

Librarians as Open Education Leaders: Responsibilities and Possibilities

By Quill West, Amy Hofer, Dale Coleman

Abstract:

A common claim in open education is that librarians are effective supporters in open education work because their talents for research, organization, and working with students make them natural supporters of faculty designing OER courses. This study seeks to understand how librarians and faculty interacted with one another in an deliberate cooperation in course design. Seventeen faculty-librarian partnerships were awarded \$3000 stipends to cooperate in designing open courses. Each participant kept a weekly journal describing current contributions to the course project. Early findings from analysis of the journals shows that librarians are effective supporters, but careful planning and organization of the projects was very necessary for the collaborations to be successful.

Project Summary

Libraries as Open Education Leaders (LOEL) was a three-year project that brought librarians and faculty together to collaboratively redesign 40 courses that used open educational resources (OER) in place of expensive copyrighted textbooks. A partial list of courseware developed as part of the LOEL project is available at librariesasleaders.org.

The Library as Open Education Leader (LOEL) grant project was a collaboration between the Washington Library Leadership Council and College Librarians & Media Specialists (CLAMS), with support from the E-Learning Council and Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges (SBCTC). The grant was funded by the Washington Office of the Secretary of State/State Library and Institute of Museum and Library Services.

LOEL began from the premise that the cost of textbooks can be a barrier to student persistence and success in Washington's 34 Community and Technical Colleges. While every college in Washington has a mission of access, and a strong drive to serve students of diverse economic backgrounds, textbook costs represent a growing and unplanned-for expense. Open education is a tool that can help to lower textbook costs, and many colleges are seeking to adopt and adapt OER for this reason.

A further assumption at the outset of the project was that libraries should assume a leadership role in exploring alternatives to traditional educational materials. The project supported cyclical planning for open education programs and advocacy, created opportunities for librarians to become leaders in open education in Washington State, encouraged collaboration between faculty and librarians on OER adoption, and increased the visibility and value of librarians at colleges.

Workshops, conferences, webinars, and a training course all increased librarians' capacity to advocate for OER, facility with search and licensing issues, and awareness of instructional design practices. Grant funding supported strategic planning activities and as a result of these grants, libraries formed OER advisory committees, wrote multi-year strategic plans, and committed to continuing open education work on their campuses beyond the grant period. Organizations were encouraged to consider how to sustain support for open education projects beyond the grant period while assessing impact on existing services.

OER Collaboration mini-grants of \$3,000 were used to support adoption and adaptation of OER in at least one course. The grants supported collaboration between a faculty librarian and a discipline faculty member to develop open courses in order to lower textbook costs for students. Grant deliverables included:

- Weekly journals (confidential, written for research purposes)
- Analysis of the open course from the team perspective (confidential, written for research purposes)
- Openly licensed course materials shared via Canvas Commons
- Course adoption impact sheet (confidential, written for research purposes)

Many projects finished their design work at the end of the granting period and will teach the redesigned courses in the coming academic year. For those redesigned courses that have already been piloted, the results were in alignment with the consensus growing among OER impact researchers: students using OER save money on course materials, and usually do as well

or better academically than in courses using copyrighted materials (Hilton & Mason, 2017). Courses using open education practices (pedagogical approaches enabled by use of openly licensed materials) reported increased engagement from both students and faculty.

Research Activities

Research Questions

Beyond meeting the project goals and achieving the outcomes described above, the project offers an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the work done over the past three years. Project leads were particularly interested in looking into the changing roles of librarians in collaboration with faculty members in open education projects. Specifically, the project explored three questions:

- Where are librarians a good fit as collaborators in open education projects?
- What time commitment might faculty and librarian partners expect, and are there areas to find time savings?
- How can collaborators manage the impulse to create or extensively revise when existing resources may suffice?

Review of Literature

LOEL began with an assumption that librarians are natural collaborators for open education projects. The OER literature, especially for library audiences, generally assert that librarians are effective partners in OER projects. Steven Bell (2015) writes that librarians should be the prime

movers “developing programs to support usage by faculty,” as well as “supporting a national movement to advocate for OER.” Indeed, successful OER grant projects are often spearheaded by the library, for example the nationally recognized UMass Amherst Open Education Initiative grant (Billings, Hutton, Schafer, Schweik, & Sheridan, 2012). Likewise, in the LOEL project, not only were librarians instrumental in managing the creation of open courses, they also managed the institutional processes for adopting open resources such as communicating with the bookstore and promoting services that the library already offers.

Some argue that the library’s role in providing access to information places it in a unique position to assume leadership around OER - i.e., as an extension of leadership in the open access and open data movements. For example, Okamoto (2013) details three domains where libraries can take a leadership role in OER: 1) “advocacy, promotion and discovery,” 2) “evaluation, collection, preservation and access,” and 3) “curate, create and facilitate” (271-273). Others contend that libraries and librarians play a key role in OER development because OER, ideally, lives in library collections (Biswas & Goswami, 2011). These authors envision library management of OER repositories as central to the library’s contribution.

The assertion that this work is well-suited to the library is also related to a thread in the library literature recommending that librarians become deeply involved with faculty during the course design process in order to influence information literacy learning outcomes (e.g., Belanger, Bliquez, & Mondal, 2012; Weaver & Pier, 2010). Often called embedded librarianship, in these models librarians at times take on the role of instructional designer while collaborating with faculty. For example, Coltrain (2015) proposes a collaborative relationship in which

librarians work with faculty on “textbook selection, course competencies and a number of major assignments” (39), and goes on to discuss librarians’ providing remote and in-person research support, assistance with writing discussion prompts, and help defining assessment rubrics. A review article (Lindstrom & Shonrock, 2006) examining faculty-librarian collaborations in course design finds that that difficulties arise in collaboration when librarians are not involved in the goal-setting and design stages, and merely brought in at the end of development - in other words, when the librarian is not embedded deeply *enough*.

The embedded librarian model, in turn, owes a debt to the concept of blended librarianship (e.g. Bell & Shank, 2004). Blended librarianship is both an approach to academic librarianship and an active professional development community “designed to encourage and enable academic librarians to evolve into a new role that blends existing library and information skills with those of instructional design and technology” (Blended Librarian, 2017). Bell and others argue that by incorporating instructional design skills into what librarians already do, we can improve our connections with disciplinary faculty and, more broadly, remain relevant in a volatile information landscape.

West (2016) points out that OER efforts by the library are an extension of outreach and institutional service that librarians already do, for example by working with curriculum committees and professional development initiatives to adopt OER, or by developing general awareness of OER across campus communities. While this is undoubtedly true, on the other hand OER projects seem to some librarians to encourage mission creep. We are already professionals who bring a specific training and expertise to campus - are we to also become

instructional designers, grant managers, and curriculum developers? On the other, *other*, hand, though, librarians may have few leadership opportunities at their institutions and may wish to leverage OER work as an opportunity for professional growth.

Certainly, one of the biggest barriers for librarians to overcome in working on OER projects is adding one more project to already-full plates. This concern came to the fore at a pre-conference session of Oregon and Washington academic librarians and resulted in the [Pacific Northwest OER Directory](#), with the purpose of “de-stressing through structure,” as one participant put it.

To summarize, the professional conversation appears to characterize librarians as all things to all people in order to present us as ever at the service of our institutions. Librarians must be selective in order to focus and avoid burnout. OER initiatives provide librarians with opportunities for enriching and exciting work, if we approach them strategically. The grant journals kept by LOEL participants can provide some insight into how this might be done.

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were the grantees of the LOEL project and librarians or discipline faculty working for one of the community and technical colleges in Washington. The total number of grantees participating in the study was 24.

The primary data collection method of this study was analysis of the weekly journals kept by grantees. A weekly journal was required of all grantees for the duration of their project participation. An online template was provided for easy documentation. A follow-up survey was also sent out to librarian participants in the grant projects.

Findings

Weekly journals kept by librarians and teaching faculty collaborating on open course development offer insight into how librarians might find a best fit in OER projects. Survey responses provided more detail and clarification on grant projects after they were complete. Major themes emerged around expertise, time, and adopt vs. adapt.

Theme 1: Expertise

The two areas in which librarian expertise was unequivocally useful in the course redesign process were search and rights. Handing these areas off to librarians offered faculty the potential for significant time savings, yet not every team took this approach. For faculty who are reluctant to delegate, having a librarian offer specific help with search and rights may be more persuasive than a blanket offer of help with the course.

Example of librarian assistance with search:

[Discipline] is a subject for which there are a great deal of OER resources. As the librarian, I am focusing on selecting what seem to be the most promising materials and discussing them with the Discipline Faculty Member. This way she can focus on content and suitability to the students without getting lost in the searching for materials. This division of responsibilities is working quite well for us. (Journal 6)

Faculty perspective on the same interaction:

The help of the faculty librarian has already been so valuable - he has located a plethora of materials that look promising. It would have taken me months to find what he has brought me in two weeks. (Journal 6)

Example of librarian assistance with rights:

I worked on the Creative Commons licenses - for her work and the attribution for the OER text. I also met with another librarian to review the attribution and to determine appropriate placement in the course. I reached out by email to the author of one text for permission. We're still waiting for a response... When incorporating multiple sources into Canvas pages, it is somewhat complicated to determine the correct attribution, as well as the CC license for [faculty grantee's] revised materials that she's inputting into Canvas. It took two librarians to come to consensus on how the attribution and CC license should look and its proper placement. We're learning!
(Journal 4)

Librarians, for their part, may do well to define in advance what kinds of work they want to take on as collaborators. They should consider whether the time spent will feel worthwhile if it isn't related to professional expertise. One librarian journal described the activities of the previous week as "Collating and assembling, copy editing, accessibility prep, sending to printers" (Journal 11). While librarians may have excellent attention to detail, it doesn't necessarily follow that we should therefore be proofreaders on OER projects (for example).

Faculty showed different degrees of willingness to interact with a librarian as an instructional design colleague. More than one librarian was less involved than they wanted in the project, as in this example:

[Faculty grantees] are very independent workers who wanted to get things done on their own. My offers to help seemed to continually be dismissed or ignored. I think they appreciated my offers, but either didn't think I could help them or didn't want to share the load of their work. I wish I had been able to find a way to help them more. (Journal 2)

On the other hand, a disappointed faculty member who would have preferred greater collaboration on a different project wrote:

Please tell me how this process affirms Librarians as Open Education Leaders. I have worked on my own... My conclusion about this frustrating adventure is that my LOEL partner is very busy performing full-time librarian duties. Because she does not herself receive [a] LOEL grant, the grant timelines neither motivate nor bind her to a product-for-compensation system. The grant design thus seems to ignore the realities of demands on community college librarians. (Journal 14)

Comments such as this affirm the importance of discussing the role each participant will play on a team. When a discipline faculty member expected more integrated experiences with a librarian, it was frustrating to feel like there was little time for collaboration or that the librarian wasn't prioritizing the course design partnership. Part of defining expectations must take into account institutional commitments and how they will impact all team members in their work.

The Library as Open Education Leader grant did not define how colleges spent the grant money in terms of incentivizing discipline faculty and librarians. To support this grant work many librarians accepted stipend money as an add to their regular workload. This isn't a sustainable system for OER leadership, which is an important lesson learned in the colleges that are working to systematize open education course development.

Librarians who are working actively on collaborative projects should consider seeking assistance from other units as well. This approach makes projects more collaborative, while appropriate delegation asserts some boundaries on librarian time and workload. One survey respondent confirms this:

Scope creep was an issue that generated some important discussions and eventually lead to a richer collaboration with our eLearning department. Because of our mutual willingness to collaborate - we now have a clear pathway for faculty to follow as they develop OER courses and incorporate their content into Canvas. It's an outcome that has been of benefit to the entire district.

At the same time, there is tension between librarians being justifiably protective of their time, and avoiding stretch opportunities. Librarians should give special consideration to opportunities for career growth. Librarians' developing new expertise or leadership skills can be a valid outcome of a project, as expressed in a survey response:

For my most successful collaborations - I drew upon my creativity, my software knowledge and skills, and understanding of curriculum design - all things that fall more under the Instructional designer umbrella. I developed a strong interest and expertise in

instructional design. Instead of being an area outside my purview, [it has] become an incredible asset and makes me a "heavy hitter" when it comes to course redesign. I learned so very much! LOEL was an amazing career development experience.

Librarians reported varied success implementing the blended librarianship model described by Bell & Shank (2004). For example, one survey respondent wrote:

I haven't taken ID courses, but I have served on the ID team at my college for several years now. In that role, I train faculty to use Canvas and Camtasia, and I help them with instructional design questions for effective courses. This has been extremely helpful in my OER collaboration work because I can guide the faculty member in the best practices for including OER into a Canvas course. It also has given me some knowledge about the best ID practices for a course in general, so I can guide on how to integrate OER into existing course content.

While another librarian responded to the survey with: "I've been asked, in various ways, from faculty, 'I teach, what do you do?'" In other words, not all faculty recognize librarians as potential instructional design partners.

Some of the LOEL projects proved to be excellent vehicles for embedded information literacy librarianship. Where the faculty member either already understood or was persuaded of the information literacy needs for the course, librarians were able to suggest resources and assessments to support IL learning outcomes, as in this example:

[Faculty grantee] and I discussed the [discipline] literacy guidelines and how she plans to use them to restructure how she teaches [the course]. We noted that they overlap nicely with the information literacy guidelines, so I shared the latest IL Framework with her... One idea we want to explore more is to take an IL approach in [the] course and have students find the answers to the weekly questions she poses themselves, rather than giving them all the content up front. This needs more contemplation. (Journal 9)

In other cases, librarians advocated for use of library resources as course materials, at times finding it feasible to purchase materials for the course. For example:

When [faculty grantee] mentioned her use of videos and how she was not pleased with what she was currently using, I showed her some of our streaming video databases (Films on Demand, Academic Video Online, Kanopy, etc.) and she is planning to start reviewing videos for possible adoption. (Journal 6)

Faculty write-up of the same interaction:

Although this was only our first meeting, I already have derived some great benefits from this partnership. [Librarian grantee] helped me understand some amazing resources for videos that are already available here at [our] College. I now feel a much higher level of confidence that we will be able to build a quality OER-Based course that will work for my students. (Journal 6)

Another journal provides an example of librarian using OER course development as an opportunity to meet broader departmental needs:

The creation of video tutorials is something we all want but that has been on the back burner - this project needs those tutorials as a part of the virtual tour, so to speak, approach we're taking, so I really want to be able to "sell" my ideas and get the other librarians on board so we can share the burden of creating these resources for the library. The ones used in the guide, I can handle, but I want them to be a jumping point for more so it's nice that this piece of the collaboration can help get that rolling. (Journal 10)

Librarians can document these successful outreach encounters in order to demonstrate alignment with other library initiatives.

Takeaways

- Librarians can consider in advance what role they would like to play in the project and how the work will meet personal/professional goals.
- Faculty and librarian collaborators can determine at the outset of the project how tasks will be divided, emphasizing areas of professional expertise.
- Librarians should articulate the ways that their work on the project aligns with existing library priorities.

Theme 2: Time

Even with support built into the grant structure, the consistent theme from faculty was the large amount of time needed for projects. A typical comment from a disciplinary faculty member's journal reads:

I have never done this process and had no idea the amount of time I would spend on just getting quality materials. I see why people use a textbook and have students pay for it. However I am determined to make this work so that there is quality and low cost for students. (Journal 12)

From the librarian perspective, survey respondents wrote that they completed projects on time by "coming in early and staying late;" "work[ing] overtime;" and during "mostly stressed out evenings and weekends. Scrambling comes to mind."

Anecdotally, OER grant managers tend to agree that at the point of writing a proposal, applicants usually underestimate the time needed for a project and then hit a wall partway through when the true scope of the work looms into view. It may be possible to better prepare faculty for this reality at the point of application and during the onboarding process for successful proposals.

There may be natural limits on how much it is possible to speed up the course redevelopment process, though. This is complex intellectual work that requires input from colleagues as well as personal time spent on reflection and evaluation. Even in a scenario with minimal academic freedom - e.g. a department where all sections teach with identical shells from a master course - each instructor will need to develop their individual approach to teaching the predetermined material. Where there is more flexibility, the previous instructor's

discovery and development process will not necessarily make the next instructor’s process faster.

Further, it would seem (especially in light of the observations in the previous section) that librarians could save faculty significant time on searching for relevant open content and determining rights and permissions. Self-reporting on actual time spent, though, suggests that even where librarians were putting in work hours on tasks like search and license vetting, faculty time was not necessarily redirected to other tasks. The table below shows how librarians and faculty reported time in their weekly journals over the course of the grant:

Category	Librarian Total Time Spent	Discipline Faculty Total Time Spent
Course Mapping	45	79
Materials Search	128	107
Evaluating Resources	88	115
Revision	40	80
Remixing	30	37
Curation	35	33
Authoring	18	57
Editorial Work	56	36
Institutional	60	25

Project Management	118	51
Sharing	88	64
TOTAL	706	684

The most glaring data point in these numbers is that the reason it feels like OER projects take a lot of time is that they do. A combined total of 1,390 hours on 17 projects comes out to 81.76 hours of librarian and faculty time per project. The data also raise the question of whether librarians and faculty mean the same thing by “materials search,” because if they do, there may be considerable duplication of effort happening in this category in particular.

It is also possible to see from the reporting that librarians took leadership roles with project management and institutional work. For example, a librarian writes:

I made sure the completed interagency forms were delivered to the appropriate administrative offices to ensure [faculty grantees] receive the funds they're due for all their hard work. I let them know of that situation as well as in my weekly-ish email, offered any kind of help they need... As far as course development, I find myself in more of a support role, answering questions, being available to discuss options or a go-to resources for both this team and others on campus. I did spend time preparing and delivering a presentation on OER to faculty this week as well, so while my efforts were not focused as much on this individual goal, I find myself more and more as an institutional voice for this effort. (Journal 2)

This finding was echoed in a librarian’s survey response:

Writing the grants themselves felt relevant given all the budgetary issues that are abounding in academia. However, managing the back end (connecting with HR departments, billing, the various red tape involved) was more complicated in all of the grants with which I've been apart. I'm not sure whose "responsibility" it really belongs to, but given that this was library + faculty, it seemed to make the most sense to be the librarian. I think it was good to learn about the various red tape aspects if not a real highlight of the grant.

There is an artificial timeline with grant projects that unrealistically posits that the course is "done" at the end. Anyone who has ever taught the same content more than one time will know that materials and methods constantly evolve. Thinking of a completed grant project as pilot course materials may relieve some of the pressure, since a pilot is sure to be revised in the future. The journal entries reflect the provisional nature of the products at the end of the granting period, as in the following two examples:

[Faculty grantee] has done an amazing job pulling together this course. It has been published to meet the grant's deadline, but I know that she will be working on it further to refine the content to prepare for its use this coming Summer and Fall Quarters. What has been provided should be a great starting point for others looking for this kind of material, but I know with more time, she will be making it even better. (Journal 3)

We confirmed that we have a lot of ideas on how to expand this work and want to find ways for the college to support it after the grants. Regardless, we intend to

continue to convert classes to OER following what we have learned and implemented from this grant. (Journal 6)

Projects became very time-intensive for librarians when they required detailed knowledge of course content beyond the librarians' grasp.

I wish there was something that encompassed the time we spend reviewing the current course materials... Before a grant project can begin, the librarian and faculty member have to review current materials and the course itself, and spend time talking about how they will do the grant work. That's what I don't really see in the Time Engagement field in this form. (Journal 9)

Communities of practice are particularly important in these scenarios as librarians can connect faculty with others working on similar projects, if they have access to information at the state level or at the discipline level.

I wish she had others to collaborate with more on this work, both within the institution and outside of it. Based on my own research, there is very little in the [discipline] that is available as OER and I hope this course helps increase the use of this type of material for this subject area. (Journal 3)

Because OER projects do tend to be time-intensive, it's worth considering radically different models for structuring the work, even as thought experiments. One librarian grantee wrote:

I commented that it's hard to do this work well by dedicating an hour or two, here or there to the project. I feel that I need focused time on this project. We commented that

grant money might be better spent by having partners do some initial planning work, getting to know the course and its materials, etc. beforehand, and then a week spent somewhere like Sleeping Lady (but maybe somewhere cheaper) where each team could hunker down and do the actual searching, evaluation, etc. work. Might take some coordination, but we feel it would work with the type of project we're working on.

(Journal 9)

Other blue-sky ideas generated through survey responses:

- "A discovery layer for OER with our library's brand."
- "Get faculty together, especially faculty across institutions or targeting departments. Sure have the librarians help, because we're organized and helpful, but if you really want this work to take off, it's not the librarians that need the support and convincing, it's the faculty."
- "Hire a person specifically designated to do OER work, with background in Instructional Design."
- "In WA State - Pay for any current [community college] librarian interested to get an instructional design degree. Then for a... consortium of these same librarians to work for 3 years providing redesign work themselves to faculty across the state (while providing funds for their release time). Have them create and share out as they go. The end goal being tools, guidelines and training for all of the [Washington state community college] OER interested librarians and faculty... Then we take the show on the road and share it across the US and Internationally."

Takeaways

- Calls for proposals should be written in a way that encourages realistic time estimates; time commitment should be emphasized in onboarding process.
- Faculty and librarian participants must build in adequate time before committing to a project.
- Projects might not be “done” even after they have been taught to students and shared with other instructors; an accurate conception of time commitment includes ongoing development or maintenance.
- Open Ed project managers can experiment with new ways to structure projects to help participants feel that the time commitment is under control.

Theme 3: Adopt vs Adapt

Reviewing the course redesign journals written during the LOEL project, none of the projects seems to be a simple, straightforward adoption. Rather, almost all faculty embarked upon a heavy lift to revise and remix. In part, this can be understood in the context of the current OER landscape, in which there are few equivalent “course in a box” products such as those offered by commercial publishers. Yet the enthusiasm for pulling together very customized materials also suggests that inflexible publisher content has created pent-up demand for tailored content, made possible by the affordances of open licenses. As one faculty grantee wrote, "I don't just want an OER version of a textbook. I want something different from how existing textbooks are structured" (Journal 9).

Notably, at a distance of several months the librarian survey respondents recalled most of the projects as simple textbook replacements. Three of the five survey responses specifically describe librarians hoping for more customization than faculty turned out to be interested in undertaking. For example, one survey respondent wrote, “I have more faculty interested in swapping pricey books for an OER and less in developing curriculum and then using OER to support those objectives.” These recollections are at odds with the high degree of customization recorded in the weekly journals while the projects were under way.

From this standpoint, it will be instructive to track the subsequent history of the LOEL grant projects. If other instructors adopt the open courseware for additional sections of the same course, will they go on to adapt or use them as-is? Or, per the remarks in the previous section on time, will the new adopters prefer to follow their own development process?

One faculty member unwillingly found herself in an in-depth revise/remix project. A textbook that could have been adopted as-is would have been preferable, but appropriate material wasn't available. The partner librarian described the situation:

The instructor is committed to using OER to save students money and because she realizes students just don't buy the text, but she is not a fan overall because of the amount of time it takes. She would like something that is turnkey, b/c she doesn't want to be an author. (Journal 16)

A problem that arose with creating and remixing content is the implicit commitment to maintain the materials. One discipline faculty journal notes:

I am nervous about the need to constantly monitor, repair, and upload new content information to replace items no longer found or supported. There are perpetual problems with Java, security cookies, web browsers, and other student issues with technology that will continue to hinder the ease with which this OER material can be disseminated, accessed, and utilized. It's a tremendous amount of costly work for all parties involved just to have a "free" product for the students. (Journal 16)

Perhaps these questions of sustainability can be raised early in the process to remind faculty that one benefit of adopting existing materials is that somebody else is responsible for maintenance.

Overall, the journal entries revealed that the categories typically assigned to OER projects - "adopt," "adapt," and "create" - are more complex and less distinct than they are intended to be. During the messy design process, a team that is "adopting" may take so much ownership that they start adapting or even creating, moving the project into a completely different scope. In other words, the categories that project managers use to classify work may be problematic when compared against actual use of OER. This suggests a topic for future research with real-world implications for the people that create and manage grant programs.

Takeaways

- Faculty embrace the opportunity to customize course materials. This is in tension with the desire to reduce time commitments.
- More research is needed on what project managers and faculty mean by "adopt," "adapt," and "create" in practice.

Conclusion

As open education moves further into the mainstream of higher education, librarian roles and librarianship are changing. This new and promising field has an impact on staffing models and what is considered to be library work, with implications for the whole department and its relationship to the rest of the organization. It also presents opportunities for librarians to gain experience with campus leadership, administrative functions, instructional design, project management, and other areas that can lead to career advancement.

The LOEL librarians benefitted from an engaged community of practice. Moreover, there is a very supportive culture around OER and librarianship in the Pacific Northwest. For example, one librarian wrote in a journal entry:

This week all of the librarians who are working on this OER grant got together to discuss a variety of things related to the grant. Everyone shared who they are working with and what types of information they are looking for as well as a general idea for the scope of their research and deliverables. We talked through potential ideas for deliverables and those who worked on this same grant last year shared some strategies that worked well for them and their partners. We also reviewed helpful places to search and even brainstormed specific places to search for those with potentially difficult topics. Despite having worked on this grant last year, I left the meeting with a much stronger and more creative idea regarding the possibilities for my final deliverable. It was really helpful to talk through strategies, resources, and ideas for deliverables with

my colleagues. I'm looking forward to sharing this information with [faculty grantee] the next time we meet. (Journal 7)

Doesn't that sound like a great group? Other states or regions would do well to consider how to implement this kind of professional learning community since it clearly benefits those involved and likely contributes to successful projects as well.

There is also ample room for library school students to get involved through internships or practica. "OER Librarian" positions are cropping up the way that Distance Learning Librarian positions did about a decade ago, and future professionals may benefit from experience.

I've been doing work with a fieldwork student from UW's ISchool who has been a big help in collecting OER work for other classes. She hasn't been directly involved with this grant or course development, but she has been a big help in moving the other grant forward and collecting relevant materials to get faculty started. I feel like this kind of ground work could potentially make for future coursework like the one [faculty grantees] are undertaking here easier. I know [faculty grantees] are interested in images and visuals, and while I haven't had the time to dig into options there as of yet, the fieldwork student's efforts might make the work for the next person undertaking a transition easier since the text and options for some peripherals will be in one place. (Journal 3)

The LOEL faculty and librarian participants, over three years of work, did more than redesign courses with open content. Because of the grant requirements, they also offered insight into why and how librarians can be essential collaborators on open education projects.

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