


Chapter 2

Open Educational Resources and Their Impact on Curriculum Flexibility and Accessibility

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ABSTRACT

Open Educational Resources (OER) are reshaping modern education by enhancing curriculum flexibility and improving access to quality learning. Freely available and openly licensed, OER empowers educators to adapt and customize content, supporting competency-based, interdisciplinary, and inclusive instruction. This adaptability fosters personalized learning and ensures curricula stay relevant to emerging knowledge and industry needs. OER also eliminates financial barriers, promoting equitable access for diverse learners across regions and socioeconomic backgrounds. Challenges such as institutional resistance, sustainability, digital infrastructure, and legal concerns must be addressed. This chapter explores the best practices for adoption of OER, supported by case studies and emerging technologies, and underscores the need for strategic policies and global collaboration to realize the full potential of OER in democratizing education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Defining Open Educational Resources (OER)

Teaching, learning, and research resources that are either in the public domain or distributed under an open license allow for free access, use, adaptation, and redistribution with little or no limitations; these materials are known as Open Educational Resources (OER) (UNESCO, 2019). Some examples of such materials include course materials, software, films, simulations, exams, and textbooks. The ability to modify, remix, and redistribute, as well as the lack of financial expenses, distinguish open educational resources (OER) from proprietary information. This allows for more involvement and customisation in education.

1.2 Evolution Of The OER Movement

Following the official introduction of the phrase “open courseware” at the 2002 UNESCO Forum on Open Courseware, which highlighted the potential of publicly licensed content to increase educational access globally, the OER movement started to gain global momentum in 2003. Important steps forward have been made since then, with the Ljubljana OER Action Plan (2017), the Paris OER Declaration (2012), and the Cape Town Open Education Declaration (2007) all serving as milestones. Policy frameworks and institutional support for open educational resources (OER) have been pushed via these worldwide efforts, which have driven innovation and diversity in education systems (Wiley & Hilton, 2018).

The rapid expansion of internet access, digital technologies, and open-source platforms has further accelerated the spread of OER. Numerous online repositories such as **OER Commons**, **MERLOT**, and **OpenStax** now offer a wide array of high-quality, peer-reviewed resources. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a critical inflection point, highlighting the importance of resilient, flexible, and inclusive educational resources. Many institutions and educators turned to OER as an immediate and sustainable solution to maintain learning continuity during global disruptions (Ribeiro & Subrahmanyam, 2021).

1.3 Relevance Of OER In Modern Pedagogy And Curriculum Development

OER has become central to modern pedagogical approaches that emphasize learner agency, collaboration, and contextual relevance. Their adaptability allows educators to modify content to reflect cultural, linguistic, and cognitive diversity, promoting inclusive education. This flexibility is particularly aligned with constructivist and

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