AGENCY AND VOLITION: A SOCIAL REALIST PERSPECTIVE ON SELECT FINDINGS FROM THE ROER4D PROJECT

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Agency and volition: A social realist perspective on select findings from the ROER4D project

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Overview of presentation

- Introduction to ROER4D
- Meta-synthesis approach (multiple sub-projects)
- Social realism
- Single sub-project comparison with meta-synthesis framework

http://roer4d.org/edited-volume-2
Some ROER4D team members, Cape Town, March 2017
ROER4D research sites across the Global South :: 18 sub-projects in 26 countries
Meta-level research question

In what ways, and under what circumstances, can the adoption of OER impact upon the increasing demand for accessible, relevant, high-quality and affordable education in the Global South?

- As a way to synthesise 17 autonomous sub-projects within the ROER4D network
Meta-synthesis approach

- Synthesis of draft book chapters of the ROER4D edited volume, research reports and in some cases primary micro data
- Conceptual framework of 10Cs “Open Education Cycle” developed by Hodgkinson-Williams (2014) and refined by Walji & Hodgkinson-Williams (2017)
- Theoretical framing using some aspects of Margaret Archer’s (2003) social realism
Meta-synthesis methodology

- Nvivo used to code themes emergent in the chapters and research reports
- **Themes** helped to provide a more comprehensive understanding and to indicate general **trends** across the sub-projects findings
- **This presentation** will illustrate the meta-synthesis approach highlighting **one step** in the Open Education Cycle and how Archer’s social realism can be used to provide a deeper understanding
Optimal Open Education Cycle

Hodgkinson-Williams & Arinto, 2017
Dimensions of social realism (Margaret Archer)

- Theory of change: morphogenesis (change) and morphostasis (stability)

- Culture, structure and agency

- **Agency** - personal concerns and internal conversations that drive our decision making, but also institutional agency
Social Change according to Social Realism

Culture

Structure

Agent

Interplay

SOCIAL CHANGE

“How does structure influence agency?”
“In the ROER4D project, Archer’s theoretical framework is used to understand under what conditions (Structural and cultural) individual’s or institutional decision making result in change or constancy in OEP associated with OER adoption....” (Hodgkinson-Williams, Arinto, Cartmill & King, 2017,p.35)
META-SYNTHESIS: CREATION OF OER
## Meta-synthesis Component: Creation of OER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Interplay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enablers:</strong></td>
<td>Enablers:</td>
<td>Enablers:</td>
<td>Access to infrastructure, medium level digital proficiency, legal permission, technical support, a little financial aid and motivation to share seem to encourage the CREATION of OER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government support</td>
<td>Professional networks</td>
<td>Digital proficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School based support</td>
<td>Unfamiliar practice amongst educators</td>
<td>Consideration for reuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission to use open licences</td>
<td>Constraints:</td>
<td>Constraints:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constraints:</strong></td>
<td>Lack of permission to share created works</td>
<td>Lack of digital proficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of permission to share created works</td>
<td>Lack of awareness of OER and Open licensing</td>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CASE STUDY: OER ADOPTION IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UCT</th>
<th>UFH</th>
<th>UNISA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student access</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student numbers</td>
<td>26 000</td>
<td>11 000</td>
<td>400 000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Dispersed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional culture</td>
<td>Collegial</td>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
<td>Managerial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright owner of</td>
<td>Lecturers</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching materials</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enablers:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Capacity - technical and financial (grants)&lt;br&gt;Policy</td>
<td><strong>Enablers:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Awareness&lt;br&gt;Sharing culture&lt;br&gt;Institutional support&lt;br&gt;Academic freedom and autonomy</td>
<td><strong>Enablers:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Volition</td>
<td>Institutional decision makers need to support OER adoption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constraints:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Permission&lt;br&gt;Power in the hands of management - includes copyright constraints</td>
<td><strong>Constraints:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bureaucratic/managerial where institution has power and permission and no imperative to share</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual agency is key when permission is in place but then depends on personal concerns of lecturers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy and power

**Policy**: specifically around copyright over materials. Who owns the copyright and has legal permission to share teaching materials openly?

**Power**: as a result of the policy either the institution or the individual has the power to choose to share.
References


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Further reading

http://roer4d.org/

ROER4D principal investigators: Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams & Patricia B. Arinto

Host institutions: University of Cape Town & Wawasan Open University


Published data sets: https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/dataportal/index.php/catalog/ROER4D

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