In the Classroom 3
Using Open Educational Resources in the Classroom

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Stan Skrabut: In today's episode, I'm going to share why I'm using open educational resources in my multimedia development course and things that you should consider for your course. When I started to teach for the university of Wyoming, I made a conscious decision to use open educational resources whenever possible. The reason I did this is I was finding that most of the content that I wanted to teach didn't necessarily fit my student learning objectives the way I wanted that the content was at a date.

It basically was someone else's interpretation of what I wanted to present, and so I didn't find that the textbooks that were available neatly fit into the instructional plan that I wanted to use. With OER, this provides me with more control over my course. I'm not a teaching assistant to somebody else and what I mean by that is, first of all, what is a course? A course is a curation of material in which a expert guides you through that material and a textbook is a curation of content that an expert guides you through that content. When you're using somebody else's textbook, in essence, you're teaching their material. With open education resources, it allows me to pull in the materials that I want, adapt them and change them and create my own to teach the things that I think should be taught in a course.

The other reason that I'm using open textbooks or trying to get away from commercial textbooks is that textbooks are really overpriced. I want to save students money, they certainly appreciate that the other reason is I want them to be able to access all the course material from day one and typically what happens is students want to know if you're using the textbook or not. I've been in a number of courses where they require a textbook and maybe only one chapter was used in that book and we were forced to buy that book and so students are getting savvy and they're not buying the book, they're waiting to see if the instructor is going to use the material because I pulled all the material together that I really want. They're using the material and we're doing it from day one.

In episode two and episode one I talked a little bit about OER and probably the first thing was I ran into material that professor Curtis Bonk was using and he was creating what was considered a monster syllabus. If you go out and do a search for Curtis Bonk and monster syllabus, you will see what I mean. He does not use a textbook for those particular courses and he has a wealth of material. He is just pulling from the internet and packaging together to meet his student learning objectives. That's what I thought that teaching really needed to be about, to be able to do that.

The internet has a wealth of material, it is updated daily, new information is coming out and this is a great place to go out and explore for the latest and greatest material

and curate it and also to have students helping to do that. I'm also a fan of open education in its principles because education is about sharing, in the classroom, that's what we're doing, we're sharing information, we're sharing our experiences, we're sharing our perspective on a particular topic. None of us know it all on a particular topic we're sharing that perspective, but it's all about sharing and open education is at its core about sharing.

Open education, it means different things to different people but basically, according to a definition from the University of British Columbia, it can be understood as a collection of practices that utilize online technology to freely share knowledge and when we talk about sharing in the idea of open education, this could be scholarly research.

Right now folks are writing research articles and they're sent to a publisher who then charges a crazy amount of money and the authors don't receive any benefit except being able to add that to a tenure and promotion package.

We go through all this research, this research should be available to the public to help make the world a better place. Teaching and learning materials, that's another area and that's typically what we find in open educational resources. It could be tools or computer code, for example, Linux or some of the other software that's openly sourced like gimp as a replacement for Photoshop. These are openly created, that other people can use and adapt and change and they're freely available to the public. Open data, right? Putting datastores out there that you can tap into and then manipulate, well, manipulate is probably not the best word, but you can go ahead and run analysis on to serve your research needs.

Being able to work and learn in an open environment, it's considered an open practice or being able to access your courses and open courses. This is another strategy that we can do by putting your syllabus online, making your homework assignments available online for others to benefit and use. These are all part of that open education and I'm totally bought into that. The homework assignments I have or the quests that I have for this particular course are searchable, they're findable on the internet if you do a search, I put a creative commons license on them and I made them publicly available.

The idea of open education resources, let's start with that, everything that is produced, everything that's written down, even if I scribble notes on a piece of paper, have a copyright license on it, okay, this means that we really can't use it unless that individual gives you permission to use it, and this used to be more of an arduous task in the fact that you had to go write somebody to ask, "Hey, do I have permission to use this in my course?" Well, then came along creative commons licensing.

The copyright is still there, but the creative commons license gives you permission, the individual putting the license on the person who owns it says upfront what you are allowed to do with that artifact, basically, for example, like a CC by license, which means attribution, they are telling you upfront, you can do anything you want with that document as long as you give attribution that you let people know where you got it. This is great, now I don't have to write to somebody to say, "Hey, can I use it?" Now I

don't have to get sued because I go ahead and use an image that was copyrighted, I can go find images that have a creative commons license.

The key to this is you have to abide by that license, right? You can't just Willy nilly, claim it as your own, which honestly, I see a lot in different courses that I evaluate, that they're using content but they're not indicating where they got it and what permissions they have and it's obvious when you copy a PDF from a book or something, it's obvious that they took it from a book, but they're not giving credit so that's not a good practice. OER helps do it the right way, open education resources, OER, are education materials that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits their free use and repurposing by others.

This is a definition that Hewlett Packard or Hewlett foundation came up with, okay, The Hewlett Foundation, this means I can go in and use these materials more freely, for example, the music in my intro and outro, trying to get music is crazy hard but there's creative commons repositories that people have created music, they want you to use it and so the music for my intro and outro to this podcast is a creative commons licensed piece of music. They're allowing me to use it, I just have to give attribution and I do as it's tied to the podcast itself.

Creative commons is really surrounding, the five Rs, right? So revise, remix, reuse, redistribute, retain. Revising, this means that I can take something if under the right license and I can make it better. If I don't like the examples that they used in the textbook or in this open text, if I don't like the examples, I can create an example that is more relevant to my audience, my students, so I can change it. One of the things that I'm finding out right now is the faculty that I'm working with are really hesitant about changing anything, but don't worry, I'm working on them, we'll get them to change. Remix? Remix means I can mash it up with other materials, if I find video I like, I can put that video in there, if I find that a podcast that works, or an audio file, I can put that in there, I can add different images as long as it's- -all within that Creative Commons or I can add my own images and make it better with my own images or my own soundtracks that I personally created. I can enhance it. If I'm working on an open textbook, maybe I'm looking across a variety of open textbooks and I like chapters from textbook A. I like chapters one, two and three from textbook A, and I like chapters four, five and six from B and I like seven, eight, nine from C. I can put them all together and create a new open textbook. That is what's really cool. I can reuse this. I created I take an image, I can use it in all kinds of different ways. I can take a soundtrack and use it all different ways.

I have the capability of reusing it and redistributing it. Once I repackage it, say I had created that new textbook that's taking chapters from three different open textbooks, package it together. I can then put it back out in the world with that new license as long as I take care of the proper licensing, I do the proper attributions. I have built courses, pulling from all these different OER content. Finally, what's really cool is the retain. We give these materials to students. In a typical class, they buy a textbook. It's not a textbook that they really want. At the end of the course, they sell the textbook back. They don't have that wealth of knowledge.

With an open textbook, there is the keep, they don't have to turn it back in. It didn't cost them anything. They don't have to pay to keep it and they can go on. For the publishing houses, one of the clever things that they're trying to do right now is they're providing a subscription for access. It's like you pay the subscription you pay $100 you have access to all these books. Well, guess what happens when the subscription runs out? It's gone. Then they don't have that material anymore. We want to make them lifelong learners. We want them to keep building upon their knowledge and we want we ideally want them to keep those resources so they can tap into them later.

They can do this now with open education resources. Open textbooks, when you're going out there to put your course together or choose a textbook. Have you ever found that ideal textbook? Have you ever found the right textbook that addressed everything you needed? I certainly haven't. It's absolutely frustrating. Like I mentioned in the example previously, if I like chapters in one book, and I like these chapters in another book, with open education resources, I can now pull them all together into one book. I can very specifically address the SLOs that I've created. Those Student Learning Objectives. I can very specifically create those for my students.

I am able to better serve my students. You can make changes to it, you don't like something, change it. That's the power of OER. The research behind this, this is a relatively new trend that we are getting into, to using OER. I just got back from a conference, I have a bunch of notes from the conference. The research has been quite favorable, that students who are using OER content are doing as well or better than students who are using commercial products. The cool thing is they're doing it with a bigger load, which means they are getting to completion a lot quicker than students who had to shell out extra dollars to pay for textbooks.

If you're a professor and ideally if you're a full-time professor, you're making some decent money, right? You may think that a $25 textbook is not a big hurdle for students. I can tell you that from the students that I have to work with at a community college, it can mean the difference between eating or not. We have to see it from their perspective, from their position. The fact that they're doing as well or better, and they're doing it with a heavier load, that's huge. More research keeps coming out and they're keeping to explore this idea. Let's talk real quick about the Creative Commons License.

There are four elements to a Creative Commons License when they pull the license together. First is attribution. Attribution means that you can copy distribute, perform remix work, as long as you give credit to the owner of that work. Attribution at the very basic level, just give credit, no derivatives. You decide if you put no derivatives, what you're basically saying is that they cannot change it at all. This is putting a barrier around it. I'm not a fan of no derivatives but this means that you have to use it exactly as they produced it and you need to make sure that you give attribution. Share-alike means that if you redistribute something that you have to give the same licensing as the originator.

If they indicate that it's attribution share-alike when you put it out there, you have to also give attribution and share-alike. If they also say no derivatives, that's how you got to produce it you can't make any modifications and change it. The last piece is non-commercial. This means that you decide whether somebody can use it for commercial

purposes or not. This is where a lot of people get some heartburn. It's like, I don't want people making money on my stuff. I would rather, people go out and spread my stuff and spread the news about the things that I was doing for my class than not. If they did it commercially and they figured out how to do it best that way, well, more power to them but that's just me.

There's different ways that you can combine these license. You can do simply an attribution license. There's also one license CC0, which means that you basically setting it free as public domain, saying, Here you go, do whatever you want, I don't care. But CC by means use my stuff, give me attribution. CC by no derivative, give me attribution you can't make changes. CC by non-commercials share alike, that means that you can do things, you can make changes to it, but when you share it, other people can't make any profit of it, and things like that. There's also CC by share alike, CC by non-commercial, CC by non-commercial no derivative, which is really the tightest that you're going to go.

It's right next to copyright, you almost have to ask permission to be able to do anything with it. That's the most restrictive. At SUNY where I work, I work for Jamestown Community College, which is part of the SUNY system. We have received wonderful grant that allows us to build content. There's $4 million given to the SUNY system and $4 million given to the CUNY system to make open education resources. Their stipulation is it must be created in no more than a CC by license, which means attribution. They don't want it any more restrictions than that. If you are just searching, going out there and trying to figure out what content is available for you, here's what I recommend.

I start with a Google search, and I will put the term in that I'm looking for. Instructional technology, for example. I'll put that term in quotes, then I will also add as another phrase. OER. Just the letters OER and I will typically do a search and see what I find. If OER doesn't give me a lot of things, I will also put it in quotes, Creative Commons. Whatever my search term is Creative Commons and do a search that way. With Google search there's other attributes that you can put in there to filter your search. If I want to find everything, that's OER in higher ed, for example, then I would add site colon EDU. That I will restrict it to everything in education.

That's all we are Creative Commons, depending on my search phrase. Then if I'm looking for a specific file type, maybe I'm looking for a PDF or a PowerPoint or something like that, then I will put in file type one word colon PDF, or file type colon, PPTX for PowerPoint, and that helps narrow down my searches. In a lot of cases, when I do that, I will find a library LibGuide to help point me in the right direction. That's been extremely useful. Those are the things that I do to get the search on the way. One of the things that you can do to start in the OER realm is start sharing things with the Creative Commons license.

One of the ways that I do that I use Google Docs and I will create a Google Doc say for my quest. I've written out my quests, all the steps to my quest, and I attach a license to it. Right in the- -end of the document I will put my Creative Commons license, and there's ways that you're supposed to do that. There's a nice tool that a gentleman that I know David Godot, he created a tool that will allow you to add a Creative Commons

license. If you're in a Google Doc check the add-ons, look for Creative Commons, and it'll probably be the first one that pops up. The other thing that is also key is when you share it, you need to share it publicly.

I know from working with the faculty at Jamestown Community College, they're a little skittish about that, but they're coming around, and we're starting to share more things publicly, and that's really useful to building this whole OER library. Because I know you as a faculty or you're looking for material out there, and you're really grateful when somebody provides something that you can use. It saves you from trying to figure it out, and you look for somebody else that's already done this. I know I'm grateful and then especially if it's OER, then I would just pick up from where they are, adapt to what I want to do, add a license and share it under their license also.

Here are ways that I'm using it for this multimedia development course, the discussions that we're having in the course, all those discussions are based on content that is freely available on the internet. Now, it may not meet the definition of OER, and the fact that I can adapt it and change it, some of it is, some of it isn't, but it's freely available. I'm not making them, I'm not restricting it to documents that I have to search the library for at least I tried to avoid that because once you get out of school you don't have access to those libraries. I try to find open journals and things like that. Book chapters, they are writing a book chapter that's going to be contributing to an OER book.

Each of the students is right in their own chapter, I went into great detail into episode 2, on how I was doing that. That is they're writing a book chapter that's going to be built with OER content so we can redistribute it later. Then finally, the quest that I have been building are all license with an OER license, and if you wish to use them feel free to use them. I will probably attach them in the show notes for this and then you'll be able to tap into those. That is what I'm doing that's why I think OER is important, hopefully, I gave you some strategies that you can explore, thanks for coming and check this out.

Real quick a plug for my book, I had just got a book published, and it's called *Read to Succeed*, I'm a little proud of it and so here's a little more about that.