

Big Shift! From Resources to Practices!

The OER movement has gained considerable momentum in recent years, backed by key stakeholders in the field such as the Hewlett Foundation and UNESCO and as a result an impressive array of OER initiatives has arisen. The rhetoric behind the notion of free educational resources and a vibrant community of sharing and scholarly practices is exciting and visionary. Despite this however, the actual impact on educational practice has been limited. Yes, OERs are being viewed and used by some teachers and some learners but they are not being used extensively. And evidence of actual reuse is even more scant.

Why is this? Well, actually taking someone else's OER, understanding it, deconstructing it and then re-contextualizing it is a complex cognitive process. Add to these potential technical and organisational barriers and perhaps the lack of uptake is not so surprising. Would shifting away from a focus on the resources to the associated surrounding practices help? i.e. if we can better understand how teachers and learners are creating and using OER perhaps we can get a better idea of what the associated barriers and issues might be and hence put in place mechanisms to address these. This is at the heart of the work we are doing in OPAL (www.oer-quality.org). We have gathered over 60 case studies of OER initiatives and from these abstracted a set of eight dimensions which show how what we are terming 'Open Educational Practices' are constituted (<http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2085>):

So... this week's topic is the **Big Shift. From Resources to Practices...**!

We have found in our research so far a number of factors which turn out to be important if educational practices in an organisation are to be opened. We have coined this process the **BIG SHIFT** - because it obviously involves more than 'just' using open educational resources. We found that

- Teachers
 - need **skills** to learn about how to e.g. with user generated content rather than expert content
 - have to become **knowledgeable** in guiding students to become professional in self-assessment processes and embracing the notion of assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning.
 - are faced with a **power shift** in the way that not their own resources are subject of teaching any longer but those of other experts as well.
- Students need
 - to become **autonomous** learners
 - have to learn about **assessing** their own progress and taking responsibility for their learning
 - are faced with being **peers** to each other and validating each others learning
- Leaders of educational organisations
 - are faced with the question how they can **make content** which has been produced in teaching and learning processes relevant to other actors within the organisation
 - how an open **policy can be lived** within the institution and express itself not 'just' in the use of just another open educational resources repository.
- Policy makers want to stimulate the use of open educational resources to improve the quality of education - **not just the access** to educational opportunities. But what is quality of open resources?

This week we would like to invite your best recommendations and experiences how to make the **big shift**. What are your experiences?