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Open-mindedness and Openness-minded: How State Schools Impact Innovation

Student Dissertation

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SAT: Open-mindedness and Openness-minded: How State Schools Impact Innovation (Callum Moore)

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[Callum Moore](#)

13 January 2016

State schools throughout the United Kingdom are required to conform to higher standards (BBC, 2014) and a widening range of needs in the classroom (Department of Education, 2014) when budgets are being cut (BBC, 2015). Various studies exist that suggest that Open Educational Resources (OERs) are helping schools to adapt but these are not occurring in terms of professional development for teachers (Lock, 2006).

In 2015, I instigated my own OER to support professional development called Bloom Education. This was a website with courses created by teachers with videos, plans and materials designed to help others freely. After its initial launch, the project was well-received by colleagues, as predicted by Lock (2006) who stated that there was a need for 'ongoing opportunities for professional development'. Regrettably, the resource did not come to complete fruition.

There are innumerable causes as to why innovations such as Bloom Education might be successfully implemented or not. According to Nachmias et al (2004), these can be divided into seven categories:

- ▶ organizational climate,
- ▶ roles within the school,
- ▶ infrastructure,
- ▶ learning configuration,
- ▶ roles outside the school,
- ▶ staff training and development,
- ▶ ICT Policy.

Though studies by the likes of Nachimas et al. (2004) and Laferriere et al. (2007) outline various factors that support the implementation of innovation in schools, there is not a first-hand case-study that looks at the factors that hinder innovation. The aim of this case study is to describe the obstructions in developing OERs in state schools.

This paper is based on my own personal experience of attempting to implement an innovative

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professional development OER. However, the presentation will focus on what Nachimas et al. deemed the most 'intense' factor in the implementation of a resource: roles within the school, in particular the teaching staff.

The presentation will analyse and discuss research and first-hand experience to evaluate how specific encounters, events and experiences with teaching staff played a positive or negative role in Bloom Education's launch and ending. For instance, this will compare the research of Lee et al. (2006), who found that there are teachers keen to share their practice altruistically, against my personal experience of teachers.

The presentation will culminate in a discussion of what could have been done differently in order for Bloom Education to have an alternate outcome. This discussion will utilise interactions with the teaching staff involved and the research of Bossu and Tynan (2011) who found that a reluctance to share educational resources follows an educator's opinions regarding intellectual property rights, financial losses and credit distribution. Furthermore, the presentation will discuss how Farrow et al.'s (2015) discovery that minimising financial expenditure and workload, and maximising ease of use impacted teachers and whether there was reasonable objection to playing a part in this OER.

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[Chris Gray](#)

7:31pm 30 January 2016 (Edited 7:53pm 30 January 2016) [Permalink](#)

Callum

Barriers to engaging with and creating OERs would appear to be reducing year on year due to the pervasiveness of digital technology. I'd be interested to hear your opinion on how teachers addressed the obstructions you mention to better utilise OERs.

Engaging with OERs could help drive diversity of content and improve student performance as either students may be more inclined to search out material that interests / enthuses them more or teachers would have a greater resource bank from which to help them in providing better student differentiation within class, keeping everyone (well, maybe not everyone) better engaged.

I don't know whether you will cover any aspects of how open senior management are within schools and whether they have not explored the benefits of OERs and how they might be implemented within their teaching programme.

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[Dr Simon Ball](#)

11:36am 14 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

Hi Callum

Here is a summary of the questions/comments from your presentation - please respond as you wish:

- ▶ Why did teachers not upload material? Did you find out?
- ▶ Did they need some form of incentive? I don't know what that would be, though.
- ▶ Healthy scepticism remains a starting point to shows the value of Bloom education
- ▶ This is definitely a factor - time and also the professional fear of being criticised perhaps
- ▶ Did you send around a survey to ask what could be done?
- ▶ But ppl would eventually be able to get something back through the sharing of resources. Perhaps it's the initial stages, when not much is up there, that presents the challenge. You need to get a certain momentum.
- ▶ Perhaps if they felt more ownership?
- ▶ Are you thinking that teachers are already over-scrutinised, and this is another bit of evidence that can be scrutinised?
- ▶ I suppose if they had their own 'site' on the platform? That might help with ownership?
- ▶ Time to learn and time to share is a common issue across all sectors
- ▶ I've seen instances where tutors put pressure on their colleagues not to innovate - in order that they themselves are not pressurized into having to do the same.
- ▶ I think you highlighted some very important issues around the sustainability of OER.
- ▶ Although time is a huge factor, teachers are producing resources for their own teaching purposes but not sharing them?
- ▶ Time issue - if they've had to create these resources in their own time then may feel reluctant to hand them over for sharing with others who have not put in such effort
- ▶ I wonder whether this is an issue that will change over the next 5 to 10 years, as attitudes change?
- ▶ Do you think there is an element of 'why should I?' What is their motivation?
- ▶ Most teachers sift through resources and use the ones that are relevant to them.
- ▶ Is there an issue about the re-usability of resources across subjects?
- ▶ Need a reward and recognition system valued by professionals - see also <http://www.ubiquitypress.com/site/books/detail/11/battle-for-open/>
- ▶ Sites like <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources> have lots of teachers sharing resources. Maybe the wider audience helps get the momentum going.
- ▶ If teachers were given adequate time to create resources there would be no issues with ownership

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