

Open Peer Review

Kirschner, J. (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), 208-211. doi:10.13001/joerhe.v1i1.7143

Reviewer: Jessica Kirschner

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?

This article shares the results of a survey looking at the characteristics of OER initiatives, which is certainly in scope for the journal. Exploring trends/patterns in these initiatives is an important topic and should be of interest and useful to OER practitioners.

Organization

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

The organization is logical and follows the recommended structure and section guidelines.

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 methodology and analysis (primarily descriptive statistics) are appropriate for the article. I look forward to seeing the survey instrument in the final version (the article mentions it as a supplementary file), and I think the inclusion of the instrument will answer some questions about depth of some of the points in the article (see my response to weakness). All included conclusions are supported by the data.

While I don't believe that there were any important works left out of the citations, I was surprised that the Open Ed Group and their COUP framework was not mentioned in the literature review section on assessment, although works from some of the groups members were included.

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.

The writing is very clear and easy to follow. When reviewing, I'd recommend keeping an eye toward eliminating repetition within sentences/paragraphs and ensuring sentences are clear--there were a couple that appeared to have a word missing (I'm happy to provide some notes on this, if the authors would like).

Application:

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

This is the part I'm struggling with a bit for this article, to be honest. I think the study that the authors undertook is a very useful and interesting one. As they point out, no similar large scale studies have been done, and it would be good to have a better understanding of the landscape of OER initiatives. The current article aligns survey results with literature and points out further avenues for exploration, but doesn't include many actionable takeaways. They do include tables aligning funding and cost savings and age of program and courses impacted without exploring these relationships in depth, although I do admit that exploring these connections too in-depth may be a stretch based on the sample size. I wish there was more "so what" addressed in the article, whether it being connection between funding and program success, characteristics for a successful program and/or a roadmap for newer programs, or something similar. That being said, I think that if someone were looking for an general overview of OER program characteristics grounded in data, this article does a good job and is a valuable contribution.

What are the stronger points/qualities of the article?

I think the article provides a great overview of their survey results, which explores OER initiatives' implementation, funding, governance, and assessment practices. It is very easy and clear, and the data presented provides a unique overview of OER initiatives--filling a gap in the literature. I think the survey and results are a great contribution to the OER field and only wish that the response pool had been larger so that larger trends and additional analysis could have taken place, although this is no fault of the authors.

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

When reading the article, the biggest question I was left with was how did the authors define OER initiatives. As is noted, "OER initiatives have taken many different forms and sizes." However, I think it may be helpful for the authors to include a broad definition or overview of OER initiatives. Are these grant programs? Those just focusing on education and advocacy? Publishing support? All of the above? I'm not sure if these types of characteristics were collected in the survey (incentives for faculty was mentioned), but the goals and projects of the initiatives could be important, especially when looking at initiative sustainability in relation to funding.

I'd also be interested in seeing more detail provided in the data (e.g. what non-library units were involved with governance, more specificity on funding source), but, again, this might not have been collected.

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

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?

Sound

Overall Evaluation

2- Accept
