



How Might We:

**Foster active learning through
open knowledge co-production?**

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Overview

This guide provides advice on how to include the creation of educational materials (podcasts, Wikipedia pages, presentations, open text-books, etc) by students in a more socially engaged and ethical curriculum in which learners are empowered as open knowledge producers.

In this guide, Open Knowledge refers to educational content produced with a view to be shared beyond the classroom, including Open Educational Resources (OERs), which can be defined by UNESCO as teaching, learning or research materials that;

1. are in the public domain or
2. have been released with intellectual property licenses that facilitate their free use, adaptation and distribution by others ¹

The production of educational materials by students, individually or as teams, can become part of assessment, replacing more traditional tasks, or enriching them.

Rationale

Since 2002, a growing body of educational research on OER has emerged, highlighting the benefits for learners, educators and society of embracing not only student production of beyond-the-classroom content, but also the Open Educational Practices and the participatory culture that comes with it.

The adoption, review, production and sharing of Open Educational Resources by staff and students is

instrumental to our institution's Open Higher Education aspirations (Strategic Priorities 6 and 10 of Knowledge for All) ², furthering the sustainability of education thanks to the accessibility, adaptability, reusability, and scalability provided by Creative Commons Licences.

Crucially, student OER production can reinforce student belonging to the academic community, act as a conduit for decolonisation and sustainability, serve as a catalyst for active learning, facilitate authentic assessment, and contribute to the fostering of digital literacies and employable skills.

In addition to this, student production can serve as leverage for the University's strategic endeavour to connect with local and global communities, and to promote collaboration, internally and with other institutions and partners.





There are excellent examples of successful integration of open content production in student education in our institution and beyond, whether it is as part of learning activities, or through assessed tasks, or in showcase events.

The HumBox OER repository hosts the audio files of the documentaries published by students as part of the 20-credit module SPPO3650, which ran between 2013 and 2018.³ The module, run by Antonio Martínez-Arboleda, was replaced by a 40-credit FYP MODL3350⁴ also focused on research-based podcasts, which generated positive student engagement and publication.

This is a quote from a recent Leeds graduate, Stella Patsikas (BA in Linguistics and Spanish), who produced the podcasts “[The Guardians of Kichwa Language](#)” as her main assessed piece for the Module MODL3350: FYP Digital Documentary:

Student voice

“

The participants of my project expressed to me that other researchers came into their communities, studied them and produced papers, but never really gave anything back to the community that was useful to their movement. This format felt more appropriate to them, and the final production holds far more power, coming from the very voices of members of the community, rather than through the objective pen of the academic. [...] The course is a catalyst for students to move away from thinking restrictively and start thinking about new and innovative ways of representing research that are inclusive and personal - a skill that is very useful in the changing dynamics of society as a whole.

”

N.B. permission for the use and publication of quote, personal information and link has been given by Stella Patsikas.

There are more recent great examples of student podcasts at Leeds, like the ones led by Maria Hussein (Leeds Business School). These have been produced either in collaboration with her students, particularly for the LUBS Digital Intercultural Showcase⁵, or by students themselves, who reflect openly on their own learning in the Year Abroad.

Other experiences include the educational resources created by students for their own peers and the

community as part of the project by Alison Voice in experimental techniques on physics⁶; or the assessed videos, websites and podcasts produced by students as part of the module MODL2250 Digital Communication across Cultures, led by Elisabetta Adami.⁷

The University of Edinburgh has been leading the way in student co-production of OER through the revision, editing and creation of entries in Wikipedia as part of their course work but also as extracurricular activities. This includes students writing pages collaboratively on scientific and humanistic knowledge for wider audiences, which requires selecting quality sources as well. The video “Stories of Student Empowerment - a compilation of student feedback on the Wikimedia residency”⁸ contains comprehensive accounts of student experiences, showing the positive impact on the learning journey of students in Law, Psychology, Physics and Astronomy, History, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, Biology, Translation and International Relations. This is part of a wider collection of 14 videos delving into student voices.⁹

How might we...

Practitioner-based tips

Module changes

In many cases, introducing an element of student production may require some Faculty approved changes in the module catalogue, as well as redefining certain aspects of your module handbook such as objectives and skills.

- **Tip 1:** Think about the learning objectives and outcomes of your module: you may want to include objectives such as “connecting with communities through dissemination of your work” or “producing sharable and suitable content in our discipline for educational uses” or “actively contributing to fulfil the educational needs of formal and informal learners with an interest in our discipline”.
- **Tip 2:** Surfacing Skills. Think about the multiple ways in which student OER production is also a good way to foster digital and professional literacies, authentic assessment and employable skills. OER production can be the trigger for further redefinition of the objectives of your course.
- **Tip 3:** For the setting of assessment, if you choose to assess the OER work produced by students, start small, but make it relevant. You can start with OER review and/or creation with mid-term tasks, but give them some weighting in the module assessment if you can. Make it matter for the students. Review the percentage allocated and the nature of the tasks in successive years as you learn from experience.

Assessment of OER

Students tend to value those activities that are rewarded, so you may consider giving some weighting to the educational work produced, and assess it fairly. Ensure that students can also demonstrate in other pieces of assessment that the resources produced reflect a critical and evidence-based understanding of the subject studied in the module.

- **Tip 1:** There are exemplars of assessment grids for podcasting that can be adapted for other forms of production. ¹⁰
- **Tip 2:** You can ask students to submit a more traditional written assessed task in the form of a “research justification” adjunct to the OER work produced, in which the students discuss what academic knowledge, is going to be reflected (or not), and how, in the OER produced with references to academic literature. This is the way it works in MODL3350, where the podcast (70% of the mark) and the research justification (30% of the mark) are the 2 individual assessed tasks for the module. (FYP for Languages, Cultures and Societies).
- **Tip 3:** Give students options: For instance, in MODL2250, students can produce, as a Team, either a video or a podcast. This component of the module is 50% of the mark.

Support for you

The majority of colleagues who have embraced openness in education so far are self-taught.

Unfortunately, this is not an area of work included in traditional training courses for educators.

- **Tip 1:** Sign up for courses or consult resources offered by the Library and ODPL on OER and podcasting.
- **Tip 2:** Join the existing community of podcasting in Teams ¹¹, or consult existing resources published by ODPL in this area. ¹²
- **Tip 3:** Talk to a learning technologist about your plans and identify what support and training you may need yourselves.
- **Tip 4:** The OER academic community is probably the most supportive of the whole HE sector. Established OER practitioners are always ready to help, share and collaborate. Join communities of practices on OER through social media and look for relevant hashtags, such as #OER.
- **Tip 5:** It is easier to share responsibilities, learn from each other and discuss ideas in co-taught modules.

Your preparation

Your main assets as a University educator is your knowledge of the subjects you teach and your ability to understand and guide students. So, teaching in a module where students will produce some educational content should not place anyone out of their depth.

- **Tip 1:** Explore connections between your own work as an engaged researcher, for instance your work with communities or your impact activities and look

at the ways in which students can learn from, or even enrich, the projects that you run whilst benefiting from that contribution.

- **Tip 2:** Research Wikipedia and find gaps in knowledge within your area of specialisation on which to base a programme of review, critical discussion (for instance within the “Discussion” pages for Wikipedia entries), page edition and even page creation for your students to work in the future.
- **Tip 3:** The same goes for podcasting and other OER. Is there a gap of suitable knowledge or a specific community, including students, which you think will benefit from having access to the work produced by the students?
- **Tip 4:** Decolonisation and translation from, and into English are only two of the fields where more work is needed in OER production, for instance in Wikipedia review, edition and creation.

Your teaching

Teaching in a module where students are going to produce an OER instead of, or in addition to, an exam or an essay, should not require any change in the subject-specific academic content of the module or in the teaching, per se. However, there are specific adjustments that you may want to introduce.

- **Tip 1:** Consider dedicating specific sessions to present and discuss work in progress as a group. It can work as a seminar with peer feedback.

- **Tip 2:** At times, you will feel like the chief editor of a group of students. This can be very enriching for them and for you in terms of balance of responsibilities.
- **Tip 3:** In general, you may benefit from a more participatory learning culture in your module, in tune with the ethos of Open Educational Practice.
- **Tip 4:** If the students are in Level 4 or are postgraduates, ask them to read academic articles in your discipline and find gaps of knowledge in Wikipedia or in Spotify, for instance, and ask them to discuss in the seminars why they think there is, or there is not, a need for new or updated knowledge in the space(s) explored.
- **Tip 5:** Refrain from providing “exemplars” of previous student work, as this can be seen as tutor-sanctioned formats. It will stilt creativity and defeat the purpose, and the joy, of students interpreting the guidelines for the task and researching what work is out there on the subject and exploring what formats are actually used by a variety of content producers.

Supporting your students

It is crucial for students to be supported and feel confident that their creativity and curiosity will be fostered, and celebrated, in a safe environment.

- **Tip 1:** Student-created work can be showcased and integrated into their own portfolio. This is always a source of extrinsic motivation.
- **Tip 2:** Include in your module some basic training videos on Creative Commons Licences. At the time of publication of this Guide (date) the University is developing resources for the production and sharing of OER. There already exist a suite of online resources for Podcasting that will be regularly updated [here](#).
- **Tip 3:** Although students are free to explore, it is always better to recommend the use of University supported tools. For instance, use Audacity for editing podcasts.
- **Tip 4:** Authenticity, which in this case means producing something as if it were meant to be published for a real audience, whether a very general or very targeted audience, is crucial. The intended social relevance of the student work produced will shape the content of the work and is what

differentiates an OER from a more traditional piece of assessed work that is meant to be for the eyes of the tutor only.

- **Tip 5:** If your students are interviewing others for their videos and podcasts, make sure they use appropriate consent forms and ethical protocols are followed.

Publishing students’ OER work

Students are free to publish their work, or not to. It is their intellectual property. They should not be required or pushed to publish. The fact that they may not end up publishing their work does not matter when it comes to supporting the student and assessing the work.

Openness is a negotiated road leading to a greater degree of educational and social engagement through co-creation and sharing. Its relationship to OER is not merely instrumental.

The University is, at the time of the writing of this Guide (25 April 2022), working on an OER repository, on the provision of support for Wikipedia production, and a podcast channel to cater for student and staff production.

- **Tip 1:** Open Educational Practices include a wide range of activities that do not necessarily lead to the publication of OER, or the adoption of a particular licence. The variety of plausible options for student production and publication of educational resources proves that openness is contextual and needs to be considered on a case-to-case basis.
- **Tip 2:** In the past, Creative Commons Licences have been used by the students, such as in the podcasts / documentaries produced as part of modules MODL3350 (FYP) and SPPO3650. The University supports actively these licences through our OER Policy because they facilitate knowledge circulation.
- **Tip 3:** For podcasting, currently, the recommended site is SoundCloud, where students can create a free account and assign a Creative Commons Licence, if they wish, to their work.
- **Tip 4:** Tip 4: For other OER, there are multitude of repositories. These are two of the most popular ones: [OER Commons](#) and [Merlot](#).





More information

The University of Leeds has participated in a number of initiatives on **Open Educational resources** through relevant national bodies such as the former Subject Centres, the national JISC repository Jorum, and through a SCORE Fellowship at the OU funded by HEFCE. Credit to this is the fact that our OER policy was the first in the country and has inspired the policies of other leading universities.

The academic work of **Catherine Cronin**, a leading Open Educator, is a great source of inspiration in critical Open Educational Practice and OER.

Wikipedia at Universities

Integration of OER and OEP in Authentic e-Learning Experiences (2021)

3 case studies of Wikipedia in the Curriculum at University of Edinburgh: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_q1zz0uun

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