

# OER-Enabled Pedagogy

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Over the last several weeks there has been an incredible amount of writing about open pedagogy and open educational practices (samples collected [here](#) by Maha). There have been dozens of blog posts. Countless tweets. There was a well-attended (and well-viewed) conversation via Google Hangout. At the Hewlett OER Meeting last week over a dozen people spent another hour talking about the issue during the unconference time. There were additional conversations on the topic during walks through the incredibly beautiful countryside outside Toronto. I had particularly helpful talks with John Hilton and Rajiv Jhangiani - but don't blame them if you don't like what you read below.

I'm convinced that the terms "open pedagogy" and "open educational practices" are understood so differently by so many people that there is literally no hope of achieving a useful consensus about the meaning of either of these terms. Some definitions are centered on OER. Some are centered on the public, linkable nature of the "open web." Some are centered on social justice. Some are centered on collaboration. Some are centered on innovation. Some are centered on learner empowerment. Some are exercises in the permutations of these. There have even been arguments made that a clear definition would somehow be antithetical to the ideal of open.

As I said, there appears to be no consensus coming for the meaning of either of these terms. For my own personal purposes of writing, researching, and advocating, the absence of a shared understanding

of these terms removes any utility I previously hoped they had. Consequently, I don't think I'll use these terms any longer or participate in the discussion about their meanings going forward. Others will doubtless continue this deeply interesting conversation and I wish them well as they do - I am in no way criticizing them as I withdraw from these conversations.

My curiosity in this space has always been about understanding something very specific. As I've described it many times:

1. We learn by the things we do.
2. Copyright restricts what we are permitted to do.
3. Consequently, copyright restricts the ways we are permitted to learn.
4. Open removes these restrictions, permitting us to do new things.
5. Consequently, open permits us to learn in new ways.

What teaching and learning practices are possible (or practical) in the context of OER that aren't possible when you don't have permission to engage in the 5R activities? What are the impacts on learners and teachers of engaging in these practices? **That** is what I want to understand. And I need something to call that so I can talk about it, research it, write about it, and advocate for it. I need a *completely empty phrase* that I can fill with my specific meaning so that there can be no confusion about definitions when the term is used.

After brainstorming, gathering some feedback, and running some Google searches, I've decided on the term "OER-enabled pedagogy." Google has no record of this phrase ever being used, so it should serve my purposes of both conveying my intended meaning and avoiding argument.

Here's the definition of "OER-enabled pedagogy":

OER-enabled pedagogy is the set of teaching and learning practices only possible or practical when you have permission to engage in the 5R activities.

As for usage, the phrase “OER-enabled pedagogy” can be used as-is to talk about how the 5R activities facilitate new kinds of teaching and learning in general. You can also put one or more additional words inside the phrase, like “OER-enabled constructionist pedagogy,” when you’re trying to describe the additional learning-mediating leverage the 5R activities give you in the context of a specific model of teaching and learning.

For some definitions of “open pedagogy,” OER-enabled pedagogy can be categorized as a form of open pedagogy (but not for other definitions). For some definitions of “open educational practices,” OER-enabled pedagogy can be categorized as a type of open educational practice (but not for other definitions).

You may find the idea of OER-enabled pedagogy utterly uninteresting. That’s ok. I find it thrilling and energizing and recharging and inspiring. And I’m excited to stop arguing about definitions and get back to doing the work of designing, enacting, researching, and advocating for OER-enabled pedagogy.



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