The global open education community, whether engaged in sharing open educational resources (OER), developing practice (OEP) or delivering open courses, is transforming education access and networks beyond the classroom. But is it doing enough? There is some suggestion that the promise of massive online open courses (MOOCs) to empower learners has not been realistically met (Rolfe 2015). There is a lack of awareness and understanding of OER amongst educators in the US (Allen & Seaman 2014), and that without wholesale commitment and engagement by institutions, openness will be usurped by those with commercial interests (Weller 2014).

So why is it that open education has seemingly stalled? Innovation in education and those leading campus transformations are working in challenging territories. Implementing change is demanding for those leading innovation and puts pressure on others to acquire new skills and practices (McDonald & Ingvarson 1997). At the heart of innovation is the reuse of knowledge and ideas and ability to critically reflect and reject old solutions (Kuhn 1970).

This paper examines whether the open education community is being critical enough in its evaluation of progress. Are we thinking critically enough and how does this relate to our research cultural norms? As reported elsewhere, a lack of critical scrutiny is very apparent in research publication processes that exhibit publication and citation bias toward positive claims (Ball 2015). This adds little critically to fields of study. The aim of this research is to enquire whether the open education community being critical enough in its evaluation?

The methodological approaches will involve a systematic review to identify studies describing the impact of open education on learning and teaching in its many guises (OER, OEP, MOOC). A number of areas will be reported upon including publication bias and citation bias within the literature. The research will provide the open education community with an important perspective on levels of critical reflection and reporting, and will examine the need to open our minds an important component of our open practice.

References


