My life on the OER ladder: a personal history of language teachers and openness

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The Ladder

The OER Engagement Ladder

The OER Engagement Ladder. ©2012 Joanna Wild, University of Oxford, CC BY
Questions for the day:

Where are you on the ladder?

Where do you want to be?

Where do you feel happy to be?
The first rung: how?

Technical considerations, e.g.

- Interoperability
- Formats
- SCORM compliance, content packaging
- Metadata

‘Sharing’ required time and devotion just to get started.
Why create and share OERs?

Early fears:
- Copyright fears
- ownership of materials
- loss of face/public embarrassment

Met by positives:
- pleasure in sharing
- feedback from colleagues
- new audiences
- reaffirmed confidence in teaching work
- learnt new skills and enhanced pedagogical knowledge
Need:
- Lack of CPD training
- Lack of resources and reliant on own materials
- Few opportunities to share practice; isolated working

Impact:
- Open to ‘open’
- Increased willingness to reflect on teaching
- New skills

Learning: engaging in OEP can enhance pedagogical knowledge
FAVOR project

- part-time, hourly-paid staff
- particular challenges: fewer CPD opportunities; reduced sense of belonging; working across several institutions; limited working space onsite
- 5 universities, c.30 language tutors representing 17 languages
- publishing existing work and creating new OERs
OEP has the potential to enhance practice:
- New skills acquired; enhanced confidence; improved digital literacy; improved practice through self-reflection

Also change of practice:
- New approaches and skills adopted
- Motivation to try out new methods

“...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.” – FAVOR tutor
The importance of community

- Community of Practice gives context to sharing
- trust in the offline community is extended online
- focus on the activity of sharing
- supported and encouraged
- sense of individual contribution to a wider group
- blended communities of open practice
Blended cycle of support

**Offline community**
- Gave direct support
- Peer review
- Knowledge exchange
- Local networking
- Learnt new skills

**Online community**
- Networking further afield
- Ideas, inspiration, encouragement
- Knowledge exchange
- Peer review

Boosted confidence to ‘go open’ and in general

More likely to continue ??
OpenLIVES project:
• Digitisation and open publication of research data
• Creation of open educational resources based on the material
• Embedding of the material, OERs and open practice in ongoing teaching across 3 universities

By the close of the project:
- a new module; student research; student-created language OERs
Students’ views

“It has given us...an opportunity to do our own primary research and genuinely engage with the issues we are studying. Having more academic and creative control over our own education is extremely stimulating and motivating...” – student participant

“We are really proud [of our work on the project].” – student participant
OpenLIVES findings

- Open collaboration enables cross-institutional working
- a response to increasingly competitive environment of HE
- “It has made me realise that students can really be partners in research...” – tutor, Portsmouth University
- “I feel more confident as a practitioner; I think I can offer better education and better learning and teaching to my students.” – Tutor, Leeds University
- rebuts the notion that using OERs will lead to homogeneity of student experience
Where do you want to be on the OER ladder?

…keep the glorious tradition of language teachers and OER alive!
Useful links

MOOCs: The Maturing of the MOOC (published 18 September, 2013)  
http://www.obhe.ac.uk/documents/view_details?id=933

Case Studies of openness in the language classroom:  
http://research-publishing.net/publications/2013-beaven-comas-quinn-sawhill/

COERLL (US language OERs): http://coerll.utexas.edu/coerll/

Watch out for an upcoming special issue on OERs of the journal Computer Assisted Language Learning  
http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ncal20/current

LLAS elearning symposium: tell us about your work! Call for papers live:  
https://www.llas.ac.uk/events/6747
Useful links for info and advice (OERs)

- JISC Impact Study: [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/oer2/oerimpact.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/oer2/oerimpact.aspx)

Some repositories:
- Jorum: [www.jorum.ac.uk](http://www.jorum.ac.uk)
- HumBox: [www.humbox.ac.uk](http://www.humbox.ac.uk)
- LanguageBox: [http://languagebox.ac.uk](http://languagebox.ac.uk)