CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY TEACHERS ON THE USE OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to emphasize the role of English as a language in learning Open Educational Resources (OER) as well as its advantages; likewise, the different instructional materials needed in teaching English were also presented. The study further elaborates on effective assessment activities which need to be used in OER-based blended learning. Moreover, the study specified the importance of incorporating OER in teaching English.

Keywords: blended-learning, English instruction, open educational resources, online instruction

INTRODUCTION

Blended learning is one of the most accepted learning modes where the learners get the opportunity to learn using online digital media as well as the traditional classroom methods (Bonk & Graham, 2013). The use of online learning methods in blended learning helps the course designers in using learning materials as their preference. Open Educational Resources (OER) are the types of educational materials that are used in the public domain or introduced with an open license (UNESCO, 2002). In conventional teaching practices, teachers mostly spend time developing learning materials, reviewing lecture notes, anticipating questions, formulating answers, and preparing for examinations. This method is no longer appropriate with the learners' current association with the technology as well as with the changes in the educational flow and setting due to the pandemic. The different Open Educational Resources have empowered teachers to become more innovative in their teaching and learning through openness and flexibility. The use and adaptation of these applications have been recommended as a very cost-effective investment in quality teaching-learning. With the current health crisis that the world is experiencing, there is a great need to capacitate the teachers in the use of ICT and other Open Educational Resources for them to employ in their classes as supplemental materials that will aid them in their lessons. Hence amidst the different Open Educational Resources being introduced to aid the teachers in the teaching under the new normal, there had been a lot of challenges that teachers experienced in using the Open Educational Resources.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic as a massive global concern has brought unprecedented challenges in different sectors of the world. One of them is education which posed as one of the most vulnerable sectors significantly impacted by it. This phenomenon changed the mode of instructional delivery and the viewpoint of education stakeholders on the kind of learning continuity applicable to the learners amidst the looming uncertainty brought about by the health crisis. One of the subjects seriously affected is doing online and or distance teaching and learning in English. English teachers are faced with instructional

dilemmas in adapting to the demands of the new normal teaching and learning.

Under the provisions of Executive Order No. 210, English shall be taught as a second language starting with Grade 1. As provided for in the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum, English shall be used as the medium of instruction for English, Mathematics, and Science and Health starting Grade 3. The English language shall be used as the primary medium of instruction in all public and private schools at the secondary level, including those established as laboratory and/or experimental schools, and vocational/technical institutions. As the primary medium of instruction, the percentage of time allotment for learning areas conducted in the English language should not be less than 70% of the total time allotment for all learning areas in all year levels (DO 36, S. 2006).

In this new normal education, Blended Learning is one of the most accepted learning modes where the students get the opportunity to learn using online digital media as well as the traditional classroom methods (Bonk & Graham, 2013). The use of online learning methods in blended learning helps the course designers in using learning materials as their preference. Open Educational Resources (OERs) are becoming popular such as online course designers since OER are the types of educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an open license (UNESCO, 2014). The Open Educational Resources (OER) movement has empowered educators to become more innovative in their pedagogical practices, through the openness and flexibility in educational resource use permitted by open licensing materials (Sandanayake, 2019). The use of OERs allows educators to improve their teaching and their students' learning. It is flexible and easy to access and has rich sources of content.

There are different instructional materials in English instruction. These are the following: Print Materials (Readings, Syllabus, Lesson/Assignment Files, Rubrics, Handouts); Digital Media/Recorded Lectures (Audio or Video); Movies/TV Clips/YouTube, Podcasts, Course Introduction Video, Presentation Materials (Lecture Notes, PowerPoint,

Prezi, Adobe Captivate); Expert Interviews, Case Studies, Simulations, Expert Blogs and Open Educational Resources(OER); Textbooks, Online Articles, Audio or Video Clips, Links to Online Resources, Databases, Examples, Simulations.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are Open Educational Resources and their historical background?
2. What are the advantages and benefits of using Open Educational Resources?
3. What is the use of Open Educational Resources in Teaching English?
4. What are the challenges in using Open Educational Resources by English teachers?

I.   Open Educational Resources: Concepts and Historical Background

1.1 Definition

'Open Educational Resources' represents an emergent movement that is re-shaping learning and teaching in higher education worldwide. Claimed as one technology to be closely considered by higher education institutions, OER is already influencing the way institutions worldwide to offer education and market themselves. The growth of the open educational trend is a response to the rising costs of education, the desire for accessing learning in areas where such access is difficult, and an expression of student choice about when and how to learn. In addition, OER has the potential to meet the growing demand for higher education worldwide, and to close the gap between formal, non-formal, and informal education (Kanwar et al., 2010; Pereira, 2007). The OER movement is a technology-empowered effort to create and share educational content on a global level (Caswell et al., 2008). Since being first coined by UNESCO during the Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries hosted by UNESCO in 2002, the term "open educational resources" has been re-

defined several times to meet the fast-evolving pace of the movement and to fit into the diverse range of contexts that it has been applied.

According to Atkins et al. (2007), Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or repurposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge.

Faber (2012) defined Open Educational Resources (OER) as teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium that resides in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits their free use and repurposing by others.

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are educational materials that are licensed in ways that provide permissions for individuals and institutions to reuse, adapt, and modify the materials for their use. OERs can and do include full courses, textbooks, streaming videos, exams, software, and any other materials or techniques supporting learning (Mackintosh et al., 2011).

OER is a relatively new phenomenon that may be seen as a part of a larger trend towards openness in higher education including more well-known and established movements such as Open-Source Software (OSS) and Open Access (OA). The two most important aspects of openness have to do with free availability over the Internet and as few restrictions as possible on the use of the resource. There should be no technical barriers (undisclosed source code), no price barriers (subscriptions, licensing fees, pay-per-view fees), and as few legal permission barriers as possible (copyright and licensing restrictions) for the end-user. The end-user should be able not only to use or read the resource but also to adapt it, build upon it and thereby reuse it, given that the original creator is attributed for their work. In broad terms, this is what is meant with "open" in all three movements. It is also what is covered in the definition

used by The Open Knowledge Foundation when they say that knowledge should be legally, socially, and technologically open.

In a broader context, open education is not limited to just open educational resources. It also draws upon open technologies that facilitate collaborative, flexible learning and the open sharing of teaching practices that empower educators to benefit from the best ideas of their colleagues. It may also grow to include new approaches to assessment, accreditation, and collaborative learning.

1.2 Historical Background

Bliss and Smith (2017) started tracing the history of the OER in the 1990s with fledging programs that formed the foundation for modern open education. From there, they cover the period they refer to as 'open's adolescence' from 2004 to 2010.

It used to be that an Ivy League education was reserved only for those with vast fortunes, family connections, or stellar grades. However, much of academia's top curricula are now available online, free for anyone with an inquiring mind to see. The History of Open Educational Resources Infographic presents how the Internet became one of the best places to get an education.

In 1994 Wayne Hodgins coined the term "learning object," and this term quickly entered the vernacular of educators and instructional designers. One role of learning objects in the history of OER is its popularization of the idea that digital materials can be designed and produced in such a manner as to be reused easily in a variety of pedagogical situations. Along with its emphasis on reuse, the learning object movement spawned several standards efforts aimed at detailing metadata, content exchange, and other standards necessary for users to find and reuse digital educational content.

In 1998 David Wiley coined the term "open content," and while targeted at the educational community (and learning object creators specifically), the term quickly entered the vernacular of internet users.

One role of open content in the history of OER is its popularization of the idea that the principles of the open-source/free software movements can be productively applied to content and the creation of the first widely adopted open license for content.

In 2001 Larry Lessig and others founded the Creative Commons and released a flexible set of licenses that were both a vast improvement on the Open Publication License's confusing license option structure and significantly stronger legal documents. One role of Creative Commons in the history of OER is the increase in credibility and confidence of their legally superior, much easier to use licenses brought to the open content community.

Also, in 2001 MIT announced its Open Course Ware initiative to publish nearly every university course for free public access for non-commercial use. MIT Open Course Ware has played many roles in the history of OER, including being an example of commitment at an institutional level, working actively to encourage similar projects, and lending the MIT brand to the movement.

Finally, in 2002 UNESCO held a Forum comprised of some of the many people who "wish[ed] to develop together a universal educational resource available for the whole of humanity." They chose the term "open educational resource" to describe their efforts:

> Open Educational Resources are defined as "technology-enabled, open provision of educational resources for consultation, use, and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes." They are typically made freely available over the Web or the Internet. Their principal use is by teachers and educational institutions support course development, but they can also be used directly by students. Open Educational Resources include learning objects such as lecture material, references and readings, simulations, experiments, and demonstrations, as well as syllabi, curricula, and teachers' guides.

II.   ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Research shows that OER brings many benefits to educational institutions, educators, and traditional and nontraditional learners. At institutional levels, OER can assist to reduce costs, improve quality, and bring innovation to traditional educational material (Caswell et al., 2008). Thus, assisting senior managers and educational leaders to lead in the current climate of change across the higher education landscape worldwide. OER can also be used as a market tool by making educational resources publicly available on the Internet.

Open sharing will speed up the development of new learning resources, stimulate internal improvement, innovation, and reuse and help the institution to keep good records of materials and their internal and external use (OECD, 2007).

Educators, in general, can also take advantage of OER. They can have access to a growing range of resources that can be built and/or used to update and revise existing learning content (Bossu & Tynan, 2011; Caswell et al., 2008). Most importantly, OER can assist educators to reduce teaching preparation time, avoid duplication and concentrate their efforts on making students' learning a more rewarding experience (Willems & Bossu, 2012). Nevertheless, formal, and informal learners can gain the most advantage from the adoption and use of OER because they are accessible; provide learners with the flexibility to study anywhere and anytime; at no or low costs; and have the potential to contribute to informal, non-formal and formal education (Bossu & Tynan, 2011; Panke, 2011; Schuwer & Mulder, 2009). Other benefits for learners are the interaction with content and the sharing of knowledge with other learners, following personal learning goals and encountering different points of view (Panke, 2011).

III.   UTILIZATION OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The utilization of open educational resources (OER) is becoming a global trend. The advent of new technology has made the world to become a global village in information dissemination. The developed

world has taken the lead in bringing information to the doorsteps of people. This age of technology is witnessing tremendous opportunities to access learning materials online.

Observations have shown that despite the level of understanding of the usage of OER in developed nations the developing countries are still not putting into expected use, these online learning resources. It seems students are still not aware of the availability of OER, the level of accessing OER is minimal, and that there are series of challenges facing the usage of OER. The purpose of this study was to examine the level of awareness of students on the availability of OER and the extent to which OER is utilized by university undergraduates. It was also used to examine the potential of OER in enhancing the quality of education.

The utilization of OER has been of great advantage to educational development in this age of technology. The usage of OER has highly enhanced the quality of university education in Nigeria. The maximal use of OER has not been attained in this part of the world, because despite the level of understanding of the usage of OER in developed nations, the undergraduate still has a moderate level of awareness and usage of OER in Nigeria.

The developed nations are continuing to gather further momentum in developing more OER and to raise the quality of the OER, Nigeria should not only be a country desire to consume the resources of technology but to aspire to contribute to the development of OER and participate in enhancing the quality of OER. Although Nigeria is facing a lot of challenges in accessing the internet to get relevant educational materials nevertheless, there is no doubt that OER has impacted positively on the quality of education. This study has affirmed that the undergraduates were able to share world learning resources and subsequent capacity building among undergraduates and enhancing the quality of university education in Nigeria.

IV. CHALLENGES OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

OER movement faces some sort of challenges. Despite the continued growth, success, and evident benefits of the OER movement, a range of issues remains unresolved. Some of these issues have existed since the early stages of the movement and are widely discussed in the body of knowledge regarding OER. Other issues have emerged recently, as the movement matures and evolves. Some challenges at an institutional level include copyright and intellectual property policies, and lack of awareness regarding OER. Institutional barriers also include lack of incentives from institutions toward staff and their use and development of OER (Atkins, et al., 2007; Bossu & Tynan, 2011; Wiley & Gurrell, 2009). In addition, issues regarding quality control, whether to support translation and localization of resources, how to facilitate access for students with disabilities, and technical issues need to be considered when developing an OER initiative (Bossu & Tynan, 2011, p. 261). Many, however, believe that the sustainability of OER initiatives is perhaps the most significant issue for educational institutions. Even though several sustainability models have been developed and discussed in the literature to date, there is no evidence yet of their successes (Dholakai et al., 2006; Downes, 2007; Humbert et al., 2008; Lane, 2013; Schuwer & Mulder, 2009; Smith & Wang, 2007). As Smith and Wang (2007) point out, for an OER initiative to be sustainable in the long term, it needs to create value for the host institution.

Some of the key challenges faced by academics in terms of the use and repurpose of OER include an evident lack of understanding regarding copyright and intellectual property issues, and where to find quality and relevant resources (Bossu & Tynan, 2011). For those who are more familiar with the licenses applied to OER, the adoption of OER into traditional educational contexts would still require academics to pay attention to a layer of their instruction beyond what is simply pedagogically sound (Caswell, et al., 2008, p. 8). The non-invented-here syndrome is another problem, as some believe that a material developed or chosen by someone else is commonly judged to be inferior (McGreal, 2010, p. 3). As for learners, contextual barriers can pose a substantial challenge to the adoption of OER due to different students' needs and

capabilities (Kanwar, et al., 2010; Willems & Bossu, 2012). Additionally, adequate access to an Internet connection, computer skills, and relevant OER are all challenges faced by many learners worldwide (Willems & Bossu, 2012). For an OER project to be successful the above and other issues must be considered.

CONCLUSION

To anticipate the global change in the education system the development of higher-order thinking skills is encouraged, one of them being critical thinking skills. The use of Open Educational Resources (OER) in teaching English poses a challenge to English teachers. It is undeniable that some of the teachers are not yet fully capacitated in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Moreover, the use of OER in the teaching-learning process would be as effective if teachers are empowered to become more innovative in their teaching and learning, through openness and flexibility especially in teaching the English subject. Hence, there are also challenges encountered by teachers in using OER which include copyright and intellectual property issues, sustainability, and lack of resources.

In addition, using Open Educational Resources is more interactive especially for 21st-century learners. Integrating innovative styles, educational videos and games can help you more to encourage learners to learn. Also, it encourages the retention of learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are deemed important:

1. The school administrators may consider maximizing the use of OER to improve the quality of education through upholding webinars, seminars, and trainings. Thus, this would help to expand the open access repositories and open licenses in instruction.
2. English teachers may consider attending webinars, seminars, and training on the use of OER to evaluate the applicable activities and

strategies to be designed in the instruction process, especially on language subjects. Hence, they are advised to utilize tools and services that support learning designs, content, and experiences through open access repositories and open licenses.

3. Students may consider demanding educational approaches to ensure that learning experiences are real using new tools and services. They are also required to develop one's e-portfolio and make study results accessible to others.

4. Parents may consider embracing the existence of OER through supporting individual content creators and communities of practice with useful tools and services to enhance the teaching-learning process and update resources.

5. Instructional materials' developers may consider involving teachers, students, and parents in the development of learning tools, fostering open educational practices through helping in setting up appropriate tools that support group-based, collaborative learning practices, and thoroughly observe the progress and consider testing of learning design-based systems.

6. Future researchers may consider using the results of this study as additional resource material or reference in the conduct of similar or related studies.

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