

# Understanding OERs in Higher Education

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# Defining the Concept

- Educational resources that are freely available for use by educators and learners, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or licence fees
- Idea of sharing learning materials is not new
- The technologies to support the sharing are

# Licensing

- Broad spectrum of frameworks emerging to govern how OERs are licensed for use
- Some simply allow copying and others make provision for users to adapt the resources that they use

# How do CC Licences Work?

- CC licences are based on four specific conditions:
  - attribution,
  - share alike,
  - non-commercial and
  - no derivative works



# How do CC Licences Work?

- **Attribution.** You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your copyrighted work — and derivative works based upon it — but only if they give credit the way you request.
- **Share Alike.** You allow others to distribute derivative works only under a licence identical to the licence that governs your work.

# Examining The Landscape

## OCW Initiatives

- OCW Consortium
- OER Commons
- Merlot
- CORE
- Jorum
- Health Education Assets Library
- Etc

The screenshot shows the OpenCourseWare Consortium website. At the top, the logo "OPEN COURSEWARE CONSORTIUM" is displayed. To the right, a tagline reads: "Institutions working together to advance education and empower people worldwide through opencourseware. [Learn more...](#)". A search bar contains the text "find courses about..." and a "FIND COURSES" button. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links: HOME, ABOUT US, MEMBERS, HOW TO JOIN, NEWS, CONTACT US, BLOG, HELP.

The main content area is divided into three columns:

- USE** Find Course Materials: Image of a student in a library.
- SHARE** Share Your University's Courses: Image of a notebook with math equations.
- SUPPORT** Support the OCW Movement: Image of a large university building.

Overlaid on the center image is the text "OPEN SHARING, GLOBAL BENEFITS". A blue "JOIN NOW" button is at the bottom right of the main content area.

Below the main content are two promotional boxes:

- PARTICIPATE IN OUR BUSINESS PLAN DISCUSSION** MARCH 22 - APRIL 16. [CLICK HERE TO JOIN THIS DISCUSSION LIST](#)
- PARTICIPATE IN OUR STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION** APRIL 5 - APRIL 30. [CLICK HERE TO JOIN THIS DISCUSSION LIST](#)

On the right, a box for **OCWC Global 2010** in Hanoi, Vietnam (May 5-7, 2010) has a **Registration NOW OPEN!** banner with a [click here for more information](#) link.

**NEWS**

- Wed 31 Mar 2010 // As Colleges Make Courses Available Free Online, Others Cash In [New York Times](#)
- Mon 29 Mar 2010 // Educational sources: changing landscape

**NEWSLETTER SIGNUP**

\* indicates required field

# Examining The Landscape

## Institutional Initiatives

- MIT OCW
- Open Learn (OU UK)
- UCT Open Content
- UNOW
- University of Michigan
- Etc

The screenshot shows the UCT OpenContent website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for 'Contribute', 'Feedback', 'Help', and 'Login'. The main header features the UCT logo and the text 'UCT OpenContent'. Below the header, there is a search bar and a tagline in three languages: 'Sharing online resources for teaching and learning', 'Deelbare onderrig en leer bronne', and 'Ukwabelana ngezixhobo zokufundisa nokufunda'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Recent posts' on the left, a central text block stating 'The UCT OpenContent directory is the web portal for accessing open teaching and learning content from the University of Cape Town. Read More', and two large blue boxes for 'Popular resources' and 'Tags'. The 'Popular resources' box lists items like 'Open Teaching in a Digital World', 'NGO ICT and e-Readiness Assessment Tool', 'Building a global teaching profile: OER at UCT', 'A Manual of Online Molecular Biology Techniques', and 'Facilitating Online'. The 'Tags' box lists categories such as 'cell biology OER', 'open educational resources', 'soft Office', 'microbiology', 'oral surgery academic', 'obstetrics', 'biology occupational', and 'more tags'. A 'Faculties' dropdown menu is open, listing 'Centre for Higher Education Development', 'Commerce', 'Engineering and the Built Environment', 'Health Sciences', 'Humanities', 'Law', and 'Science'. At the bottom, there are three featured resource boxes: 'Ear, Nose and Throat Tutorial (Video) by Dr Graeme Copley', 'Procedures in Obstetrics and Gynaecology by Dr Stephen Jeffery (ed)', and 'Faculty of Humanities: Handbook on... by Karin de Jager'. A footer contains links for 'About Us', 'Blog', and 'Terms & Conditions'.

# Examining The Landscape

## Content Development Projects

- TESSA
- Health OER
- AVU
- SAIDE AceMaths
- University of Malawi
- Etc



**TESSA**  
TEACHER EDUCATION IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA  
OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Module 1 >> Section 2

 **Pan Africa**

**Planning physical growth and development sessions**

**Introduction** | Page 1 | Page 2 | Page 3 | Resources | Print Section | Adapt Section

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this section, you will have:

- planned lessons that are focused on clear learning outcomes to investigate growth and development;
- explored ways to include games and exercises into your lessons;
- used problem solving in whole-school activities.

This section focuses on your planning and preparation of lessons. It is important to do this well if your pupils are to achieve what you want them to achieve. One of your roles is to help your pupils understand the concepts of physical growth and development. These include both the physical changes that will take place as they get older, and also the different things they need to think about and do in order to stay healthy. As you plan practical activities about physical growth and development, you need to use pupils' existing knowledge as a base from which to plan and extend their understanding. This section suggests different ways to work in and outside the classroom, which you could also plan to use elsewhere in your teaching.

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# Examining The Landscape

## Web Eco-Systems

- Connexions
- Wikieducator
- iTunesU
- DiscoverEd
- Folksemantic
- COL
- Etc

The screenshot shows the Connexions website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Connexions logo and links for Home, Content, Lenses, About Us, Help, and MyCNX. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is divided into several sections:

- Connexions is:** A section describing the platform as a place to view and share educational material. It lists three roles: authors, instructors, and learners.
- FEATURED CONTENT:** A section highlighting specific educational resources, such as "Advanced Algebra II" and "Collaborative Statistics".
- FIND CONTENT:** A section with a search bar and a "Go" button. It also includes a "browse by" menu with categories like Subject, Language, Popularity, and Title, author, etc.
- CREATE CONTENT:** A section titled "Creating content in Connexions is as easy as 1, 2, 3:" with three numbered steps: 1. Get an account and log in, 2. Make a module from scratch or convert it from a Word doc, and 3. Publish your works, sharing them with the world.
- MY ACCOUNT:** A section for user login, including fields for Username and Password, and a "Log in" button.
- SUPPORT:** A section with the Connexions logo and the text "with a donation."
- SPOTLIGHT:** A section highlighting the Connexions Consortium, a group of organizations and individuals working together to advance open source educational technology.

# An Economic Shift

- Free sharing of educational content is not really a question of choice
- The wave is building, and the key question is: how do we ride it rather than being drowned by it?

Shift question from

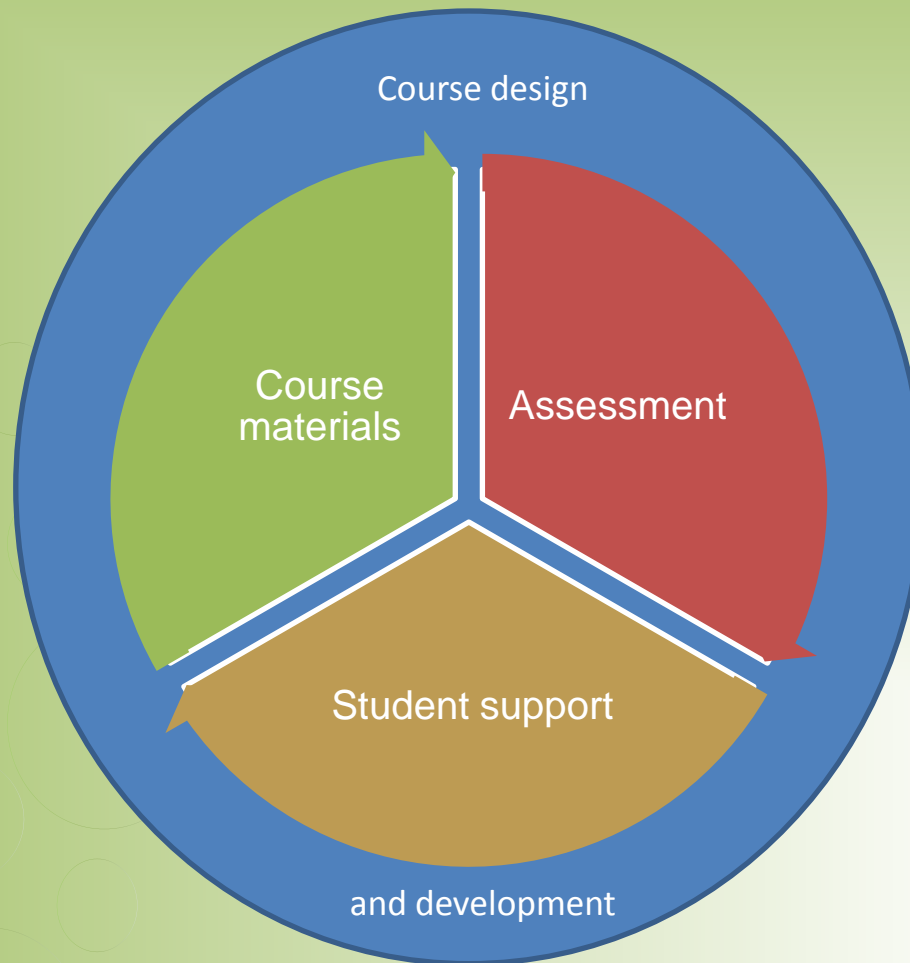
- ‘why should I share my educational content?’
- to
- ‘how can I stay in control of the process of my educational content being shared?’

# The OER Value Proposition

Vastly increased availability of learning materials

- Potential for reducing the cost of accessing educational materials
- Can provide opportunity for learners to adapt materials and thus become more active participants in educational processes
- Can encourage more academics to involve themselves in materials development
- Can free academics' time to concentrate on course design and delivery and not the content

# Course design for student engagement



# Content ≠ Education

- The role of the academic or teacher remains essential, not to present content but to design and mediate the learning experience and to assess its outcomes.
- *The term navigator is an old one in education circles but it now has new purchase. The quality of the selected content, the quality of the learning experience and its outcome, are consequences of the intervention, not the withdrawal, of the guiding hand of the teacher. (Gourley, 2009).*

# The Potential of Deliberate Openness

- Investment in designing effective educational environments is critically important to good education
- A key to productive systems is to build on common intellectual capital, rather than duplicating similar efforts
- As education is a contextualized practice, ability to adapt should be encouraged rather than restricted

# Some key challenges

- Resistance from those with vested interests
- Developed world producing for the developing world
- Restrictive licences preventing commercial use
- Free content equated with good content
- Ideological dogmatism alienating many
- Sidelining the development and use of OER

# Conclusion

- Vast quantities of educational material are already available from which no-one is generating any meaningful commercial return
- These represent a common intellectual capital that should be unlocked to drive and support education rather than kept hidden away from sight



# Conclusion

- Initial results of sharing are and will be messy – and there will be many problems to solve (storage, discovery, QA, etc)
- But online communities have demonstrated the now indisputable power and value of lots of people working collaboratively towards a common cause

# Conclusion

- **Online academic communities have the potential to restore core values of building and sharing knowledge that underpin good education, and systematically encourage us to work with and learn from each other**

# Dispelling Some Myths

- Content = education
- Good content will overcome institutional capacity constraints
- OER should be a process of voluntarism
- OER will make education cheaper in the short-term
- Openness automatically equates with quality
- OER is about e-learning