

Methodology for conducting an OER environmental scan of departments with high enrollment courses

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Community Resource

Google Doc online access

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eAng6wIlyj9JcbhS4Bw4_jsMq51Ym2L3p9NpujUmZ9o/edit?usp=sharing



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Background

My SPARC OER Fellowship [capstone project](#) was to conduct a comprehensive open educational resources (OER) readiness and environmental scan of 3-5 departments with high enrollment courses (HEC) to gather data about current practices, structures, policies, attitudes and course material usage to determine which departments would most likely switch to OER or low-cost alternatives. The project was intended to position the university to begin implementing the Affordable Course Materials Initiative and build a network of allies, supporters and collaborators on the campus.

The framework for the methodology is based on Castiglione's 2008 article "*Environmental scanning: An essential tool for twenty-first-century librarianship*" which provides some structure for how libraries can use ES in library work. Castiglione suggests starting by "developing a list of critical variables that require continuous evaluation" and creating "a list of information sources that provide the required coverage of all the critical variables" (p. 534).

I. Data gathering

1. Obtain enrollments data from most recent year possible
2. Select criteria
 - a. # of enrollments, \$ of materials
3. Search for current textbook prices in the bookstore system for all sections of the selected courses.
 - a. Narrow down list by those with high textbook prices ~ \$100+
 - b. Determine which courses have a high total enrollment ~100+ cumulative enrollments per semester (all sections)

RESOURCE 01: Sample number/price chart

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=11m66H9N-I-PsQdPCPujSqCjQNGGw-6ri>

Questions to consider:

1. What sort of data is easily available on your campus? Is data downloadable from the university website?
2. What is considered to be a high enrollment class on your campus?
3. Should you focus on general education courses or other types of courses?

II. Build Support

1. Presentation to library liaisons
 - a. OER work alignment with the ACRL [Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education](#)
 - b. Present information about the listening tour objectives/process.
 - c. Invite librarians of targeted programs to be included on emails and meetings. Help with determining who to contact.
 - d. Invite librarians to participate in meetings with faculty.

RESOURCE 02: Handout for librarians - OER & ACRL Framework

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VHF3IYI_TTB5X6KDB9qq8zXMADlhMWi4

2. Reach out to relevant Deans (or other administrators) to discuss the process, get advice and support.
 - a. Ask if they would like to be included on emails to faculty or departments when arranging meetings. Their inclusion can provide legitimacy and carry more weight with faculty.
 - b. Send email to Chair or group of faculty responsible for a particular course.

RESOURCE 03: Draft email to departments

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FeKeQhuGJry7XoJiRde43XL2dyBJJaNg66xxgF8yz58>

Questions to consider:

1. Where do you have support? Do you or your Dean have a relationship with the Dean of the School with most of the high-enrollment courses?
2. What are your current contacts/relationships with faculty in the departments?
3. How many different faculty teach the course and how many should be involved in the discussion? Is there a coordinator or group of coordinators?
4. Do you know the bookstore manager? May want to speak to them about the courses you choose to target before meetings, or after. They know a lot of information about textbook options, prices, and interactions with the department.

III. Deep Listening methodology for the textbook listening tour

The theoretical framework used for the listening tour combines focus group procedures with deep listening theory. The meetings and question structure are based on *Focus Group Fundamentals Iowa State U Extension Methodology brief* (Grudens-Schuck, Allen, & Larson, 2004) and Krueger, & Casey (2002).

- Focus groups are naturalistic
- Researcher listens not only for the content of discussions but for emotions, ironies, contradictions, and tensions.
- Learn or confirm not just facts, but meaning behind the facts
- Questions invite openness and avoid bias
- Reporting on patterns and themes or perspectives
- Shared control - allow for spontaneous, unexpected elements

Suggested Reading: Focus Group Fundamentals Iowa State U Extension Methodology brief https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1011&context=extension_communities_pubs

Deep Listening is an approach that “involves listening, from a deep, receptive, and caring place in oneself, to deeper and often subtler levels of meaning and intention in the other person. It is listening that is generous, empathic, supportive, accurate, and trusting” (Rome, 2010). Deep listening is similar to active listening methods which are part of mindfulness practices and requires the facilitator to actively listen but not comment or try to troubleshoot.

Suggested Reading: Deep listening <https://www.mindful.org/deep-listening/>

Suggested Reading: Active listening <https://www.ccl.org/multimedia/podcast/the-big-6-an-active-listening-skill-set/>

Listening Tour discussion questions

A list of questions (originally developed by librarians at Temple University Library) are divided into two groups for this methodology and should be edited to be specific to the institution.

RESOURCE 04 - Original Questions: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-d6leModQEBlqB-qx7FdPYB4XIKZCLSEVXAwwzIVFqEQ>

RESOURCE 05 - Revised Questions:

1st meeting

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1W_Qe3pY49C7fygqs5SnbpwNsVfvFYnbUEshf2SxZ-IY

2nd meeting

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1R8S2y2WbXwRsMhn0dXtY43GSfOO_J4AvRZzzWgj-m2s

I. First meeting

The first meeting of the textbook listening tour is to listen to what faculty are currently doing. To let them talk about the current textbook, practices, and opinions without the facilitator engaging in crosstalk or problem-solving. Start with a statement to faculty about the deep listening approach. Emphasize the no judgment aspect of deep listening.

Sample introduction: *"I am meeting with the various departments who offer high enrollment and general education courses. My objective for today's discussion is to gather information about your current textbook and course material usage, course and department needs and your perceptions about what is working well and where you need support. I am taking a deep listening approach. If you are not familiar with this concept, Deep Listening is a way of hearing in which we are fully present with what is happening in the moment without trying to control it or judge it."*

- Inform the attendees that you wish to record the discussion. Reviewing recordings is more valuable than written notes because it allows for deep listening during the meeting.
- Strive for a minimum of two faculty members at the meeting.
- Discussions with the larger group of departmental faculty about textbooks may produce data that is too generalized than discussions with faculty all teaching a specific high enrollment course.
- Cross talk between faculty is most fruitful. This is when misperceptions and department dynamics are revealed.

Post discussion

1. Review recording, compile bullet point notes (generalized, no names).
 - a. Group comments into categories, these may change based on specific discussions. Categories may include: current textbook, online components, selection, teaching, students, other.
 - b. Place comment groups in categories under either of two headings:
 - i. What was learned- Basic facts - which textbook is used, price, how it is selected, how often replaced, what they communicate to students
 - ii. What was heard - The meaning behind the comments about the textbook, affordability, concerns, what they value, department dynamics

2. Investigate options for the course based on what you learned.
 - a. OpenStax, Open courseware, low-cost homework system
3. Find out any answers to questions that arose.
 - a. Use of financial aid, questions about the bookstore
4. What is the low-hanging fruit that the library or the affordable group can do immediately?
5. Share notes with the participants.
6. Schedule next meeting.

RESOURCE 06: Sample notes outline

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1olnEEcK6RCMIQ7aOzMmrVvMg_yq8KEi1-cBs-6qTtqs

II. Second meeting

The second meeting is more of a back and forth discussion and may even include a bit of presentation depending on the participants' knowledge and understanding of OER and affordable options.

Sample introduction: *“As I mentioned in our previous meeting, the library is leading a campus affordable course materials initiative. I have spoken with the various departments who offer the most highly enrolled courses about their current textbooks use and selection process and now I would like to talk about ways to make course materials more affordable.”*

1. Start by communicating back what you learned but mostly what you heard. Repeat back the values and concerns.
2. Present information about the campus initiative and/or OER based on groups' knowledge.
3. Discuss different pathways to affordable (see [sample resource](#))
4. Suggest making an affordability pledge as a group, either for the department for a specific course.
5. Clarify concerns, questions.

If departments prefer having the second meeting combined with the first, it is more challenging to immediately reflect back without listening to the recording. For these meetings:

1. Focus notetaking on values and concerns being expressed and immediately reflect these back.
2. Have a clear distinction when the conversation is changing to a discussion about affordability and away from a deep listening approach.
3. After the meeting and reviewing the recording, provide additional follow-up through email about what was learned and answer any questions that came up.
4. Come prepared with general knowledge of what OER and affordable resources are currently available for the course/subject being discussed.

Post discussion

Notes gathered during the affordability discussion will enlighten your understanding of where your faculty are in their understanding of OER and will support the affordability initiative and next steps.

1. Develop resources to assist with outreach and education specific for your campus.
2. Share handouts with participants through a variety of mechanisms.
 - a. New faculty Handbooks
 - b. Bookstore Textbook materials
 - c. Via Librarian liaisons

RESOURCE 07: Sample handouts

07-1 Introduction to OER

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1RdYLC9yFefeh3zht8v8OCZsOluKsrlId->

07-2 Transitioning to Affordable

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=10WpylWYTp4kvWFaZu7oYOllmLgzZtT-R>

07-3 Why OER for our campus

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1MRCDYSCvAZy_TBcVey1xUg5wp8FD3-Nj

07-4 What Faculty Can Do - cheat sheet

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1C7GW92IA7UZePu25n8zj5PYmQd-fp7fu>

Questions to consider:

1. How likely are you to be able to schedule two separate meetings with faculty?
2. How can you leverage liaison librarian connections?
3. Are faculty on campus generally aware of OER and/or any campus initiative?
4. Will faculty be comfortable with you recording discussions?
5. Are you required to submit an IRB application prior to conducting the listening tour?

III. Report back

A letter acting as a final report to participants should be drafted after the listening tour ends, or within a few months of the last meeting if the tour will be ongoing. Report letters may be cc'd to the Deans and Department Chairs. The letter should:

- Thank participants
- Detail how data from tours impacted campus initiative
- Provide information about upcoming grants opportunities
- Invite further discussion about affordability

The letter should include:

- A copy of the compiled notes
- An affordability strategies [tip sheet](#)

RESOURCE 08:

Sample report back letter

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1_DyKgJef806vqutwVB6waRAhHvbIFGU4L9K7-U-T3aA

Questions to consider:

1. Are your notes in written in a way that can be shared? No names, no judgment statements? Should you make a revised copy separate from your own?
2. Does your tip sheet answer the questions and misconceptions you heard during the tour?
3. Who should receive the letter and notes?

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