

**Title:** Open sharing for learning communities

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### Abstract:

#### Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- explain the contribution that open educational resources could make to communities of learning in which they are involved
- understand some of the cultural and organisational barriers to open sharing of learning and teaching materials
- reflect on the impact that open educational resources and the Capetown Declaration may have on learning communities

#### Session Outline

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are defined as 'digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research' (OECD, 2007). Many educators are aware of high profile institutional initiatives such as MIT OpenCourseware and the UK Open University OpenLearn, but there is less understanding of what open content means to learning communities at large.

HEFCE has recently funded, via the JISC and the HE Academy, a large-scale pilot programme to support the release of open learning materials<sup>1</sup>. Early evidence suggests that different subjects and professions, sub-discipline and topic-based communities, different institutions, and staff in different roles and at different stages of their professional life, all have different attitudes and responses to opening educational content.<sup>2</sup>

Two recent JISC reports have examined the history of sharing in the UK, the barriers and cultural issues<sup>3</sup>, and also identified the benefits of sharing, with a focus on open and community-based sharing.<sup>4</sup>

This workshop will draw on the pilot project experiences and the reports to explore the cultural aspects of OER, including impacts on institutional strategy and learning and teaching

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<sup>1</sup> Yuan, Li et al (2008) *Open Educational Resources – Opportunities and Challenges for Higher Education*, CETIS [http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/images/0/0b/OER\\_Briefing\\_Paper.pdf](http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/images/0/0b/OER_Briefing_Paper.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> McGill, L., Beetham, H., Smith, K. and Littlejohn, A (2009) *Interim report of the Synthesis and Evaluation Team*. Unpublished.

<sup>3</sup> Charlesworth, A et al (2007) *Sharing eLearning Content – a synthesis and commentary report* <http://ie-repository.jisc.ac.uk/46/1/selc-final-report-3.2.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> McGill, L., Currier, S., Duncan, C. and Douglas, P (2008) *Good intentions: improving the evidence base in support of sharing learning materials*. Project Report. <http://ie-repository.jisc.ac.uk/265/>

practice of the widespread availability of open content and community practices around learning and teaching resources which support or resist the move towards greater openness and sharing.<sup>5</sup> This is also informed and grounded in very rich range of literature.<sup>6</sup>

### Session Activities and Approximate Timings

10 mins: Background to open content: introducing the Capetown Declaration on Open Content, and a range of international initiatives including the UK OER programme

15 mins: We will invite participants to consider the likely impact of a widespread availability of open content in their learning communities, using paired discussion

15 mins: Benefits of sharing through open and community of practice approaches  
introduction to Good intentions toolset

10 mins: Discussion around benefits to different communities and how institutional strategy, policy and practice needs to adapt to support opening educational resources.

15 mins: Findings from the UK OER programme and the JISC Good intentions report: what are the barriers and incentives to sharing in different communities?

10 mins: Straws in the wind: small group activity in which participants identify signs of 'openness' from their own communities, and prioritise the factors which impinge on attitudes and practices

5 mins: Open discussion: learning from the OER pilot projects and taking forward an open agenda

The session will include hands-on encounters with tools for open educational thinking, and opportunities to interact using ready-to-hand technologies such as twitter.

### References

Charlesworth, A et al (2007) *Sharing eLearning Content – a synthesis and commentary report* <http://ie-repository.jisc.ac.uk/46/1/selc-final-report-3.2.pdf>

Community Dimensions of Learning Object Repositories (CD LOR) JISC funded project. <http://www.academy.gcal.ac.uk/cd-lor/>

McGill, L., Currier, S., Duncan, C. and Douglas, P (2008) *Good intentions: improving the evidence base in support of sharing learning materials*. Project Report. <http://ie-repository.jisc.ac.uk/265/>

McGill, L., Beetham, H., Smith, K. and Littlejohn, A (2009) *Interim report of the UKOER Synthesis and Evaluation Team*. Unpublished.

Yuan, Li et al (2008) *Open Educational Resources – Opportunities and Challenges for Higher Education*, CETIS [http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/images/0/0b/OER\\_Briefing\\_Paper.pdf](http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/images/0/0b/OER_Briefing_Paper.pdf)

A wide range of sources are listed on this wiki page – with links to documents where appropriate.

<http://www.caledonianacademy.net/spaces/oer/index.php?n=Main.UsefulDocumentsAndReports>

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<sup>5</sup> *Community Dimensions of Learning Object Repositories (CD LOR)* JISC funded project. <http://www.academy.gcal.ac.uk/cd-lor/>

<sup>6</sup> List of key references in the OER literature <http://www.caledonianacademy.net/spaces/oer/index.php?n=Main.UsefulDocumentsAndReports>