on this project are likely to reap the most benefit from engaging with it, and realise the greatest impact on staff and students. The external evaluator noted that the benefits and impact of the project risk being lost without continuing institutional support and recognition. Finding ways to engage and incentivise part-time tutors in academic work outside teaching is clearly of benefit to tutors, students and institutions.
- **Open practice offers a key benefit to languages.** Many tutors working on the project teach what are termed as 'less widely used languages' (in a UK context), for example, Hungarian, Finnish, Amharic, Slovak. These tutors noted that open sharing of their resources offers a means and a space for their languages to be heard in an environment dominated by the main European languages. They emphasised a need for more 'lwl' practitioners to share their work to widen the pool of available resources.

Conclusions relevant to JISC:

- **The timing and length of projects should be considered carefully when issuing funding calls.** The short turnaround time for this project made it difficult for many part-time tutors to commit to it – a longer project life would have allowed tutors to engage with the project at different points in its cycle and would have suited their working patterns better. In addition, the timing of the project from October to October meant that key project activities coincided with heavy institutional workloads (beginning of the new academic year), and that student evaluation of new materials was not possible at the close of the project.
- **Encourage users new to working with OERs to focus on practice rather than technology.** The focus of the FAVOR project was on the activities inherent in open practice, not on the technology required to make it happen or the affordances of our OERs. We made use of a platform which is three years old and has been used in a variety of different OER projects before. It underwent some technical tweaks during the project, but otherwise has not altered very much. While it is important to constantly review the affordances of repositories and sharing sites to ensure that they are serving their communities in the best way, we find

that focussing on the technology used to deliver OERs can be a distraction. There are a proliferation of excellent OER-sharing sites available, from community sites to national or institutional sites and these should all be considered and used before money is spent creating new platforms. The features and availability of excellent OERs are only a part of how we can benefit from the broader, more exciting world of open practice.

5 Recommendations

General recommendations:

- **The Higher Education community should find ways to recognise reward and support the work of part-time, hourly paid staff.** This includes finding incentives for such staff to engage in professional development activities and in project, research or other work which benefits their institution, alongside their teaching. One project coordinator noted: “...self-motivation can only serve up to a point because of all the demands on people’s time...we need to continue to find ways to provide external incentives and not just heavily rely on part-time teachers’ professionalism, which we all recognise, and willingness to improve themselves.” It is the institutions themselves which would reap the benefits of supporting their part-time staff better, through an enhanced student experience and improved staff satisfaction and performance.
- **Institutions should consider reviewing the processes they have in place to employ, pay and manage part-time, hourly paid staff.** Many such staff find it difficult to take part in activities outside of their standard teaching contracts because of bureaucratic obstacles within their institutions. Institutions should work to reduce these obstacles, where possible, in order to make better use of tutors’ knowledge and experience.
- **Institutions should consider reviewing their policies on open practice and find ways to build it into academic practice.** While it is acknowledged that not everyone will wish to engage with open practice, this project has shown that using it as a vehicle for staff development and engagement of part-time staff can be effective and motivating. Tutors on the project noted that if open practice was more embedded into institutional teaching, it would be easier to engage with, but otherwise it can be seen as a “luxury or an extra thing to do, when you are already busy.” (tutor comment). If institutions can find ways of integrating open practice into the work of their staff and students, and incentives to engage (perhaps through blended communities of practice) then the benefits of open working will have more chance to be realised (e.g. enhanced digital literacy, collaborative working, promotion of teaching work, enhanced pedagogical practice). Open practice does not simply happen – it has to be encouraged.

Recommendations for the wider language-teaching community:

- **Language teachers should be encouraged to engage with open practice.** Open practice offers opportunities for language teachers to share their work and improve their own practice through reviewing and reusing the work of others. It increases the pool of high quality, authentic resources available which is a particular benefit in a discipline which is in constant search of new materials over a range of topics. Open working also offers the opportunity for teachers of less widely taught languages to share their work and make contacts with other teachers working in their disciplines. Typically, such tutors are geographically dispersed and so online sharing offers particular benefits.

Recommendations for the JISC:

- **Promote blended OER communities as a way of embedding open practice into academic working.** The method of creating ‘blended’ (offline and online) communities of open practice has worked effectively for this project and is a low-cost way of team-building and maximising the benefits of using and publishing OERs.

6 Implications for the future

This project has been successful in its intention to give part-time, hourly-paid staff a voice through open resources/open practice. It is clear to us that momentum needs to be maintained within the participating institutions in order to fully realise the benefits gained from the project – and whether this happens will depend significantly on institutions' current attitudes and policies regarding support for their part-time staff. There are positive indications from all of the partner institutions that project work and outcomes will continue in some form. In addition, learning about the work of the project has been inspiring to others outside of the project team and it is hoped and expected that the 'FAVOR' model of working will be adopted in the future, in other institutions. However, we are under no illusions that this is a difficult time for the higher education sector in general, and in particular for language departments, which are frequently subject to harsh cuts and reductions. Language staff are increasingly subject to fractional contracts; however, open practice (and the FAVOR model) have shown that it is possible to find ways of rewarding, recognising and engaging staff on such contracts in activities which are of benefit to institutions, but are also low in cost. Open practice needs to be encouraged for it to take hold and for its benefits to be realised, and it is within institutional communities of practice that this can begin to happen most effectively.

Sustainability of project outputs:

The LanguageBox is hosted and maintained by the University of Southampton and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. This is an open site which anyone can join, and any registered user can comment on others' resources and create their own interest groups.

LLAS coordinates ongoing projects which promote language learning and teaching in schools and in Higher Education, and the LanguageBox and FAVOR resources will form part of our continuing work with our community. We also intend to seek further funding to extend our experience working with language teachers and open practice to Europe. LLAS will also work with colleagues at Southampton to pilot FAVOR models of working with other groups of teachers.

Long-term project contact

The project manager, Kate Borthwick K.Borthwick@soton.ac.uk and other staff at LLAS llas@soton.ac.uk. The language tutor community of practice exists on www.languagebox.ac.uk

7 References

Borthwick, K., Arrebola, M., Millard, D., Howard, Y. (2009) 'Learning to share in the Language Box: a community approach to developing an open content repository for teachers and learners,' in proceedings, EuroCALL Conference 2009, Valencia, Spain

Coleman, J. 2004, Modern Languages in British universities: past and present, Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, 3(2), 147–162.

Howarth, P. 2011, Language Centres and Academic Departments. Available online: <http://www.ucml.ac.uk/shapingthefuture/identity>

Klapper, J. 2006, Understanding and Developing Good Practice: Language Teaching in Higher Education. London: CILT. [page 6]

8 Appendices (optional)

Appendix A: external evaluator's report

Appendix A

FAVOR Project – evaluation report

By Jules Newman

Executive summary

The FAVOR project, led by the LLAS team in Southampton, in collaboration with project partners in Newcastle, Aston, UCL SSEES, SOAS and Southampton, aimed (1) to engage hourly-paid part-time language tutors in the preparation and release of OER resources. (2) These resources were to be targeted at different HE-levels and potential students of a language at HE level and shared through the existing LanguageBox open repository. (3) The project also aimed to raise the awareness of the work of hourly-paid language teachers within their own institutions and (4) provide specialist training and other opportunities to the language teachers not normally available to them. Finally, (5) a central objective to all of the above aims was the creation of an online community that 'can offer mutual and ongoing support for the development and sharing of language teaching materials'.

The external evaluation of the project through online questionnaires and follow-up interviews with partners and tutors, meetings and discussions not only confirmed that all the project's aims had been achieved beyond the expectations set by the project team at the beginning of the project but also highlighted a number of results that deserve special attention in the conclusions and recommendations to be drawn from the FAVOR project. One particularly exciting finding from FAVOR is the emergence of what could be best described as 'Blended OER Communities': each of the five partner institutions recruited at least five hourly paid-time language tutors - although some tutors knew each other at the beginning of the project, this was typically not the case - and sought to organise face-to-face group meetings to discuss the project, ideas and share good practice. Each institution involved in the project, also set up a Group page on LanguageBox, with tutors' individual profiles listed on that page. Although not every institution was successful in having regular meetings with all the tutors (predominantly due to time constraints/other commitments of individuals), those who did have described the emergence of communities that have supported each other in the face-to-face environment and published their resources online. There is a strong desire among tutors and partners to keep these communities going, with plans to extend the involvement in LanguageBox to other tutors within the institution. My main recommendation to the project team is to facilitate, if possible, to keep this momentum going.

A particular pleasure of the review was to access and view the resources that have been created and uploaded as part of FAVOR, and I would like to congratulate all the partners and tutors on the engaging, high-quality materials that they shared on LanguageBox. What particularly distinguishes them from many other OERs that I have seen in the past, is that they are 'purpose-made' and with a specific audience in mind. Having learned from the tutors that even their existing 'repurposed' materials had often undergone considerable

changes, what is remarkable is that whilst these resources have had to undergo review to make them comply with CC requirements, they have maintained the spirit of their creator and the focus on the 'end-user'. While in other cases, resources that have been clearly originally developed for a face-to-face audience and then made available as an OER, often lack the narrative and context to make them feel applicable to the user, the FAVOR OERs 'spoke' to me (and made me think that it's time I tried to learn another language!).

CASE STUDY: From OER Zero to OER Hero!

Despite her considerable experience of language teaching, tutor A was completely unfamiliar with e-learning and OER. She became involved in the project when another tutor encouraged her to take part and found the training provided by the project team particularly useful: '*We were trained to produce online material based on the LOC tool or material which we would design and upload. We were also told how to protect copyright and how to create pedagogically valuable material.*' While she was getting more used to idea of the technology and copyright, a concern about sharing her materials remained initially '*I was hesitant at the start, as I liked to hide behind my material. I was worried about negative comments and that my resources needed to be perfect*'. Meeting up with the other tutors and talking about their learning materials, proved both reassuring and inspiring: '*The best part was the sharing of ideas, seeing how others tackled certain topics. I tend to always create the same kind of exercises. Interacting with other showed me different approaches*'. Since starting to interact with LanguageBox, A has received positive comments from another LanguageBox user on her resources but also repurposed a number of resources uploaded by tutors from her institution: '*I teach a lot, so I always need new ideas and exercises. The fact that I can change already existing exercises (as long as I attribute them correctly) and adapt them to my needs is great*'.

I would like to finish this executive summary by echoing the suggestion expressed by many of the tutors, that the LanguageBox and the FAVOR resources now need to be promoted to the audiences they were created for, and I sincerely hope that there is opportunity for the tutors to be involved in these activities.

1. Introduction

The section below details the key results from the external evaluation of FAVOR. The findings have been grouped by the wider Focus Areas as defined by the UKOER Phase 3 evaluation framework (<https://oersynth.pbworks.com/w/page/50612432/UKOER%20phase%203%20evaluation%20framework>) and project-specific questions related to each focus area.

2. Evidence

- Online Surveys for (a) Project Partners and (b) Tutors [August 2012]
- Telephone Interviews with Partners and Tutors [September/October 2012]
- Informal discussion with project team and attendance of Skype meetings [May –September 2012]
- Web statistics and Analysis of LanguageBox Repository [September/October 2012]
-

3. Evaluation foci

Focus 1 Culture and Practice: Has the Community engaged with the project? Has the project initiated a community of sharing amongst part-time language tutors?

- Although tutors mentioned that they had looked at some existing materials on LanguageBox, there was not a lot of evidence of tutors being influenced or inspired by existing materials.
- However, a number of tutors pointed to the usefulness of certain tools and technologies, for example the LOC tool or use of video/audio recordings - not just relevant to LanguageBox but general development as a teacher
- Lack of exploring resources on LanguageBox appears to be more connected to time issues than sense that other materials might not be useful/inspiring: tutors mentioned that they would have liked to have had the opportunity to look at other resources in more detail to determine whether this is something to point their students to/reuse themselves
- Only a small number of tutors had received comments from other LanguageBox users on their resource though some partners encouraged their tutors to look at each other's work and also gave them feedback on their resources
- Talking to tutors about the commenting function, it was clear that most of them would really value receiving feedback from other tutors and students on their OER, though even in the limited number of cases where tutors had used others' OERs, they had not written comments themselves, without any specific reason on why they had not given feedback. It seemed as if they were unsure about how to use the comment function most appropriately.

- It was clear from talking to tutors that they had invested a huge amount of time and effort in the creation of the resources - whether these had been created from scratch or based on existing material - far more than they would have anticipated in the beginning. However, only a small minority felt that the time they had invested was not reflected properly in the payment received for their work. In fact, the majority said that they had been more than adequately remunerated and a few said that they would have taken part in the project without any financial gain.
- Training (Technology): The majority of tutors took up the opportunity to receive formal training (in the form of a workshop or group session) in how to prepare and upload resources to LanguageBox and how to use the LOC tool, though some had to rely on informal training through their project co-ordinator or communication with the Southampton team. All tutors I talked to had succeeded in uploading resources to LanguageBox but some felt that they had not mastered the upload process as quickly and easily as they would have anticipated.
- Training (Copyright) for some tutors, this proved a real eye opener, as they had been completely unaware of the implications of taking images/graphics etc for use in their teaching material . Taking part in the FAVOR project has completely changed their practice including for face-to-face teaching, in their preparation of learning materials.
- For some, FAVOR has highlighted copyright issues they were previously unaware of and that have affected their way of creating learning materials for the classroom as well as LanguageBox, in particular, the use of images. Where before, some tutors would use images from a range of sources without considering the copyright issues involved, a number reported that now they take photographs themselves or go to specific sites to look for images/graphics they know can be freely used.
- Training (OER) Only a few tutors reported being familiar with OER or even e-learning before the start of the project, which makes their dedication and enthusiasm even more remarkable. For several, it was the LLAS visits and presentations that ultimately convinced them to take part in FAVOR - coupled with the good support received from the project co-ordinators (which most tutors commented on) to keep them engaged and interested in the project.
- There were a few tutors who either had not received training on the LOC tool or had not had the opportunity to use it for the creation of resources themselves but who indicated that this was something they wanted to learn/use in future

- Emergence of Blended OER Communities: where tutors have had regular group meetings and discussions with peers about the project, communities have emerged: while they plan, share training and good practice off-line, resources are shared via the LanguageBox and affiliated with the Institution's 'Group Profile.' A further investigation of this phenomenon might not only help to provide a better understanding of OER communities but also shed light on the reuse/repurposing of materials: there are a few examples where tutors from the same institution have repurposed each other's materials (particularly exercises that have been translated).One reason for this might be trust (in knowing the other person) and quality assurance (by reusing the material of a peer/someone from the same institution).

'Open practice is a way to work as a teacher, sharing not only resources but ideas, opinions with other teachers and learn from each other' (Tutor, Southampton)

Focus 2 RELEASING AND USING OERs IS NEWLY-CREATED MATERIAL APPEALING AND PEDAGOGICALLY SOUND? HAS THE NUMBER OF RESOURCES IN THE LANGUAGE BOX REPOSITORY INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY?

- Mix of existing material and creation of new materials - noticeable that preparation of new materials frequently has meant an opportunity to learn new skills (eg software, video, audio recording) for tutors
- Majority of tutors were able to use existing materials to add to LanguageBox though some reported that they had to transfer their materials into completely different formats (eg where length of lesson or type of material was not suitable to OER) meaning a similar workload to creating items from scratch
- Benefit of Creativity: In institutional teaching, language teachers have to follow curriculum prescribed to them but on LanguageBox, they are able to present their materials how they like - eg opportunity to focus on cultural aspects rather than just grammatical exercises
- Interesting Involvement of students in creation of OERs: it was fascinating to hear how some tutors had involved their students in the creation of the new OERs they produced (eg <http://languagebox.ac.uk/3030/>; <http://languagebox.ac.uk/2178/>)
- Quality Issues: Some tutors reported worries about sharing their resources on the LanguageBox in that the material might not be good enough. A few mentioned that they would like to see a more formal review process to indicate the quality of a resource (similar to a peer review) and one tutor felt that other resources in their language were of poorer quality than their own.

- Copyright Issues: some tutors advised that they had felt worried about the fact that they were sharing their teaching materials with the whole world. One tutor expressed a worry that some materials could be potentially misused as student assignments.
- Only a limited number of tutors had had an opportunity to test their materials with students as the time frame of the project clashed with the timetable/summer holidays; meaning that in many cases the material could not be formally integrated into the teaching plan. However, the overwhelming majority of tutors have plans for using LanguageBox in the coming year as part of their teaching, so will direct students to the site then [some were not aware that students could just click on link to site and would not necessarily have to log into LanguageBox to access materials)
- Tutors plan to use LanguageBox within and outside of the classroom: some will ask students to view materials in class, others will give them links to specific resources to revisit material covered in class or to undertake exercise following a lesson/in preparation of next lesson -this is another example of how LanguageBox has had practice changing impact beyond the life of the project.
- A few tutors mentioned that they would put their resource links to LanguageBox on Blackboard for students - meaning, a closed, institution-only site is being used to direct learners to the exact opposite - an open, accessible repository! However, the benefits of LanguageBox as an open repository compared to Blackboard have been noticed by tutors: especially where tutors have students without a university log in, LanguageBox is the perfect solution for sharing materials.
- Although tutors were generally enthusiastic about the use of LanguageBox, OERs and e-learning, a number made the point that the materials could only serve to enhance language learning, not replace traditional face-to-face interaction with a tutor.
- Would be really useful to have a formal evaluation exercise that explores the use of the materials by students/learners

*Taking part (in FAVOR) was an opportunity to be 'creative' rather than following the prescribed curriculum dictated by the institution' (Tutor, SOAS)
'I want to expand the collections that I created and maybe keep uploading my conference PowerPoint presentations. I think it is good to have a high and active professional profile online. LanguageBox is handy for student-teacher interaction: students can download my handouts from LanguageBox.' (Tutor, UCL)*

Focus 3 PROCESSES FOR SUSTAINABILITY Has the project work of part-time language tutors been recognised in their institution?

- The level of support for FAVOR and the involvement of hourly-paid part-time language tutors appears to have varied widely between the institutions and I suspect that there will be similar discrepancies when it comes to recognition of the project work of the FAVOR tutors. However, all the project partners, responsible for co-ordinating the project work at their institutions, not only spoke highly of the enthusiasm and input of the tutors to the project but also revealed that through FAVOR they had gotten a better understanding of language teachers, their work but also their situation within a HE setting.
- Although the FAVOR project work undertaken by the tutors might not have been recognised in equal measures across the partner institutions at the time of writing this report, there are some immensely promising indicators that this could happen in future: all the tutors interviewed as part of the evaluation have indicated an interest to continue using LanguageBox , and the majority have specific plans to use the repository with their students. Furthermore, several have mentioned their involvement in FAVOR to colleagues and encouraged them to visit the LanguageBox repository. If the commitment of the existing tutors and the interest of tutors not currently involved could be demonstrated through training workshops and good practice presentations within the department, it would undoubtedly lead to increased recognition across the institution: of course, it would be wonderful if this would mean further opportunities for tutors to represent their institution and encouragement to explore new, creative ways of teaching but even if the outcome was just to produce guidance material on copyright (quite a few tutors told me that they been rather unfamiliar with this and astounded to find out that their learning materials contained content that breached copyright) in learning materials to be shared with all the institution's language tutors, FAVOR would have had a lasting impact.
- ***'One positive aspect was definitely the closer relationship I developed with part-time colleagues and the pleasure it has been to see them build up their confidence and start getting them involved in the broader community of teaching practitioners' (Institutional Partner)***
- ***We have mentioned (FAVOR) to other staff in the institution who have been involved in other funded OER projects. We have also shown other teachers the FAVOR materials in LanguageBox. (Institutional Partner)***

Focus 4 Impacts & benefits - benefits, and appreciation of benefits by, stakeholders, institutions, students

- Language Teachers specifically highlighted the collaboration with other tutors in their institution as well as the chance to contribute to a 'research project' as particularly rewarding aspects of their involvement with FAVOR.
- The opportunity to undertake 'self-development' through learning new software tools, exploring the preparation of teaching materials in different formats and receiving feedback from project partners and fellow tutors on their work, has been a further key benefit that language teachers reported widely
- A number of tutors were also involved in representing the project at conferences/workshops and enjoyed the opportunity to network with tutors/partners from other FAVOR institutions
- Quite a few tutors also remarked on the usefulness of the profile function and that through the group function, they could show their affiliation to their institution, too.
- Tutors involved in less widely taught language programmes clearly appreciated the opportunity to act as ambassador of their language and expose it to a greater 'audience' - however, they also tended to be more 'demanding' about what should happen next: wider promotion of LanguageBox within UK and overseas, involving schools and other organisations in attracting new users to the repository

'The project has given me a good opportunity to explore to use modern technology to create teaching resources and also a chance to make language teaching staff within the school closer. As I was an hourly-paid teacher when I started the project, I had never had the chance to share or contribute my work to other teachers or prospective students' (Tutor, Newcastle)

'It was stimulating to be involved in something different from teaching but related to it. Being involved in the project made me feel part of the University. And also to see that somebody appreciates my work was rewarding' (Tutor, Southampton)

'I would say the impact (on department/institution) was very small considering it is early stages and it only involved a small portion of the staff. However, the participants were very positive about it and I think this could have some positive ramifications in our general practice. It will also encourage colleagues to be less 'weary' towards OERs'. (Institutional Partner)

4. Conclusions

OER Community

The three Phases of JISC OER programmes and the number as well as the diversity of projects they have attracted, are strong indicators of the interest

of the UK HE community and the applicability across the subject range. JISC has captured the lessons learned at the end of each phase to inform the focus and evaluation of the next phase but this would have not always helped new institutions/projects to avoid some of the more time-consuming aspects likely to occur such as creation of platforms, design and implementation of project-specific tools/features and preparation of training materials. LLAS was represented in Phase One through HumBox and provided advice to the SWAPBox team throughout the project. The LanguageBox repository which was used to deposit materials for FAVOR was developed in 2008, using EdShare software (which was also used for Hum Box and SWAPBox). The benefits to FAVOR as a result of the vast expertise of the project team, the ability to draw on an existing repository but also make feature changes to it quickly (thanks to the features that had been introduced and tested in HumBox and SWAPBox). While the availability of the repository from the beginning of the project was clearly one considerable advantage to the project, the key message that emerged from partner and tutor feedback alike, was how inspiring, motivating and useful the training and support from the LLAS had been in overcoming challenges along the way. This was evidenced by the number of tutors who singled out presentations from the project team as convincing them to take part in the FAVOR project and partners and tutors who remarked on the fast and efficient support from LLAS on any project issues raised with them. I believe that this positive experience throughout the project, is a key reason why the vast majority of tutors are not just planning to continue using LanguageBox but are planning to get further training, eg on the LOC tool.

'Repurposing' existing open platforms and features from previous projects not only afforded the project the opportunity to upload resources early on but the project team was also able to draw on their experience from OER Phases 1 and 2.

Institutions

While much of the success of FAVOR can be directly traced to the enthusiasm and dedication of individual project partners and tutors, the attitude of individual institutions towards the project with regard to (a) OER and (b) involvement of hourly paid language tutors has had a definite impact on the project, both positively and negatively. While there were several positive examples of how institutions had encouraged and supported the participation of language tutors, and had promoted the project itself at a senior level early on, there were also a small number of challenges reported, where the lack of institutional support for the project was threatening to be detrimental to the involvement of project partner and tutors. Despite the overall positive support from the institutions for FAVOR, there is a risk that the benefits and the potential to be gained from the project might not have much impact beyond the project length and outside the tutors already

involved, if there is no 'formal' follow-up such training and dissemination sessions by the FAVOR project partners/tutors for other colleagues within the institution, and the permission to make use of LanguageBox as part of the teaching or other activities.

Despite multiple challenges (to partners and tutors) FAVOR and its aims have been embraced by the institutional sites, albeit with varying levels of institutional support

Language Tutors

During the interviews with the partners and language tutors themselves, it soon became apparent that not only might they have incredibly heavy workloads at short notice, but that most had been unfamiliar with the concept of OER at the start of the project and a few were not even routinely using tools such as PowerPoint in their classroom teaching. To agree to take part in the project therefore meant not a mere taking on of extra work but first of all, familiarisation with OER and learning of new technological and other skills for a considerable proportion of the tutors.

However, several of the interviewees commented that it was that lack of existing knowledge as well as the opportunity to get to know and work with colleagues within their department that enticed tutors to take part, and led to the depositing of such a great number of engaging quality resources. It is important to stress the support of the LLAS management team and the local institutional partners at this stage again, as tutors spoke highly of their enthusiasm and tireless effort to empower them through the provision of training and feedback.

The key conclusions to be drawn from the surveys and interviews with tutors and partners are as follows:

- Rather than 'just' repurposing existing teaching materials, the tutors demonstrated considerable time investment and creativity to develop engaging, 'user-friendly' resources. Many had specifically gone out of their 'comfort zone' to prepare resources in a different format to what they would usually do in face-to-face teaching and/or using new technology. Nevertheless, there was also considerable self-criticism on display as to what could make their own resources better and several tutors remarked that they would like to receive further training to explore new methods/formats in future resources. One could argue that, perhaps, there is a greater perceived need/appreciation among this group to showcase oneself than perhaps for an academic to whom different channels of dissemination are open/and who possibly rates research less highly than teaching.

- There is clear evidence of community building - though this has mainly taken place outside of LanguageBox for direct interaction between tutors and restricted to each institutional site rather across institutions. However, the Group Function on LanguageBox with individual tutors listed as individual members affiliated to an institution has reflected individuals' shared experience/effort. Such 'Blended OER Communities'(who meet up face-to-face but work to create and publish OERs under a joint profile online) would offer huge potential for further investigation through future events/projects.
- All tutors plan to continue their use of LanguageBox and it would be important to follow this up in three-four months to capture whether they have, how they have used it and what kind of feedback they have received
- Whilst appreciative of the opportunity to take part in an 'academic' project, many success criteria that tutors mentioned in relation to the FAVOR project are practical rather than theoretical: how many downloads have resources had; can profile and display of resources lead to new work; can Group page and resources lead to a rise in the number of students - suggesting they might prefer to see a greater focus on *marketing/promoting* LanguageBox rather than *disseminating* FAVOR.

'The project has started me thinking about teaching in a new, visually oriented way' (Tutor, Aston)

5. Recommendations

- **OER Community:** This project has really demonstrated how OER Release projects do not necessarily require new platforms or new features to be developed as part of the project but instead can draw on the experience of previous projects. While I don't know whether there is going to be a 'Phase 4' OER call by JISC, if there is, I would like to suggest that rather than 'buddying' up projects taking place simultaneously, an effort should be made to try and get teams/project managers from the previous phase involved as 'mentors' to new projects as relevant.
- **Institutions:** Through their other commitments, language tutors often have an exposure and knowledge of language community activities and needs that are not easily available to HE institutions. There are several potential benefits that the institution could gain from this expertise, such informing institutional strategy, the development and review of language courses, or the recruitment of new students. Opportunities should be explored of how language tutors could act as ambassadors for the HE, eg to promote

individual languages to schools and colleges. As many institutions continue to use 'closed' repositories like Blackboard, LanguageBox would offer the ideal platform to showcase individual tutors, languages and departments. Many of the resources that I accessed, struck me not only as highly engaging but also as perfectly suited to appeal to potential students.

- **Language-Tutors:**

On the basis of my external evaluation activities and the conclusions I have drawn from my communication with project partners and tutors, as well as viewing many of the resources placed on LanguageBox as part of FAVOR, I would like to recommend that over the next few months some of the following activities should be considered and where possible, funded, to further the understanding around findings that have emerged from FAVOR:

-**Blended Community:** support the wish of many of the tutors to continue meeting face-to-face to discuss opportunities to use the LanguageBox and share good practice with each other/identify training needs - consider organising workshops to engage other tutors in the use of LanguageBox

-**Students:** Many tutors would have liked to have tested their resources with students but were unable to do so due to the timescale of the project. Most have indicated that they will point students to LanguageBox resources in the starting term. Offering some tutors the opportunity to formally evaluate their resources with students, summarise the feedback received and prepare a small number of additional resources on the basis of the comments/suggestions from 'live' users would not only provide valuable insights into how materials could be used but might also lend itself to a further dimension of the blended OER community: the integration of learners.

-**Peer Review:** Many tutors expressed an interest in looking at other materials on LanguageBox more closely with a view to reusing them, though hardly any of them have had the chance to do so due to a lack of time. Likewise, many tutors would welcome comments on their resources but none have added comments themselves to other materials - there appears to be a degree of uncertainty of how this function could be used most appropriately. I could envisage a formal review activity involving the tutor groups looking at the output of another tutor group and engaging with the materials.

-**Promotion:** Tutors have expressively stated that they would like to see LanguageBox promoted more widely. One possible quick and easy way to achieve this could be to ask tutors with profiles on their HE institution webpage to mention their involvement with the FAVOR project, with a link to LanguageBox

I would love to [engage with LanguageBox further] as it would enable me to further develop materials for the language I teach and hopefully, to make me more aware of the type of materials that can be useful for teaching. (Tutor, UCL)

'I would like to be involved in more OER projects and/or in follow up of the FAVOR Project. I think it will improve my knowledge and my experience'. I am willing to help others to create OER'. (Tutor, Southampton)