Large Scale OER – A National Framework

Large-scale OER initiatives have a lot of moving parts and complexity. This session will visually map out a framework showing the components of large-scale OER initiatives that need to be thought of in advance and planned for to ensure success. Drawing on actual experience with large-scale OER initiatives this framework provides a roadmap for strategic planning large scale OER. The diagram on the last page of this proposal shows a national OER framework developed for the National Center for e-Learning Ministry of Education, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 26-27-October-2014. A short description of this diagram is provided below.

Large-scale OER initiatives should be strategic and purposeful. Doing OER without a real purpose is not a recipe for success. The US Department of Labor TAACCCT program is a great example of a national OER initiative with a clear purpose – move displaced and unemployed workers into jobs in high growth industry sectors by funding community colleges to create stacked and latticed credentials in partnership with industry. All the curricula these community colleges create must be licensed with a Creative Commons CC BY license making them OER.

In addition to strategy a large OER initiative needs incentives which could be monetary or could be other things related to innovation or transformation of teaching and learning.

A national OER framework should include a research component. It is essential to test out the strategy and purpose of any OER initiative and evaluate practices and outcomes on an ongoing basis. Research informs success. I point to a current source of OER research – the OER Research Hub (and in subsequent versions of the diagram have included the OER Knowledge Cloud).

To enable large scale success OER require policy. Creative Commons has been aggregating examples of OER policy from around the world into an OER policy registry. In addition UNESCO has authored an excellent OPER policy development template that describes policy as it pertains to intellectual property, copyright, hiring practices, procurement and many other areas of education operation. (in subsequent versions of the diagram I’ve also included the recently launched Open Policy Network – at Cable Green’s suggestion).

Strategic purpose, incentives, research, and policy all impact the activities of institutions. A national OER initiative involves many institutions. Two institutional practices I’ve come to see as critical to success are:

Forming inter-disciplinary OER teams within an institution made up of faculty, instructional designers, media producers, librarians, and educational technologists. For OER to succeed a team effort is needed and each of these roles has crucial skills and knowledge to contribute. Faculty have the subject matter expertise, instructional designers the ability to design effective teaching and learning structures and activities, media producers can produce rich multimedia, librarians are superb at finding and
curating collections, and educational technologists bring essential skills about how best to develop and deliver OER with technology.

Forming communities of practice across all the institutions involved in a national OER initiative that bring together people across institutions by domain (such as arts, science, engineering, etc.) and by role (such as faculty, instructional designers, librarians, etc.) All distinct fields of study and members of OER teams like to talk to their peers at other institutions. The challenges tend to be the same and they frequently learn about great resources their peers have found or new practices that are working well.

For actual OER content I advocate implementation pursue four distinct efforts. First review existing curricula already developed and in use that could simply be openly licensed and made in to OER. Second identify educational content that is desired and search existing OER to see if anything is available. If it is simply adopt it. Sometimes OER is found but is not a perfect fit. If that is the case why not adapt it – translate, localize, customize, update or improve the educational materials so that the fit works. Thats one of the benefits of OER – you can modify it. Finally, as a last measure, having exhausted the previous three efforts if OER is needed where none exists then go ahead and author it.

OER is transforming education by making educational materials visible and available to all. Success is contingent on high quality resources. In higher education research is quality assured through peer review. I believe the same practice is a success factor for OER too. OER should be vetted through a quality review process and peer review.

I place technology next well after all those other key success factors have been dealt with. I highlight a few of the key technology components in the diagram – authoring tools, open file formats (so others can modify the resource downstream), creating portable interoperable content that can be exported out of one Learning Management System and uploaded to another, classification schema for OER, and repositories or referatories where OER can be found, previewed, and downloaded.

Finally we come to usage. OER are multi-use. They can be used in on campus courses, mixed or blended courses, fully online courses, and MOOCs. OER don’t just have teaching and learning value they are useful as a means of marketing to students (try before you buy), they provide a rich source of supplemental resources for students to use when they are studying, they can help industry meet the professional development needs of their employees, they help working adults pursue career pathways, and they attract national and international interest in your institution.

I’m currently developing new versions of this diagram adding in accessibility (ensuring OER meet the needs of those less able) and pedagogy (factoring pedagogical approaches into the design of OER and innovating new open pedagogies based on the unique attributes OER have).

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MENA NATIONAL OER FRAMEWORK

Strategic Purpose
- economic
- social
- academic
- teaching & learning

Within Institution teams of faculty, instructional designers, media developers, librarians, ed tech

MENA Education Institutions
- Cross Institutional Communities of Practice by domain (arts, science engineering, etc.) and by role (faculty, Instructional designers, media, library, ed tech)

Incentives
- funding
- transformation
- innovation

Research
- benefits
- practices
- technology
- pedagogy

Policy
- IP
- copyright
- government
- institutional
- personal

UNESCO OER Policy Development Template

Convert
- Make existing institutionally developed educational content into OER

Adopt
- Find, review and adopt existing OER

Adapt
- Translate, localize, customize, update, improve, existing OER

Author
- Individual and team based authoring of new OER

QA & Peer Review
- authoring tools
- open file formats
- LMS exports (SCORM, IMS Common Cartridge) upload
- meta data, taxonomy, classification
- Technology storage
- (repository, referatory, existing, acquire, ...)
- distribution
- search
- find
- preview
- download

Usage
- campus based classes
- blended
- fully online
- MOOCs
- Usage marketing
- students
- industry
- public
- working adults
- international

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