

OER Adoption: Strategies and Returns

(Proposal for a panel discussion)

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The significance of OER as an instrument of cost alleviation, and expansion of diversity and inclusion in higher-education is a rapidly acknowledged fact, not just for the developed world, but also globally. (UNESCO, 2019; <https://en.unesco.org/themes/building-knowledge-societies/oer/recommendation>)

Despite this, the average growth of OER adoption across higher-ed stays below what can be called the 'tipping point' for real diffusion of any innovation. (Bradlee et al, 2019). Our paper discusses the various processes that have worked till date in enabling adoption of OER. At the outset, the paper acknowledges that development of new OER material vs adoption of pre-existing OER materials is not the same thing. A clear understanding of such a distinction is needed because it can be presumed that the incentives needed for the former will be of larger magnitude, if not different, from those required for the latter. In particular the existing literature is scoped for evidence on the kind of support that has enabled successful development and adoption of OER by faculty.

These supports are categorized based on political, institutional, and financial stakes that are lent to the OER projects. We explore the State-wide legislative initiatives, and summarize their growth and outreach thus far. In addition, the role of grant programs especially targeted at institutional level towards these efforts is explored from the perspective of returns on investment. Returns are defined in various ways, ranging from the direct cost-savings from reduced textbook bill, to implied increases in the retention/graduation rates.