

## Open Educational Resources: Research with JISC & Higher Education Academy

### Starting point: professional learning

The Caledonian Academy led an evaluation and synthesis study of the £15M Open Educational Resources programme funded by the joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and Higher Education Academy (HEA). Widespread involvement of faculty and support staff within the programme was assumed to lead to sustainable change in culture from focusing on content ownership, to focusing on open sharing. Also, building a critical mass of OER would bring about sustainable change in professional practice.

### Communities and trust

How professional practice is transformed to support activities underpinning the release of OER, sometimes called open educational practice (OEP), is not well understood. Communities of practice provide a positive environment for changing professional practice. Communities are important if the benefits of a culture of open resources, open knowledge, sharing and peer collaboration in education are to be realised.

### Analysis

Data was drawn from the programme-wide synthesis and evaluation using project reports and focus group discussions to analyse the contradictions evident in OER release by UKOER project teams. The analysis surfaced 1) common barriers and enablers around OER release and 2) cultural differences across the sector, detailing evidence of norms, roles, rules and reward structures that foster effective professional practice. Analysis was through mapping the actions of project team members against an activity framework.

### Findings

OER projects made best progress where project team were within existing communities. However, release within communities limits open release.

### Impact

Our research into practices around learning resources has had an impact on the direction and decisions of funding bodies, on learner support in other institutions in the UK and internationally, has contributed to public policy on transparent government. Our emphasis on socio-cultural factors has changed culture, leading to richer policy, by moving debate on from technology and a view of resources as objects, to practices. Through shaping the UK Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and Higher Education Academy (HEA) programmes in Open Educational Resources (UKOER) and Digital Literacies, our research has had impact on practitioners and professional services around open learning practices in over 90 higher education institutions in the UK. Findings have informed a report to the UK Cabinet Office on 'Transparent Government'.

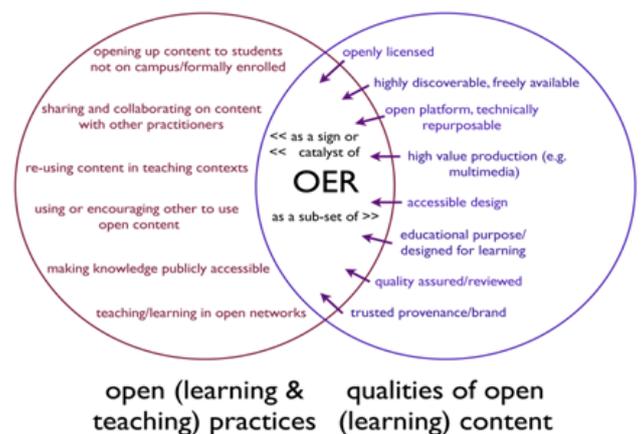


Figure 1: The OER Impact Model illustrating the relationship between OER and OEP

### Project team

Professor Allison Littlejohn, Director  
Dr Isobel Falconer, Senior Lecturer  
Ms Lou McGill, Project Manager  
Ms Helen Beetham, Research Consultant

### JISC Collaborator

Mr David Kernohan, JISC Programme Manager

### The Caledonian Academy

The Caledonian Academy is a research centre in Technology Enhanced and Professional Learning at Glasgow Caledonian University.