Lessons Learned

The Powers and Pitfalls of Open

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An overview of the lessons learned during a semester long study of the philosophy and context of open educational resources and projects to create two resources.

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Today I would like to share with you some lessons learned during my semester long study of the philosophy and context of open educational resources and projects to create two resources.

The projects I worked on included work on the structure for an open access textbook for one of my courses as well as work on open access lesson plans and a structure to disseminate them.

In strategizing on how to make these projects happen I encountered a number of challenges, and through these challenges I learned a few things that I would like to share with you.

I first had look for existing resources and I quickly learned that finding open resources can be challenging. With no one cleaning house it was a lot work to really explore the landscape.

Even when I found some similar content I found the quality of open really varies. Particularly with open lesson plans some were really great and others where poorly constructed and thought out.

Because quality varied, I came to realize just how important remixing is. Lesser quality items did have some useful elements so the ability to remix was essential.

I soon found the amount of work ahead was too much for me alone. So I began the complex process of creating collaborative partnerships to really make my open resources stronger.

But not everyone really understood the concept of open and to cement my partnerships I had to do a lot of educating about the purposes and values of open.

With more collaborators deep strategic planning about the scope and context of the project and strategies for dividing the work resulted in numerous conversations and compromises.

In planning content we constantly came up against copyright. How much can you really quote from copyrighted texts? How can you remix and use copyrighted material? All are tricky questions.

I've laid a lot of groundwork but still have a long way to go. I've come to appreciate just how essential things like planning and collaboration are to making open resources successful

So I'm going to keep working on making these resources a reality and now the future of my open resources will be all the better because of the lessons learned.

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