

Concerns at UNC

OERs might replace the use of fee based textbook I published which makes money for and/or provides me national and international renown. (extinction of brand of “book”).

My course content in my intellectual property; I want control; I don’t want others to use it. (should we allow UNC only use?).

Should we have a common holding area (repository) and standards for contribution/sharing.

OERs are not the same quality as fee based materials (answer like electronic journals: ultimately quality is measured the same way, and is independent of whether electronically available or OER).

I don’t have the time or expertise to modify my course to utilize OER materials. (answer: fair criticism, help with stipends, recognition).

Creating OERs are a lot of work which is not recognized by P&T committees. (answer: fair criticism, requires education/change in values by faculty).

Related: as long as the world (promotion and tenure considerations) views OER resources in one way (for instance lower quality, creation of OER not worthy of positively affecting faculty evaluation), then even if good, it may not have impact. (leads to question of how to educate faculty (similar to open access issues). [investigation-- How do other institutions help with this educational process].

Will all courses have to use OERs? (answer No).

Assuming OERs are delivered electronically, then they may have the same issues that many electronic textbooks have, in being difficult to use, not easily available on all devices, limitations on simultaneous users, some students prefer print. (answer: fair criticism currently, hopefully disappears or electronic resources are better in future).

OERs present more potential value to other UNC system institutions than at the more resource rich institutions in the system (this is disadvantage because UNC would spend effort to create something of more value to other UNC institutions than ourselves). (answer: would be of value to UNC-CH, and yes could be of more value to other UNC institutions—but would argue this is important goal of institution).

Many health affairs faculty use articles and chapters, not textbooks, and provide deep linking to these in their LMS or provide them in coursepaks or provide a link to the library’s resource in their syllabi. (in other words, some areas like health affairs, information and library science are already are doing OERs to some extent, just not calling it that. (answer: this is GOOD!; related—useful to understand this better for this campus via the survey, i.e. they may be doing OER but not calling it that yet).

Choose different wording that “convert” for the change from existing courses to OER’ed courses. “enhanced”, “supplemented”. Need good word choice for this to imply utilized of OER resources, but also reworking, improvement of course using expertise of CFE and library.

Need to be able to present easy understand explanation of what OERs are, and how they relate to, but are distinguished from MOOC, electronic textbooks, open access, open course ware, etc.

Nice discussion of pros/cons from another institution:

From University of Maryland: <http://libguides.umuc.edu/content.php?pid=98930&sid=742401>

Advantages of using OERs include:

- **expanded access to learning.** Students anywhere in the world can access OERs at any time, and they can access the material repeatedly.
- **scalability.** OERs are easy to distribute widely with little or no cost.
- **augmentation of class materials.** OERs can supplement textbooks and lectures where deficiencies in information are evident.
- **enhancement of regular course content.** For example, multimedia material such as videos can accompany text. Presenting information in multiple formats may help students to more easily learn the material being taught.
- **quick circulation.** Information may be disseminated rapidly (especially when compared to information published in textbooks or journals, which may take months or even years to become available). Quick availability of material may increase the timeliness and/or relevance of the material being presented.
- **less expense for students.** The use of OERs instead of traditional textbooks or course packs, etc. can substantially reduce the cost of course materials for students.
- **showcasing of innovation and talent.** A wide audience may learn of faculty research interests and expertise. Potential students and donors may be impressed, and student and faculty recruitment efforts may be enhanced.
- **ties for alumni.** OERs provide an excellent way for alumni to stay connected to the institution and continue with a program of lifelong learning.
- **continually improved resources.** Unlike textbooks and other static sources of information, OERs can be improved quickly through direct editing by users or through solicitation and incorporation of user feedback. Instructors can take an existing OER, adapt it for a class, and make the modified OER available for others to use.

Disadvantages of OERs include:

- **quality issues.** Since many OER repositories allow any user to create an account and post material, some resources may not be relevant and/or accurate.
- **lack of human interaction between teachers and students.** OER material is created to stand alone, and since self-learning users may access the material outside of a classroom environment, they will miss out on the discussion and instructor feedback that characterize for-credit classes and that make such classes useful and valuable.

- **language and/or cultural barriers.** Although efforts are being made to make OERs available in multiple languages, many are only available in English, limiting their usefulness to non-English speakers. Additionally, not all resources are culturally appropriate for all audiences.
- **technological issues.** Some students may have trouble using some OERs if they have a slow or erratic internet connection. Other OERs may require software that students don't have and that they may not be able to afford.
- **intellectual property/copyright concerns.** Since OERs are meant to be shared openly, the "fair use" exemption from the U.S. Copyright Act ceases to apply; all content put online must be checked to ensure that it doesn't violate copyright law.
- **sustainability issues.** Since OER creators generally do not receive any type of payment for their OER, there may be little incentive for them to update their OER or to ensure that it will continue to be available online.