

# Observations and Learnings About OER

Yvette Arts

*As editor of the seminal volume *Instructional Technology: Foundations*, Robert M. Gagné (1987) collected research to define the then new and expanding field of instructional technology, and to provide indicators of where it may go in the future. He attributed “two sets of events” that brought about the development of the discipline. The first event was the continuing advancements in technology. The second, and to Gagné—“equally essential”—was the growing number of individuals with “a dedication to the promise of human learning, and a vision of how to promote the spread of human knowledge” (p. 1). I’m interested in finding a way that the design and delivery of curriculum can better take into account the lifestyle and circumstances of the individual, especially when national and international instability have caused many of this generation to grow up in a world without structure.*

*According to Gagné, these individuals would research, investigate and verify “the features of communications to human learners that optimize learning, and...discover how these features may best be planned and executed with the use of the various communication media and their combinations” (p.7). I feel I’m one of those individuals described by Gagné, who is devoted to the “promise of human learning” and am seeking a “vision of how to promote” exceptional teaching and lifelong learning. I think one of the ways to do this is to use OER as the basic infrastructure of education.*

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SCRIPT FOR SLIDES & VIDEO:

### **OER VALUATION**

A new opportunity appears to be present for institutions in higher education to consider how to leverage OER to address completion, quality, and affordability challenges, especially those institutions that have higher percentages of Pell eligible, underserved, and/or part-time students than the institution presented in this study.

[See the YouTube video that discusses OER valuation.](#)

[Read the blog post.](#)

### **SUCCESS, SCALE, SAVINGS**

David Wiley details his thoughts about educational innovations (including OER) into an evaluation framework with three components: success, scale and savings.

SUCCESS= Completion of a course with a final grade that counts towards graduation.

SCALE=The proportion of students being reached.

SAVINGS=How much money does this innovation save students?

He measures the impact in an equation that ideally would equal 7.  $\text{IMPACT} = 4 \times \text{success} + 2 \times \text{scale} + 1 \times \text{savings}$

[See the YouTube video that explains the equation for impact.](#)

### **REPRODUCING MARGINALITY?**

I was reminded by [Maha Bali](#) about mindfulness in open spaces: “It is everyone’s responsibility to listen and care and support marginal voices. Whether or not they wish to speak. Whether or not they wish to be present. Whether or not they like what we do. It is everyone’s responsibility to recognize their own privilege and to use it with purpose.” Maha Bali

[Read the blog post.](#)

### **JOHN HILTON III RESEARCH**

John Hilton synthesized the results of 16 studies that examined either (1) the influence of OER on student learning outcomes in higher education settings or (2) the perceptions of college students and instructors of OER. He concluded that educators may need to more carefully examine the rationale for requiring students to purchase commercial

textbooks when high-quality, free and openly-licensed textbooks are available.

[See the SPARK presentation that distills John's research.](#)

### GETTING INTO THE AIR

Wiley makes the point that we now have the internet and such copyright restrictions as were in place before the internet are outmoded and outdated. Just as the possibility for flight with the airplane was squashed by the law, Wiley states that the copyrighted textbooks and other materials invisibly “shackle” our actions.

[Read the blog post.](#)

### STOP THE BRAIN DRAIN!

Imagine my delight when I read the article by David Wiley [What is Open Pedagogy?](#) and found that others share the same sentiment about the time spent on homework that doesn't add value, both for the students doing the assignments and for the teacher doing the grading. Let's change 'disposable assignments' into activities which actually add value to the world. Let's stop the brain drain!

[Read the blog post.](#)

### DAVID BOLLIER ON COMMONS

Bollier clarifies the commons in very precise language, detailing what the commons is and what it isn't. I wanted to see if Bollier averted the [tragedy of the commons](#) in his definitions and suggested solutions. All of his structures mention accountability in some form or another....through community. He even suggests adaptations of laws, changes in culture and public policy to advance the commons.

[Read the blog post.](#)

### WIKI AS ULTIMATE OER

Wikipedia is called “the ultimate open education resource” in a blog post by [Cassidy Villeneuve](#). She states: Wikipedia is one of the most important resources for public education in the world. It's free, openly licensed, and available to anyone who has internet access worldwide. No ads, no collecting or selling of personal data, and no fake news.

[Read the blog post.](#)

### INFRASTRUCTURE

[David Wiley](#) and [Nicole Allen](#)—both propose using OER as an educational infrastructure. Said Wiley: “OER is about creating possibilities. When infrastructure is of reasonable quality and it's available for everyone to use, then it becomes kind of an innovation platform on which you can do all kinds of stuff.”

[Read the blog post.](#)

### FUTURE OF OER

“[W]e contend that future directions in OER design, use, and research should not focus on openness itself but on creating futures that (a) are more generous and (b) better allow for ongoing improvement (both in sustainable ways).” (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2012b)

For more observations and learnings, go to my blog at <http://yvettearts.com/>.





## Yvette Arts

Brigham Young University

Yvette Arts is a lifelong learner working on a doctorate degree in Instructional Psychology and Technology. She's interested in finding a way that the design and delivery of curriculum can better take into account the lifestyle and circumstances of the individual.

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