Teaching in a Digital Age Webinar Series

How open education will revolutionize higher education: the impact of open research, open textbooks, OERs and open data on course design and delivery

Tuesday, February 21, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern

There were eight questions or comments Dr. Bates was unable to respond to during the webinar. All other questions and comments posed during the webinar were responded to by Dr. Bates and are included within the recording of the webinar. Click here to access the recording.

We are pleased to share the questions/comments and Dr. Bates' response below italics.

1) OER use requires careful review by content experts as SMEs. This means recruitment of OERs by SME as a form of QA. WE talk about information literacy, so maybe we need OER literacy for the new academic facilitators? Where is the CPD support for leveraging OERs into courseware for elearning? Maybe this may help it become ubiquitous for academia.

   Yes, however, in the end it should be the SMEs finding relevant OER; not the support staff. The understanding and use of OER is yet another professional development requirement for SMEs. Professional development however is a big problem in most institutions: too little and mainly for already the best instructors. There is research that suggests the most likely users of OER are those that create OER, so maybe that's the route: money to develop OER.

2) Most of my college faculty always have an excuse to find something lacking in OER material.

   See above comment: if we can get them to create OER they may see the value of others' OER.

3) For online 'instruction' of courses the credit systems of the UK and US need to be harmonised in favour of flexible engagement time, i.e. credit based assessment linked to course achievement, not necessarily volume of instructional hours as per physical delivery assumptions.

   We are seeing some moves to that with competency-based learning and increasingly with hybrid learning where online is replacing some but not all classroom time. I agree there is still a long way to go.

4) Can we have the link to Malala's video, please?

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOqIotJrFVM

It's all worth watching but she really gets into the essence of open education after 4 mins 40 seconds. Her speech always brings tears to my eyes.

5) We are now in the process of exploring the viability of OER in our institution

6) I always do use OER. We need to provide tools to students how to select and evaluate before using. So more rubric development for these activities to prepare as lifelong learners.

   Responds to 5) and 6):

   I agree 100%. Students should be asked to justify their choice of any content they find on the Internet, in terms of its reliability and validity, especially if they use it for assessment purposes.

7) *We are trying to increase our use of OER content...texts, objects, and so on. A lack of quality and selection is a main challenge.*

8) *Sometimes they are not the real picture. I worked at an elite university in Japan where they made MOOCs in association with EDX. They spent a lot of money to make excellent material in order to increase enrollment.*

   Response to 7) and 8):

   I don't think that this is a dishonourable reason provided they got a return on their investment, i.e. enough enrolments to more than cover the cost of the MOOC. As I said, it's not so much the use of MOOCs that I object to, but the statements proponents have made about how they will transform education, and the lack of pedagogical quality of many – but not all – MOOCs.

11: Books are technology and caused problems when they became widely available. We just didn't think about "old" tech, shame on us.

R: *I agree that books or at least text still has a very important place, particularly in higher education, because it suits a particular type of learning based on abstraction, reasoning, and questioning. This is discussed further in Chapter 7.2 in, yes, my* book!

12: Psycho-motor skills are not necessarily able to be taught online (e.g. automotive service technicians need to work with physical cars and their systems)

R: *I agree that there are still many psycho-motor skills that are not yet able to be taught effectively online, but things are changing with technology such as augmented reality. Pilots for instance learn a great deal through simulators. We are also seeing increased use of remote labs as well. Even golf coaches these days use video and computer analysis to improve golfers' psycho-motor skills. Again it is not so much a case of technology replacing but augmenting the development of psycho-motor skills.*

13: Maybe first online courses for students should be in small classes so they can get more feedback and use video conferencing to help with the shift from face-to-face.

R *Good suggestion, but a gradual and phased introduction through blended learning is another way, as often an individual teacher doesn't have control over class size.*

14: In the end, technology is a tool that allows us to do wonderful things and collaborate. But that's all it is. Nothing will ever replace an intelligent teacher who can truly engages the students.

R: *I wish I had your confidence on this. I do believe it, but daily I see more and more replacement of human behaviour by machines. It's not always for the best, by any means, but the external pressure is always there. See http://www.tonybates.ca/2016/03/15/technology-and-alienation-online-learning-and-labour-market-needs/.*

Click here to read *Teaching in a Digital Age*.

Click here to read *10 Fundamentals of Teaching Online for Faculty and Instructors* by Dr. Tony Bates.