Open Educational Resources

FACULTY, LIBRARIES, PUBLISHERS, AND STUDENTS WORKING TOGETHER

The problem of textbooks

► Students respond to the high price of textbooks by not purchasing, sharing, illegally downloading, etc. Studies indicate that students not using course texts perform less successfully, which leads to issues with student retention

► There may not be a textbook suitable for certain specialized courses

► Open or public domain readings may exist, but students want to be able to use to same edition or to have access to ancillary material

Perceived challenges of OER materials

▶ Lack of time: With busy teaching loads, there's little time to investigate or create custom course textbooks

▶ Lack of funds: Licensing material may take money; are there resources?

▶ Lack of quality materials: Are quality materials or peer-reviewed textbooks even available?

▶ Lack of student engagement: students want traditional textbooks, ancillary materials, and print they can annotate and highlight

OER solutions are a click away

▶ The UK Libraries has an extensive guide to OER resources, including links to open textbooks, videos of faculty discussing how they implemented OERs, and an explanation of available grant funding for open textbooks: http://libguides.uky.edu/alternative_textbooks/find

▶ Solutions can also be a combination of faculty-created material and published material that the UK Libraries have already acquired or licensed; this makes better use of library-owned resources and expedites the creation of course materials

A case study: Robin DeRosa at Plymouth State University (NH)

▶ English professor Robin DeRosa realized her students were paying more than $85/semester for mostly public domain materials

▶ She had no funds and was teaching a 4/4 load, but she successfully put together a student-led textbook using the Pressbooks platform (https://pressbooks.com/)

▶ She trained her students to find open/public domain versions of the desired readings for the course

How she improved the textbook

▶ Students missed the ancillary materials. So students from the class built out those resources, each according to his/her interests and strengths: some made videos, some created maps, some wrote section introductions.

▶ DeRosa overlaid the Hypothesis app onto the web-based book to allow social sharing/reading and annotation; during the semester, students created more than 10K annotations (https://hypothes.is/education/)

▶ High level of student buy-in: they liked building something that would be of use to others (the book is now in use at several institutions); students listed as authors; students liked the multimedia aspect of the project

Things to consider

- Metadata! This is sometimes a problem for OERs. Using a properly created Creative Commons license can help alleviate this as the process does include metadata

- Hosting & discoverability: Faculty need a place to lodge their OER materials and to have the metadata that will make the resource discoverable to others. Libraries can work with faculty to make the resource more discoverable through linking to other OER websites

- Who's responsible? The *scholarship* is in the purview of the faculty, and the rest of the process should be in collaboration with the library so the material is properly licensed, hosted, and sharable

How to improve faculty acceptance and creation of OERs

- DeRosa finds that only 20-30% of faculty may know anything about OERs, so education is the first big hurdle

- Traditional OER talking points have centered around textbook costs, and this is a tough sell. Talk about PEDAGOGY instead.

- With a pedagogical approach, students are doing the bulk of the work. They are engaged in applied learning, and she found this encouraged a critical thinking approach in the classroom

- Cultivate faculty champions. Faculty champions/coalitions of the willing have higher conversion rates than relying on rhetoric about student success policies

Further reading and resources

- Robin DeRosa talks about the process of creating her open textbook: http://robinderosa.net/uncategorized/my-open-textbook-pedagogy-and-practice/

- Learn about Open Access, Open Education, and Open Data, develop critical skills, and catalyze action toward a more open system of research and education: http://www.opencon2016.org/

- Other LibGuides: http://www.library.umass.edu/services/teaching-and-learning/oer/; http://libguides.northshore.edu/open