

Sprint 2: Open Toolkits | Week 3: Open & Modding

Sprint 2: Open Toolkits

Week 3: Learning Module on 'Open & Modding'

Prof Neil Mulholland

This short learning module will provide you with a few tools to investigate the open paradigm and the practices of teaching and making contemporary art 'in the open'.

It also offers a semi-structured reading process that you can follow on your own.

As you review this module on your own, you should also get into the habit of posting any questions raised or insights gained by engaging with these materials in your Portfolio. You can do this at any time.

What you post in your own Portfolio will inform the focus of your own approach to OERs in the Art & Open Learning BarCamp.

What is Open Learning? Key Terms

Let's begin by looking at a few key terms relating to open learning and Open Access (OA).

This course, and the work that you produce for it, seeks to realise The University of Edinburgh's OER Policy

The University encourages staff and students to create and publish OERs to enhance the quality of the student experience, increase the provision of learning opportunities for all, and contribute to the global pool of open knowledge.

To begin with, try to familiarise yourself with this policy so that you can implement its recommendations on how to publish and licence OERS; you can read it here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/openeducationalresourcepolicy.pdf>

Open Licences

There are different licences attached to open learning resources.

Some are more 'open' than others.

For example, the words you are reading just now are licenced as Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Neil Mulholland. This is not an entirely open licence. For starters, it prohibits you from using this resource for commercial purposes. Secondly, if you do use this resource, then you need to attribute the author Neil Mulholland.

Modding

You can, however, share, repurpose and remix ('mod') the learning module materials you are reading now.

In this respect, this learning module is evolving rather than stable. The more people who use it *and feedback* on how they have adapted and remixed it, the more useful it might become.

A few things worth noting here:

This original version of the learning module will only evolve if it receives feedback from its users (i.e. from you).

If the feedback loop is not closed, then the original version will simply remain stable.

Mods (adaptions and remixes can function as forms of feedback. But for a mod to enable feedback the orginator of the learning module would need to be aware of its existence.

An attribution licence does not require the modder to notify the orginator – so this feedback loop might not be ‘closed’ in a beneficial way.

When you create something that’s open with the explicit purpose of generating feedback on what you have created, you need to design-in a clear mechanism for closing the feedback loop – thus ensuring that you learn from how people use your work.

Licencing

As an individual you need to think carefully about how you licence your work. A licence enables you to dictate the terms of use for your intellectual property.

The *right* licence can assist you in making a living from your work or, at very least, getting due credit for what you’ve produced.

The *wrong* licence can lead you to lose credit and might mean others profit from your work without your explicit support.

There isn’t a universally right or wrong licence. You need to have contextual awareness and learn to judge what’s appropriate in the circumstances.

What might this look like in practice? Here are two examples:

Through the Clock's Workings (2009)

A good example of *free culture* that's created with the intention of being remixed is *Through the Clock's Workings* (2009).

The book's editor, Amy Barker, actively encourages us to revise and reuse the book:

This anthology of short stories is not some textual tome, frozen in time and space. It is alive, evolving organically in a constant state of flux. Why? Because each story is available under a Creative Commons licence, giving you rights to share and reuse the book as you see fit. <https://sydneyuniversitypress.com.au/products/78790>](<https://sydneyuniversitypress.com.au/products/78790>

So how do you use a remixable anthology? Simple.

Step 1 – Read. Thumb your way through the pages at will. Find the stories you love, the ones you hate, the ones that could be better.

Step 2 – Re/create. Each story is yours to share and to remix. Use only one paragraph or character or just make subtle changes. Change the genre, alter its formal or stylistic characteristics, or revise its message. Use as little or as much as you like – as long as it works.

Step 3 – Share. Be part of a growing community of literature remixing. Post your remixes to the [Remix My Lit website](#), and start sharing. The entire anthology can be remixed – the original stories, theremixes, and even the fonts.

Through the Clock's Workings is Read&Write!

You can download the book and try this yourself: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/25995/1/c25995.pdf>

Barker, Amy (Ed.) (2009) *Through the clock's workings*. Sydney University Press, Sydney. ISBN 9781920899325

Licensing, Games, and OER: Board Game Jam (2017)

A more overtly *educational*, (non-artistic) example of a modifiable OER is the **Board Game Jam** produced and facilitated by our brilliant educational designer Charlie Farley ([link](#)) from The University of Edinburgh's OER Service (part of Information Services).

Farley's ***Licensing, Games, and OER: Board Game Jam*** (30th November 2017) was part of Innovative Learning Week in The University of Edinburgh. The *OER: Board Game Jam* is both an OER **and** a reflective toolkit that enables participants to understand what OERs.

Here's a quick example of a game the toolkit helped to produce:

https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_bhx0whre

Apocalypse Later created by University of Edinburgh students Luise Kocaurek, Nikolay Slavov, Rishikesh Sinha, Siqi Li.

The game itself was created as an Open Educational Resource under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence.

Here are a three more *Board Game Jams*:

Board Game Jam OER – Mouse Hunt

Board Game Jam OER – Mythical Continents

Board Game Jam OER -Cultured AI (AI for Art)

The games produced here all stem from Farley's simple board game design tool-kit.

You could work with this as a way of understanding what an OER

is and, of course, creating your own OER in ways that align with our University's OER policy ([link](#)).

The Open.Ed – Open Educational Resources ([link](#)) site that Farley maintains is full of inspiring OER ideas for your Basho to try out.

Remember that Open.Ed and its Media Hopper channel is, in its own right, a potential site for distribution of your own Open Toolkit.

Open.Ed ([link](#)) <https://open.ed.ac.uk/>

<https://open.ed.ac.uk/how-to-guides/> ([link](#))

Open Licensing of Contemporary Art?

For CC free culture ([link](#)) licencing to function in a comparable way to the above examples *within contemporary artistic practice*, artists, curators and dealers need to think about how works of art are codified.

Codifying and CC licensing some works of art is simple (e.g. digital video). In other cases it might prove more difficult (a unique performance).

You can find many examples of free culture music to remix:

<http://ccmixter.org/media/view/media/remix/latest> ([link](#))

<https://freemusicarchive.org/> ([link](#))

What do literature and music have in common that enables them to be distributed with CC licences for remixing in this way? Both are *codified*. This means that the code (e.g. the text or the sound) that the audience receives is an identical form of structured information. The code needn't be digital, it could be a printed book or a printed musical score. Either way, the code will be something that is *ostensibly* identical and infinitely reproducible.

This is something for you to ponder.

How could you codify your own work in such a way that it could be CC licenced and distributed as free culture?

You don't **have** to actually do this of course, but thinking about how you might do it is a useful thought experiment.

More Research Resources on open and CC licensing:

- Barker, Amy (Ed.) (2009) *Through the clock's workings*. Sydney University Press, Sydney. ISBN 9781920899325
- Green, Cable. "Open Licensing and Open Education Licensing Policy." In *Open: The Philosophy and Practices That Are Revolutionizing Education and Science*, edited by Jhangiani Rajiv S. and Biswas-Diener Robert, 29-42. London: Ubiquity Press, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv3t5qh3.7>
- Fuster Morell, M. (2013). *Online creation communities viewed through the analytical framework of the institutional analysis and development*. Madison, M. J., Strandburg, K., & Frischmann, B. (2013).
- Friesen, Norm & Hopkins, Janet, 2008. *Wikiversity; or education meets the free culture movement: An ethnographic investigation*. *First Monday*, 2008-10-06, Vol.13 (10).
- Kirkorian, G and Kapczynski, A, 2010. *Access to Knowledge in the Age of Intellectual Property*, Cambridge: Zone Books.

You will produce an open framework for artistic learning as part of this course for assessment.

That means considering not only how an open educational

resource is distributed but how it is licenced. Thinking about licencing is part of the creative process.

For example, if you produce a print edition you need think about how it is licenced (how many will there be, what price, what are the resale conditions, etc.)

If you created a work in the form of software, you'd have to consider who can use your code, what it will cost for them to use it, if modifications are allowed, etc.

Everything that you put into the public realm really needs to be accompanied by a well-considered licence.

Open Access and Practice

A useful paper to read that connects the licencing of OERs with our next topic (Open Access) is Paul Boshears' (2013). **"Open Access and Para-Academic Practice."** *tripleC* 11((2)): 614-619. (link)

Herein, Boshears calls on researchers to engage in the open creation of research objects. What you will be doing for this course, is just this.

You will openly create research objects (artworks, programmes of study, events, etc.)

Boshears argues that, to be genuinely open, researchers should be focused less on the research objects and more on the new 'publics that result from the circulation of these objects'. (Boshears 2013: 617)

Thinking about which publics you might engage (or generate) through the production of open research objects is, in essence, one of the challenges of your summative assignment for this course.

Open access (OA)

In addition to OERs, academia is currently being transformed by open access research. Government research funders in the EU and UK are now requiring that funded research is published in an open access format.

See <https://www.coalition-s.org> (link)

Most academic research has been guarded behind paywalls – journals that require a subscription fee, paid, mainly, by academic libraries. The cost of journal subscriptions escalates annually. Open access (OA) research is generally published in ‘flipped’ journals that do not require subscriptions. The research they publish is still rigorously peer reviewed by academics, but the academics themselves aim to publish their research in ways that do not require a paywall. This requires a different funding model:

The costs of publication in a subscription journal are covered by subscription fees, and upon publication the articles are immediately accessible to subscribers. Articles in open access journals are broadcast to everyone. The costs are covered by an open access publication fee, paid by the author, his or her institution, or a funder.

Reference:

<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/flipping-journals-from-subscription-to-open-access> (link)

You can see that this pay-to-publish model still leaves academic institutions footing the bill for publishing their research. The main difference, however, is that the research findings are made open. OA is a very thorny issue (link) research universities and is far from resolved.

Open Access Artistic Research

Open Access applies to artistic research too. How might artistic research, or art practice, become openly accessible?

As it stands, a lot of art is freely accessible in public contexts (galleries, museums, *biennale*, public spaces). This gives the public access to what we might call – research outputs – that is, the works of art and exhibitions that emerge from research. Open Access academic research also does this; but, importantly, it also offers access to the research *processes* that lead to the propositions or outcomes that are published. We get to see the ‘workings’ of the research. This raises the question: what would Open Access to artistic research processes look like?

There are a number of peer-reviewed journals and artistic research catalogues that seek to answer this question; here are a few in our vicinity (Norden):

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/> (link)

Journal for Artistic Research (link)

KC Research Portal (link)

Norwegian Artistic Research Programme (link)

RUUKKU – Studies in Artistic Research (link)

VIS – Nordic Journal for Artistic Research (link)

It’s helpful to become more familiar with this open access artistic research landscape since it is the world that we work in (Open Access is now the standard rather than the exception). You do not *have* to make your own work/research open access. However, if it is **not** open access, (and it’s not ‘secret’), then access will come at a cost to someone other than you.

If you *choose* to make your own work/research open access, then that has licencing implications. It also means that *you* are likely to have to pay the cost of making it available either in terms of unpaid labour or in the form of (self)publishing fees or APCs (article processing charges). For more on APCs, see: (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_processing_charge (link))

In addition to the OA movement, some para-academic (link) art schools attempt to make their processes open.

A useful example for us to look at here is The Mountain School of Arts' *the TEACHABLE FILE (tTF)*. *tTF is*

is a working catalog of alternative art schools and a reference on education-as-art. The file delivers and demonstrates its subject by acting as both a resource for teaching and a student of its users. It forms and reforms itself through communicative action and engaged research.

Please visit the *TEACHABLE FILE (tTF)*
<https://www.are.na/carson-salter/the-teachable-file>

Spend a little time examining *tTF*

You will see that *tTF* offers a bibliography on art/education that includes a mixture of closed (copyright protected) and open access materials.

Is *tTF* an OER? To answer this question, try this semi-structured reading suggestion.

What is an OER?

Foundational reading on open learning

The following texts give different insights into different, but connected, phenomena: open education, OERs and open innovation. It will be helpful for *you* to read *all* of them.

But, before you do, consider again if the semi-structured reading that follows is something that you might do more effectively *as a Basho*. If you want to read as a Basho – then you can use the Swarm Reading technique. See: How to Swarm Read ([link](#))

1. Edinburgh's OER Policy

First, if you haven't yet read the University of Edinburgh OER policy, read it now. Yes, it's dry 'white literature' but that's what's useful about it as a way into this issue. It's quite straightforward, clearly written and outlines some good principles for us to attempt to embed in what we are doing in this course:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/openeducationalresourcepolicy.pdf> ([link](#))

2. Blessinger and Bliss

I suggest you then read the following text, since it helps to outline the 'human rights' roots of OERs:

Blessinger, P. and T. Bliss (2017). 1. Introduction to Open Education: Towards a Human Rights Theory, Open Book Publishers.

I'd then suggest you follow up with this (if you want to know more about where OERs come from):

Bliss, T. J., and M. Smith. "A Brief History of Open Educational Resources." In *Open: The Philosophy and Practices That Are Revolutionizing Education and Science*, edited by

Jhangiani Rajiv S. and Biswas-Diener Robert, 9-28. London: Ubiquity Press, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv3t5qh3.6>.

3. Knox

You should then move on to read Jeremy Knox's critique of the OER discourse:

Knox, J. (2013). "Five Critiques of the Open Educational Resources Movement." Knox, J 2013, **Five Critiques of the Open Educational Resources Movement** vol. 18, no. 8, pp. 821. DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2013.774354

Knox, who is an expert on e-learning, teaches in the Moray House School of Education here in the University of Edinburgh.

He outlines a few very important critiques of what is written about OERs. When reading his paper, remember that the writing he refers to is from before 2013 (the field moves on quickly). Here is a list of his main issues and a few suggestions of how you might consider them in light of what you're doing in this course:

(1) "Open" is under-theorised. Knox uses the concepts of positive and negative liberty to pinpoint how.

Consider how these concepts of positive and negative liberty in OERs relate to ingrained practices of artistic licence and academic freedom, in particular, paying attention to what Jay, M. (1992) called "The Aesthetic Alibi." *Salmagundi*(93): 13-25.

Knox refers to the connectivism of George Simmens and Stephen Downes. To what extent is the connectivist vision for OER technocentric? Is this an example of the kind of techno-libertarian-emancipation thesis that Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron (1995) called the 'Californian Ideology'? <https://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/californian-ideology>

Consider to what extent your own OER might pursue a concept of positive and/or negative liberty.

(2) OER lit upholds a two-tiered system, in which the institution (in our case The University of Edinburgh) is both maintained and disaggregated.

It is worth thinking about this parasitical relationship in relation to the Para-Academic and undercommons debates that emerged around the time Knox was writing this paper.

You might also use this to self-reflect. How does Knox's critique apply to *this* course? How might it apply to the OER that you create?

(3) Knox doesn't see a role for pedagogy within the OER vision.

Knox draws on Gert Biesta's influential critique of 'learnification' here in relation to the learner-centred constructivism and connectivism that underlies a lot of OER discourse. Are OERs all about learning and not about teaching? Is this a meaningful distinction?

For more on learnification, see: Biesta, G. (2015). "Freeing Teaching from Learning: Opening Up Existential Possibilities in Educational Relationships." *An International Journal* **34**(3): 229-243.

Knox points out that a lot of OER advocates (in 2013) were keen to make their resources open without thinking about how the resources would actually be used. However, we should ask if it was thus true that OERs did not have a theory of teaching? Might the emergence of pedagogy ([link](#)) since 2011 suggest otherwise? Pedagogy has many well considered ideas of how OERs can be used to learn via P2P forms of teaching.

(4) Knox aligns the learner-centred / negative liberty stance with humanistic assumptions of unproblematic self-direction

and autonomy.

This is another interesting critique to examine in relation to this course and the OER that you create. There certainly are many OER advocates who imagine that OERs are used as PLEs (personal learning environments) rather than as components in social PLNs (personal learning networks). MOOCs and e-tivities are often structured for individuals rather than groups of learners. In both cases the assumption is made that groups of learners (peer groups, communities of interest, paragogues, etc.) are seen to require teachers to facilitate their learning. Teachers are expensive (see Knox's Point 5 and Winn, J. (2015). "Open Education and the Emancipation of Academic Labour." *Learning, Media and Technology* 40(3): 385-404.

There's a lot to think about here. You can, of course, choose to support your OER as a facilitator and 'teach' to whatever extent you think is appropriate. Your available teaching time, however, is a finite resource (you have a life). It's also unremunerated. So there are lots of reasons why you'd want to limit your active involvement in the OER.

Still, Knox shows how leaving it *all* to the learner is problematic.

Can scaffolding provide direction when you're not there to?

Might paragogics help to overcome the problem?

(5) Knox discusses the extent to which the OER movement aligns itself with **economically orientated** models of the university.

Again, another important critique to examine in relation to this course and the OER that you create. Does education simply "train" people for work? Unlike a humanities degree, art education is vocational (at least it is, officially, in Scotland). Is it therefore appropriate to focus OERs exclusively on specialist "training"?

If so, is the OER movement really concerned primarily with personal development in the form of upskilling or 'lifelong learning'? Is this course economically-orientated? How so? Is the OER you create going to be economically orientated; how and why?

There's also the economic question of how OERs are paid for. This is a similar issue to OA research. Even if OERs and OA are free at the point of access, someone is paying for them. The production of an OER carries costs for: research, creation, maintenance, facilitation, hosting (web hosting is not free). OERs can be funded publicly (e.g. through taxation) and/or privately via 'tuition fees', bequests (including micropayments) or voluntary labour. Universities are increasingly interested in OERs as a means of meeting their remit to widen participation in learning and research. In some countries – e.g. England, USA, Australia – they do this while public funding is fully withdrawn. In neoliberal economies, OERs, and indeed all forms of education, are privately funded by fees, corporate sponsorship, micropayments and voluntary labour.

The issues that Knox identifies here are important. In particular, the issues around economically orientated learning and the broader economic vision they entail are worth exploring further. To this end, it would be useful for you to read this: Ettlenger, N. (2017). "Open innovation and its discontents." *Geoforum* 80: 61.

Further research on open learning that you might pursue:

<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks> A source of openly licensed textbooks available for anyone to download and use for free.

<https://open.umn.edu/oen> A network alliance of OE institutions.

Lane, A. (2017). 2. **Emancipation through Open Education:**

Rhetoric or Reality?, Open Book Publishers.

Downes S. (2017) **New Models of Open and Distributed Learning**. In: Jemni M., Kinshuk, Khribi M. (eds) *Open Education: from OERs to MOOCs. Lecture Notes in Educational Technology*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi-org.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/10.1007/978-3-662-52925-6_1

Knox, J. (2016). **Posthumanism and the massive open online course : contaminating the subject of global education**. New York, NY Routledge.

Winn, J. (2015). "Open Education and the Emancipation of Academic Labour." *Learning, Media and Technology* 40(3): 385-404.

To consider: Swarming your Structured Reading (link to guidelines for Swarm Reading)

You **do not need** to read the Structured Reading texts as a Basho – you can do it all on your own.

But, if you did want to read the texts *collectively*, how could you read *as a Basho*? The jigsaw process should be familiar:

1. Each member of your Basho agrees to examine a different text (self-assign).
2. Once you've all had a chance to read your own text do a little more research around it, agree to meet up.
3. In your meeting, take turns to present an overview of the text you worked on. You might all try to take notes using your Basho's Miro Board so that you build up a collective picture of what you've all found out.
4. Since this was the work of your basho you can decide if you keep it to yourselves (closed) or share it with the rest of the MA CATs (open).



What is the Open Paradigm?

Dr Emma Balkind

https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_86nk0pgu

The Open Paradigm is about the shift from a mode of Copyright and protectionism within forms of production into a system which allows for collaboration and sharing.

My brother Jonathan is a Computing Science PhD and the majority of his research has been collaborating towards the production of what are described as 'manycore' computer chips. These prototypes can have up to half a billion cores of processing power within them and therefore can potentially change supercomputing possibilities by miniaturising the size of computers needed for these processes.

The project that he is part of is called OpenPiton. The reason that science tends towards an Open Paradigm is quite simple, the more people who are involved in a given innovation project, the more likely it is to either reach the end goal of that project or create new projects in its stead. When a project is run from an Open Paradigm, it allows for other projects to be developed using it as their basis. It allows for troubleshooting and for more active collaboration to happen. One medium to facilitate this that is often used is a website called Github.

When there is not an Open Paradigm, in the world of computer science this usually leads to expensive lawsuits which are

simply taken as the cost of doing business. If you follow any of the news around Apple, they are regularly in litigation with other companies over the patenting of e.g. a particular shape of phone bezel.

Pirating is not a type of Open Paradigm, and there will always also be fights between what is perceived to be piracy (which is illegal and therefore has financial and legal penalties such as jail!) and what is the freeing of information that should not legitimately be charged for. Some examples of this we could consider would be the death of the Activist Aaron Schwartz who downloaded large numbers of JSTOR papers from Harvard servers with the intention to share them online and was aggressively pursued by the authorities over this copyright infringement.

There is also an ongoing argument about the legality of the website Internet Archive, which provides digital library access to some copyrighted content. The Nation reports that 'Penguin Random House, together with fellow megapublishers Hachette, HarperCollins, and Wiley, filed a lawsuit against the Internet Archive alleging "mass copyright infringement."'

One thing which is important to remember about any commons or Open Paradigm is that it does not negate the possibility of discord between the users of the project or concept. It allows for more collaboration, but the framework that is being produced must also account for argument and even for perceived 'improper' use. An Open Paradigm is something which will always produce a community of users, and therefore requires a set of rules for engagement.

Creative Commons is a type of Open Paradigm. Another example I often use is that of Wikipedia. Wikipedia is an open Encyclopaedia, built and maintained by a vast number of people around the world who do so simply for the status of being involved. There is a hierarchy of users within Wikipedia, and some are allowed to edit more than others based on their prior

experience.

In my thesis I used Wikipedia as an example of a commons or Open Paradigm in which disagreements have played out in a very public forum. The co-founder of Wikipedia, Jimmy Wales, has over time found it quite hard to give up his position as a kind of 'owner' of the site and has tried to assert his own position rather than allowing for more horizontal forms of decision making amongst users.

In one particular case, Wales tried to clamp down on the hosting of pornography in the image hosting section of Wikicommons. Russavia, an editor of Wikipedia argued with him that this should be permissible, and in response to Wales' family-friendly policies, he found a workaround to get back at him. He commissioned a painting to be made of Jimmy Wales, painted by an artist called Pricasso who paints only using his body parts. Russavia then produced a Wikipedia page for Pricasso which embedded the video of the artist producing the painting wearing a pair of pink pleather chaps.

Overall the Open Paradigm is one with almost limitless potential, but situations can play out in unexpected ways and these can often come with social costs and repercussions. At any given time someone may use the project you have produced in an unexpected manner, and you will have to decide how to deal with that situation. By creating a covenant, or a set of rules, for the resource which you are creating within the Open Paradigm, you can set yourself up to manage any inevitable conflicts.

In one of the key texts Neil has set for this week, writer Nathan Tkacz says that 'openness... implies antagonism' and that 'Once an organisation, state or project is labelled open, it becomes difficult to account for the politics (closures) that emerge from within'. To deal with this he states that we must leave the language of openness behind. Perhaps this is a dilemma we can discuss next week in our respective Basho.

Links from this video:

Open Piton: <http://parallel.princeton.edu/openpiton/>

The Internet's Own Boy (2014) Watch online:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vz06Q03UkQ>

Publishers Are Taking The Internet To Court (2020) The Nation:
<https://www.thenation.com/article/society/publishers-are-taking-the-internet-to-court/>

How Wikicommons became a massive amateur porn hub. Daily Dot:
<https://www.dailydot.com/debug/wikimedia-commons-photos-jimmy-wales-broken/>

Key resources on the open paradigm:

- Tkacz, N. (2012). "From open source to open government: A critique of open politics." *Ephemera* **12**(4): 386-405. *Notions of openness are increasingly visible in a great number of political developments, from activist groups, software projects, political writings and the institutions of government. And yet, there has been very little reflection on what openness means, how it functions, or how seemingly radically...*
- The Commons Transition Primer
<https://primer.commonstransition.org/>

Should all Education be 'in the Open?'

https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_ml9y2mgt

Q. Should all education be open education?

A. In an ideal world, yes. Why would we decide to put barriers up against this?

Positives of open education

- Anyone can sign up from anywhere
- Little barrier to entry or cost to participate (maybe access to IT, internet speed, etc.)
- Offers the possibility of Lifelong Learning

Problems for open education

- Always going to be a finite level of resources needed in order to run. Where do you find those resources to keep going?
- There are limitations of language, number of people available to teach / provide a level of contact.
- Some education requires prerequisites to be taken for good reason. Or, in the case of professional training, requires specific levels of outcome in order to join an association (such as in medicine or education).
- There is a large dropout or non-participation rate. A paper in the British Journal of Education Technology lists participant completion rates in MOOCs as 'typically in the range of 3–10%' (Rieber, 2017).

When we look at a lot of the issues of Open Education they mirror those of commons. One of the most persistent arguments for commons resources is whether they should truly be open to everyone, or if they can be community based and directed.

There generally is an understanding today that actually commons should be created in relation to a need, and therefore the creation of a resource is most likely to be successful and be available in perpetuity if it is created with a specific community in mind.

If we consider OERs in the same way, then we should ask the question 'who is the community that you wish to create your educational resource for?' When you know the answer to this and have identified a community, you can begin to plan for their needs. It is possible that others from outside that

community will still be able to participate, but knowing your audience is something which allows you to make key decisions on resourcing your project.

What do you need to set up an OER?

- Surplus labour to create and manage the resource. In your case this labour is finite, but you have access to a group of people with time available because you are students and you have elected to volunteer this time to your own education.
- Resources such as technology and web hosting. Hopefully you already have a computer and an internet connection to participate in the course anyway. Web hosting will use free existing online resources, and some from the University itself.
- Knowledge of what your intended community might need from you in order to plan other parts of your resourcing. If, for example, you intend to make this resource available to people from other countries, do you have the facility to translate some of it into other languages?

Overall I would still say that in an ideal situation we should try to make open education a priority. In the current conditions, perhaps the next best situation is to:

A) provide education from a position of surplus (as Neil's organisation of this course does, with open elements sitting within a fee-paying larger programme) or

B) through targeting educational resources to specific communities and allowing for engagement from others who might have crossover interests.

In the current situation of an international pandemic, we are presented both with the potential for greater engagement (more people who are stuck in one place and seeking new projects and hobbies) but with limited resources (less access to

institutions who might create surplus physical resources of space and technology for us to use). This does not mean we should be deterred from creating new OERs but it does present a particular position that we need to account for when producing these resources.

Links:

Rieber, L.P. (2017), Participation patterns in a massive open online course (MOOC) about statistics. Br J Educ Technol, 48: 1295-1304. doi:10.1111/bjet.12504
<https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1111%2Fbjjet.12504>

Humanities Commons (like a Creative Commons Academia.edu)
<https://hcommons.org>

Humanities Commons plans to sustain their project through a hosting partnership with Michigan State University
<https://sustaining.hcommons.org>

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