

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE DESIGN

SOCVOC Enhancement of Social Skills during Vocational Training in Prison · Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in Adult Education Project
Project number 2022-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000087556



SOCVOC



Co-funded by
the European Union

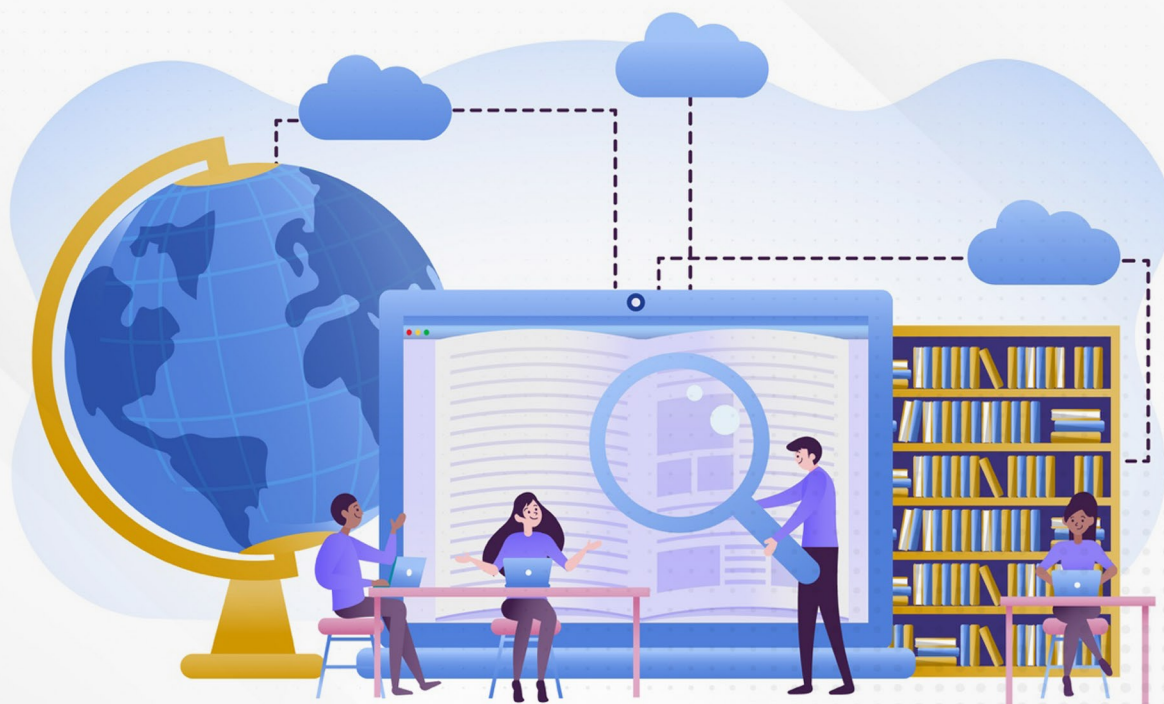
Stowarzyszenie na rzecz edukacji
osób wykluczonych społecznie
o nazwie "BUSOLA"



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What is an open educational resource?

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. Open license refers to a license that respects the intellectual property rights of the copyright owner and provides permissions granting the public the rights to access, re-use, re-purpose, adapt and redistribute educational materials.

While the main focus, when preparing OERs, is on creating, assessing, sharing, and supporting open textbooks, there are many other types of OERs available, such as:

- ***Online courses***
- ***Videos***
- ***Audio files***
- ***Presentation slides***
- ***Syllabi***
- ***Course outlines***
- ***Supplemental materials, such as quizzes and assignments***



Why should we use open educational resources?

One of the driving factors for the adoption of OER, such as open textbooks, is that they are free. But cost savings is not the only benefit of using OER – they are an essential part of an open pedagogy, and can be used to create a powerful learning experience for the students. Studies have revealed a ‘positive relationship between the use of OER and student academic achievement’ and suggest that OER may help to decrease withdrawal rates while increasing overall student grades.

What are the benefits of using OERs? They can:

- Increase access to education
- Provide students with an opportunity to assess and plan their education choices
- Showcase an institution’s intellectual outputs, promote its profile, and attract students
- Convert students exploring options into fee-paying enrollments
- Accelerate learning by providing educational resources for just-in-time, direct, informal use by both students and self-directed learners
- Add value to knowledge production
- Reduce faculty preparation time
- Generate cost savings – (this case has been particularly substantiated for open textbooks)
- Enhance quality
- Generate innovation through collaboration



Why do we (SOCVOC) need it?

In 2021, prisons across the EU were holding about half a million inmates, including both convicted persons, serving their final sentence, and persons accused of a crime. Living conditions in prisons are regulated by numerous laws and guidelines: from constitutional provisions to national criminal and penitentiary laws and international law principles. An essential element, when looking at prison conditions, is whether individual sentence plans are offered, and if so, whether they are properly designed and adequately implemented, so that the regime they foresee is truly designed to enable detainees to lead a responsible and crime-free life. The plans should include work, education, and activities in preparation for release. Bearing this in mind, the partnership has prioritised to enhance the social skills of prisoners while they are involved in a vocational training. At the same time, it is a must to train educators working with adult learners in prisons to guarantee that they have the skills and competences necessary to be successful in this special environment. The core of the project is to develop an easy-to-use guidebook and an open educational resource consisting of good practices and methodologies for learning social skills to low-skilled and/or older learners while they are learning a profession and train the teachers how to use these tools. The project wants to promote the use of internet-based learning platform with adapted exercises and instruments which are easy to use by the target group. The outputs and activities of this project can also be used by trainers in their own regular courses in the prisons of the project partners. By using the exercises and instruments of the learning platform and guidebook the learners can increase their vocational skills as well as their social skills which are highly regarded by later employers after they are released. The other motivation why we want to implement this project is the fact that the specially developed materials will be easily accessible on an open educational resource for the target group and trainers. Finally, we believe that the project should be funded because, more than in regular educational situations, education in a prison system is a niche, has limited resources and demands a special approach, due to all kind of limitations that are inherent to the prison system(s) and the target group. The funding can accelerate providing of a group of vulnerable adults with adequate education. Furthermore, all partners are engaged in prison education networks across Europe, so there will also be a promising dissemination of the materials and gained insights.



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Existing examples of open educational resources on the Internet.

One of the most well-known OER is Khan Academy. It offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower learners to study at their own pace in and outside of the classroom. KA tackle math, science, computing, history, art history, economics, and more, including K-14 and test preparation (SAT, Praxis, LSAT) content. It focuses on skill mastery to help learners establish strong foundations, so there's no limit to what they can learn next. This is a very expanded and complex tool where millions of students from all over the world, each with their own unique story, learn every single day. KA resources are being translated into more than 36 languages in addition to the Spanish, French and Portuguese versions of the website.



4 - Existing examples of open educational resources on the Internet.

One of the very first OERs was MITOpenCourseWare created by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Since 2001 it has been creating new opportunities for millions of learners and educators, sharing Open Educational Resources (OER) from MIT and helping to lead a global revolution in free access to knowledge. MIT OpenCourseWare continues to build on this foundation. With a new web platform, ever-growing content, and collaborations across the vibrant open education ecosystem, it creates a world of more equitable and inclusive education for all.



MIT OpenCourseWare is a free and open collection of material from thousands of MIT courses, covering the entire MIT curriculum. It may be used to guide your own life-long learning, or to teach others. MIT does not offer credit or certification to users of OCW – and asks for nothing in return. Anyone can freely browse and use OCW materials at their own pace. There's no signup, and no start or end dates. It is possible to download files for later, send them to friends and colleagues, modify, remix, and reuse them. The only thing necessary is to cite OCW as the source.

4 - Existing examples of open educational resources on the Internet.

Another interesting OER is Academic Earth. It brings together educational content and course materials from some of the best universities in the world, including Stanford, Princeton, U.C. Berkely, MIT, and Yale. Students can browse the library of more than 1,500 lecture videos, which are organised by school, subject, and scholar, and then download the ones they like or even find curated playlists based on their interests. Academic Earth was launched on the premise that everyone deserves access to a world-class education. In 2009, we built the first collection of free online college courses from the world's top universities. The world of open education has exploded since then, so today our curated lists of online courses are hand selected by our staff to show you the very best offerings by subject area. We also make sure there is something for everyone: whether you want to explore a new topic or advance in your current field, we bring the amazing world of academia to you for free.



 **ACADEMIC EARTH**

4 - Existing examples of open educational resources on the Internet.

One more resource worth mentioning is OER Commons. It is a digital library of open educational resources created by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME). With over 70,000 educational resources from providers like the British Library and Harvard University, it's a great tool for discovering and organizing educational content. Open Educational Resource Commons is particularly useful for educators, as it allows them to build their own resources, lesson plans and courses, while using groups to collaborate with other educators in their network. This particular resource was mentioned on purpose. I will get back to it in the latter part of this paper.

The four mentioned above OERs are those vast, very complex resources, which are organized in a very professional and neat way. However, it is hard to enumerate all OERs available on the web. Many OERs are just 'local' resources which have been created to meet some basic needs of the creator and their students. It would be hard for SOCVOC participants to create such extended resources but we can have a closer look at what is available on the Internet.



Proposals and ideas of what OERs SOCVOC may use.

While doing research for this presentation, I have come across many websites that SOCVOC partnership could use for the sake of creating their own OER. However, the plethora of these resources caused quite a problem in making a decision which one would be most suitable. Therefore, the choice that the readers will see below is just a subjective selection of the author.

PRESSBOOKS

The first tool that SOCVOC partners could consider in order to put the content of the project and thus have a ready-made OER is Pressbooks. It is a versatile tool with myriad applications, it has grown into the preferred platform for open educational publishing programs. There was a need for an easy-to-use platform on which to create professional educational content in an open and ethical way, and creators responded by making this tool. Creators help their partners compete with large commercial publishers, while supporting their immediate need to get accessible educational content into the hands of readers or the target group.

Pressbooks is an authoring and formatting platform for books of all types: textbooks, monographs, novels, manuals, and beyond! It covers all aspects from start to finish of creating a book. Book creation process will look something like this:

1. One needs to sign-up for Pressbooks. There is an option to create a book right away.
2. Add book information. One can include a title, author, language, book description, and more!
3. One can begin building the book by writing, formatting, and adding media. Authoring Dashboard is used to start writing.
4. Authors can choose a theme for your book. There are 21 different themes with different typefaces, colors, and styles to explore.
5. After that it is possible to export the book in one of the many formats Pressbooks support! With PDF, ePUB, and a web version of the book, it can be shared online, or sent to a printer.

5 - Existing examples of open educational resources on the Internet.

What seems to be very important is the fact that nothing on Pressbooks is irreversible. Everything, from the book information to the theme can always be modified.

Another interesting piece of information is that the author(s) are owners of the book since it is them who are responsible for the content. Pressbooks takes no royalties for the content created with their software. It is up to the author(s) to decide what they would like to do with their book.

PRESSBOOKS

5 - Existing examples of open educational resources on the Internet.

OERCOMMONS

In one of the paragraphs above this resource have already been described. Since the author of this paper believes this tool is very useful, it found its place in the presentation.

The tool that is used to create OER is called Open Author. It loos relatively easy to use and it could be compared to regular writing editors that we use on a daily basis (i.e. WORD). Thanks to this tool author(s) may create and customize open educational resources to meet their needs and the needs of your learners/readers/target groups. Open Author can be used to create resources with both instructor and student facing views. This means that instructors can view the resource that is customized for instruction, and students can view the resource that is customized for their learning needs.

When one creates a resource in Open Author, they are able to include overviews and pedagogical supporting text for both instructors and students. The resource can consist of sequenced sections, in which a step-by-step approach to instruction and learning may be incorporated. Each section can have associated resources available for download.

To get started, one needs to click Add OER at the top of the screen then select Open Author. There are two steps to creating an educational resource in Open Author: Resource Details and Describe.

Note: To create a resource, one must create an account or log in.

To get started, one needs to click Add OER at the top of the screen then select Open Author. There are two steps to creating an educational resource in Open Author: Resource Details and Describe.

Resource Details is where you enter a title, include attachments, and insert step-by-step sections.

1. Enter a title for the resource.
2. Upload an image to display as the opening image for the resource.
3. Provide a section name for the first section of the resource.
4. Enter Main Content. This is the main content of the resource, and is viewable by readers.
5. Click the Add Section Resource button to upload an attachment or link.
6. Add Instructor Notes. This can be used to annotate the main content or provide further instruction to other educators.
7. Insert new sections as needed.
8. Etc.



5 - Existing examples of open educational resources on the Internet.

SOCVOC website

Obviously, one of the easiest ways to provide future users with our OER is creating our own website where all the resources could be uploaded and available to be used by whoever visits the website. The OER can then be saved in any available format and shared via the website.

We need to ask ourselves the question if we want to prepare the website for the project which will last for a limited period of time. After the project is over, someone, definitely, would have to make sure space on a server is still available and paid for.



5 - Existing examples of open educational resources on the Internet.

EDPEP

At the beginning of this year, the author of the presentation was approached by the Dutch branch of the EPEA (European Prison Education Association) and was asked whether would be interested in joining an Erasmus+ KA2 Small Scale Partnership Project. The title of the project is European Dissemination Platform for Education in Prison (EDPEP). Regardless of the decision, please have a look at the idea of the project that was included in the application form.

There is a lot of knowledge and expertise in organisations within the EU about Education in Detention. Knowledge/experience that mainly remains within the own organization is hardly shared in our own country or within Europe. In recent years, EPEA-NL started the construction of a WIKI, a Wikipedia site on which individuals and organizations can place and share information about the acquired knowledge / expertise in, for example, projects. That WIKI (<http://www.prison-education-wiki.eu>) has been prepared as a final concept and has been tried out in our own circle. This new project plan (EDPEP) is intended to professionalize the site – with some European partners – design a user guide, involve contacts in all European countries who will enthuse colleagues in their own country and train them to participate in the use of the WIKI.

Individuals and organizations that provide Education in Detention are now mostly solitary and can make use of each other's knowledge and experience through this WIKI. To this end, the tools are lacking so far. This can lead to further professionalization of the workers and to innovation within organizations based on experiences, research results, etc. gained elsewhere in Europe. Ultimately, this should have an impact on the educational offer that prisoners in the various European countries can make use of, as well as the practice of the skills of the teachers in those penitentiary institutions.

EDPEP want to investigate the possibility of placing the WIKI with EPALE, the Electronic Platform Adult Learning Europe. The intention is also to start a so-called 'community of practice' in which all coordinators and users of the WIKI in all European countries can post and view messages at any time and thus remain involved and informed about new knowledge, experiences, research data but also ask questions to other users.

This future project (it has now been applied for and the results will be known roughly in June 2023; the start of the project is planned for autumn 2023) seems to be very interesting and an option to have a fusion of two separate Erasmus+ projects seems tempting, too.

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SWOT analysis

Strengths

- The primary goal of an OER is to generate, share and curate information. OER allows anybody, wherever in the world, to get access to information.
- It provides time utility by allowing access to resources at any time.
- There is no charge for the books/resources.
- Users may access resources without having to carry heavy books.
- Creation helps to save time and money.
- It helps to have larger benefits to scholars across the globe.
- It helps to share best practices with anyone.

Weaknesses

It was hard for the author of the presentation to find any weaknesses. The third one of them was the difficulties instructors encounter while producing such resources. However, on the other hand, production of any materials is a burden in a way.

Opportunities

The biggest advantage of OER is the wide access to the content. Education can improve and a notion of life long learning is being cherished along the way.

Threats

Similarly as with 'weaknesses', it was basically impossible to find any threat in creating our own OER. There is no need to be afraid to create such content. I would say – let's go for it!



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Suggestions for further future

I hope, Dear Reader, you have managed to go through the whole presentation and you have a wider knowledge about Open Educational Resources. Moreover, I also hope that having such a tool will help disseminate SOCVOC results to a wider spectrum of interested parties – be it instructors, prison educators, policy makers, social rehabilitation students, anyone.

The only suggestion that I have at this moment is that all SOCVOC partners meet and decide which tool/website/idea should be used to create our own OER. Maybe you do not like any of the suggestions above? If this is the case, all the more, we all should sit down, have a meeting and find the proper way of creating and publishing SOCVOC OER.



Resources:

SCOVOC application form

EDPEP application form

<https://www.opencolleges.edu.au>

<https://www.edweek.org/>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/>

<https://ocw.mit.edu>

<https://academicearth.org>

<https://www.oercommons.org>

<https://pressbooks.com>

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/>



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