

# Open Education Down UndOER Australasian Case Studies



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# OPEN EDUCATION DOWN UNDOER: AUSTRALASIAN CASE STUDIES

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[https://research.usq.edu.au/researcher/11/dr-eseta-](https://research.usq.edu.au/researcher/11/dr-eseta-tualalelei)

tualalelei\_text Tualalelei, 20Eseta, 20Taylor-Leech, 20Kerry and 20Fluckiger,

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# GUIDING THE GUIDANCE ONSERVASEST YOUR NEW DIRECTIONS IN GUIDANCE ONSERVING

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The Open Educational Resource (OER) *New Directions in Guidance and Counselling* (Archer, 202 ) emerged as an innovative response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 lockdowns. Originally, students in the Masters of Guidance and Counselling program were to undertake original research during placements for their capstone unit. However, pandemic restrictions necessitated a rapid pivot in assessment design.

This shift led to the development of a major work centered on comprehensive literature reviews. Students received explicit training in advanced literature review techniques, ensuring their contributions maintained high academic standards despite the inability to conduct field research. This adaptation not only addressed immediate assessment needs but also equipped students with valuable skills in synthesizing and critically analyzing existing research.

The assessment required students to develop their major research literature reviews, showcasing the ability to engage deeply with current scholarship in guidance and counselling. The collection spans various topics, reflecting contemporary trends and emerging areas of focus in the field. Each piece underwent rigorous evaluation for academic merit, relevance to current practice, and potential impact.

Compiling these works into an OER served multiple purposes

- It provided a meaningful culmination of students' studies despite pandemic disruptions.

- It offered a platform for showcasing student research in a time of limited opportunities.

- It created a valuable resource for practitioners and fellow students navigating similar challenges.

The project highlighted the potential of student-generated content in creating substantive educational resources, even under restrictive circumstances. It demonstrated the adaptability of both students and educators in the face of unprecedented challenges.

Ultimately, this COVID-19-induced pivot resulted in a unique learning experience. Students engaged with



the scholarly publication process from literature review to peer review, while educators gained insights into facilitating collaborative academic work in a remote environment. The resulting product stands as a testament to the resilience and creativity of the guidance and counselling student community during the pandemic.

This case study demonstrates how an innovative response to COVID-19 restrictions transformed a traditional research assessment into an authentic publishing opportunity, fostering meaningful collaboration between academics and counselling students while creating an enduring professional resource that bridges academic learning with industry practice.

The key stakeholders in this project were the Master of Guidance and Counselling students at James Cook University who contributed their work to the OER. Securing their enthusiastic participation was crucial to the project's success. Students were initially presented with the prospect of contributing to a published academic book as part of their assessment, with the understanding that only work achieving a grade of 5 or higher would be considered for inclusion. This selective approach was demonstrated through examples of existing academic compilations in counselling, where individual research chapters were brought together into comprehensive volumes.

To foster student engagement, the importance of counsellors creating practice-based evidence was emphasised. This approach was presented as a critical form of professional development, enabling counsellors to inform their evidence-based practice and utilise best practices in their work (Hatchett, 2021). By framing the project in this context, students could see the direct relevance to their future careers and the potential impact of their contributions.

Maintaining high academic standards was paramount, given that the final product would be a university-published resource. This necessitated rigorous quality control measures throughout the process, from initial drafting to final editing.

The James Cook University Open Educational Resources team, comprising Alice Luetchford, Deborah King, and Sherre Roy, played a pivotal role in this regard. Their expertise was instrumental in managing the quality of work and overseeing the publication process. Their involvement ensured that the students

contributions met the requisite standards for academic publishing, thereby enhancing the credibility and utility of the final resource.

The capstone unit for the Masters of Guidance and Counselling, was initially designed to provide students with an opportunity to conduct primary research during their professional placements. This approach aimed to integrate academic learning with practical experience, allowing students to apply research skills in real-world settings.

However, the onset of COVID-19 lockdowns in 2021 significantly disrupted this plan. Face-to-face placements became untenable, and many internship hosts and supervisors expressed discomfort with students conducting research in their organisations during this uncertain period.

This sudden shift created an urgent need for an alternative assessment that would maintain academic rigour whilst providing students with an authentic, meaningful culmination to their degree. The challenge was to devise an assessment that would adequately prepare students for professional practice without the originally planned field experience.

The project centred on students producing substantial literature reviews of 2,500-4,000 words, each addressing a clear research question relevant to their local context. The methodology I employed aligns with the approach detailed in Chapter 10 of Alele & Malau-Adulis (2021) OER on health research design, ensuring a rigorous academic framework for the students' work. This resource is recommended for future OERs that incorporate student work.

To maintain the high quality of the final OER, only submissions graded as High Distinctions (5+) were considered for inclusion. This selective approach ensured that the published work represented exemplary student scholarship.

Students were tasked with several responsibilities beyond the initial writing. They were required to proofread their own work meticulously, enhancing their editing skills. Additionally, they needed to secure permissions for any images used or create original visual content, introducing them to copyright considerations in academic publishing.

The editing process involved peer review feedback from both myself and the JCU OER team, providing students with valuable insight into the academic publishing process. However, due to time constraints attached to taking on additional classes and marking at the conclusion of the semester, I was not always able to review the revised work before submission. Consequently, some contributions required further refinement prior to publication, illustrating the iterative nature of academic publishing.

The technical aspect of the project presented its own challenges. Student work was uploaded directly from Microsoft Word to the Pressbooks platform, a process that proved problematic. Significant time was invested in adjusting formatting and conducting additional proofreading to ensure the final product met professional standards. This experience highlighted the importance of considering technical compatibility and not being time-pressured in ensuring the publishing process progresses smoothly.

## O

The project culminated in a 14-chapter book, including an introductory chapter written by the academic lead that framed the theoretical context for the collection. Students enhanced their chapters with self-generated charts and tables to illustrate their findings, while library staff supported the work by sourcing and incorporating Creative Commons-licensed images. Following a soft launch in May 2024, the book is now being utilised as an exemplar within the Master of Guidance and Counselling programme, providing current students with a concrete model of scholarly excellence and demonstrating the potential for their own academic contributions.

Initially, there were aspirations to replicate this project with future cohorts, building upon its success and creating a series of student-authored resources. However, these plans were ultimately curtailed due to a confluence of several factors. Workload pressures on academic staff combined with institutional restructures both had a significant impact on the time and resources required to replicate such a project in the future. Furthermore, shifts in university policy regarding student-academic collaboration necessitated the abandonment of the project in future years. This highlights the ongoing nature of the Australian university system that good work and initiatives are often changeable at the whim of policy and executive decision making.

The development of the New Directions in Guidance and Counselling OER yielded valuable insights that can inform future endeavours in student-led academic publishing. Three key areas emerged as important to the success of such initiatives.

Firstly, securing student buy-in early in the process proved to be paramount. Only 14 students ended up contributing to the book, when the potential size was as high as 20. The availability of exemplars was identified as a crucial element in this regard. Students, unfamiliar with OERs, often struggled to envision the final outcome of their efforts. Providing concrete examples of completed works similar to the intended book allows students to grasp the scope and potential of their contributions, setting clear expectations and inspiring higher-quality work. Future projects should prioritise the creation or curation of such exemplars to facilitate student engagement and understanding from the outset.

Secondly, the time-intensive nature of developing an OER from student assessments cannot be overstated.

Despite advancements in artificial intelligence and some misconceptions regarding the efficiency of creating such comprehensive academic resources (Carter & Santiago, 202 ), adequate time allocation remains crucial. A potential solution could involve formally integrating the development of OER s into academic workload models. While this may present challenges in implementation, it is essential for enhancing the student learning experience and ensuring the sustainability of such projects. Recognising the development of OER s, such as student-authored academic resources as a significant academic endeavour could lead to more robust support structures and improved outcomes.

Thirdly, maintaining rigorous quality standards is essential for the credibility and utility of student-authored works like *New Directions in Guidance and Counselling*. This involved adopting a discerning approach to content selection, acknowledging that not all student work may meet publication standards. Experienced academics must be prepared to engage in challenging conversations with students whose work lacked novelty or rigour, culminating in them missing out on being invited to contribute despite their marks being borderline Distinction High Distinction. These discussions should be approached with the same level of constructive criticism and guidance typically afforded to Higher Degree by Research students. Providing practical, forward-looking feedback can help students understand the requirements of academic publishing and potentially improve their work for future consideration.

These recommendations require significant investment from the individual or team responsible for developing student-authored OER s. The process demands not only subject expertise but also skills in mentoring, editing, and project management. However, the potential benefits including enhanced student learning outcomes, the creation of valuable academic resources, and the cultivation of research skills among students justify this investment.

Implementing these recommendations could lead to more sustainable and impactful academic publishing projects, bridging the gap between student coursework and professional academic publishing. By addressing these key areas, institutions can create more meaningful learning experiences and contribute valuable resources to their respective fields of study.

Furthermore, projects like *New Directions in Guidance and Counselling* serve as a unique opportunity for students to engage with the academic publishing process firsthand. This experience can be invaluable for those considering further research or academic careers. It also provides a tangible outcome that students can reference in their professional portfolios, potentially enhancing their employability and academic profiles.

## S

Student feedback on the New Directions in Guidance and Counselling project revealed a mixture of enthusiasm and frustration. While students were eager to see their work published, they expressed dissatisfaction with the extended timeline from submission to publication, which stretched to 18 months.

This delay was primarily attributed to the need for additional proof-reading and quality assurance measures implemented after student submissions. The unforeseen extent of these post-submission refinements highlighted the importance of establishing robust editing processes from the outset.

Despite the delays, students appreciated the opportunity to contribute to a published work. However, their feedback underscored the need for clearer communication about timelines and potential delays in future projects, as well as the importance of front-loading quality control measures to streamline the publication process.

## I

### Advice and Tips:

For future endeavours like New Directions in Guidance and Counselling, three key factors are crucial for success. Firstly, securing student buy-in early in the process is essential. This can be achieved by clearly communicating the project's benefits and potential impact on their academic and professional development.

Secondly, having exemplars is vital. These provide students with tangible models of the expected quality and format, helping to align their work with publication standards from the outset.

Lastly, allocating ample time for peer review, and copyediting student submissions is paramount. This ensures the final product meets high academic standards. A well-planned timeline that accounts for multiple rounds of revision will contribute significantly to producing a high-quality publication that reflects well on both the students and the institution.

## R

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Ben Archer is an experienced educator in the fields of career development, educational contexts and management. His expertise are in the fields of workforce development, educational attainment and lifelong learning. Ben's research interests are centred on how education can impact work outcomes in geographically diverse areas.

# REVIEW STATEMENT

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Rigorous resources cannot exist without the selfless work of our academic peers.

We give thanks to the following people who generously dedicated their time and expertise to contribute to the book and provide valuable feedback through peer review.

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# VERSIONING HISTORY

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This page provides a record of changes made to this book. Each set of edits is acknowledged with a 0.1 increase in the version number. The exported files reflect the most recent version.

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