

OLTD 502  
Reflection on Evidence 1

**Program Learning Outcome:**

- Critically assess and evaluate resources for best practices in online learning
- Develop and design intentional learning activities suitable for the appropriate environment and the learner
  - Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles
  - Select strategies and resources appropriate for environment, learners and learning outcomes

**Evidence: Open Educational Resource Critique**

This critique of an existing Open Educational Resource (OER) was completed at the midpoint of OLTD 502. After spending two weeks investigating, reviewing and reflecting on learning theories and frameworks for implementation within distance and blended learning environments, this critique provided an opportunity to pull together various threads of educational theory and instructional design, applying this knowledge by analyzing and assessing a specific OER learning activity for its suitability within my current teaching and learning environment.

I believe a significant strength of this particular piece of evidence is that it demonstrates continued growth in my ability to critically assess and evaluate resources for best practices in online learning, building upon the learning that I outlined in my reflection for OLTD 512. In OLTD 512 I described my learning as scratching the surface of open educational resources; in working towards the completion of this resource critique I dove beneath the surface of OER, learning about the pedagogical foundations of open learning practices and practical considerations for determining the usefulness of an OER. Determining whether the licencing applied to a resource or activity allows for the 5 R's of openness; reuse, revise, remix, redistribute and retain (Wiley, 2014); then further analyzing an OER using the ALMS framework which considers the technical aspects of the resource's openness (Wiley, 2009) are skills that I have refined and implemented when choosing a specific learning activity to critique for its suitability for use within the context of my current practice.

Moving beyond determining the openness level of the resource, this critique also demonstrates my understanding of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, and an ability to apply this instructional design framework when evaluating and revising

educational resources, giving thorough consideration to the specific educational context, including the learners, the environment, and the identified learning outcomes. Upon completion of the analysis of my selected resource, I was left with a clear picture of some key challenges that exist within the body of open education resources available as a whole that will allow me to more easily sift through the often overwhelming plethora of resources available in the future. These key challenges are the often poor alignment between the goals of the resources and the specific learning goals outlined in the British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum documents at given grade levels, and the learning barriers that exist for many of my students that may prevent them from being able to access the content within the resources without adaptations being made for the reading level, alternate presentation of the content, or methods for demonstrating their learning. Approaching new resources with these particular barriers in mind will allow me to more effectively assess the resource and consider how it could be revised and remixed, potentially developing a bank of strategies and a pattern of workflow that may ease the process and make using OER a more viable option in my future practice.

Educators in online and blended learning environments need to ensure that they apply intentional design processes when developing online activities or courses. Analyzing the learners and the learning objectives are the initial steps in the ADDIE instructional design model, as well as several others, followed by a design phase in which appropriate delivery methods are selected and a development phase in which course activities and materials are prepared (Bates, 2015). Not all resources can or need to be created from scratch. Utilizing existing open educational resources can be a way to make use of collective knowledge and experiences while also potentially saving a significant amount of time. Critically assessing and evaluating these resources, ensuring that they are appropriate for the given environment, learners and targeted learning outcomes is an essential step in the overall process of designing the best learning opportunities possible. I now believe that I am better equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to help create these high quality learning opportunities for my own students.

## **References:**

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Wiley, D. (2014). The access compromise and the 5th R. Weblog. March 5, 2014. Retrieved from <http://opencontent.org/blog/archives/3221>

Wiley, D. (2009). Defining “Open” in Open Content and Educational Resources. Retrieved June 7, 2019 <https://opencontent.org/definition/>