Travel Well
Open Educational Resources:
A Presentation of Ongoing Research

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What Do We Mean By 'Travel Well' Resources?

Resources that are

localizable across multiple

teaching and learning

situations, including those

for which they were not

originally intended

http://www.flickr.com/photos/pbo31/482457259/

Why Do We Need to Understand Travel Well?

A case example:

- A teacher in Denmark wants a new activity for her music theory class

- She finds a lesson plan, but it is specific to the U.S., and she is not sure how adaptable it is

- She looks for information on how other teachers might have used it, but cannot
find any

- She sees it is downloadable file, but it does not seem possible to break it apart and remix it

- Frustrated, she returns to the activity she has always used

Researching Travel Well

- Exploratory pilot study of the factors that contribute to a resource's ability to travel well

- Two surveys with college level biology instructors – one in March and one in June 2008

- All instructors had previously accessed and used OER

- All were interested in incorporating open content more into their teaching

Survey Design

- For the March 2008 survey, instructors reviewed 5 pre-selected biology resources

- For the June 2008 survey, instructors chose 2 resources that they would likely use in their planning, preparation and teaching of a biology course

- For both surveys, instructors answered a set of open-ended and Likert scale questions about the resources

- After both surveys, a debrief session was held to obtain input on the survey design and to capture further insights on the issue of travel well

Resources Reviewed

March 2008 Survey - Pre-selected

- A Flickr photo
- A K-12 tutorial (flash interactive)
- A scholarly article
- Two learning modules

June 2008 Survey - Instructors' choice

- Scholarly articles
- Lesson plans
- Activities, labs and exercises
- Homework assignments

Survey Questions

1. How likely are you to use this resource as part of your planning, preparation and teaching?

2. In thinking about the descriptive information provided about the resource, how important were the following in helping you to decide whether to click through and view it? [List of metadata as answer choices]

3. Is there descriptive information that is not provided, but which would have been helpful to you in deciding whether to view or select the resource?

4. In examining the actual resource, which of the following factors played a role in your decision to select/use it?

5. What, specifically, did you like about the resource? Was there anything that you did not like about the resource?

6. Will you change or modify this resource to better meet your own teaching and learning needs?

Summary of Findings (across both surveys)

	Whether to <u>view</u> the resource	*Whether to <u>use</u> the resource*
What was <u>most</u> helpful about the resource and its metadata	• The subject • The abstract	• How current the resource is • Whether it matches students' learning level • Whether it is a familiar resource type and media format
What was <u>less</u> helpful about the resource and its metadata	• Who authored it • Conditions for use • Tags	• Cultural relevance • Author/collection name

Summary of Findings (cont.)

Whether to <u>use</u> the resource

What they wish they knew about the resource

- How other instructors have used the resource
- Obtacles others have encountered in using the resource and how they overcame them
- Whether their expert colleagues have tried and liked the resource
- Whether students have found the resource interesting

How they would modify the resource

- Make the resource more comprehensible/appealing to students
- Use only parts of resources, and reformat those parts
- Make the resource more interactive for students, by, eg., adding more student questions to the resource

Future Questions

- Are the findings replicable across other situations and for other categories of users (students, k-12 teachers, etc).

- Given that instructors would like to reformat resources, why didn't conditions for use surface as a more important aspect of resource selection and usability?

- How can we facilitate users' comfort level with varied types and formats of resources? What supports are needed?

- How can we better accommodate the need for more user-generated information, such as how other instructors have used a given resource?

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