

Opening Up the Curriculum : Midwifery Open Education Resources: who benefits?

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Abstract

This poster highlights the case for developing midwifery OERs in a UK midwifery undergraduate programme and who will benefit from the development. Students will be able to access the learning materials across their programme, currently this is restricted to the module they are enrolled on through the virtual learning environment (VLE). The Midwifery lecturers will have a central resource for all materials, avoiding duplication of effort and resources. The open repository will enable engagement with the students' practice mentors as the midwifery curriculum will become accessible and as a result address the potential theory practice gap. The materials will be available to prospective DMU students and their teachers so they can assess the quality of teaching at DMU, which will assist them in selecting the correct subjects for university entry and overall better prepare them for entry to a midwifery programme.

Importantly, it will support countries abroad where they have a need for high, quality, up to date midwifery materials to develop the care fo childbearing women and babies.

Keywords

Midwifery OERs, sustainable. Accessible to practice mentors, bridging the theory practice divide.

Background

The author believes there is a strong case for developing midwifery OERs from a UK midwifery undergraduate programme. There are very few midwifery OERs developed to date. The TIGER (transforming interprofessional groups through education resources) repository has recently released OERs applicable to midwifery in areas such as emergency skills drills, Parenting and Disability and Independent and Supplementary prescribing (<http://tiger.library.dmu.ac.uk>) However, there are many advantages to developing more midwifery OERs for use both home and abroad.

The author has recently reviewed Africa OER as it has released a midwifery training programme in the form of a CDROM developed by the University of Malawi and Kumuzu

College of Nursing

(<http://www.oerafrica.org/ResourceResults/tabid/1562/mctl/Details/id/37994/Default.aspx>).

The file to download was found to be 133mb and there was no facility other than a ‘taster’ to view the materials. However, it was observed during a further exploration of the resource that there were links to baby milk manufactures. This discovery was of concern as this contravenes the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/code_english.pdf).

A further example, in the UK, is U-Now from the University of Nottingham (www.unow.nottingham.ac.uk). It has materials which are potentially useful to midwifery but they are grouped under the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science and lack of a search facility within the resources makes it difficult to readily determine the actual midwifery resources.

The MORE Project

The MORE project will develop an open repository solely with midwifery learning materials that midwifery students to be able to access across their programme. Currently materials are restricted to the module which students are enrolled on through the virtual learning environment. Therefore as they progress through the midwifery programme they are unable to access materials from earlier parts of the curriculum, Additionally the Midwifery lecturers will, for the first time, have a central resource for all midwifery materials thus avoiding duplication of effort and resources. A further benefit of the open repository will be to give access to the midwifery curriculum to the student’s midwifery mentors when they are working in clinical practice, which will address the potential theory practice gap.

The materials will be also be available to prospective DMU students and their teachers so they can assess the quality of teaching at DMU, assist them in selecting correct subject choices and overall better prepare them for entry to a midwifery programme.

Importantly, this development has the potential to support countries that have a need for high, quality, up to date midwifery materials to educate and professionally develop health care staff who care for childbearing women and babies.

The following work packages are in progress during the project phase:

- The collection and transformation of first year midwifery teaching and learning materials used within an undergraduate programme into OERs. Year 2 and 3 materials will follow.
- Evaluation of the materials by first year midwifery students and practice midwifery mentors who have no experience of using open educational resources to date.

- Evaluation of the use of the midwifery OERs by local Further Education Colleges with students who are considering a career in midwifery
- Work with international links to disseminate and promote use of Midwifery OERs which have the potential to up skill and educate midwifery practitioners
- Work with key midwifery publishers to promote their contribution to MORE by release of some of their materials under creative commons licenses.

Sustainability

The midwifery resources are currently in use within the midwifery curriculum so are updated yearly for each cohort of students in the programme. Therefore, once the midwifery repository is established the midwifery OER materials will be readily available to all lecturers on the Programme Team and the materials will remain current and evidence based as they continue to be used year on year. This will be a live and evolving repository. Students will also be able to upload their learning resources to benefit other midwifery students.

Engagement with stakeholders within the MORE Project

- Midwifery students on the first year of midwifery programme plus their practice mentors will use a selection of OERs from the repository and their experiences will be evaluated.
- There will be links made with local Further Education Colleges that DMU currently have partnerships with to assess their view of the repository.
- Through the Lead Midwifery for education we will liaise with the International Confederation of Midwives to promote repository internationally
- Identify midwifery publishers who are willing to release materials within the repository.

References

OER Africa (2011) at <http://www.oerafrica.org/ResourceResults/tabid/1562/mctl/Details/id/37994/Default.aspx> (accessed 1/3/12)

TIGER (2012) (Transforming Interprofessional groups through Education resources) at <http://tiger.library.dmu.ac.uk> (accessed 29/2/12)

UNOW University of Nottingham's Open Course ware. (2012) at <http://unow.nottingham.ac.uk/resources.aspx?sn=nursing> (accessed 1/3/12)