



Open Educational Resources – Perspectives about Quality

OER Conference – March 6, 2021 – Online

Presenter: Dr. Andreas Rambow

Email: arambow75@gmail.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/andreasrambow/>

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Problem Statement
4. Purpose Statement
5. Methodology
6. Research Questions
7. Data Analysis and Findings
8. Conclusions and Future Recommendations
9. Leadership Implications
10. References
11. Questions

Introduction

- The cost of higher education increases around the globe and may deprive people worldwide of educational opportunities (Hodgkinson-Williams & Arinto, 2017).
- The deprivation of higher education represents a severe economic problem (Mitchell, Palacios, & Leachman, 2015).
- College tuition rates have increased by 106% between 1987 and 2010 in the United States (Gordon & Hedlund, 2016).
- Between January 1977 and June 2015, college textbook prices have risen by more than three times the rate of annual inflation, a total increase of 1,041% (Popken, 2015).

Background

- College tuition at public and private schools has risen approximately three times faster than the annual rate of inflation between 2007 and 2018 (Gibson, 2019).
- Student debt amounted to \$1.4 trillion in 2018, surpassing credit card and auto loan debt (Maldonado, 2018).
- College costs have surged for a variety of reasons including an increase in the demand for higher education, a lack of financial aid, and cuts in state funding.
- 30% of college students use financial aid funds to purchase textbooks (Zook, 2017).

Problem Statement

- No standard set of criteria exists for the selection of quality open educational resources (OERs) in online undergraduate courses.
- Instructors considering the adoption of OERs have concerns about the accuracy and quality (Butcher, 2015; McMurtrie, 2019), leading to the deterrence of adopting OERs (Seaman & Seaman, 2017).
- There is the potential to provide higher education instructors a consistent set of selection criteria for quality OERs.
- While individual selection criteria exist, they are not consistent across colleges and universities or by discipline (Fischer, Ernst, & Mason, 2017).

Purpose Statement

- The purpose was to examine the perspectives about the accuracy and quality of OERs among instructors who have experience in applying quality standards in online course design and who have adopted and used OERs in online undergraduate courses.

Methodology

- Qualitative Methodology
- Qualitative Design: Hermeneutic Phenomenology
- Purpose: To measure the perspectives of faculty members regarding the quality and accuracy of OERs in online undergraduate courses
- Population: Quality Matters (QM) (<https://www.qualitymatters.org/>), leading organization in the US to assess the quality of online and blended-learning courses
- Sample: 16 online undergraduate instructors who are QM course reviewers and have used open educational resources in their online classes.

Research Questions

These research questions were developed using Jung, Sasaki, and Latchem's (2016) 25-item framework as a foundation.

1. What are the perspectives of online instructors using OERs in online undergraduate classes on the purposes of OERs?
2. What are the perspectives of online instructors using OERs in online undergraduate classes on the ease of use of OERs?
3. What are the perspectives of online instructors using OERs in online undergraduate classes on the content of OERs?

27 interview questions (IQs) addressed these research questions.

Data Analysis and Findings

- Research Question 1:
 - IQ 12: Cost considerations and social justice.
 - IQ 13: Faculty members rated the future of OERs as promising.
 - IQ 14: When interviewed about OERs meeting expectations, provided mixed responses.
 - IQ 15: Faculty members felt OERs had improved the online courses for a variety of reasons.
- Research Question 2:
 - IQ 16: The interviewed faculty members located OERs in different ways.
 - IQ 17: The faculty members cited different criteria for selecting OERs.
 - IQ 18: Fourteen out of 16 faculty members indicated a preference for an open content license.
 - IQ 19: Faculty members, when asked if having reused, revised, or remixed OERs, provided mixed answers.
 - IQ 20: Faculty members look for beautiful, clean content, currency, relevancy, ease of use, and quality information.
 - IQ 21: Answers ranged from simple internet downloads to PDF files to peer-reviewed sites such as OpenStax.

Data Analysis and Findings cont'd

- Research Question 3:
 - IQ 22: Faculty members indicated looking for completeness, coverage of needed content, author credibility, and positive reviews of OERs.
 - IQ 23: Each one assessed the appropriateness of the material for the class for various reasons.
 - IQ 24: When surveyed about the creation of the interviewed faculty members' own OERs, answers were mixed.
 - IQ 25: The three main cited advantages of OERs were cost, relevance, and current information. Other advantages included accessibility, flexibility, availability, and control over the content.
 - IQ 26: Cited disadvantages of using OERs included lack of capacity on student computers, students not accessing OERs, time, availability, credibility, and not having a physical copy of the text.
 - IQ 27: The concluding faculty comments about OERs were mostly positive.

Conclusions and Future Recommendations

- The general interview questions revealed there are no identified limits in terms of users of OERs. Full-time professors and adjunct instructors alike may be engaged in the selection, adoption, and use of OERs.
- The college administration gave the instructors a choice in the selection process. The types of OERs ranged from the use of open books to YouTube videos to OER sites such as OpenStax or the American Yawp.
- The selected faculty members taught in different subject areas and the selection of courses taught by the sample of online undergraduate instructors represented a cross-section of the disciplines where OERs are used.
- Student enrollments ranged from 10 to 40 in these types of classes, which suggest widespread use of OERs within the colleges.
- The theory of transformative learning provides the framework for this shift (Bali & Caines, 2018).
- The answers provided by the participating faculty members presented a broad spectrum of thoughts and opinions on the purpose, ease of use, and content of OERs.
- Faculty Development and Support
- Future research: Replication of study with different set of faculty members

Leadership Implications

- Textbook costs and costs of other educational resources have become unmanageable.
- Rising costs in university materials and textbooks require students to consider more affordable alternatives in higher education (Brown, 2020).
- College and university administrators should find ways to reverse this process and to provide educational opportunities at a lower and affordable cost.
- UMGC moved to OERs prior to its Fall 2015 semester. The move to OERs saved students approximately \$17 million on textbook purchases in the first year following the transition to OER (Schwartz, 2017) and the switch to OERs has resulted in increased student enrollments (McKenzie, 2018).
- The participants interviewed for this research study cited cost as the primary reason to move to OERs. OERs can provide more than textbooks. OERs can provide easy accessibility, and faculty members believed there would be a dominant future use of OERs.
- College and university leaders should act as facilitators in the creation, selection, and adoption of OERs. Resources at the college and university level should be shifted to make a move to OERs to live up to the promise of providing affordable higher education to society at large.
- Institutions of higher learning have untapped resources. Libraries can act as curating sources for OERs, and departments can create OER initiatives making the use of OERs mandatory in the classroom.

References

- Bali, M., & Caines, A. (2018). A call for promoting ownership, equity, and agency in faculty development via connected learning. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 15(1), 1–24. doi:10.1186/s41239-018-0128-8
- Brown, K. (2020, January 20). Declining enrollment in the U.S. *Retrieve*. Retrieved from <https://www.retrieve.com/declining-enrollment-in-the-us/>
- Butcher, N. (2015). *A basic guide to open educational resources (OERs)*. Paris, France: UNESCO Commonwealth of Learning (COL).
- Fischer, L., Ernst, D., & Mason, S. L. (2017). Rating the quality of open textbooks: How reviewer and text characteristics predict ratings. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 18(4), 1–14. doi:10.19173/irrodl.v18i4.2985

References

- Gibson, K. (2019). As college costs keep rising, some schools slash tuition. *CBS News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/as-college-costs-keep-rising-some-schools-slash-tuition/>
- Gordon, G., & Hedlund, A. (2016). *Accounting for the rise in college tuition* (Working Paper No. 21967). doi:10.3386/w21967
- Hodgkinson-Williams, C., & Arinto, P. B. (Eds.). (2017). *Adoption and impact of OER in the Global South*. Cape Town, South Africa: African Minds.
- Jung, I., Sasaki, T., & Latchem, C. (2016). A framework for assessing fitness for purpose in open educational resources. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 13(1), 1–11. doi:10.1186/s41239-016-0002-5
- Maldonado, C. (2018). Price of college increasing almost 8 times faster than wages. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/camilomaldonado/2018/07/24/price-of-college-increasing-almost-8-times-faster-than-wages/#12e5a1766c1d>

References

McKenzie, L. (2018, January 8). Has UMUC turned enrollment woes around? *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/01/08/has-umuc-turned-enrollment-woes-around>

McMurtrie, B. (2019, January 9). Professors worry about the cost of textbooks, but free alternatives pose their own problems. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/>

Mitchell, M., Palacios, V., & Leachman, M. (2015). States are still funding higher education below pre-recession levels. *Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy*, 0(10), 1–27. Retrieved from <https://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba/>

Popken, B. (2015). College textbook prices have risen 1,041 percent since 1977. *NBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/freshman-year/college-textbook-prices-have-risen-812-percent-1978-n399926>

Schwartz, E. (2017). Open educational resources. *Ithaka S+R*. Retrieved from <https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/open-educational-resources/>

References

Seaman, J. E., & Seaman, J. (2017). *Opening the textbook: Educational resources in U.S. higher education, 2017*. Babson Park, MA: Babson Survey Research Group.

Zook, C. (2017). Infographic: Textbook costs skyrocket 812% in 35 years. *AES Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/infographic-the-skyrocketing-cost-of-textbooks-for-schools-students>

Thank you for your attention!



**AMERICAN
COLLEGE *of*
EDUCATION**

Questions?



AMERICAN
COLLEGE *of*
EDUCATION