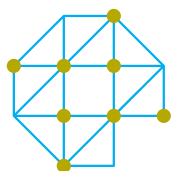# OER workshops evaluation report

Acceleration plan
Educational innovation
with ICT

digital educational resources

OER workshops
evaluation report

Acceleration Plan for Educational Innovation with IT -
Zone Digital (open) educational resources

Contents

Reusing
teaching materials

Customising
content

Just imagine...

Releasing
materials for
open reuse

Remixing
several sources

Students
collaborating
to create content

Co-creating
reusable content
with students

Introduction

The workshops on Open Educational Resources (OER) were organised as a joint initiative of the University of Groningen Library (UB) and Education Support and Innovation (ESI) of the University's Centre for Information Technology. They were developed in cooperation with SURF and in partnership with the Towards digital (open) educational materials zone of the Acceleration Plan for Educational Innovation with IT.

In the course of 2020, three workshops were organised in the form of online webinars, namely:
– 12 May and 17 November: Interactive webinars for lecturers "Redesign, enrich and transform your course with open educational resources"
– 8 October: Interactive webinar for education and teaching support staff "Discover the transformative potential of open educational resources for your faculty"

In total, 43 University of Groningen (UG) lecturers and education support staff participated in the three online workshops.
In the communication before the workshops, the differentiation between the two target audiences and corresponding key messages was made. The lecturers were approached with the promise of getting expert support, tools and information necessary for redesigning and enriching their courses with open materials, as well as inspiration and didactic advice. The education and teaching support staff were approached from the angle of introducing the concept of OER and conveying its added value for their faculties, as well as promoting effective implementation of OER at the UG. The workshop learning outcomes for both target groups were adjusted accordingly.[1]

In preparation for the webinar, lecturers were invited to complete a short home assignment. They were asked to read or view several resources for a brief introduction to the topics of OER and constructive alignment, share some information about their course and think about a course element that they would like to redesign with open materials. Over the course of two lecturer-oriented workshops, 14 lecturers have submitted their home assignments and received detailed feedback with materials and suggestions for redesigning their courses.

[1] See Appendix 1.

In line with the UNESCO competency framework[2], the workshops aimed at addressing five distinct fields of competence: familiarity, searching, using, creating, and sharing OER. This framework was reflected in the structure and content of the workshops.

Evaluation results

Based on the analysis of the webinar evaluation surveys[3], inputs collected during interactive exercises, brainstorming ideas, Q&A discussions, and follow-up conversations, we have organised the evaluation of the workshops into several sections, namely to demonstrate:
1. What the participants learned and what was improved based on their feedback
2. Behaviour change stories from the participants
3. What we learned both organisationally and as well as from the participants

1. What the participants learned and what was improved based on their feedback

What the first group of lecturers learned (May 2020)
Based on 9 responses out of 15 participants
Positive aspects mentioned by the lecturers were the applicability of the information to many disciplines, the introduction of tools and websites on OER, and the home assignment stimulating lecturers from the beginning to start thinking about how they could use OER in their own courses.

The key takeaways for participants were understanding the Creative Commons licences, how and where to look for and share OER, using the quality criteria to check whether the material is useful for their course, using the slides of the webinar in the future for the overview of tools, and getting inspired by examples from the experts and other participants. Suggestions for improvement were to have less overlap between the home assignment and the content of the webinar, a higher pace, clearer explanation of the open syllabus project, and having an all-day face-to-face workshop instead of a shorter webinar.

In this webinar, we asked the participants about the barriers and thresholds to integrating OER into their teaching. The detailed answers can be found in Appendix 3. We used these results as to prompt discussions in the second workshop.

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[2] See International Organisation of La Francophonie. (2016). *Open Educational Resources Competency Framework OER*. Retrieved from unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000266159_eng.

[3] See Appendix 2 for graphs visualising the results of the closed-ended questions in the evaluation surveys..

What we adjusted based on the feedback
- We used the open materials we found for one of the participant's home assignments as an example of the search process and to showcase the resources available out there
- We included more inspiring examples
- We focused more on the UG-specific context and services, and gave a brief overview of national and international developments in the area
- We included student perspectives on OER
- We included the overview of barriers and thresholds identified by the first group (May) to prompt the second group (November) into discussing and mapping potential solutions and support needs
- We reduced the repetition and allowed for more time for interaction
- We adjusted the home assignment by minimising the preparation requirements (removed the OER module and left a few short videos for the broad context). Our experience showed only a few participants did the preparatory reading before the webinar and those who did felt like there was too much overlap between the first part of the webinar and the home assignment.

What the second group of lecturers learned (November 2020)
Based on 9 responses out of 16 participants
Positive aspects mentioned by the lecturers were that the webinar was inspirational, the number of examples given, discussing the open material we had found for one of the participants was a useful exercise. Participants also enjoyed the stimulating self-reflection on possibilities of OER in their own courses.

Positive aspects regarding the setup of the webinar were the sharing of the slides during the webinar, a clear and simple structure, enough interaction, and good facilitation by the experts.

The key takeaways for lecturers were "use OER!", where to search for OER, different licences, barriers for using OER, and how to overcome these barriers. Other takeaways were ideas to develop OER including how to involve students and colleagues in the process and ideas on how to implement OER.

Suggestions for improvement were longer time in breakout groups and clearer instructions, adding studies/cases in the US and Netherlands, including a more global or international perspective. Other suggestions were to provide an example of OER that was modified for a specific course, addressing technical issues associated with OER (accessibility and appropriation of suggested platforms), and adding a follow-up session.

In this webinar, we asked: "Why should OER be used in education?" The answers were as follows:
- Using OER in the flipped classroom and with a focus on interaction
- Cutting costs for both institutions and students
- Fair use
- Easy access
- Saving time
- Approving quality of (your own) materials
- Making the pool of knowledge larger
- Because the Netherlands lacks a robust fair use provision
- Possibility to build on the work of others
- Inspiration

As mentioned before, we asked lecturers in the first group to indicate the barriers and thresholds to integrating OER into their teaching. In the second workshop, we summarised the answers and used them for a follow-up question, namely how to overcome these barriers and thresholds (see Figure 1).

Overcoming barriers and thresholds

Barriers for UG teachers (May 2020)

TIME AND RESOURCES
To create/find/adjust/integrate OER
To redesign an existing course
No incentives

QUALITY OF CONTENT
Free = low quality?
Suitability (to learning goals, course structure, context)
Customisability
Too American, but presented as universal

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ON HOW AND WHERE TO FIND IT
Where to start?
Time to learn about all this

AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS
Especially for MA and advanced courses
Only some elements of courses available

"YOU SHOULD FOLLOW A TEXTBOOK!"
Need to align with a compulsory textbook

LANGUAGE

SCARED/ASHAMED OF MAKING MISTAKES (WHEN SHARING OWN WORK)
Reputation
Incorrect use of sources

Figure 1. Slide with a summary of barriers to integrating OER into teaching for lecturers in the first workshop.

In the second workshop, we let the lecturers brainstorm on how to overcome the mentioned barriers and thresholds. We used a Jamboard for this exercise[4]. In Appendix 4, you can also find ideas from lecturers on how to use OER in their classes and how to further involve students in their own learning with the help of OER..

What we adjusted based on the feedback
- Included more examples of open pedagogical practices, to facilitate better involvement of students in the learning process
- Demonstrated specific examples of OER modified for a course at the UG (open reader, open syllabi, open textbook pilot)
- Added more global/international perspectives
- Provided clearer instructions for breakout groups

What the support staff learned (October 2020)
Based on 4 responses out of 12 participants
A positive aspect of the webinar that was several times mentioned by support staff, was the amount of (practical) information delivered as well as in the slides used. It inspired participants to dive deeper into the topic of OER. Furthermore, exchanging experiences with colleagues was appreciated. Lastly, the attitude of the trainers was described as friendly and open.

The main point of improvement was around how participants felt somewhat overwhelmed by all the information and needed some time to process it all.

The key takeaways for the support staff were making colleagues in their faculty aware of OER, sharing the possibilities of OER, and share OER platforms with colleagues. Other takeaways were that they should be investigating what colleagues already know and do in terms of OER.

In the workshop, we question: "What kind of open practices and OER would your faculty benefit from?" The answers were as follows:
- Expert advice about retrofitting existing courses to use OER content
- Open textbooks
- Videos to replace parts on online lectures
- Open images
- Assignments/cases/simulations
- Open online courses

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[4] See Appendix 4 for the solutions to barriers proposed by the participants..

- Open syllabi
- 3D models (e.g., for Archaeology)
- Videos that can be used by students to create video assignments

2. Behaviour change stories

After having followed one of the workshops, several lecturers reported back on starting the implementation of OER and open practices in their courses. We have come across stories of lecturers remixing open materials into a reader, opening up and sharing already existing materials developed by them (course syllabi), embarking on a journey to create an open textbook and raising awareness about OER and our initiatives among their colleagues.

Remixing and sharing: One of the lecturers from the Faculty of Spatial Sciences remixed four chapters from three open textbooks into an ***open reader*** (compilation of course reading materials). This reader is now being used by BSc students working in Perusall as part of their "Introduction to Academic Research" course. The open reader has been created with an intention of facilitating student learning, staying compliant with copyright regulations, saving students' money, and, very importantly, gathering their feedback to adapt and improve content for future iterations of the course. By continuously refining the content and involving the students in the evaluation of its quality, the lecturer aims to develop an evolving open textbook that would respond to student needs and would be easy to tailor to the course objectives. The lecturer intends to share the developed open reader with the rest of the academic community via Netherlands-specific channels (Edusources portal) and global repositories. Once enough material and feedback have been collected, the lecturer is also willing to publish this resource as an (evolving) open textbook by using the open textbook publishing initiative of the UG (or, in the future, established open textbook publishing services). Another step in the direction of Open Science and open practices this educator is undertaking is looking into open qualitative research data as the basis for their ongoing research.

Creating and sharing: Another workshop participant, a language lecturer from the Faculty of Arts, has joined the ***open textbook*** publishing pilot launched in 2020 by the UB and UG Press. Together with a colleague, this educator is engaged in the early stages of producing an interactive open textbook expected to be published on the Pressbooks platform in 2022 and disseminated via various local and global repositories.

Sharing: After following one of the workshops, a lecturer from the Faculty of Law has decided to openly share already existing ***syllabi*** of three of their courses jointly taught

with several other Law lecturers. After the educator chooses the appropriate open licence, the syllabi will be shared in local and global repositories.

Sharing / Raising awareness: Many of the participants of the workshops have been spreading the word about OER and these training sessions among their colleagues. A few of the workshop participants in late 2020 and early 2021 indicated the topic of OER and the webinar had been recommended to them by their colleagues.

3. What we learned

What we learned while organising OER workshops

Having designed and conducted 3 workshops for UG lecturers and support staff in 2020, we have learned the following lessons from the organisational perspective:

- Inter-university cooperation and joining forces are important: It is highly beneficial to gather a team of information specialists and didactic experts to work together on such initiatives.
- From the very beginning, the organisers should set clear expectations, context, and goals for the target audience(s) that differ from organisers' own more pragmatic internal goals (to promote the topic of OER and get to know the needs of lecturers in support when designing and delivering courses).
- When targeting a broad target audience for the same workshop (lecturers, education specialists, policy specialists), it is more beneficial to concentrate on a larger/primary group (lecturers).
- Planning is of utmost importance here: More time should be reserved for webinar preparation and communication with participants.
- It is highly advised to proactively involve every communication channel and not to expect the target audience to find you. Their attention and time should be "conquered", given the busyness of remote teaching, information overload and webinar fatigue.
- In terms of advertising the workshop, university-wide newsletters work best, followed by specialised newsletters (e.g., Open Science newsletter of the UG), word of mouth and personalised emails to one's network.
- The information presented in the workshops should remain relevant to such a varied audience representing all faculties across the UG. It is important to address participants' fields of work and areas of interest from the registration forms, or to redirect them to other UG services that might best answer their needs.
- When planning the team's work on home assignments feedback, more time should be scheduled and, ideally, subject specialists should be engaged.

- It is useful to start an own curated collection of OER sources and repositories the team comes across when preparing the feedback.
- Due to pandemic-related work and time pressure, do not expect much time investment on the participants' side.
- It is important to prepare a detailed lesson plan with links and responsibilities, along with the backup plan of what can be skipped (prioritise interactive moments).
- Participants' energy and inspiration resulting from the workshop need to be channelled by offering them direct hands-on solutions or steps: "Where to publish", "Roadmap", "Next steps", etc.
- Keeping in touch post-webinar is equally important - for instance, sending an occasional email with useful resources, promoting OER-related events, involving most active lecturers in adjacent OER projects.
- It is beneficial to share the experience, materials, approaches with other institutions interested in setting up their own OER workshops.
- It is important to expand the knowledge on OER to other information specialists and didactic experts, thus adding to the sustainability of OER efforts and promoting the subject beyond a limited group of people.

These lessons have been presented as recommendations in preparation of the SURF workshop development roadmap (August 2020) and during two train-the-trainer workshops organised by SURF in September-November 2020 (slides are available here).

What we learned from the lecturers

UG lecturers were the key target audience of the conducted workshops. It was important for us to understand their needs and the challenges they face in their teaching in order to promote and stimulate the reuse and creation of OER and build efficient support infrastructure at the UG. Some of the most important findings we have learned from lecturer participants are as follows:

- Time is the most precious resource and one of the biggest issues for lecturers, it comes up as a key obstacle when discussing thresholds to adopting OER. Therefore, the activities and services we implement should have a low participation threshold and aim to unburden lecturers.
- There is a strong need for better institutional and policy support, as well as rewards and recognition ('erkennen en waarderen') that would help and motivate the lecturers in the long run.
- Most lecturers are especially interested in making their courses more engaging for students, to "trigger students' intrinsic motivation to learn", in the words of one of the lecturers. There is, therefore, a demand for introducing open pedagogical practices as a separate topic among the OER-related sessions and initiatives.

- There is a need for faculty-specific workshops on OER targeting a narrower subject group.
- Concerns about the quality and findability of OER content should be addressed more 'extensively.
- General copyright knowledge and awareness are quite low among lecturers and should also be addressed outside of OER-related interventions.
- When it comes to implementing OER, three main drivers can be discerned on an individual level:
  - The belief in "open" and associated values, access to knowledge and education, sharing of ideas and synergistic effects;
  - Drivers related to teaching quality and innovation, co-creation with students and building more active learning environments;
  - Contextual change - legal, institutional or technological, - in which lecturers cannot avoid using OER[5] .
- Many of the lecturers who participated in the webinars were already open to educational innovations and shared the "open values", they did not need to be additionally convinced on the value level. They are the "early adopters" searching for innovations in their teaching and have fewer barriers to overcome when learning about the opportunities associated with OER.

What we learned from the support staff

UG education and teaching support staff was the second target audience we worked with and included teaching advisors, learning coordinators, e-learning specialists, lecturer professionalization experts and information specialists. In their discussions and feedback, they highlighted some key points also shared by the lecturers, namely:

- OER should be reflected in the broader institutional education policy, which would help spread awareness about this area of educational innovation and the available support.
- There is a need for adjustments in the system of recognition and rewards at the UG. This development would motivate lecturers to explore and engage with OER and provide them with more time for innovation in their teaching.
- There is a need for closer cooperation between different functional departments of the UG. Both UB and ESI are already involved in raising awareness about OER, and more educational initiatives, institutes and units should join them.
- Faculty-specific workshops on OER are needed, and the faculty level is seen as optimal for reaching out to more lecturers potentially interested in the subject.

Conclusion

In the 2021 *thema-uitgave* on the reuse of open educational materials[6], we made the argument for new skillsets for OER - not only focused on creation and access, but also on co-creation, mutual interaction and reflection, remixing and redistribution.

Our workshops were specifically designed around those skills. Where we may have been worried initially that we had to "sell" OER, it quickly became obvious that among the group of enthusiasts signed up there was very little need to - the academics attending intrinsically understood OER's potential upsides. However, they lacked understanding of how to apply OER in practice, had very little knowledge of practical and legal boundaries, and very little time to delve into the nitty-gritty of copyright or fiddle with specific search tools.

The interactive format worked extremely well and allowed us to build a great amount of involvement among the attendees. Discussing OER in a broader didactic context also facilitated deeper modes of engagement and more constructive interaction. Additionally, the extensive feedback we provided, specifically tailored to the lecturers' own courses, had concrete and direct results. It is unlikely we'd achieve a similar amount of impact with less (specific) support and attention, or if we had separated the basic OER skills from more creative and inspiring applications.

In short, the workshops were a success - yet they also underscored the importance of continued support in this initial phase: almost all the feedback we received indicated time is a precious resource for lecturers and they need high levels of support to find, use and create OER.

For us, it underlined investment is a necessity, particularly in this initial phase, in terms of information, easy tooling and platforms and sufficient manpower to offer very direct support to academics. "Ontzorgen" is the key term here, as all the ingredients for broader adoption of OER are already present. Though some of this can be done locally, with properly equipped support staff providing help at the university or even the faculty level, our capacity is currently limited as well, and broader institutional or national support is needed to bring OER to the next level.

[5] See Raj, R., Zhuk, M., van Rij, F. & Beldhuis, H. (2021). 'Shifting Gears Towards the Reuse and Co-Creation of OER: New Skill Sets for Sustainable Staff Development.' In *Theme Edition on the Reuse of Open Educational Resources (OER)*. SURF: the Netherlands. Retrieved from communities.surf.nl/files/Artikel/download/ Theme%20edition%20Reuse%20OER.pdf.

[6] See Raj, R., Zhuk, M., van Rij, F. & Beldhuis, H. (2021). Shifting Gears Towards the Reuse and Co-Creation of OER: New Skill Sets for Sustainable Staff Development. In *Theme Edition on the Reuse of Open Educational Resources (OER)*. SURF: the Netherlands. Retrieved from communities.surf.nl/files/Artikel/download/ Theme%20edition%20Reuse%20OER.pdf.

Appendix 1 Learning Outcomes

Interactive webinars for lecturers "Redesign, enrich and transform your course with open educational resources"
After following this webinar, you should be able to:
– Understand how to use open educational resources (OER), basics of the copyright and open licences
– Search strategically for and evaluate OER most relevant to your subject area
– Design appropriate teaching and learning activities using OER

Interactief webinar voor onderwijsondersteunend personeel 'Discover the transformative potential of open educational resources for your faculty'
After following this webinar, you should be able to:
– Understand how to use OER, basics of the copyright and open licences
– Search strategically for and evaluate OER most relevant to your subject area
– Help design teaching and learning activities at your faculty using OER
– Identify relevant national and international OER policies and initiatives
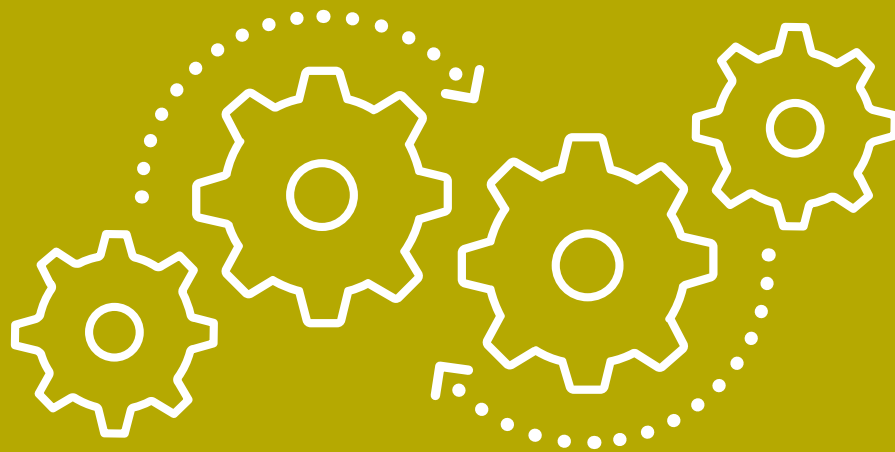
Appendix 2 Graphs

The following graphs visualise the results of the closed-ended questions in the evaluation surveys. The results for the three workshops are combined in every graph.
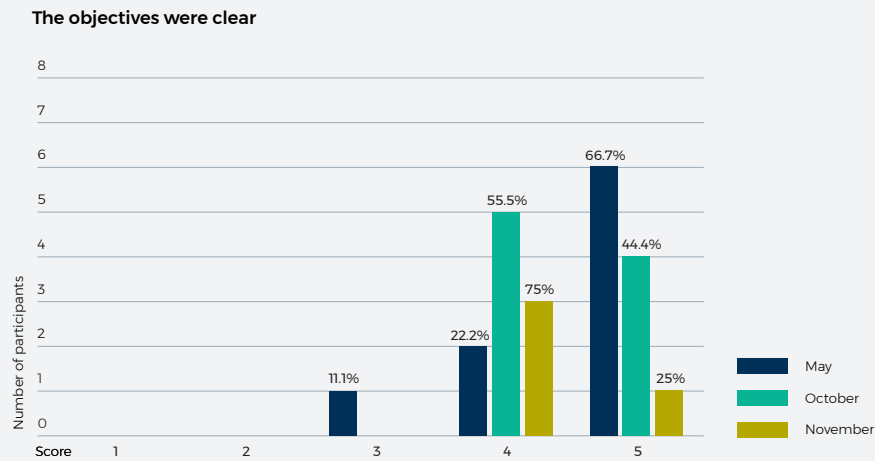
The topics and content covered most of the issues/lessons that I hoped to learn

The objectives were clear
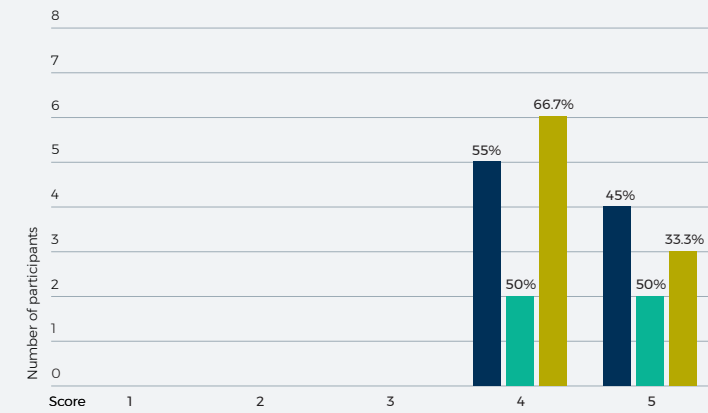
The facilitators of the workshops were able to communicate effectively

The webinar was well organized
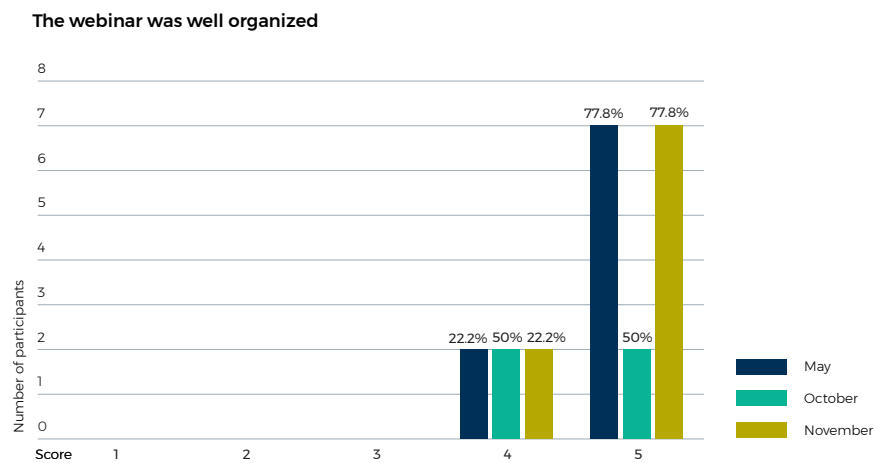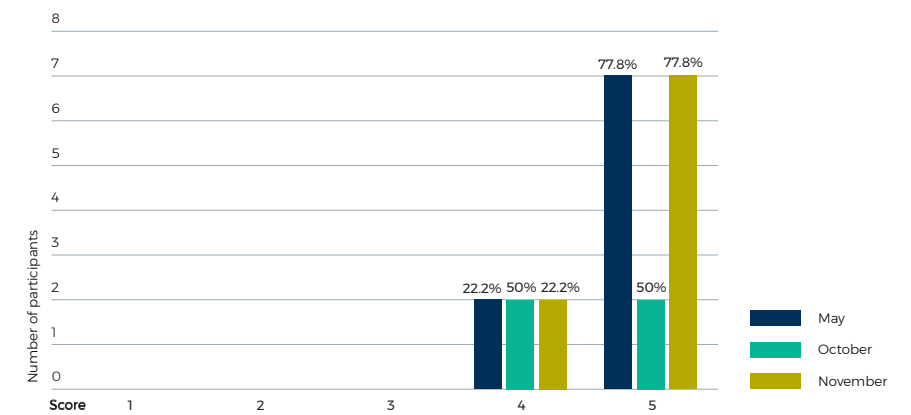
I feel that I will be able to use what I learned in this webinar

I would recommend this webinar experience to other faculties
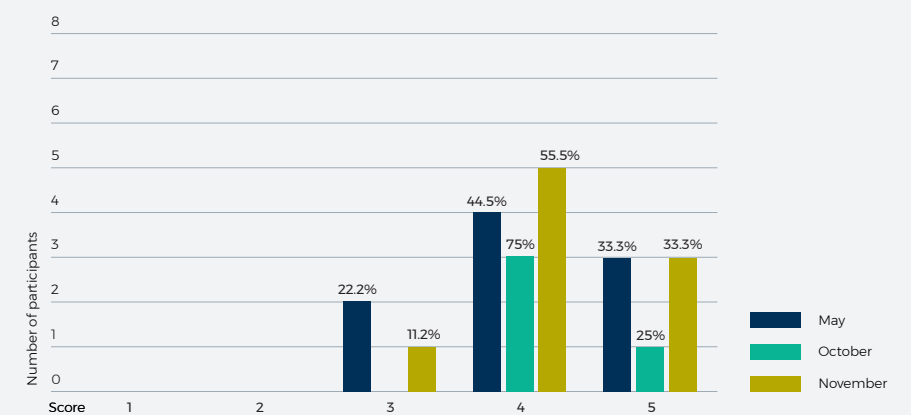
Appendix 3 Barriers and Thresholds to Integrating OER into Teaching

Responses of the participants to the topic "List as many barriers and thresholds against integrating OER into your teaching as you can think of. Up- and downvote other responses given."

The polling was conducted during the interactive webinar for lecturers "Redesign, enrich and transform your course with open educational resources" (12 May 2020) and by using the PollEverywhere platform.

The assignments were relevant to the webinar's subjects

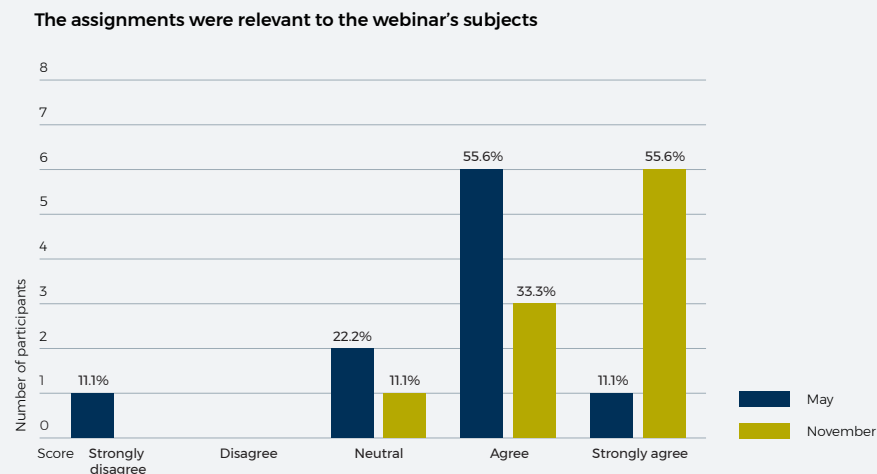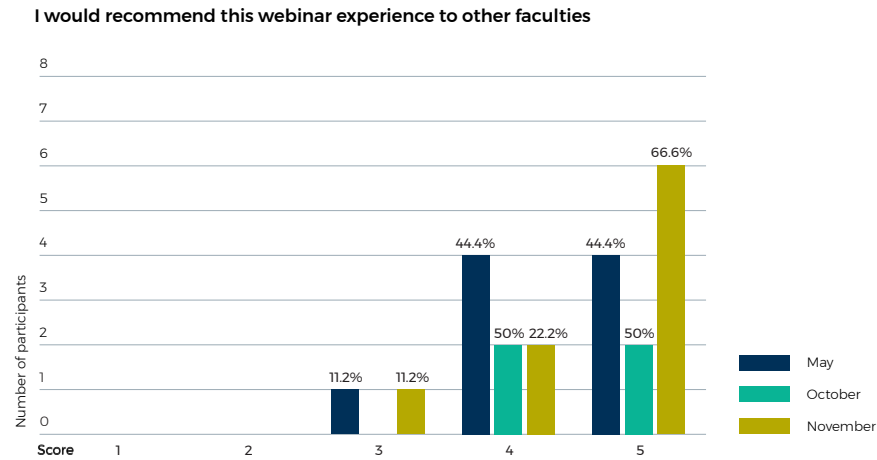| Response	Net Votes	Upvotes	Down-votes	Trending Score
No incentive to make things open / not given time or resources to do so	9	9	0	9
The amount of work to search for it and check the quality of the content	9	9	0	9
Lack of knowledge as to where to find material	8	8	0	8
Finding suitable material	8	8	0	8
Takes a lot of time to adjust the material to my own course. In that time I can make my own materials	7	8	1	7
Customisability of the material	6	6	0	6
Beliefs that one should follow a textbook	5	5	0	5
Materials not quite fitting well with the exact learning goals of the education	5	5	0	5
Language	5	5	0	5
Need to align with coursebook (which for us is sort of compulsory to have)	4	4	0	4
Reluctance using materials that are free to use (doubting the quality)	4	4	0	4
For making: The demands. It will cost more preparation time.	4	4	0	4

Response	Net Votes	Upvotes	Down-votes	Trending Score
Lack of time to change the existing content of a course	4	4	0	4
Takes a lot of time to find exactly what I want	4	4	0	4
Material nearly fitting but not entirely	4	4	0	4
Not finding suitable materials	4	4	0	4
Being scared to make mistakes (or incorrect use of sources) in the material and spread this into the world	3	4	1	3
Content is American, but presented as universal, without context	3	3	0	3
Level of the material: usually easy to find for initial bachelor courses but gets harder and harder for more advanced courses	3	4	1	3
Poor quality of the materials	3	3	0	3
Not knowing where to start	3	3	0	3
Finding suitable material	2	2	0	2
Tone of the material does not apply	2	2	0	2
Only some 'layers' of courses available: ie some materials are behind a wall (for example, the accompanying quiz is in a 'blackboard' type environment that is not accessible)	2	2	0	2
The time it costs to deepen my knowledge of finding/using the material	2	2	0	2
Not all principles or concepts meet the aims of own course	1	2	1	1

Appendix 4 Oplossingen voor de barrières voorgesteld door de deelnemers

Group 3

What approaches to overcome these barriers can you think of?

What additional support do you need to overcome these barriers?

TIME AND RESOURCES

Raising awareness.

Open resources as tenure/ promotion criteria.

Collaborating & helping colleagues.

AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS

Creating the critical mass among teachers.

QUALITY OF CONTENT

Accept it as a learning curve, learning challenge.

Institutional reforms at the higher level: materials should be made open access.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ON HOW AND WHERE TO FIND OER

LANGUAGE

SHARED/ASHAMED OF MAKING MISTAKES (WHEN SHARING OWN WORK)

NEED TO FOLLOW A TEXTBOOK

Including open materials 'unofficially', outside of the curriculum.

Working more with open access materials.

Institutional barriers.

Additional barrier: Trust.
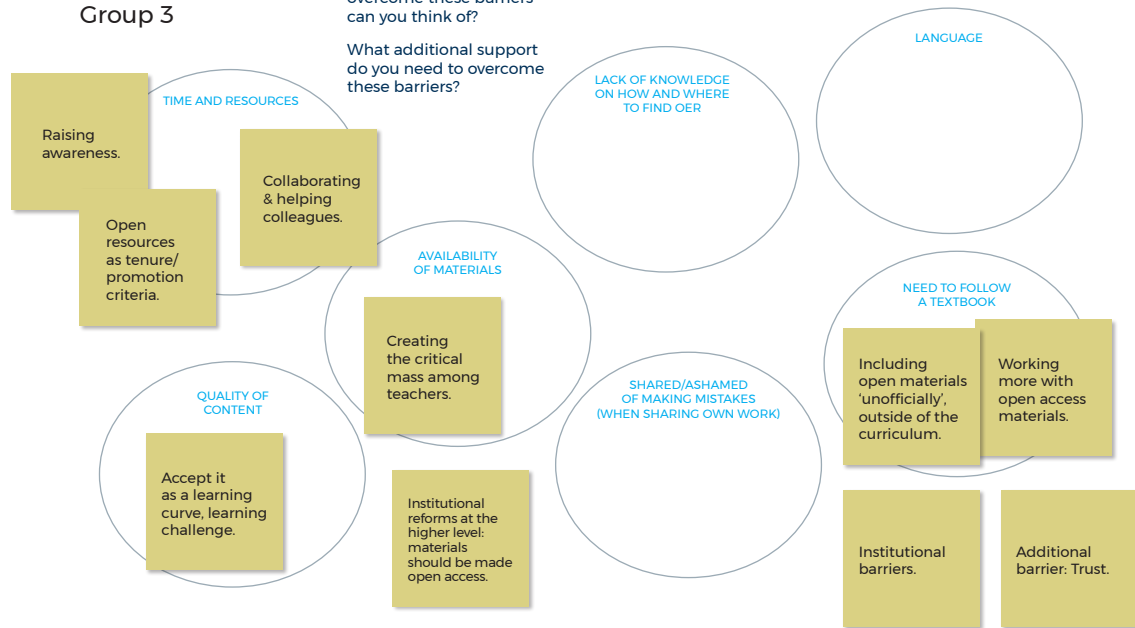
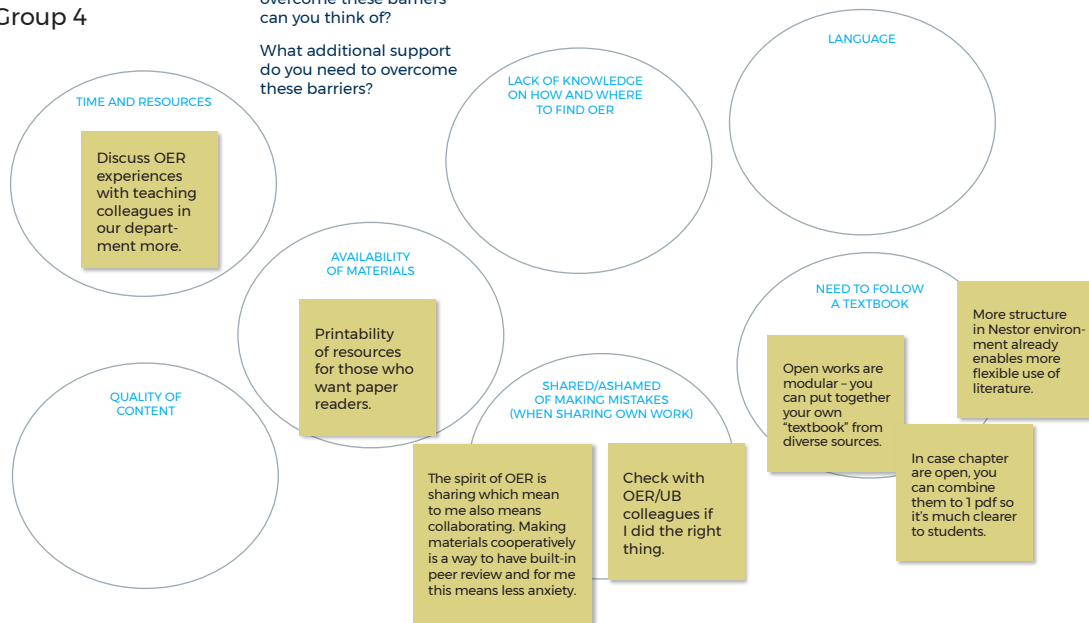## Group 4

What approaches to overcome these barriers can you think of?

What additional support do you need to overcome these barriers?

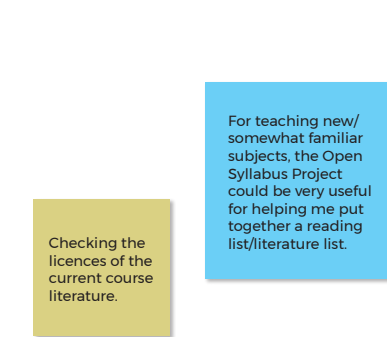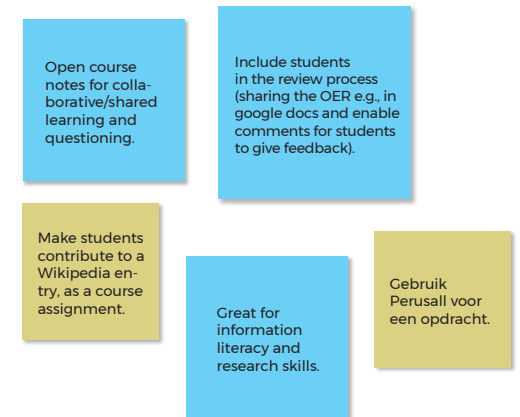**TIME AND RESOURCES**

Discuss OER experiences with teaching colleagues in our department more.

AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS

Printability of resources for those who want paper readers.

QUALITY OF CONTENT

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ON HOW AND WHERE TO FIND OER

LANGUAGE

SHARED/ASHAMED OF MAKING MISTAKES (WHEN SHARING OWN WORK)

The spirit of OER is sharing which mean to me also means collaborating. Making materials cooperatively is a way to have built-in peer review and for me this means less anxiety.

Check with OER/UB colleagues if I did the right thing.

NEED TO FOLLOW A TEXTBOOK

Open works are modular – you can put together your own "textbook" from diverse sources.

In case chapter are open, you can combine them to 1 pdf so it's much clearer to students.

More structure in Nestor environment already enables more flexible use of literature.

How do you envision using OER in your classes?

Group 1

How can you further involve students in their own learning with the help of OER?

Checking the licences of the current course literature.

For teaching new/ somewhat familiar subjects, the Open Syllabus Project could be very useful for helping me put together a reading list/literature list.

Open course notes for colla- borative/shared learning and questioning.

Include students in the review process (sharing the OER e.g., in google docs and enable comments for students to give feedback).

Make students contribute to a Wikipedia en- try, as a course assignment.

Great for information literacy and research skills.
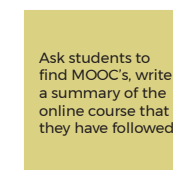
Gebruik Perusall voor een opdracht.

How do you envision using OER in your classes?

Group 2

How can you further involve students in their own learning with the help of OER?

Open Syllabus

OER Commons and Merlot... We hope they allow us to apply filters to our search. This would make our search way easier!

Use OER as separate units as basis for discussions (ex. video or podcast).

Integrate OER in some parts of assessment: publish students' blogs.

Ask students to find MOOC's, write a summary of the online course that they have followed.

How do you envision using OER in your classes?

Group 3

How can you further involve students in their own learning with the help of OER?

Integrating podcasts clips, story mapping – for visual explanations.

Supplementary materials for the content-based learning.

Transform the creativity from 'live' setting to the online one.

Story mapping/ Storytelling as a way to engage students.

Open study notes.

The Acceleration Plan for Educational Innovation with IT is a four-year programme from SURF, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences and the Association of Universities in the Netherlands, that aims to bring together initiatives, knowledge, and experiences to realise ambitions for higher education at an accelerated pace. This is taking place in eight 'acceleration zones'. In the Towards digital (open) educational resources acceleration zone, eight universities are working to ensure that students and lecturers have the opportunity to compile and use an optimal mix of educational resources.

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