



Using a Trauma-Informed Framework to Evaluate Open Educational Resources

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Learning Objectives

- ❖ Identify the unique challenges of Open Educational Resources (OERs) with regard to inclusivity.
- ❖ Apply an inclusive, trauma-informed framework (IDEA) to review and revise OERs for cultural responsiveness and accessibility.
- ❖ Develop concrete suggestions for how OERs can further promote inclusivity.

About this Session

- ❖ Participate as you would like.
- ❖ Feel free to get up and move around or take a break.
- ❖ Feel free to talk with other participants next to you, or just reflect and write notes.



About Me

- ❖ Instructional Designer
- ❖ Background in Educational Psychology
- ❖ Interests include accessibility, neurodiversity, trauma-informed practice, and inclusivity in course design and delivery
- ❖ Taught English to war refugees



About You

- ❖ Faculty, Instructional Designer, Administrator?
- ❖ What interested you to come to today's session?
- ❖ How many of you use OER for your course design or help faculty use OER?



Definition of OER

Open Educational Resources (OER) are "learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others."

(Source: UNESCO)



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Why I Chose This Topic

- ❖ OER offers faculty a great deal of freedom to curate their courses instead of using a publisher textbook.
- ❖ As such, there are several caveats to choosing materials that align not only with the learning objectives but also respect the learners' lived experiences.





Story Time

(Image: S.G. Michael, Findagrave.com)



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Benefits of OER

- ❖ Expanded access to learning. scalability. OERs are easy to distribute widely with little or no cost.
- ❖ Augmentation of class materials.
- ❖ Enhancement of regular course content.
- ❖ Quick circulation.
- ❖ Showcasing of innovation and talent.
- ❖ Ties for alumni.
- ❖ Continually improved resources.

(Source: Penn State)



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Unique Challenges of OERs Regarding Inclusivity

- ❖ Level of difficulty to use and access online materials
- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Diverse representation
- ❖ Inclusive language
- ❖ Pedagogical use of OER

Can you think of other challenges not mentioned here?

(Source: Sergiadis, Smith, & Moin Uddin (2024))



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Definition of Trauma

"Trauma is a physical, cognitive, and emotional response caused by a traumatic event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced as harmful or life-threatening. It can have lasting effects, particularly if untreated."

(Source: CDC.gov)



Connection between Trauma and Inclusion

“Trauma is at the heart of diversity, equity, and inclusion work because repeated acts of marginalization, oppression and racism are wounds that overwhelms one's ability to cope.” — Dr. Laura Quiros



(Image: Dr. Laura Quiros Consulting)



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Trauma-Informed Educational Principles

1. Physical, Emotional, Social, and Academic Safety (Psychological Safety)
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency (TILT)
3. Support and Connection (Inclusive Pedagogy)
4. Collaboration and Mutuality (Cooperative Learning)

(Source: J. Carello, PhD, LMSW)



Trauma-Informed Educational Principles

5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice (Universal Design for Learning)
6. Social Justice (Culturally Responsive Pedagogy)
7. Resilience, Growth, and Change (Mindset Pedagogy)

(Source: J. Carello, PhD, LMSW)



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Misconceptions about Trauma-Informed Educational Practice

1. TIEP involves talking about trauma.

TIEP recognizes that learners do not learn in a vacuum; rather, they come to class with lived experiences that may interact with the course material.



Misconceptions about Trauma-Informed Educational Practice

2. TIEP is strictly about mental health, and faculty play the role of psychologist.

TIEP involves the realization that trauma can play a profound role in the ability to learn. Trauma-informed faculty are mindful of this and develop strategies to mitigate re-traumatization.



Misconceptions about Trauma-Informed Educational Practice

3. TIEP only applies to humanities, social sciences, etc. but not to math or science.

All disciplines can apply trauma-informed principles.



Misconceptions about Trauma-Informed Educational Practice

4. TIEP is about “sanitizing” material to avoid traumatization. TIEP attempts to contextualize material to give fair notice to learners about possibly triggering material and offers learners choices about various topics.



Misconceptions about Trauma-Informed Educational Practice

5. TIEP only involves the learners.

TIEP involves **everyone** at the institution. Trauma is part of the human condition and affects everyone.



What do you think might be more misconceptions about TIEP?



(Image: Tim Mossholder, Unsplash)



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IDEA Framework for OERs

- ❖ Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) framework
- ❖ Used to assess and revise OER incorporating trauma-informed principles.
- ❖ Aims and Actions are indicated for each of eight dimensions.

(Source: Luetchford et al., 2022)



1. Diverse and Inclusive Imagery



Aims:

- ❖ Images reflect diverse populations, intersectionality, and context.
- ❖ Images do not perpetuate stereotypes.

(Image: World flags, Pixabay)



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1. Diverse and Inclusive Imagery



Actions and Considerations:

- ❖ Are all populations equitably represented throughout the resource?
- ❖ Does the background or setting of the image indicate anything negative?

Image: World flags, Pixabay



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Representation in Science

(Image: National Cancer Institute, Unsplash)



(Image: National Cancer Institute, Unsplash)



2. Example Names

Aims:

- ❖ Ensure that people's names used
- ❖ in examples, exercises, and scenarios represent various countries of origin, ethnicities, genders, and races.



(Image: Rona Fishman, 2018)

2. Example Names

Actions and Considerations:

- ❖ Diversify names used in case studies & scenarios.



Image: Rona Fishman, 2018



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Example Names

University of Southern Queensland OER–Example Names

- ❖ Popular names from around the world
- ❖ Multicultural names
- ❖ Gender neutral names
- ❖ Pronunciation guide

(Source: Enhancing Inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) in Open Educational Resources (OER))



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3. Inclusive Language



Aims:

- ❖ Ensure that all references to people, groups, populations, categories, conditions, and disabilities use the appropriate verbiage and do not contain any derogatory, colloquial, inappropriate, or otherwise incorrect language.

(Image: My Name Badges)

3. Inclusive Language



Actions and Considerations:

- ❖ Since terminology changes on a regular basis, and acceptability is not universal, do your best to identify and use the best terminology at the time.

(Image: My Name Badges)

Pronoun Use

Example: Italian language OER
Need to address binary identity
for a language that only
recognizes masculine and
feminine cases.

(Image: Graham Gunther, Unsplash)



4. Researchers and References



Aims:

- ❖ Recognise key contributors from all backgrounds, and ensure real-world examples are diverse.

(Image: Research, Depositphotos.com)

4. Researchers and References



Actions and Considerations:

- ❖ Include examples of and references to historically underrepresented groups. Where key/historical figures are not diverse, include current, more diverse researchers/figures for balance.

(Image: Research, Depositphotos.com)



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Psychology Researchers Beyond the US and Western Europe

Gopa Bhardwaj (India)

Noel Chabani Manganyi (South Africa)

Virgilio Enriquez (Philippines)

Shinobu Kitayama (Japan)

Maritza Montero (Venezuela)

Muzafer Sherif (Turkey)

Yiyou Shou (China)



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5. Diverse Examples and Balanced Perspectives



Aims:

- ❖ Represent issues relevant to diverse populations and ensure that we are not avoiding or underestimating the impacts on diverse populations.

(Image: Balance, Freepik)



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5. Diverse Examples and Balanced Perspectives



Actions and Considerations:

- ❖ Review terminology, contexts, and situations presented in problems/applications to ensure that they are comprehensible by all populations.
- ❖ Make no assumptions about prior knowledge, especially from different subjects/cultural contexts.

(Image: Balance, Freepik)

Example: Climate Change

Consider viewpoints of scientists, politicians, business owners, environmental activists, farmers, and people living in different regions, each with distinct concerns and experiences related to the issue.

(Source: Kohl, J. (2021 June 4). Talking climate with those holding different worldviews. Yale Climate Connections)



6. Appropriate Terminology and Inclusive Metadata



Aims:

- ❖ Ensure that all references to people, groups, populations, categories, conditions, and disabilities use the appropriate verbiage.
- ❖ The back matter and other metadata, such as an index, keywords, abstract or subject headings do signal priorities and importance.

(Image: Metadata, Publishdrive)

6. Appropriate Terminology and Inclusive Metadata



Actions and Considerations:

- ❖ Credit all contributors, reviewers, editors and translators.
- ❖ Consider adding keywords that specifically highlight issues important to underrepresented groups.

(Image: Metadata, Publishdrive)

Example: Developing a Digital Repository for Physics

1. Highlight diverse contributions of physicists from diverse backgrounds, including cultural heritage and historical context.
2. Inclusive language: metadata reflect the origins of concepts from different cultures
3. Collaborate with diverse communities: reach out to local cultural organizations and universities to gather input on how to describe resources.



Example: Developing a Digital Repository for Physics

4. Incorporate historical context: Give cultural and political context of physicists' work, acknowledging challenges based on their identity.

5. Multilingual metadata: Include translations or explanations of non-English-speaking sources in languages that reflect learners' linguistic backgrounds.

6. Ongoing training and awareness: Attend workshops on culturally sensitive metadata

(Source: Smith-Yomishura, K. (2018). Creating metadata for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Hangingtogether.com)



7. Accessibility, Usability and Universal Design for Learning



Aims:

- ❖ Ensure OER meets institutional and national guidelines or standards for accessibility.
- ❖ Apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles in OER creation and open pedagogy.

(Image: UDL: A Powerful Framework, Faculty Focus)

7. Accessibility, Usability and Universal Design for Learning



Actions and Considerations:

- ❖ Include accessibility information on OER. Think about UDL, usability, and accessibility.

(Image: UDL: A Powerful Framework, Faculty Focus)



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Example: Engineering OER

Engineering OER textbook was used for QM official review. No alt-text in all images

(Image: Alexander Gray, Unsplash)



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8. Anti-Racist and Inclusive Open Pedagogy



Aims:

- ❖ Create a safe learning environment for students where they have agency over content creation.
- ❖ Material does not “other” students.

(Image: Stop Racism, Building an Antiracist Institution, Pierce College)

8. Anti-Racist and Inclusive Open Pedagogy



Actions and Considerations:

- ❖ Ask students for their input on the inclusivity of your resources.
- ❖ Acknowledge privilege, bias and systems of oppression.

(Image: Stop Racism, Building an Antiracist Institution, Pierce College)

Example in Media Studies

Difference, Power, and Discrimination in Film and Media: Student Essays

(Source: Open Oregon Educational Resources)

(Image: John Moeses-Bauan, Unsplash)



One Important Principle of Trauma-Informed Practice

- ❖ Actively resist re-traumatization.
- ❖ Re-traumatization may occur when learners feel excluded from the materials/activities and/or when learners feel that they are being singled out by the materials/activities.



What about Historical Materials?

- ❖ Consider adding “a widely used term at the time” for outdated and/or inappropriate references to diverse populations
- ❖ Insert context, attribution, and/or quotations for historical references.
- ❖ Include current, more diverse researchers/figures where key/historical figures are not diverse.
- ❖ Identify any outmoded or incorrect terminology and suggest the correct replacement or re-framing.

Updating of OER

- ❖ OER require regular updating, as history and politics can quickly change the currency of the materials.
- ❖ Risk of using outdated information that can have implications for triggering learners.

- ❖ Example: Minnesota flag

Minnesota State Flag

Old (Image: Minnesota Reformer, 2023)



New (Image: Wikipedia Commons)



Storytelling OER

- ❖ “Sticky Teaching” – Teaching that is engaging, understood, and memorable.
- ❖ More details can be triggering for learners experiencing past trauma.
- ❖ Consider how much detail is enough to convey the point without unnecessary graphic detail.
- ❖ Consider including a preface for material that may be triggering.

Showing Different Points of View with OER

- ❖ If presenting controversial points of view with different OER, state the purpose upfront.
- ❖ Learners may assume that you chose a controversial OER because you agree with it.
- ❖ Example: “Creative Controversy”



Can't always avoid triggering

- ❖ Brandeis "Oppressive Language List"
- ❖ Sometimes the topic itself or seemingly neutral phrases can still elicit trauma responses in learners.
- ❖ Sometimes trauma triggers are out of your control.
- ❖ Including prefaces to material and choice of OER to read may help.

How to Preface Triggering Material

- ❖ Blanket
- ❖ In-syllabus notice
- ❖ Course website or separate document
- ❖ Personalized notice
- ❖ Email notice or in-class notice

(Source: University of Michigan)





Questions?

(Image: Chen Feng, Unsplash)



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Thank You!

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