Creating Open Educational Resources: Tips for New Creators

Welcome to this week's video. Today's video is going to cover five tips for instructors who are considering creating an Open Educational Resource (OER) for the first time.

First, you need to consider what course objectives you want your OER to meet. According to a 2016 study of faculty using OER in their courses, there are four major considerations that instructors have to keep in mind when implementing OER:

- The effectiveness of the material
- The efficiency of using the material
- The appeal of the resource over traditional methods
- Extension, or the material's ability to extend learning opportunities and accessibility

This study looked into the usefulness of OER that have already been created, but it works when considering a new project as well. Before you begin to create a new resource, consider how effective it will be in your course, whether its use will improve or enhance student learning in some way, and whether it will be usable and useful outside of your course as well. This is an open resource, which means it has to be somewhat customizable for other learning environments.

The second facet to consider when creating an OER is whether you already have a resource that could be expanded upon or made open as-is. Open Educational Resources aren't just textbooks. They're also lecture slides, notes, quizzes, lesson plans, lecture recordings, and so much more! Think about it: You can edit course notes that you've been using for years into a textbook chapter, or you can openly license and share instructional videos online. Look around at what you have already. If you've been teaching for a few years, chances are you have some materials you've developed that you can make into something great.

But let's move on to something bigger now: What tool (or tools) do you use to create your resource? This is a pretty big question and it will depend on the type of resource you're creating, but there's one rule of thumb I'd recommend: consider using tools you already know. Tools like Google Docs and Microsoft Word can be great starting points for writing open texts, and there are online tools you can import these texts into for sharing later on if you'd like to update them or share them in a more accessible format.

But what are some specialized tools you could use if you really wanted to learn something new? One tool commonly used to create open textbooks is Pressbooks. Pressbooks is an online book publishing platform built on the same foundation as WordPress. Because of this, Pressbooks is remarkably easy to use and offers some great features like themes for structuring the display of your books and an easy-to-use interface for organizing book chapters and sections. However, it is important to note that Pressbooks is only free up to a point. Added features, like the ability to clone existing books to edit them or exporting your books into ePub format, are only available for paid versions of the platform.

Another tool you can use to create your own OER is the Open Author tool from OER Commons. Unlike Pressbooks, all of OER Commons' tools are completely free to use, and you have the ability to share outside resources and webpages on OER Commons as well. When you're creating

a new resource in OER Commons' interface, you get this simple-looking screen with basic features like headings, subheadings, and the ability to put images or special characters into your text. However, OER Commons does not have a lot of advanced features for displaying your work, so you can't do as much with your design as you might on more advanced platforms.

There are a lot of other platforms you can use to create OER as well, especially if you're creating an audio or video resource, so I'll link to a few lists of these creation tools in the description.

The fourth consideration you need to take into account when you're planning to create an Open Educational Resource is the open license you'll be assigning to your resource. The most common type of open license attached to Open Educational Resources—Creative Commons licenses—come in six basic types, and each license allows users to have certain permissions when reusing a resource. Before you put out a new OER, it's important that you consider what rights you want to retain over your resource and what rights you want to allow users to have. For example, do you want users to be able to update your resource or edit it? These considerations will affect what license you give your resource once it's been created.

Finally, the last consideration you need to take into account before you create an Open Educational Resource is where and how you'll be sharing it. If you're wondering where to deposit your resource, just browse around! Look at OER repositories like OER Commons and the Open Textbook Library, media sharing sites like YouTube for video resources, and see if your Learning Management System has a process for sharing OER in its interface, like through Canvas Commons. If you want to keep your resources nearby, ask your institutional digital repository if they can host your content as well. There are a lot of options to choose from, and you can even host your resource on multiple sites. But remember: if you share your resource on multiple sites, you'll also need to update it on each of them as well. Consider how you'll address these concerns before posting your resource everywhere.

Creating an OER for the first time can be pretty scary. But Open Educational Resources can be a lot of things, and you may already have the tools and foundation you need to make something great. You don't need to run into this unprepared. Think about how, where, and why you're creating this resource before you begin. And as always, contact your librarian or check out our library guide if you have any questions.