Open Education Co-Design as a Participatory Pedagogy in an Online Graduate Class

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Extended Abstract

UNESCO OER Recommendation

This session aims to address the UNESCO OER Recommendation of building capacity of stakeholders to create, access, re-use, adapt, and redistribute OER by demonstrating how a course can be designed to include the co-creation of OER by students and the benefits and challenges encountered. Through the creation of an OER Pressbook and working in open spaces, the students and instructors in this course were able to build awareness of OER and contribute their own knowledge to the open movement. The course was designed to include participatory activities such as Twitter chats and blogging which expanded the learning community beyond the walls of the course. Students were able to connect with each other, experts in the field of educational technology, access research, and remix OER to create their own chapters. Through classroom instruction and hands on research, students gained an awareness of Canadian copyright law and open licensing, and how this legislation affects their rights and responsibilities as both consumers and creators of knowledge.

Working in the open also created opportunities for learners outside of the University to have access to the same activities and to join the conversation on ethics in educational technology. The field of ethics in educational technology has potential for future research; as such, the pressbook has created an open resource that can serve as a starting point and can be remixed as knowledge on this topic expands. Both the students and the instructor were empowered to become creators of knowledge, through the process of developing and publishing the peer reviewed open pressbook which
resulted in high student engagement and learning (DeRosa & Robinson, 2017). The completed pressbook and full metadata record is licensed with a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) license, and is hosted on Open Education Alberta, a collaborative Pressbooks platform serving post-secondary education institutions in Alberta, Canada. This platform is part of the federated Pressbooks directory, and the pressbook is also indexed by several other provincial OER repositories and institutional repositories, ensuring its long-term preservation and discoverability across a variety of search tools.

The development of the final book, entitled *Ethical Use of Technology in Digital Learning Environments: Graduate Student Perspectives*, has served as a useful case study for the research team, which included instructors, students, and a librarian. The lessons learned from this research will feed into a larger Open Education strategy at the University of Calgary which aims to create additional supports for the development of OERs.

**Research Focus**

This initiative focused on how graduate students worked together with their instructor and peers to co-design chapters for an open pressbook, an openly licensed digital book that can be easily accessed, reused, revised and remixed with others, within an ethics and educational technology course. Our research builds on student-instructor partnerships research by studying the collaborative creation of an open pressbook and extends inquiry by examining co-design as a participatory learning process for graduate students. The aim of the research was to understand the ways in which developing an open educational resource supported student engagement and
learning. This research will also serve to inform ongoing course re-design and program improvements.

**Success, Challenges, and Recommendations**

Through this research it became clear that integrating the co-creation of OER into graduate coursework can positively impact the authenticity of university assignments and support learner engagement. Findings suggest that developing human interactions and building relationships through a co-design model that integrates digital tools and open educational practices, enabled the development of an OER and engaged students and their instructor in collaborative knowledge building. The use of co-design and the inclusion of participatory activities conducted in open environments helped to develop a community of learners. Student engagement in the project and with this year’s cohort has continued well past the completion of their chapters. Although, the process did create space for the collective building of knowledge, it was challenging for the instructors to balance open versus structured learning to support students creating and publishing for the first time. Challenges with digital literacy skills were also apparent as students worked to navigate platforms that were new to them. Attention needs to be directed towards further adapting and designing the course to ensure replicability and sustainability. Self-reflection emerged as a key component of both the feedback loops and participatory activities that were included in the course design and will be used to inform future improvements to the program. Findings also demonstrated the existence of levels of openness, future designs of the course should consider how these levels are scaffolded to best meet student needs. The inclusion of alumni from the program to create a wider support structure is recommended.
References
