OE GLOBAL Conference 2021: Proposal for an Interactive Activity

A university network for OER and a tool for small OER snacks

I would like to propose a mini learning activity that fits the first area of action of the UNESCO OER Recommendation and thus the first day of the conference. During the learning activity, the participants will get to know two things: on the one hand, the network ORCA.nrw, which is to spread the topic of OER at the universities in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), and on the other hand, the tool Learning Snacks, which will be used to introduce the network (in a playful way). The Learning Snacks, small learning units, can be shared as OER. The activity will take about 5-10 minutes.

What is the ORCA.nrw network? In the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), the portal ORCA.nrw (Open Resources Campus NRW) is being set up - supported by public funds - in which the 37 public universities of NRW participate. Students will be able to find quality-assured OER here for flexible learning, and teachers can post their own teaching materials or use those of others. (The launch is planned for summer 2021. Currently, there is a beta version with a few materials that originate from a predecessor platform.)

In order to make the concept of OER and the ORCA.nrw portal known at the universities and for the purpose of support in the creation of OER, the ORCA.nrw network was founded in addition to the portal as a unique accompanying measure. A member of the network works at each of the 37 universities and provides information about ORCA.nrw and OER, while at the same time exchanging information with colleagues at other universities in NRW and with the staff of the ORCA.nrw portal. The main goal of the network and its staff is to sensitise university educators to OER and to motivate and empower them to produce OER.

What is the Learning Snacks tool? Learning Snacks is an free platform that enables users to create easily interactive learning content themselves in a text-based dialogue system and to pass it on to others as OER. By dividing the learning material into short units, the tool is based on the concept of microlearning. As an example, you can see here a learning snack on Creative Commons licences (in German) and random example to practise English vocabulary.

This activity is an invitation for interested people to get in touch with the network. Interested people can learn about the work of the network members at the universities but also among themselves. Where are there hurdles and what works well when you want to disseminate OER at universities and motivate educators to use an OER portal? Furthermore, the second goal of the activity is to present a small, easy-to-use tool to create and share OER.

As the network works in an agile way, it has not yet been finally decided at this stage exactly how many and which colleagues will collaborate on the creation of the activity, so at the moment only the submitter can be named as author and contact person.

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