

Open Peer Review

Brunet, M. (2022, October). [Review of the article Programmatic characteristics of open education initiatives at U.S. post-secondary institutions, by J. Bull & M. Gibney]. Journal of Open Educational Resources in Higher Education, 1(1), 201-204. doi:10.13001/joerhe.v1i1.7143

Reviewer: Mélanie Brunet

Recommendation: Revisions Required

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?

Yes, this article falls within the scope of this journal by providing an overview of how OER initiatives are started, governed, funded, and assessed. Its importance stems from the attempt at covering all of these aspects and trying to point out some commonalities to inform long-term sustainability, even if the authors had to leave out some of the data they collected because of the changing context due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organization

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

Yes, the article proceeds logically and follows the recommended structure and section guidelines. In the Word document attached, I suggested in a couple of places that some short sections be moved, but nothing major

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?

There is no mention of the problematic aspects of many existing studies on the impact of OER on students, so I suggest referring to Wiley's recent article on the matter (details in the Word document attached). I also suggest referring to the COUP Framework since it is used in many of those studies, and the most recent attempt to have a consistent way of measuring the costs and benefits of OER initiatives (not necessarily individual OER). It is indeed very easy to conflate the two as some programs rely on studies of specific OER for awareness and promotion. In terms of the data, while the analysis could use some clarification, overall the authors do not appear to be drawing unwarranted conclusions based on insufficient evidence.

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.

I have pointed out in the Word document places where I think words are missing. The frequent use of "in order to" was a bit distracting and could be shortened to "to". But overall, it was very easy to follow and flowed nicely.

Application:

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

I think that despite not being able to find many distinctions between types of institutions due to the limited data, the article still contributes to the knowledge on OER initiatives. Perhaps the most insightful part for me as a manager of an OER program was the observations about assessment. The data revealed that it was quite inconsistent and sometimes completely absent, which points to the urgency in continuing to develop ways of evaluating OER initiatives.

What are the stronger points/qualities of the article?

I appreciate the focus on the assessment of OER programs (which is often missing), but also that it brings it all together in a coherent package that includes origins, governance, funding, and assessment.

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

Some recent initiatives, like the DOERS3 OER Contribution Matrix and the Midwestern Higher Education Compact's suggested approach to reporting costs and benefits of OER were not mentioned. They are somewhat recent developments that would add to the authors' argument and evidence. While I recognized a lot of studies that were mentioned, I was surprised that many others were not, perhaps because there are a lot of studies on measuring OER impact on student outcomes (and they do get a bit repetitive) but to refer to more of them would help make the point that some aspects are well studied (although not without some problems) and that others are not.

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

2- Accept
