



*European Standards for Open Education and
Open Learning Resources
Grant Agreement No. 2014-1-RO01-KA202-
002985
Project No.: 2014-1-RO01-KA202-002985
O1-A3 research paper
P4, ELN- UK*



EU-StORe

Research paper referring on existing criteria for open
education

Partner 4- European Learning Network Ltd.

Project Title: European Standard for Open Education and Open Learning Resources

Project Acronym: EU-StORe

Title of the task: Open learning resources and open education

Activity Code: O1-A3

Partner: Partner 4- ELN



Research on existing criteria for open education

*Creating European standards for open education and open learning resources
Intellectual Output*

There are a number of sources available for open education resources across the UK. The largest perhaps is the Open University (OU) platform which also has branches and training facilities around the world.

The OU as mentioned on its website provides at least 5% of all its materials free as Open Education Resource (OER) and has around 8000 hours of learning materials in 12 subjects. Since its launch of Open Learn OU has had some 35.5 million visitors across 196 countries. It has some 600 courses available as free resource on its website and also has a course for designing an open learning resource.

The UK plays an important role in the OER debate because:

- the UK has some of the largest OER projects in the world, including Open University's 'Open Learn'
- the UK also has an extensive commercial educational publishing sector
- along with the US and Canada, the UK is a large exporter of e-learning services (http://www.unesco.org.uk/open_educational_resources_%28oer%29)

The debate about criteria for Open Education is an ongoing issue among educators in UK and as Tony Bates (2015) pointed out in his blog "Making sense of open education", that there are four core principles for OERs. Bates himself quotes these four principles by David Bailey and his colleagues as:

- Reuse
- Redistribute
- Revise
- Remix

And these OERs generally use the Creative Commons Licenses. In the UK as mentioned earlier under O1-A2 research Birgit Pepin (1999) pointed out the main underpinning philosophy of the English education system is humanism, with its associated principles of individualism and morality, amongst others. English education is said to be child-centred and individualistic, and the interaction between teacher and pupil is greatly emphasised. Furthermore, in order to



understand the issues related to and the quest for ‘criteria’ or perhaps more importantly ‘quality criteria’ a number of items need to be considered in the context of education philosophy that permeates across the UK. As Chris Husbands and Jo Pearce reported in their “What makes great Pedagogy? Nine claims from research” (2012) there is a strong consensus that high performance in education systems is dependent on the quality of teaching. Barber put it simply: ‘the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers’ (Barber & Mourshed, 2007:13).

In their “TLRP’s Ten Principles for effective pedagogy: rationale, development, evidence, argument” Mary James and Andrew Pollard (2011) seem to corroborate the point that pedagogy is important and especially ‘effective pedagogy’. James and Pollard explained further that the effectiveness of educational provision needs to be evaluated by reference to the goals and values of the society it serves. They continue that within contemporary Western democracies, three major strands of philosophical and political thinking on educational purposes are well established. According to James and Pollard, the first concerns teaching and learning linked to *economic productivity* – and has taken various forms historically as labour market needs have evolved. The second concerns *social cohesion* and the inclusion (or control) of different groups within society – this remains important within our unequal and diverse communities today. The third concerns *personal development*, fulfilment and expression – with a contemporary manifestation perhaps in the term ‘wellbeing’. The three, say James and Pollard, are, of course, deeply interconnected. Indeed, as James and Pollard suggest there is a mutually beneficial synergy among the three.

In terms of Quality criteria related to OERs there have been a number of studies and as Camilleri, Ehlers and Pawlowski (2014) point out when reviewing a set of definitions of OER and in particular quality issues they all:

- cover both use and reuse, repurposing, and modification of resources,
- include free use of these resources for educational purposes by teachers and learners,
- encompass all types of digital media.

Further, as Camilleri, Ehlers and Pawlowski mention due to the widespread use and access to OERs that the distinguishing feature of OER when compared to other resources is the freedom with which it may be used, reused and repurposed thanks to its open licence. Camilleri, Ehlers and Pawlowski (2014) continue that in addition to this freedom, however, the traditional lifecycle of a resource, particularly with respect to the processes of creation, editing, evaluation



and use, is significantly disrupted. Due to this disruption in the steps needed for the creation of a resource and, the freedom granted by OER leads to a blurring of these boundaries making it difficult to pinpoint a definition and in particular Quality aspects of the OER. Camilleri, Ehlers and Pawlowski conclude that the involvement of many more actors in each step therefore means a federation of responsibility for each step, and as such need to include a wide spectrum of stakeholders who are involved in an OER lifecycle, especially for the Quality aspects of the OERs.

Husbands and Pearce (2012) in their review of research literature advanced the nine strong claims about the characteristics of highly successful pedagogies. They referred to pedagogies instead of pedagogy in order to capture the variety of successful pedagogic practices which differ across the age range and between subjects. These are:

1. Effective pedagogies give serious consideration to pupil voice.
2. Effective pedagogies depend on behaviour (what teachers do), knowledge and understanding (what teachers know) and beliefs (why teachers act as they do).
3. Effective pedagogies involve clear thinking about longer term learning outcomes as well as short-term goals.
4. Effective pedagogies build on pupils' prior learning and experience.
5. Effective pedagogies involve scaffolding pupil learning.
6. Effective pedagogies involve a range of techniques, including whole-class and structured group work, guided learning and individual activity.
7. Effective pedagogies focus on developing higher order thinking and metacognition, and make good use of dialogue and questioning in order to do so.
8. Effective pedagogies embed assessment for learning.
9. Effective pedagogies are inclusive and take the diverse needs of a range of learners, as well as matters of student equity, into account.

In his "Talking about quality: Massive misalignment the challenges of designing and accrediting MOOCs" Brabon (2014) feels that in their current form, there is a clear disjunction between the purpose and suggested application of MOOCs. This has been exacerbated by media hype that has often framed debates about MOOCs in the context of either their 'massiveness' or lack of fees. However, what might be conceived here as their



potential to foster low-end disruption and within a UK context, to challenge a £9,000 fee model, is misguided because the majority of MOOCs are not in their current form easily identifiable as part of an undergraduate curriculum. Brabon (2014) further argues that in the rush to open up higher education to new markets, MOOCs may be involved in exporting a specific brand of Western education that may not be as rigorously scrutinised as on-campus provision.

Discussions on quality in education is likely to remain a contentious issue mainly because there are many dimensions and as Gibbs (2010) identified quality in education has shaped both the politics of higher education and institutional priorities. In his 'Dimensions of Quality' (2010) Gibbs attempts to identify variables that could be validly used when comparing institutions, departments and even subjects. However, as Husbands and Pearce (2012) identified classrooms are complex, multi-faceted and demanding places in which to work and successful pedagogies are correspondingly sophisticated. Highly successful pedagogies develop when teachers make outstanding use of their understanding of the research and knowledge-base for teaching in order to support high-quality planning and practice. The very best teaching arises when this research base is supplemented by a personal passion for what is to be taught and for the aspirations of learners.

Quality criteria in didactics and pedagogy might be a relative concept. What matters as Gibbs (2010) pointed out is what institutions do with their resources to make the most of whatever students they have and enhance educational quality. And as concluded by Husbands and Pearce (2012), truly effective practices depend on teachers making active connections between the ideas from research. The most effective successful classroom practices work these ideas together in systematic and sophisticated ways, and the best teachers are active in building relationships between them promoting learner engagement and enhancing quality in the pedagogical practices.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that as Atenas and Havemann (2014) point out in order to work with best practice in the creation and development of OERs and Repositories of OERs (ROERs), there is a need to consider what Atenas and Havemann have termed the Indicators of Quality Assurance (IQAs). As noted in their research, Atenas and Havemann found several cases where these IQAs have not thus far been implemented widely. Indeed Atenas and Havemann recommend further investigation of ROERs and generating OERs as spaces which enable and promote retrieval, sharing and collaboration, and facilitate access for all potential users, as well as adaptation of existing materials for new purposes.

References



*European Standards for Open Education and
Open Learning Resources
Grant Agreement No. 2014-1-RO01-KA202-
002985
Project No.: 2014-1-RO01-KA202-002985
O1-A3 research paper
P4, ELN- UK*



<http://www.open.ac.uk/about/open-educational-resources/> accessed 28-01-2015

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/> accessed 14-02-2015

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/technology/oer> accessed 14-04-2015

Atenas, J. and Havemann L, "Questions of quality in repositories of open educational resources: literature review", 24 July 2014

Bates, T "Making sense of open education", Blog, 16 February 2015
<http://www.tonybates.ca/2015/02/16/making-sense-of-open-educational-resources/>

Brabon, B. "Talking about quality: Massive misalignment, the challenges of designing and accrediting MOOCs", 2014

Camilleri A.F, Ehlers U.D., and Pawlowski J (2014) "State of the art Review of Quality Issues related to Open Educational Resource", Joint Research Centre, European Commission, ISSN 1831-9424

Gibbs, G. "Dimensions of Quality", The Higher Education Academy, Sept 2010

Hubands C., and Pearce J. "What makes great pedagogy? Nine claims from research", National College of School Leadership, Autumn 2012

Williams, Keith; Kear, Karen; Rosewell, Jonathan and Ferreira, Giselle (2011). Incorporating quality assurance criteria for OER and Social Networking in the E-xcellence QA methodology. In: 24th ICDE World Conference "Expanding Horizons – New Approaches to Open and Distance Learning", 2-5 October 2011, Bali, Indonesia



*European Standards for Open Education and Open Learning
Resources
Grant Agreement No. 2014-1-RO01-KA202-002985*

*O1-A3- Research paper
Partner 4 –ELN- UK*

