

How can open courseware make education better?

Peter Suber

Published April 26, 2006

Citation

Suber, P. (n.d.). In *Open Access News*. Open Access News. <https://doi.org/10.63485/td3zf-bvp58>

Copyright

Copyright © Peter Suber 2006. Distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Toru Iiyoshi, [Opportunity is Knocking: Will Education Open the Door?](#) Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, April 2006. (Thanks to A.G. Rud.) Excerpt:

[O]ne of open education's most critical questions --how can open education's tools and resources demonstrably improve education quality?-- [is] rarely mentioned [at conferences on open education]....The main tenet of open education is to make educational assets freely available to the public. This is becoming easier and less expensive as network and multimedia technology evolves....But several obstacles may stand in the way of using these and other powerful tools and resources in ways that will actually improve the quality of education.

First, although the tools and resources are readily available, transferring practical knowledge about how to use them is not easy. Indeed, this kind of pedagogical know-how is notoriously hard to make visible and portable....[T]he vast majority of this kind of practical knowledge remains tacit and invisible in the experiences of the educator or educators who created the materials....This is why Carnegie's [Knowledge Media Lab](#) is working...to develop and disseminate support tools and resources that capture not only materials but the stories and experiences of real teachers using those materials in...concrete settings....

Second, true success in open education requires a change in education culture and policy. The education community values activities like scholarly writing and pursuing new research questions....But...adapting or improving another's educational materials is rarely understood to be a creative, valuable contribution....

Finally, we must look beyond institutional boundaries and connect efforts among many settings and open source entrepreneurs....An initiative like the [Sakai Project](#), for example, which is working to design, build, and deploy a new online education platform that includes course management, electronic portfolio, assessment, collaboration, communication, and other tools actually coordinates multi-institutional collaborative efforts and offers institutions the chance to collectively advance teaching and learning....This is the kind of cooperation and knowledge sharing that will catapult open education to a new level.

...I anticipate three dramatic improvements over time: increased quality of tools and resources, more effective use, and greater individual and collective pedagogical knowledge. Ideally, all will occur simultaneously, combining local classroom innovations and learned lessons through global knowledge sharing....Opportunity is knocking. Will we open the door?