

The cost of not going open!

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Open Educational Resources 15, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. (OER15)

<https://oer15.oerconf.org>

14-15 April 2015

Workshop

90 minutes

The cost-saving benefits of engaging with open education initiatives has long been cited as one of the driving forces behind the sustainability of the movement. In the US, undoubtedly, faculty engagement with open textbooks saves significant cost to students, and these actions act as a lever to promote the open education cause and national policy (for example the work of David Wiley and Lumen Learning). In the UK the argument for student cost benefits of open text books has never been fully made, and cost-benefit models of other forms of open education initiatives have been ill-explored.

A pilot survey of students across three UK universities showed that average text book costs for science undergraduates per course were around the £150 benchmark, with the single largest estimated student cost stated at £700. The survey further emphasised the financial burden that students are under by showing that nearly 50% reported having to undertake part-time work to support their studies, figures reflected nationally also (A 2014 Endsleigh/NUS survey suggests 57% of all students work part time).

A second argument regarding cost savings from OER comes from estimations of the cost of creating academic content. In an initial calculation, one presenter estimated new lecture preparation and delivery over 7 years to be around £35,000 across a work load of 4 modules. This estimates exclude eLearning workshops, tutorials and laboratory practicals. Clearly reuse of material can offer a significant and measurable reduction of these costs.

This proposal is to present 90 minute workshop in three sections. The first section will provide the background and research grounding for each of the two cost arguments. The second section will develop and pilot cost-models and tools from the audience to reach consensus from the community regarding estimation of student text book costs and creation of lecture content. A rubric for calculating fees agreed by the delegates will be created using a Google document / spread sheet and applied to further calculations.

In the final section, individuals will be encouraged to search and retrieve at least one open textbook for their subject, shared back on a Google document for circulation to the conference community and abroad. A discussion around barriers and drivers to embedding materials in their own courses will provide further insight into how individuals can make a difference to their own practice.

Outcomes of the session?

This session will:

- 1) Provide background context to the cost-benefit arguments supporting open education.
- 2) Provide delegates with an opportunity to contribute to textbook resource sharing initiatives
- 3) Develop a practical set of rubrics on which to build a basis for cost arguments.

Wider impact?

By raising the importance of the cost-benefits of open educational resources, and capturing some of the emerging arguments, it is anticipated that the findings of the workshop might provide an additional lever with which to influence institutional and national policy makers to support the wider adoption and investment in open education.