**OER11 Session 1137**

**The art of sustainable engagement with OER**

**“I was a terrestrial being but now I’m a cyber-being”: sustaining OER through course design.**

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In a post-Browne world, sustainability takes on an urgent priority for small, specialist arts institutions. OER provide an opportunity to raise the visibility of arts-based courses and to offer potential students an insight into the curriculum experience. There is, however, a tension between the traditional hands-on’ experience of studio-based learning and the capabilities of on-line learning which results in some resistance to embedding an element of OER within courses offered at University College Falmouth (UCF). From our experience in establishing an online MA in Professional Writing we have constructed the curriculum around principles of peer assessment and feedback <http://professionalwriting.falmouth.ac.uk/>

In an online environment the architecture of the learning environment needs to be carefully considered in order to provide the appropriate platform for students to engage with each others’ work and to replicate the intimacy of shared readings and critique of a face-to-face session (Wenger, 1998). In our experience of the MA in Professional Writing, this is fostered through assessed tasks rather than an emphasis on socialization as suggested in Salmon (2004). Students on the online course are clearly task-focused and motivated by the production of and feedback on their work. This approach was taken forward in our first venture into OER through a HEFCE-funded, JISC-supported Phase 1 OER project <http://openspace.falmouth.ac.uk/courses/ma-professional-writing> (Di Savoia, 2009).

This project released elements of the MA in Professional Writing and provided similar opportunities for participants to share and receive feedback on their work. To date, although the units of study have been globally accessed, there has been very little sharing of work, with one participant posting a message *“… it looks like a really great idea but needs people to make the interaction work.”* There has been some discussion within the course team as to whether it is the competitive field of writing that engenders a high level of protectionism about sharing work.

The technically-supported opportunities for moving beyond a transmissive mode of text-based delivery provide clear opportunities for a ranged of media-based courses to develop OERs. In thelight of this there is institutional interest in using the course design process to develop OERs for all courses in the Department of Media. It is intended that this will be supported by a series of CPD workshops on creating OERs. In preparation for this UCF is exploring how academics respond to elements of ‘risk’ in creating and repurposing resources for open access. A further JISC/HEA supported OER initiative has provided the opportunity to develop a course aimed at educators to raise awareness of the issues of IPR in creating OER. Inevitably, in an institution that situates its reputation on the ‘studio experience’ there is a high level of resistance to the perceived anonymity and depersonalization of online learning. Despite this, there are indications, particularly in the Department of Media, that the opportunities that online learning offers may outweigh the need to be in a physical studio. The very nature of media courses allows both the content and delivery to be multi-media, multi-modal and global in its reach. Tutors involved in developing the Professional Writing OER have moved to a greater awareness of the potential benefits of online learning through the process of developing the course (see the quote in the title of this paper).

A questionnaire provided benchmark data on the understandings, perceptions and experiences of respondents to IPR related to developing and repurposing OER. Most respondents were on academic or academic-related contracts, but demonstrated a lack of awareness as to the contractual implications in relation to ownership of created resources.

*“Because the university owns the copyright, although the IP rights are mine. Or is it the other way round? Darn it! Can’t remember, sorry.”*

In terms of understanding of OER, many respondents had heard of the term but did not equate it to their use of third party materials for teaching. In terms of releasing teaching and learning materials to a wider audience, it is clear that institutional virtual learning environments provide a ‘half-way house’, but also that such VLEs may provide cover for resources that are not wholly copyright compliant. Key to our approach in raising awareness of IPR issues is to provide a platform of activities and scenarios that allow participants to identify IPR issues at an early stage of course design in order to reduce the time-consuming and angst-ridden experience of retrospectively requesting copyright permissions in order to make resources 'OER-able'.

**Key questions**

1. How might perception of IPR be a barrier to developing OERs?
2. How may the workshop pedagogies of studio-based learning be echoed in the OER experience?
3. How might we address the confused boundaries between educational and commercial use in licensing?

**References**

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