

## Open Peer Review

Finch, E. (2022, October). [First review of the article Understanding mathematics instructors' perceptions of OER: A mixed methods study, by A. Freeman, H. Tang, & J. Geary]. Journal of Open Educational Resources in Higher Education, 1(1), 163-166. doi:10.13001/joerhe.v1i1.7147

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**Reviewer:** Erica Finch

**Recommendation:** Revisions Required

Review 1 of 2 (Completed 2022-07-07)

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### Scope, Objectives, Content

*Is the article in scope for Journal of Open Educational Resources in Higher Education? Does the topic discuss an element related to open education, open data, open access, or other open topics? Is the topic an important one, or is it trivial or of low priority?*

This article discusses a survey on faculty perceptions of OER in a university mathematics department and explores barriers to the adoption of OER. Findings indicate that many entry-level mathematics courses are taught by adjuncts or non-tenure track instructors who have no control over textbook selection. Instead, a department committee selects the textbooks to be used in all sections of lower-level courses. Another barriers to the adoption of OER is the importance faculty place on online homework platforms, which may be included with commercial textbooks. Findings from this survey could better inform OER outreach efforts to university mathematics departments by including department administrators in the conversation and expanding the discussion beyond textbooks. It is within the scope for the Journal of Open Educational Resources in Higher Education and is of relevance to its readers.

### Organization

*Does the article proceed logically? As applicable, does the article adhere to a recommended structure and the section guideline?*

Overall, the article adheres to the recommended structure and the section guideline and proceeds in a logical fashion. A handful of items that might be moved from one section to another to improve flow and clarity have been commented on individually in the document.

The findings of this study are of exceptional interest to those engaging in OER outreach activities, however the Discussion section as it is written does not engage with those findings in a meaningful way. The Discussion section currently discusses the development of an action plan related to the findings, which is outside the scope of this article. Instead, the Discussion section should be rewritten to explore your findings and situate them within the current literature.

## Methodology, Approach, Conclusions

*The methodology for data gathering and analysis should be appropriate for the problem addressed. Inferences from data should be sound--the author should not reach unsupported conclusions. Not all papers will use a scientific research methodology, but all should employ sound reasoning and an adequate balance between description and critical analysis. Consider: Is the article factually accurate? Is it clear the author knows, or has investigated, previous work on the subject of the article? Has the author failed to reference recent or seminal work on the subject?*

I appreciated the author's use of a mixed methods study to provide further context and insight into the results of their quantitative survey. The findings would be given greater relevance by demonstrating to the reader that the authors have read and considered literature on faculty perceptions of OER and barriers to adoption, which exists in abundance. While the topic of the article is faculty perceptions of OER and barriers to OER adoption, the literature review fails to explicitly address these topics, which significantly weakens the study.

## Writing Style, References

*Please indicate whether there are problems with expression or flow, but do not comment about grammar or basic edits. Do NOT take the time to do copy editing - that will be handled later in the process. However, general comments pointing out problems with style or format are useful.*

Minor issues throughout would be addressed with copy editing. There is one missing reference for Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017.

## Application:

**Does the article contribute knowledge or practical examples that will inform/improve others' practice or education?**

The article provides valuable information for those engaged in OER outreach and education, particularly concerning mathematics departments. It draws attention to factors that should be considered when building an outreach strategy, such as the fact that the textbook selection process for entry-level courses, where the cost-savings for OER would have the biggest impact, may be undertaken by a committee rather

than an individual instructor. It also highlights the importance of discussing OER beyond textbooks, as instructors in mathematics department place a great deal of importance on homework platforms that might come bundled with commercial textbooks.

### What are the stronger points/qualities of the article?

The authors choice of mixed methods study to engage with their topic was an excellent choice, and yielded important results from both the quantitative and qualitative surveys. Combined, the findings provide useful insight that could help support the adoption of OER in a university mathematics department.

I appreciated the accessible language and tone of the article. The authors enthusiasm for the potential benefits of OER shines through in all aspects of their writing.

### What are the weaker points/qualities of the article? How could they be strengthened?

The literature review does not include explicit discussion of faculty perceptions of OER or barriers to OER adoption, both of which are central to this study. To strengthen the article, the authors should include literature that addresses these topics in their literature review.

The discussion section is outside the scope of the article, focusing on the development of an action plan based on the findings. To strengthen the article, the authors should instead discuss the relevance and implications of their findings by situating their findings within the current literature.

### Peer Review Ranking: Scope

*Does the topic discuss an element related to open education, open data, open access, or other open topics?*

Highly Relevant

### Peer Review Ranking: Clarity

*Clarity of expression and flow? Does the article proceed logically?*

Clear

Peer Review Ranking: Contribution

*Contribution to Higher Education research and/or practice*

Contributes

Peer Review Ranking: Research Assessment

*If this is a research paper, is the methodology appropriate?*

Appropriate

Peer Review Ranking: Research Assessment

*If this is a research paper, is the methodology appropriate? Does the article contribute knowledge or practical examples that will inform/improve others' practice or education?*

Sound

Overall Evaluation

1- Weak Accept

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# Open Peer Review

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**Reviewer:** Erica Finch

**Recommendation:** Accept Submission

Review 2 of 2 (Completed 2022-09-09)

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## Scope, Objectives, Content

*Is the article in scope for Journal of Open Educational Resources in Higher Education? Does the topic discuss an element related to open education, open data, open access, or other open topics? Is the topic an important one, or is it trivial or of low priority?*

The article is in scope for Journal of Open Educational Resources in Higher Education. It discusses Open Education Resource adoption in a mathematics department and the barriers to OER adoption. This topic is of high relevance as students are struggling to pay for textbooks, publishers are moving towards lend-lease rather than ownership models, and student privacy is compromised by publishers' data collection activities.

## Organization

*Does the article proceed logically? As applicable, does the article adhere to a recommended structure and the section guideline?*

The article proceeds logically and adheres to the recommend structure and the section guideline.

## Methodology, Approach, Conclusions

*The methodology for data gathering and analysis should be appropriate for the problem addressed. Inferences from data should be sound--the author should not reach unsupported conclusions. Not all papers will use a scientific research methodology, but all should employ sound reasoning and an adequate balance between description and critical analysis. Consider: Is the article factually accurate? Is it clear the*

*author knows, or has investigated, previous work on the subject of the article? Has the author failed to reference recent or seminal work on the subject?*

The article is factually accurate and it is clear that the authors have investigated previous work on the subject. I appreciate the additions to the literature review that provides further context for attitudes towards and barriers to OER adoption.

## Writing Style, References

*Please indicate whether there are problems with expression or flow, but do not comment about grammar or basic edits. Do NOT take the time to do copy editing - that will be handled later in the process. However, general comments pointing out problems with style or format are useful.*

There are no general problems with format or style.

## Application:

**Does the article contribute knowledge or practical examples that will inform/improve others' practice or education?**

The article contributes to our knowledge on barriers to OER adoption. The selected interviewee quotes provide interesting depth and context to the authors' research. This article will inform others whose work it is to promote OER adoption and use to instructors, and provide some guidance on specific challenges they will need to overcome.

**What are the stronger points/qualities of the article?**

I appreciate the mixed-methods approach, particularly the instructor interviews and the context their responses provide for the quantitative results. As I mentioned before, the enthusiasm the authors have for OER comes through the writing and helps make the article an engaging read.

**What are the weaker points/qualities of the article? How could they be strengthened?**

All concerns that were previously raised have been addressed. Thank you for taking the time to make suggested changes!

Peer Review Ranking: Scope

*Does the topic discuss an element related to open education, open data, open access, or other open topics?*

Highly Relevant

Peer Review Ranking: Clarity

*Clarity of expression and flow? Does the article proceed logically?*

Very Clear

Peer Review Ranking: Contribution

*Contribution to Higher Education research and/or practice*

Highly Contributes

Peer Review Ranking: Research Assessment

*If this is a research paper, is the methodology appropriate?*

Highly Appropriate

Peer Review Ranking: Research Assessment

*If this is a research paper, is the methodology appropriate? Does the article contribute knowledge or practical examples that will inform/improve others' practice or education?*

Highly Sound

Overall Evaluation

3- Strong Accept

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