

# Open Education as a Continuation of Open Science in Finnish Higher Education Sector

Anne Kärki<sup>1</sup>, Seliina Päällysaho<sup>2</sup>, Anttoni Lehto<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

<sup>2</sup>Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences

<sup>3</sup>Turku University of Applied Sciences

**BACKGROUND** *The development of Open Science in Finland has been condensed in the national Declaration for Open Science and Research 2020–2025, to which all universities have committed. The declaration includes a policy for open education (OE) and open educational resources (OER). One of the strategic goals of the policy is that the creation, use and collaborative development of open educational resources and practices become everyday activities in higher education and enable lifelong learning. In the context of the policy, this goal is a natural continuation of the previous and on-going Open Science efforts relating to publications and data.*

## Aim

The aim of this qualitative interview study was to discuss the status and attitudes towards Open Science practices as well as open education and educational resources.

## Study protocol

The target group for this study was teachers in nine universities of applied sciences. The inclusion criterium for the interviewed teachers was that they had experience on final thesis tutoring, teaching research methods and/or RDI projects. A total of 23 teachers were interviewed in April–September 2019.

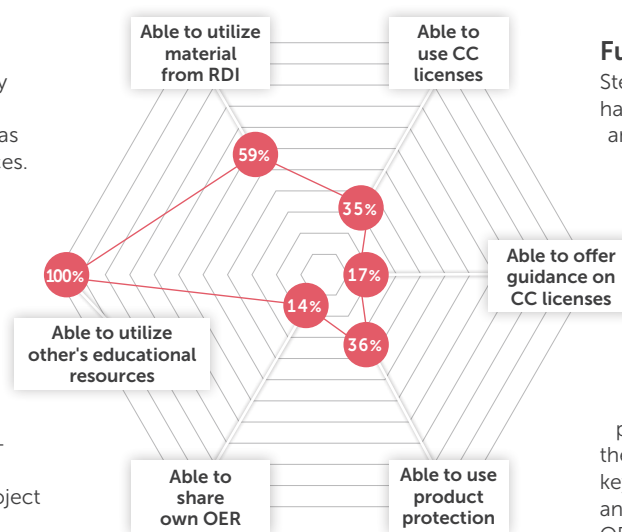
The theme frame was created by a project group of specialists both in research and education.

## Results and discussion

It seems that on some level, every interviewed teacher (100%) has utilized educational resources produced by someone else. On the other hand, only few respondents (14%) had in fact shared their own OER. Open education and sharing open educational material seemed to be unfamiliar to most of the interviewees in general. It is also possible to conclude that the concept of open learning material was not clear to the respondents. The material shared in closed learning environments like Moodle was also widely understood as open learning material. The utilization of materials produced in RDI projects was also discussed by respondents, who stated that finding this material is in

most cases difficult, although 59% had used some in their teaching. There is a huge potential in RDI projects for material that could be better used as OER in many educational contexts.

Licensing of one's own educational material was familiar only to 35% of the teachers. Even fewer (17%) stated that they could tutor students in this topic. Product protection and intellectual property rights (IPR) were unknown to the respondents (36%) as well. The need for support was obvious also in Creative Commons licensing, sharing material that had been produced by multiple individuals, open data repositories and the best OER sharing platforms.



## Further work

Steps to increase awareness of OE and OER have been taken while national-level training and workshops are being offered. Some higher education institutions reacted immediately after interviews by offering internal training in licensing and IPR. In addition, supporting the use of the Library of Open Educational Resources (aoe.fi) in sharing educational resources has become more active.

These actions to fill in the discovered knowledge gaps have had a preliminary positive effect on teachers' awareness of the topic. Teachers in higher education are a key group of actors for facilitating openness and sharing know-how on open data and OER. Therefore, relevant further training should be considered and targeted especially for this group.

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