OE Global 2021 Online Conference: Building the OER capacity of university students through renewable assignments

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OER development model: tapping into renewable assignments

In every academic semester, students generate a surplus of assignments in different disciplines. Some of the assignments are repurposed, however, the majority are rarely utilised, rather they get archived for a few years and eventually thrown away. This abundance of knowledge production can be described as 'cognitive surplus', which is a term coined by Shirky (2010) to describe the creativity and generosity that online communities create as a result of collective intelligence and collaboration with the driving force of intrinsic motives. Importantly, Shirky argued that by tapping into the cognitive surplus, people create value for themselves and the community.
This module presents an Open Educational Resources (OER) development model (Fatayer, 20216) that taps into students' assignments and repurpose the abundance of knowledge inside classrooms in order to create open resources that benefit other learners.
Finally, the module provides the learning design solution for adopting the OER development model in learning and teaching approaches.

A case study: 5 steps for integrating the OER development model in assessment

The process of integrating the OER development model in assessment requires some changes to an existing assessment. However, we found that the assessment redesign doesn't require change of the learning objectives. This case study shows the steps of redesigning an assessment in an undergraduate course at the School of Education, University of Southern Queensland; Intercultural communication in early learning contexts.

Original assignment task (15% of final grade)
Read two books from the Assignment 1 Booklist. Create a Venn diagram depicting the similarities and differences that emerge as you compare the ideas in the two books. Include a focus on communication and learning, language, culture, belonging to and exclusion from a group, religion, traditions and values, socioeconomic and linguistic background, relationships, and formal and informal learning.

Problems with the original assessment task
Even though students enjoyed this task, there were a few issues:
- some students could not access the books that were required
- they engaged at a surface level with the issues they were to focus on
- there was evidence of plagiarism: Some students copied their Venn diagrams

Step 1: Starting with the learning objective of the assessment task

Critically analyse and discuss the impact of language, culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on communication and learning, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers [APST] 1.4)

Step 2: Rewrite assessment task

Using the six learning activities design, collect, reuse, package, license and publish from in the OER development model, the subject coordinator explicitly included the specific tasks students are required to do while rewriting the new assessment. The new assessment was described to students as in the following:

Renewable assignment task (15% of final grade)
Students were asked to create two digital professional learning activities or resources responding to early years educators' professional concerns (using a list provided by the course coordinator).
For each professional learning resource students were required to add a separate digital file in which they provide clear instructions, explain why the activity or resource is an appropriate response to the educators' concern and how it contributes to Reconciliation and/or intercultural communication and list links to guiding documents

Step 3: Developing a rubric using the evaluation criteria

The evaluation instrument that can used to assess the fitness of student-generated learning resources to OER includes:

Technical: assesses the proper illustration of using features of content authoring software tools to deliver functional learning resources. The criteria also evaluates design and presentation, and reusability of the learning resource.
Openness: the learning resource is flexible to be retained, reused, revised, remixed and redistributed. The criterion also requires the availability of learning resources under an open publishing licence, searchability by other learners and currency.
Educational: This criterion evaluates the accuracy of the learning contents and supporting material such as exercises, clarity of structure and learning objectives, alignment of content to learning objective and well referenced.

Step 4: Supporting students through the development of OER

Offering students adequate technical workshops to raise their awareness of OER and upskill them in the use of content authoring tools. In this case study, the course coordinator required students to use Google Docs as this tool allows for flexible collaboration between the students and the course coordinator.
Other tools that can be used include WordPress and H5P.

Step 5: Publishing student-generated OER

In the end, students publish their educational resources using Creative Commons licenses via an institutional open repository or existing OER repositories. In this case study, the outcomes of student renewable assessments were published using the PressBooks platform.

References

Shirky, C. (2010). *Cognitive surplus: Creativity and generosity in a connected age*. Penguin Press.

Fatayer, M. M. (2016). *Towards a sustainable open educational resources development model: Tapping into the cognitive surplus of student-generated content* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. Western Sydney University.