Open Educational Resources

Collaboration between Community College Librarians and Faculty

Amy Smith[1]

Jamie L. Workman[2]

Taralynn Hartsell[3]

D. Laverne Hill[4]

Abstract

Open educational resources (OER) provide college students with course materials on the first day of class, ensuring an equitable learning experience for all. Faculty are the driving force behind OER but need more support to understand, locate, and evaluate resources. Faculty and librarian collaboration can bridge together ideas and resources to benefit students. The researchers used a qualitative case study to understand how faculty and librarians collaborated at a community college to adopt OER. The primary researcher interviewed librarians and faculty to understand their experiences of working together to promote and adopt OER at their campus. The researchers analyzed data from the participants which revealed seven primary themes consisting of communication, student benefits, faculty hesitancies, departmental and administrative decisions, librarian partnerships, and campus repository building. Findings revealed how the collaborative efforts of librarians and faculty helped move OER initiatives forward.

Introduction

The idea of Open Educational Resources (OER) was formed in the mid-1990s, with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) launching the first Open Courseware Initiative (OCW) in 2001. MIT's launch led to the continued interest and work toward new initiatives to create and promote OER. The idea and movement of OER also led to the creation of Creative Commons (CC) in 2001. For the purpose of this study, we use United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

[1] *Reference/Information Literacy Librarian, Trenholm State Community College, Montgomery, Alabama, U.S.A.;*
[2] *Associate Professor, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia, U.S.A.;* [3] *Assistant Professor, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia, U.S.A.;* [4] *Professor, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia, U.S.A.*

E-mail: jworkman@valdosta.edu

(UNESCO)'s definition of OER: "learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others" (UNESCO, n.d., para. 1). They also serve as an avenue to ease college students' financial burden of not having to purchase textbooks and by providing an equitable education to everyone (Luo et al., 2020).

Librarians can promote and assist in carrying out OER initiatives on campus, but faculty are the driving force behind overall change. When librarians learn more about carrying out an OER initiative on campus, they can better understand what is working and how to make the startup process easier for others looking to drive initiatives on their campuses. This study was conducted to better understand the practices and strategies used by librarians and faculty to advance the knowledge and integration of OER on community college campuses.

Literature Review

Individual state and college initiatives have provided incentives for faculty adoption of OER, but usage remains minimal (Katz, 2019). Librarians have become the voice at colleges for driving and sustaining OER (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). Numerous publications have investigated student, faculty, and librarian perceptions of OER; minimal studies focus on how and what librarians can do to support faculty efforts to adopt OER. The studies that do highlight four-year institutions and not community colleges. Luo et al (2020) indicated that faculty were concerned with the time-consuming task of finding quality resources as well as the need for the implementation of OER to be sustainable by receiving institutional support after the initial funding ran out. They further noted the importance of collaboration between university librarians, instructional designers, and e-learning staff to identify available resources, and to determine best practices for accessibility. Walsh (2020) documented how a large urban community college worked to make textbooks more affordable through OERs. The case study focused more on an institutional level than personal (e.g., how librarians themselves worked with faculty members). Thus, the need to explore how librarians individually support faculty members on community college campuses still exists.

Community Colleges

Community colleges provide access to higher education for almost half of the college students in the United States (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). Low tuition rates and open-door admission policies allow for an equal opportunity to obtain a degree (Doran, 2023). Additional college costs are often not considered, posing an overwhelming barrier to students. These barriers can include textbooks, food, and housing expenses (Veletsianos, 2021). Community colleges serve high populations of first-time and financially disadvantaged students, so affordability must be addressed (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). The American Association of Community Colleges Fast Facts (2020) demographic data indicated 55% of the enrolled students were minorities, and 45% were white. Twenty-nine percent of those are first-generation college students, 15% are single parents, 9% are non-U.S. citizens, 5% are veterans, and 20% are disabled. In 2017-2018, 92% of students relied on federal financial aid to attend college.

Faculty Impact

Several researchers have studied faculty perceptions to determine why they do not use OER, before and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Scott & Shelley, 2023). Faculty knowledge and understanding of OER impacted overall perception (Walsh, 2020). Walsh (2020) concluded faculty knowledge of OER, implementation, and efficacy of resources presented challenges with selection and adoption. The 2022 Bay View Analytics survey revealed OER awareness among faculty was up 7% over the previous year to 57% (Seaman & Seaman, 2022). Walsh (2020) indicated several concerns faculty expressed regarding OER. First, faculty are skeptical of free resources considered high quality. Second, the perceptions other colleagues may have of them for implementing OER is a concern. The time investment in exploring new resources, integrating them into the curriculum, and authoring or creating new resources are other issues (Scott & Shelley, 2023).

The Librarian's Role

Mwinyimbegu (2018) discussed the librarians' critical roles in identifying high quality OER materials, managing OER, and raising awareness of OER among faculty and students (Gerber, 2022). Due to changing academic environments after COVID, the growing online student population has driven more librarians to assist faculty more with "...information creation and dissemination via OER and other scholarly publication services" (Runyon & Steffy, 2021, p. 361). The success of OER integration can be dependent on the collaborative efforts between the librarians and department faculty (Luo et al., 2020). Selecting and creating ancillary materials is a growing concern, as is the need for institutional repositories. Librarians are equipped with unique skillsets to support and help faculty transition to free or low-cost resources; however, librarians are often left out of discussions regarding curriculum and resources. Library advocacy, training, and collaboration are highlighted throughout the literature to bring about awareness and assistance to faculty (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Pate, 2021).

Mwinyimbegu (2018) and Braddlee & VanScoy (2019) have concluded that academic libraries should promote and raise awareness of OER and work closely with faculty to better understand and support their curriculum needs. OER opens opportunities for institutions to align goals that decrease students' spending and increase student completion rates (Katz, 2019; Pate, 2021). Librarians have been called upon to support and champion OER by advocating and promoting faculty resources (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). Mwinyimbegu (2018) and Pate (2021) identified several ways for libraries to promote OER access and usage, including information literacy training, the university website, face-to-face sessions, an institutional repository, an OER portal, student government associations, or a learning management system.

Librarian and Faculty Collaborations

The primary concern is creating an equal and accessible educational environment for all students (Luo et al., 2020). The cost of textbooks has increased astronomically in recent years (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Griffiths et al., 2022). With 92% of community college students relying on some form of financial assistance, costs must be lowered to help students achieve success (American Association of

Community Colleges Fast Facts, 2020). The literature demonstrates most students found OER accessible, cost-effective, up-to-date, and user-friendly (Lin, 2019; Ocean et al., 2019). OER provides low-income and disadvantaged students a means to the same learning opportunities beginning on the first day of class (Okamoto, 2013).

Faculty and administrative knowledge, support, and understanding are essential in moving the OER initiative forward (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Pate, 2021). While many faculty may agree that OER is a great cost saver and benefit for students, Pate (2021) stated, "it is incumbent upon us to curate and promote course materials that are accessible and affordable for all our students" (p. 73). However, the primary drawbacks affecting faculty adoption are knowledge, time, and resource efficacy (Hilton, 2020; Luo et al., 2020). Faculty have to time manage multiple responsibilities such as teaching, advising, serving in different capacities, all the while pursuing professional development and scholarship. With these multiple responsibilities, revising curriculum with additional resources such as OERs can be cumbersome. Katz (2019) believed that librarians could assist faculty regarding these issues by garnering administrative support and educating faculty about the benefits and resources available. Librarians must work with the administration to create policies and initiatives to encourage faculty adoption of free or low-cost resources (Katz, 2019; Walsh, 2020). Literature supports the need for more communication at colleges and increased collaboration between faculty and librarians to increase knowledge, locate and evaluate resources, and promote OER usage on a broader scale (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Mwinyimbegu, 2018). Another concern for ensuring OER initiatives is sustainability of the system used. Essmiller et al. (2020) found that the Performance Improvement/HPT model used at their institution had practical applications for managing OERs materials and garnered support from the academic community. Letriz (2022) spoke of how a small private university used an open-source program called Pressbooks for its OER initiatives. The platform enabled the university's library staff to maintain the sources with relative ease and affordability. Thus, support from all members on campuses is important.

Faculty are the driving force behind OER adoption, and librarians help promote and support the transition. This study provides insight into how librarians and faculty collaborate at a community college to incorporate OER into their course curriculum. Research data regarding OER adoption is primarily survey-driven and answers what works and what is needed. This qualitative study opens a dialog with faculty and librarians to understand the inner workings of how and why OER were adopted at a community college in the Southeast. The following research question guided the study: What strategies and practices are faculty and librarians at a community college in the Southeast using to enhance collaboration to move OER initiatives forward?

Methods

The researchers used a qualitative, single-case case study design to understand the inner workings of how one community college's librarians and faculty collaborated to promote and adopt OER. The site was chosen because librarians and faculty actively collaborated on OER. At the time the research was conducted, it was the only community college in the state's system where this collaboration

occurred. Librarians had worked with faculty by identifying and aiding in the creation of OER. The librarians created LibGuides to assist faculty in linking specific course resources for the students.

The researchers sought to gain insight into librarians' strategies and approaches to assist faculty in locating, evaluating, editing, and adopting no cost or low-cost resources to replace expensive textbooks. The researchers studied faculty working with a librarian or other colleagues to adopt OER to understand their experiences. The researchers used interviews, course syllabi, and website resources to gain insight into the processes and practices of the faculty and librarians for collaboration.

The researchers used categorical aggregation and direct interpretation to analyze the case study data (Stake, 1995). The data included interviews with the five participants. Data analysis began immediately after the first interview (Maxwell, 2013). The researchers used Otter.ai to transcribe audio recordings and organize notes as each interview was completed. Maxwell (2013) recommended first reading over all documents associated with the interview and then listening to the audio recording while writing memos to identify potential themes.

The researchers reviewed both the transcribed text and audio recordings and created a critical analysis of thoughts into a narrative. The researchers continued to review the data while taking notes and identifying codes. The researchers used a combination of open coding, axial coding, and clustering to manually code the data and determine common themes.

The researchers used purposeful and availability sampling techniques to identify participants. Participants consisted of one librarian, three full-time faculty, and an adjunct instructor who served in a dual role at the college as a librarian. The researchers selected librarian participants based on their knowledge and work with faculty on OER. The researcher chose faculty participants based on their collaborative work with librarians or faculty colleagues to promote, locate, and implement OER.

Results

A comprehensive analysis of the interview responses unveiled three categories of themes within the results: communication, faculty hesitancies, and collaboration. The participants expressed these themes in the interviews by explaining how the adoption of OER occurred.

Communication

Communication between faculty, librarians, and community college administrators was a critical factor in learning about and understanding the benefits of OER. The data indicated faculty and librarians who worked together successfully implemented OER in their courses. Student success was a top priority of the faculty and librarians interviewed, and the primary reason for adopting OER. Initial reactions from the participants included being surprised that textbooks would be available for free, being excited to find new resources for students, loving the idea of free access to materials, and the satisfaction of providing equity and accessibility for all students.

Faculty Hesitancies

Faculty hesitancies consistent throughout the data were time and availability of discipline-specific content. Faculty often found the idea of changing textbooks and having to learn something else on top of their teaching loads to be daunting tasks. Joseph, an economics instructor, shared, "I would dare say that most faculty don't like the idea of changing textbooks… it's going to be a lot of work for the faculty member." Pamela, the institution's head librarian, shared that many instructors would be thinking, "you're going to make me learn something else?" She further commented:

> *I think if we eliminate the concern over learning something new if I try to do as much for the faculty member as I can to encourage them to use this product because what they're dealing with are students who don't have the money to buy the book.*

Susan, an English faculty member, stated that she had "grand intentions" to rework assignments and materials throughout the semester, then found herself "treading water" to get through the current classes. The "time crunch" of one semester and less than two weeks to prepare for another semester proved challenging for any significant course changes or transitions. Susan also stated that electronic resources were more challenging to navigate saying:

> *I still wanted the print copy. The resources are not as user-friendly to skim through and look at the readings. Finding new material to introduce to students was a bit challenging. Getting lost in the digital format as opposed to having highlights and annotations to teach from the print copy.*

Kimberlee, a full-time biology faculty member and department chair, expressed her concern for discipline-specific content. She stated:

> *I wasn't sure. I didn't know if they would have offerings in my discipline…I knew English faculty and History faculty that were using some open resources…I looked at OpenStax primarily because those are peer-reviewed. They happened to have books in anatomy and physiology, which was, I think, the first textbook I transitioned to.*

Kimberlee also stated, "I believe it's part of my job to create materials, but there is a limit to what I have to do and what I have time to do…" She continued to suggest that administration offer incentives like a course release, supplement, or fellowship to faculty to faculty working to transition and create materials. Kimberlee slowly transitioned all her classes, one at a time, over several semesters, but commented "labs are a little trickier." She stated that there were some OER resources for labs, but she preferred to create her own. Some lab simulations were available online, but "they cost $60 to $75 for the students, and they're really bad…tech support is bad." She added that the labs were not meeting her objectives, and better labs could be created for students at home with free resources.

Collaboration

Librarians served a valuable role in assisting faculty, through collaboration, to adopt OER. Librarian presentations and faculty outreach were essential lines of communication to open the

communication channels on campus about OER. Librarians have been vital in helping instructors identify resources; instructors are the guides to tell them if the materials meet the subject matter taught. Librarians created password protected LibGuides to house instructors OER course materials. Partnerships with other faculty who teach similar courses are also crucial in validating resources and how well they are working for students. Pamela and William, both librarians, spoke about the curation of resources. Pamela stated:

> *I reached out to the instructors I felt would be the most open to the idea first. Instead of making them think they had to learn something new, I create a password-protected guide for instructors and break it down by chapters, instructor resources, lecture slides, as well as test banks and solution manuals when available. Once instructors realize most of what they need is right there, they are more open to using OER. I think if we eliminate the concern over learning something new and gathering content for the faculty member, I can encourage them to use this product.*

William added that as a librarian, using OER in the classroom successfully assisted in the transition and adoption of OER for teaching purposes in other departments. William offered this scenario with a department that he worked with and how this relationship expanded to other colleges:

> *After numerous bits of talking and presentations, the sociology department also made the switch. The sociology instructor was able to collaborate with another faculty member at another college in the system and, through talks, decided the switch was a good idea.*

When faculty were asked what librarians could do to assist them in moving initiatives forward, the primary responses were: librarian persistence, inclusion at campus events, and creating a campus OER repository. Faculty participants stressed the importance of faculty getting to know the campus librarians and understanding their roles. All participants acknowledged it was important for librarians to be persistent about educating all faculty, recommending they send out information about resources and speak at campus events about OER. When librarians were asked the same question, they mentioned that being part of campus meetings involving curriculum, textbooks, and student retention was vital. Meetings and faculty professional development sessions provide librarians with a platform to get the word out about OER and showcase how it could benefit students.

Building a repository of OER resources was also a suggestion made by faculty, stating that a campus repository would provide a central location of course-specific OER for easy access. Susan recommended "building a repository of resources for courses using OER so students and faculty can easily access resources." Pamela stated it would be ideal for working collaboratively with the librarians around the state to "establish a repository of course-specific OER resources." She spoke about the limited number of staff in community college libraries and its effects on time for working one-on-one with faculty, "four campuses and four librarians, makes the task harder." Kimberlee said, "…it would be great if there were kind of a....group of faculties who are using OER and can start a database of their resources and what they use." Pamela mentioned the same idea, adding that "we all teach the same general education and developmental courses across the state. A collaborative project with a collection

of developmental textbooks and basic resources would provide faculty with materials they could quickly implement and tweak without reinventing the wheel at each school."

Discussion

A common theme throughout the literature addressed the affordability issues of community college students (Doran, 2023). Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) discussed how community colleges traditionally served many first-time and socio-economic disadvantaged students. Research conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges Fast Facts (2020) indicated that 92% of students enrolled between 2017 and 2018 relied on federal financial aid to attend college. The data collected showed that affordability was still a top concern amongst faculty and students, indicating that first-generation students receiving Pell grants expressed fears about the cost of textbooks, especially since Pell grants do not always cover all costs. Dual enrollment students expressed cost concerns because financial aid was not an option, and they were already paying out of pocket for the course. Faculty agreed that OER would eliminate the extra burden of cost for these students. Pate (2021) mentioned that OER initiatives at The University of North Alabama helped faculty members develop OER courses for students through a Provost Stipend. OER courses could alleviate the cost concerns. He further stated the goal of the program was to "leverage as much library funding to purchase resources and tools that can reduce total textbook costs for students" (p. 73). Data provided detailed accounts about how OER eliminated the barriers mentioned in the literature. Faculty expressed how OER helped eliminate accessibility and cost barriers, resulting in students having all the materials needed on day one and not having to wait for financial aid resources. Data gathered from Kimberlee described her students as "turning into the haves and have nots" and how OER frees them from deciding between feeding their kids or purchasing a textbook. These specific thoughts echoed the findings of Braddlee and VanScoy (2019), Crozier (2018), and Scott and Shelley (2023) who connected the significant increase in college textbooks directly affecting students having to choose between a text they may or may not use and other needs.

Faculty participants were asked about actions and decisions that led to the adoption of OER. Departmental or administrative decisions impacted all participants (Walsh, 2020). All the faculty participants indicated that departmental decisions ultimately dictated the timing and adoption of resources. Hess et al. (2016) suggested that faculty were the driving force behind OER adoption and implementation. The data fully supported that faculty drove change, but it also highlighted the obstacles faced by faculty regarding departmental decisions. Faculty members indicated that although they may have been fully on board with the idea of OER, the decision of what textbook to use in the course was made by a committee with no intention of changing from the current textbook. Adjuncts had little leverage in the textbook decision process. Kimberlee, as department chair, was able to slowly make changes in her department and hand down the new content to other instructors for use. Martin et al. (2017) collected data indicating that faculty were willing to adopt OER but needed more training, direction, and support from institutions. The data from this study showed that even when faculty were eager and ready to transition to OER, more training, guidance, and support were needed at the administration level to impact and implement change. Participants mentioned that curriculum changes,

departmental retirements, and advocating for OER use both on and off campus opened the door for OER implementation. Still, it took more administrative push before faculty started getting on board.

For decades, librarians have advocated for free and open resources (Young, 2016). Librarians have been called upon to support and champion OER by advocating and promoting faculty resources (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Pate, 2021). Katz's (2019) research indicated that librarians needed to garner administrative support and educate faculty about available benefits and resources. The data from this study widely supported the importance of librarian partnerships for moving OER initiatives forward on campus. The impact of librarian outreach showed early in the data when participants shared how they learned about OER (Pate, 2021). Two of the four faculty members interviewed learned about OER through faculty professional development meetings. Crozier (2018) emphasized the importance of librarians building relationships with the different departments on campus and sharing quality and relevant resources in their instruction area with faculty. Two librarians spoke about their relationships with faculty on campus. Both indicated that they began promoting OER to those with whom they had already established a rapport. For example, whenever there was any campus event, one-on-one discussions about OER could take place with faculty. Any opportunity to visit with faculty was taken to remind them of OER resources available for them as well as their students. Furthermore, librarians can greatly assist in the development of OER repositories as indicated by Letriz (2022). Designing a system to sustain materials at the library is important to allow access (Essmiller et al., 2020).

Walsh (2020) found it was critical to encourage faculty who have OER experience to advocate and promote adoption. Both found that faculty advocates proved to be just as crucial as librarians in getting the word out about OER. Three of the five participants interviewed initially found out about OER from other faculty. All the participants agreed that working with a librarian or other faculty member to identify resources helped get them started. One participant, advocating as both a librarian and adjunct instructor, shared how he sparked enough interest in the department that they decided to collaborate further with a colleague at one of the other colleges to make the switch. As a department chair, one participant shared resources and content she created with others in her department and constantly collaborated with other faculty to determine what resources and labs worked best for the student population. The faculty and librarians also agreed that sharing resources prevented others from reinventing the wheel. As seen in the data, faculty were huge influencers on other faculty adopting OER and should also make a point to share and advocate.

Susan recommended "building a repository of resources for courses using OER so students and faculty can easily access resources." Pamela stated it would be ideal for working collaboratively with the librarians around the state to "establish a repository of course-specific OER resources." She spoke about the limited number of staff in community college libraries and its effects on time for working one-on-one with faculty, "four campuses and four librarians, makes the task harder." Kimberlee said, "…it would be great if there were…a group of faculty who are using OER and can start a database of their resources and what they use." Pamela mentioned the same idea, adding that we all teach the same general education and developmental courses across the state. A collaborative project with a collection of developmental textbooks and basic resources would provide faculty with materials they could quickly implement without reinventing the wheel at each school.

Mwinyimbegu (2018) discussed the librarians' critical role in identifying high-quality OER materials, managing OER, and raising awareness of OER among faculty and students. Borchard and Magnuson (2017) said librarians often saw the barriers faculty face as an opportunity to create a partnership. The data collected specifically from the librarians in this study highlighted the critical roles in assisting faculty. Both librarians were able to relieve the hesitancies of faculty and help make OER a reality for their courses. The librarians asked the faculty to submit their course syllabus. They were then able to search for and identify peer-reviewed resources for the faculty member to review. The librarians were able to help identify OER-specific resources and link faculty to library subscription content to broaden the resources. Mitchell and Chu (2014) discussed how libraries already have many resources available to faculty, including subscription content, eBooks, institutional archives, and special collections. All the participants spoke about faculty as content experts and the librarians being key in locating and supporting the content. Bliss et al. (2013) wrote about the importance of faculty identifying and evaluating resources to determine if the content met their curriculum needs. After the faculty members reviewed the resources, they let the librarian know what chapters and information best fit their curriculum needs. The librarian would then create a course specific LibGuide for the faculty member to integrate into their course. The librarian would also make a separate password-protected guide for the faculty member that included ancillary materials to support the student resources. One participant felt it was important for the librarians to help create resources as much as possible, to remove that barrier from the faculty. Participants in the study who actively collaborated with a librarian on OER praised them for their assistance in identifying and creating easy access links for them and their students. They further indicated that the collaboration efforts were instrumental in making the switch to OER successful in class. Today's role of the librarian as an information collector and disseminator is evident (Runyon & Shelley, 2021).

A support system needs to be in place to reinforce the innovation-decision for sustainability (Essmiller, 2020; Gerber, 2022; Walsh, 2020). Faculty and librarian adopters could continue to teach others and help maintain current and future collections of OER (Pate, 2021). Mwinyimbegu (2018) wrote about how academic libraries should promote and raise awareness of OER and how to work closely with faculty to better understand and support their curriculum needs through OER. The participants of the study echoed the same sentiment. When interviewing faculty, they all felt that it was important for librarians to continue educating faculty about OER, stating the importance of librarians understanding what may be holding faculty back from adopting OER. Librarians interviewed also agreed that awareness and support are vital in reaching faculty. Within the literature, several researchers expressed the importance of librarians. Braddlee and VanScoy (2019 and Mwinyimbegu (2018) agreed that library advocacy, workshops, faculty liaisons skills, and focus groups brought about awareness and assistance to faculty. They also said librarians were equipped with unique skillsets to support and help faculty transition to free or low-cost resources; however, they were often left out of discussions regarding curriculum and resources. Data collected from both librarians support the findings in the literature, noting they were often left out of meetings and discussions, including student success and retention discussions as well as textbook selections. They felt they should be invited to campus meetings involving curriculum and textbooks since these meetings were critical to introducing faculty and administrators to OER resources.

Faculty and librarian support and encouragement are crucial in maintaining and moving initiatives forward at community colleges. Data collected from faculty and librarians supported the need for librarians to further educate faculty and administration on their roles and skills related to OER. Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) provided detailed examples of roles that librarians filled with supporting faculty, which included: adoption, advocacy, curation, preservation, repositories, content development, description, cataloging, metadata, discovery, funding, information literacy, licensing and copyright assistance, policy development, professional development, publishing, recognition, and team members. Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) and Mwinyimbegu (2018) agreed on the importance of librarians' roles in supporting faculty adoption of OER and promoting and curating resources. Borchard and Magnuson (2017) agreed that librarians work hand in hand with faculty to identify gaps and help faculty locate quality OER. Data collected showed faculty participants valued the work librarians were doing on campus to help support OER initiatives. They said networking with librarians and faculty helped lessen the workload and better navigate resources. Katz (2019) further stated that librarians must work with the administration to create policies and initiatives to encourage faculty adoption of free or low-cost resources. The library website at the college reflected the collaborative efforts of librarians and administration to create OER adoption policies. The website included all necessary forms and procedures for faculty to submit and receive OER adoption approval from the administration.

Identifying curriculum needs is the first step for libraries to build sustainable OER collections (ACRL, 2018). Mwinyimbegu (2018) identified several ways for libraries to promote OER access and usage, including information literacy training, the university website, face-to-face sessions, an institutional repository, an OER portal, or a learning management system. The librarians at JSCC have started the process of building an OER repository. This is evident on the library website, where the librarians have created course specific LibGuides for faculty they have worked with to adopt OER. Additional guides have also been designed to introduce faculty and students to library resources and databases to support the curriculum. Colson et al. (2017) wrote about how selecting and creating ancillary materials was a growing concern, as was the need for institutional repositories. One participant who worked exclusively with other faculty in adopting and creating her resources, suggested the need for librarians to help with the publishing side of OER. The bridge between librarians and these faculty members could enhance the library website and resources available to others in those departments. Mwinyimbegu's (2018) faculty survey suggested that librarians could play roles in OER collection creation and management. The data showed that all participants agreed that a course specific OER repository would help faculty and students access resources. The head librarian agreed, but further addressed the need for the community colleges in the state to create a collaborative repository since all community colleges in the state were teaching the same developmental and general education curriculum. One large repository would make the resources available to everyone, eliminating duplication of the same resources. Faculty could quickly adapt resources to fit their needs or update them and republish them for others.

The collaborative relationships between librarians and faculty have proven essential and necessary to help move OER initiatives forward (Gerber, 2022). Faculty and librarians must share their OER experiences to help educate other faculty and librarians who have not yet decided to take the

plunge. Continuing to share knowledge, resources, and collaboration can lead to higher rates of adoption of OER. The existing literature with this study's support provides working examples, ideas, and solutions for faculty and librarians interested in campus OER initiatives.

Conclusion

Many factors play in the implementation of OERs. Community college students are often first-generation or lower-income students who face an overwhelming cost burden when they choose to attend college (Doran, 2023). OER initiatives are just one way community colleges can drive change and eliminate the burden of textbook costs for their students. Faculty and librarians are needed to initiate and sustain effective use of OERs (Gerber, 2022). Librarians in the study saw themselves as the primary advocates for OER on campus. They felt the best way to assist faculty with OER was to educate them and then create a guide of potential resources and ancillary materials supporting the curriculum outlined in their course syllabi. The faculty in the study praised the work the campus librarians had done to promote OER on campus and create course guides for specific classes. All faculty agreed that students were their main priority and the driving force behind adopting OER. The faculty members interviewed however, addressed the issue of time and quality content for their discipline. With a bit of research and assistance, resources were quickly located, but faculty felt that time would have been less of a barrier with administration support. Overall, the collaborative efforts of librarians and faculty have helped move OER initiatives further at this college.

Implications for Practice

The adoption of OER at community colleges can significantly impact students. The data gathered from this study showed how collaboration between librarians and faculty could impact OER adoption, benefiting faculty, librarians, and students. The themes found throughout the results section dig deeper into how knowledge and collaboration could ease common barriers faced by faculty such as faculty knowledge of OER, time, and library staffing.

Being the primary adopters of OER, faculty must possess a basic understanding of OER functionality and licensing. Understanding the benefits and barriers allows faculty to decide whether the transition would work for their course. One of the first steps a faculty member could take when considering OER is to reach out to their campus librarian. Department chairs could go a step further by inviting campus librarians to a division. Administrative incentives for faculty could provide much-needed time for integrating OER. Participants suggested a one-semester course release would free up work hours to transition a course fully. Other suggestions were monetary incentives, campus recognition, or counting toward tenure for those at universities.

Librarians are vital in raising awareness about OER on community college campuses. Specific course content is not always easy to locate, but librarians can quickly assist faculty in searching, organizing, and adapting resources to fit their course curriculum. As OER adoption increases on campus, creating a repository is vital for housing course-specific resources and making resources accessible to

faculty and students. Items could include OER textbooks adopted or adapted for a specific course on campus, electronic presentations, activities, labs, test banks, answer keys, and more. A campus repository would provide a central place for all faculty teaching the same course to use or adapt resources to meet their teaching needs.

Common barriers associated with OER adoption were decreased when faculty collaborated with librarians and other colleagues in their discipline. Faculty looking to transition courses from a traditional text to OER should check to see if there is anyone on their campus heading up OER initiatives. If not, the librarian can offer support and assistance with getting started. The key is collaboration. Faculty who have successfully integrated OER into courses should become advocates on campus. Talking with other faculty can promote the benefits of OER (including student success) and encourage others wanting to transition to OER.

Implications for Future Research

Future research should extend this study to more community college campuses across the state or southeast. Since beginning this study, other colleges have started implementing campus OER initiatives. Understanding and comparing strategies and practices that enhance collaboration and drive OER adoption on each campus is essential. A more comprehensive understanding of policies and procedures for adoption at each campus can help unify campus practices. The research could also include interviews with the administration to determine their perception and support of OER on campus. Additional research could also be conducted to understand why faculty may choose or not choose to collaborate with librarians when working to implement OER in a course. Faculty focus groups could provide further insight into what faculty need or want from librarians during the implementation process. Finally, more research is needed on creating and managing campus OER repositories. Identifying the process and procedures colleges and universities have in place for faculty is important to ensure resources are current and made available for others in the same discipline areas. Administration, faculty, and librarians could be interviewed and surveyed to determine what resources are required and were housed to examine effective OER management.

Acknowledgements

Conflict of Interest Statement

There are no conflicts of interest.

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