

Nicole ([00:01](#)):

Welcome to this week's episode of, into the open being a student in a course that integrated open educational practices and where I had to create an OER clearly had a huge impact on me, but I wanted to connect with other students to see if they had similar perspectives and how they really felt about open education. In this episode, I connect with Joel Templeman from Tech Manitoba. Joel was a graduate student in the second cohort of the #EdTechEthics class. Let's see how creating an OER and participating in open impacted his learning journey. Can you tell me your story of how you got involved in Open education?

Joel ([00:42](#)):

Sure. I was first introduced to the concept of it. So in class, so it was my first year Master's of education. University of Calgary went into the class, started talking about it in general, I guess, but really there wasn't, didn't wade into the water very quickly. We kind of got thrust into the idea of it, right from the beginning of the course to, you know, the, the end goal of the, of that course was to, to author a press book chapter and open educational resource in itself. So a real life project, something that was going to, to be seen by other people, but the buildup to it, like all the way through the course, we used collaborative, open concepts, right? So we were, we were our first drafts. Our ideas even were done in groups. Normally you spend a lot of time kind of in your safe little cave, coming up with ideas. And there's a big ball of papers around your feet of all the horrible ideas that you had to no one ever heard of them or saw them other than you or your dog or your immediate family. But in this case, this was like right out there, all of your horrible ideas were just thrown against the wall. And other people were commenting on them, which wasn't necessarily a bad thing. It was actually, you know, exciting. It was you know, it was really collaborative, but it was also, you know, everybody was nice about it. Obviously you're not going, you're going to be supportive and, and you're going to be helpful and suggesting, and it, it definitely, wasn't very competitive in the sense that you didn't withhold any good ideas or anything, right. Everyone could

Nicole ([02:24](#)):

You weren't worried about like someone stealing an idea or anything like that.

Joel ([02:28](#)):

It wasn't going to be, you know, a bunch of business ideas that if I tell you my secrets, you're going to run off with that. And, and I'm going to, I'm going to do that. It was, you know, people were genuinely excited about ideas or would give you real feedback about, or question you, I guess, about things. And it right from the very beginning of it, it really helped in honing your idea and not wasting time going down an avenue that you might find out wouldn't really catch on later, it was somewhat terrifying, it was somewhat uncomfortable for sure. I feel like I have a fairly good comfort level when it comes to being uncomfortable. I've been in a lot of situations in business and in education and I have a military background, so I've been, you know, I have a lifetime of being thrown overboard, figuratively, and literally, and put into tough situations. So even that this kind of pushed my comfort level a little bit, but creatively too. Right. And it was, it definitely made me try some stuff that I wouldn't have tried or write about stuff that I didn't really necessarily even know a lot about at the time and, and had to do it. And it had a really good authenticity to it. Right. The, the looming factor that this thing was going to be seen by whoever out there was kind of always in the back of everyone's mind. I think mine, for sure.

Nicole ([03:51](#)):

It's still at the back my head.

Joel ([03:53](#)):

Yeah. And it's, and there had been one that, so the year before us had done the first one, the, the complete thing, and it just came out, I guess, around that time that the class started. So, so the, the final version of this thing, that, and at the time you had no idea what it took to get there. So you just saw this polished finished, Hey, this is what you're going to need to do in a couple of weeks. And you're like, I just, I think not, I, I, you know, there's no way we're getting no, the way we're getting from where I am right now to this, uh, in any amount of time.

Nicole ([04:25](#)):

I went through the course without that example to start with, I was part of the course that did the first press book. So I didn't have a model to go by. And I remember feeling so uncomfortable. Like I just wish I had an example. So I understood what I had to do, but I'm hearing from you that was actually more terrifying and almost worse because you were looking at this thing and being like, oh, this is impossible. I'm never going to get there.

Joel ([04:50](#)):

You could see the amount of work in like that, that it was when it was done. And again, because you didn't know the process, you didn't realize that there was kind of an on-ramp to that, like, as, as steep of that is, as much of a curve as that was anyway, um, there was at least a little bit of a process. And I definitely felt if I had, you know, on the, on the negative or the anxiety side or whatever, you know, that kind of imposter syndrome, like I, no way I shouldn't be writing a chapter about anything, let alone, you know, artificial intelligence or whatever. So this is nuts. But it was interesting to be able to kind of break through that and realize that, you know, the people who finished this were equally lost at that moment. You know, when the, when they, when they started this whole thing and, and went through the same kind of journey,

Nicole ([05:37](#)):

I don't know, what's broken through that imposter, like, have you broken through that imposter syndrome? Was it a stage for me? I'm still in it. I still get nervous.

Joel ([05:47](#)):

I've given up on, just atrophied

Nicole ([05:52](#)):

Atrophy- is a good word. Yeah. I like that. Yeah. I'm still uncomfortable with the fact that it's out there floating around. Cause I'm like, oh, is that I don't, I don't know. I don't think I broke through I'm getting there.

Joel ([06:05](#)):

Well, it was, it was definitely was because again, it was my first year and I, I was not prepared. One of the reasons I was doing this was, you know, so I had a few years, I expected to be doing something, some writing in the third year, you know, like a finished thing. Okay, cool. Well,, I'll have lots of time to prepare for this and I won't have to actually have anything, you know, substandard for awhile now, so

will learn some stuff, do some small papers. And then this was like, yeah, this is going live in a couple of weeks. So hop to it. Right. It was like, sorry. Um, did you, I've got to re-introduce myself. This is not my third year. I don't know what I'm doing. So that part is still there. I, what I imagine is that five years from now, I'll go back and read it. Maybe if I can bear it, realize, you know, all the things that I could have done better or, you know, should have done better or whatever, or just to see progress, even because, you know, but I was talking to a student a while back on a completely different project, actually about podcasting. And, it was his project for a term was to learn how to do podcasting. And he said that he was waiting around, he was waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting because he just wanted it to be perfect. He was like, I can't do it yet because the intro music's not good. I can't do it yet because my logo is no good. You always have the million excuses. And he realized that he just had to kind of dive into it and do it. And that was where the learning was, was in that actual doing it.

Joel ([07:34](#)):

Yeah. The first few are going to be a mess, but you know, by the third one, by the sixth one, whatever, you're going to do it. But if you just wait around, you will never have any of them done and you won't learn anything. Right. So I think that actually describes how I felt through this process was someone getting shoved off, shoved off the deep end. Right. You know, you can swim, you don't want to get wet, but you just need that kind of shove and then get a little panicky in the beginning. And once the cold wears off, you just start to swim. Right.

Nicole ([08:07](#)):

Adapt to it. And then once you've gone through that process, the first time it's, it's still scary the second time. And I feel like, that podcast story speaks to me because it's exactly what I'm in right now. I'm a bit of a perfectionist and I could spend a hundred hours editing this. And I still feel like it's junk. But because I think I went through that, the pressbook process and put myself out there and it was terrifying. Maybe I've been desensitized. I don't know. And I'm willing to put myself through it again. So I think there is something to the process of creating and creating an open space. That's I don't know if it's, it's just motivating, but, but it definitely kicks you into the deep end that's for sure.

Joel ([08:53](#)):

Yeah. There's a proverb by heard recently. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good, um, you know, don't, don't wait around for perfection, cause it'll never happen. You won't get there. So do good work, do lots of good work. Uh, and then maybe someday you'll end up with perfect work like that. You know, if you wait around for that to be the first thing it'll never happen.

Nicole ([09:17](#)):

I need a bumper sticker with that on it then to blow it up and put it in front of my desk. That might be my big lesson takeaway from, from that press book then.

Joel ([09:29](#)):

Well, there's, there's lots of cool stuff too. Like the, the, even the idea, and this is where like technology and the digital world comes into it is that you can update it, right? Like you don't actually have to be perfect. Right? Like that. I was part of a project that edited a historical book a number of years ago and published it in print. Right. And then six months later someone goes, oh, uh, this is wrong. Like, like that, is it like for forever, there's 400 books or whatever, out there with that mistake in it, you know, enbraised in there. And you can never take that back. You can't just go back and collect those books.

Right. But because we're working in a digital environment, obviously you're going to make it as good as possible. But if there's some thing that needed to change or improved on, or another project could come along and kind of revamp something, it is, a working kind of living documents to a certain degree. And it only because it does exist,

Nicole ([10:22](#)):

That could be dangerous too, though, because if you are in that perfectionist mindset, it could be a constant going back to remit or fix or do things. I'm like, Ooh, I'm seeing both sides of that. I think it's, it is really good and you're right. You can put it out there and have other eyes on it. And I think there's power to collective knowledge building. You're never going to see everything from every perspective. So it digitally it being out there and being able to be accessed and changed and morphed and remixed, I think is a good thing. I have got to work on my imposter syndrome. Apparently

Joel ([10:57](#)):

That might be the only difference. Right. Like I think of film, both of my sons are in, in film editing and producing, motion pictures. And I've been on a lot of sets and I've worked with a lot of the directors and you can tell the pros because you know, they, they do some stuff and they set it all up and they all look the same and then they do it again and they do it again. And then they're like, that was it. Like, how do you know that was it? How do you, how do you, that was not it ! But the, but that guy over there, his foot wasn't quite right. Or that guy over there, that thing. Nope. And he just like, that was it, you know, next scene let's move on kind of thing. Right. And I think that, I think that might be it, the difference like perfectionism comes from that, you know, that lack of confidence, that voice in your head saying like, oh, there's just that one little thing.

Joel ([11:41](#)):

There's one little thing on it though. But as you do it, you know, a hundred times, a thousand times, a million times, it's, you've just, you're like, no, that it isn't getting better than that. And if I'm going to play around with it, I get just, you know, you're just back and forth. You're not necessarily making improvements. You're just making changes. So knowing, and I don't know what that is, whatever, whatever that is in writing a chapter or making a movie or whatever, like that's not a level of expertise that I have, but I think that's something that you eventually get. Is you just, I think that's the difference between, you know, the amateur or the new person who's worried about it. And the pro who's just knows when to say move it on.

Nicole ([12:17](#)):

Now that you've moved through the process of creating an OER and really been involved in open, what would you say are some downfalls, maybe from a student's perspective, are there any negatives to being involved in this or some obstacles you could see

Joel ([12:34](#)):

If you are not in the learning space, energetically and wholeheartedly, and you know, you're, you are there to pass a course, you know, you're there to check a box. This would be annoying. This was process would be like, you know what, just tell me, just tell me 10 facts, make me memorize them, give me a sheet of paper. I'll regurgitate the 10 facts you give me my mark and I want to go home. Right. I could see that this process is, is so open-ended and requires your active learning and your attention and caring and all that kind of stuff. If you're, if you're really ambivalent about, you know, the content, I guess then

that would be, I think a problem. So I think it has to just, it, it needs to match up to the students and to the topics. Like we have a lot of leeway in what we wrote about. And even what I found too is even in the way we wrote about it, you know, as long as it made it through the process of peer review and all that kind of stuff, you know, my, the, the chapter ended up very similar to my original kind of thoughts wrote lines or whatever. And I had just made that up. So, you know, that's the good side is that you've got that creativity. The problem is you have to be creative, right. It forces you to be creative when maybe

Nicole ([13:58](#)):

Yeah and want to be creative nad put in the energy

Joel ([13:59](#)):

And it is more like, it is more like one of the, one of the reasons that the classic teacher at the front 30 people in rows model exists is because it's highly efficient, not good. It's just, you know, you can, you can pump that out, like a, like a car assembly line, because it, it is efficient. This is not efficient, right. And probably not for the instructor or for the, for the staff, you're trading off efficiency for true learning. Like you're really engaged, involved the students. But, you know, I try to, I try to think of myself on the instructor side too, you've got whatever it is, 15 people, and they're writing 15 different chapters on stuff you may or may not know about. And you have to be able to give feedback and read all of that. And, you know, if you were, if you were back to the classic model, everyone would read same chapter of the same book.

Joel ([14:52](#)):

You would've read that one chapter. And when they wrote the right thing, you could say, this is right. And when they wrote the wrong thing and say, no, and you can be definitive about that. Here, people are, you know, this is the amount of information is exponentially growing. As, as independent people are researching things and writing things and all that of stuff. So, you know, it really, really breaks them. Cause it's impossible to maintain that old model where the teacher is the gateway of what is right and what is wrong, right. Then you have to, you have to, as the instructor step out of the way and become that mentor and supporter and not follower, but let the student do the leading and the learning. And, and, and, you know, you're just hurding the sheep at that point.

Nicole ([15:33](#)):

You have to be okay with not having control. I think as educators, we often are, are used to having control and you have to kind of step back and let it be messy

Joel ([15:43](#)):

Because we're set up for that, right? Like the day one of teacher school is the lesson plan and you know what the end result of the lesson plan, everyone has to hit this marker at the end of it. And then you work backwards from that and say, okay, well, we're going to do this assignment. We're going to read this thing. We're going to do this thing. And this is going to take 10 minutes. And this is all going to, and you have it all chopped up and mushed up and everything has to go. And then when it's going behind schedule, you're freaking out halfway along because you're not going to make that mark cause everyone has to pass that line. This blows that entire model out of the water because the end result is the, is the process itself. There isn't really an end result because I don't know if this was clear, but we didn't have to publish our chapter. We had to complete a chapter, you know, had to hand something in that

resembled the chapter, but that could stay between you and the instructor or, you know, we're obviously encouraged to do the full thing and publish this publicly. That was part of the process was the end product, right. Was to go through it all. And if it, if it worked, then you would have that and you would still succeed. Even if you didn't publish this thing publicly, right? You would still accomplish the task, but changes the entire light.

Nicole ([16:51](#)):

They're trying to fit it into a traditional, not completely, but a more traditional system. And that you still need a grade at the end of this. You still need to hit certain learning outcomes. And I think that's, that's hard. We're in that. In-between where our, I agree with you completely, that this blows the whole traditional design of a course out of the water, but they still have to exist in that traditional institution and fit into that mold. And I think that's quite challenging and it'll be interesting to see how it, I would just worry with sustainability. Like if you're up against a pretty ingrained system, like how much leeway do you have to fight into that? Cause we still like, we still had grades at the end of it until to get a grade.

Joel ([17:37](#)):

Yeah. And, and sustainable and scalable, which is a horrible word because it's a business where non-education ordered, right? It's uh, the, the business of education constrains and forces, these things onto the structure there, you have to have a grade, you have to be able to rank people and you have to be able to say, these people didn't make this part of, there needs to be, you know, for you to have some accreditation of this thing, you're going to give away at the end of this process. There needs to be some way of saying you achieved it and you didn't achieve it, you know, but that's the, that's the business of education. That's not the learning part of it. Right. And I think that's, they, they, you know, they go hand in hand, but one constraints the other for sure. And then scalable as well. Like this is, you know, could, could we have run our course if there was 200 of us,

Nicole ([18:28](#)):

How many instructors would you need to give feedback?

Joel ([18:32](#)):

There's not enough wine in the world to be able to, you know, you'd have to both for the, both for the instructor and for the students. It's, it's one of those things, right? It's even the groupings, right? Like we broken into smaller groups and stuff, right? Like we did a lot on our own within our groups, you know, having to share with each other or, Hey, I found this resource, you should check it out. Right? No, we weren't told at some point to do that, we were set up to these little support groups kind of thing. And we just manage them. However we wanted to, a lot of that was in other platforms, even. So the instructor wouldn't even have known that we did or didn't do that. That was just our own kind of way of doing it. But the original question was what are some downfalls, right?

Joel ([19:15](#)):

And the downfall is not, not on the learning side, it's on the business side and it is, this is difficult to scale. This is difficult to measure. This is difficult to quantify one person's journey over another person's journey. The other thing that it assumed, like the one thing about marketing is that it's denoting everyone's place in time at the end, but it doesn't take into consideration everyone's place in time at the beginning, it's not about the growth, right? It's not that I've, I've done 200% growth and you have had

some experience in this. So you want a 10% growth or no growth, whatever, you know, there's a thing, a test at the end. We both pass. We both get the same thing, hooray for all.

Nicole ([19:58](#)):

Now that you've gone through the whole process, how have you been able to, or how have you applied that to maybe your own professional context or with your work in Edtech, Manitoba?

Joel ([20:11](#)):

I had no prior experience with open educational practices, resources, even when I was teaching it wasn't really, it wasn't called that if it was anything in it, it wasn't something that was, available. And the technology wasn't necessarily there either. But something that in my, on my technical background, open source software, open projects like that, I have always been a fan of. Again, breaking the model of the commercial side of it, right? So this is not people writing code for Microsoft and selling it and licensing it and every single little add on you have to pay for and stuff. This is people saying I did this because I wanted to, or I was interested or somebody needed it. And I don't care. Here you go. It's all free. So they're not making a million dollars off of this, whatever, but that, it's a, it's a S you know, that social connected aspect, and they're doing it for their community of other technicians or whatever.

Joel ([21:03](#)):

And you like, it's when you go on to those kinds of technical blog sites saying like, Hey, I've got this broken thing and I can't fix it. And then other people are willingly on their own for no payment helping you out and giving you ideas and that kind of stuff like that. That's a community kind of thing that exists in it. And open source, open source software is akin to the open education. So, so I was, I think I was already kind of primed for it, when I experienced it. But again, from the educator kind of side of me just saw the, saw the potential in it, right? I'm, I'm already a project based learning advocate. That was the way I taught the, you know, the, just the idea of having a, a practical goal in front of you, some, some kind of a problem in front of you that you have to work on and you have to go and bring in all the different aspects of learning and things to overcome that problem.

Joel ([21:56](#)):

That's just kinda my style already. So when I, when I experienced this, this was just an add on, you know, doing some research, those types of things, and then sharing that and being able to build on other people's that was, uh, that was a big deal. It gave me a much better appreciation of, copyrights and, uh, intellectual property, even looking at who the other authors were of things, you know. Writing, writing a paper, you know, reading something and then writing a report on it or something. And you have to pull some quotes, whatever. I don't know, that's, that's kind of in personal, like, you're just, you're not really going anywhere with it. You're, you're, you're sending that to your instructor. Your instructor already read the paper, you read the paper, you're just confirming that you read the paper. So there isn't really, like, I don't really care who wrote the paper, cause you already know who wrote the book.

Joel ([22:44](#)):

Like it doesn't, you don't have that. It doesn't really have any personal, it doesn't. I don't need to know about that person who wrote that. Cause I was, I was told to read it in the first place. Right. But now I'm writing a chapter and I need to support my arguments and I go out there and I find these things what's interesting is so actually I looked into who the author was because I don't want to get, I don't want to write something, make a statement, support it with this other person's work, and then find out that



they're whatever they're contrary to it, or they're a fraud or they're, this is the one thing they wrote and everything else that they wrote was horrible. And, and, you know, like now I'm implicated in that because I didn't, you know, do my research and figure out who that was, all the biases and all those things you're told you have to do and told you have to care about, well, all of a sudden you actually do care about it because the impact is higher.

Joel ([23:32](#)):

Like if I, if I did cite an author and it only went to my instructor, my prof, you know, he, or she's going to grade it and say like, oh, this maybe, maybe not catch it at all. Or, you know, maybe make a comment. Well, the impact on that is pretty low to me. But if it goes out into the world and I'm sharing it and it, and worse, it gets like replicated itself. Someone else uses it. And whatever, you know, I'm implicated in that chain now. So where I get my sources from does have an impact on, on me, not just today, but in the future, possibly even just the risk of that makes me more motivated to care about the lineage of documents that I'm, you know, so, I mean, I've been told that for years, you know, for years, and I've respected, respected it as far as I was required to, for the, you know, for the activity, but this - this changes, things like the way that you, those are the experiences that I think were the most valuable in going through a process where you're doing, these kinds of shared documents.

Joel ([24:33](#)):

Yeah. You're, you're, you're now implicating yourself into this knowledge base and, you want to get it right?

Nicole ([24:42](#)):

Do you have any words of advice for someone who might be hesitant either from a student's perspective, if this is something that has been presented to them in class and they have the opportunity to share openly or from an instructor's perspective, if they're looking to design a course incorporating OER or OEP, is there anything you would say to them if they were a bit nervous to do? So

Joel ([25:05](#)):

I would say don't be hesitant. It's, you know, it's been labeled as something, but it really, it just comes down to being a logical way to try to engage learning in the simplest terms. And I guess you can use what you, what you want out of it, right? Like you can, this is not some, some hard core formula that you have to take it all. And in one particular way, it's an ideology that you can use aspects of it. And it it's, it's, a different way of engaging students and, and getting more authentic quality experience for them and for you. And you can, you can use parts of it without having to be, you know, of the other examples that are out there, that you don't have to do those things too. There's just, it's just a different approach at the same time.

Joel ([26:00](#)):

And I think I said this about project based learning in the past too, is that, don't do it though, if you don't have the supports to do it. If you and I, I only say that as a caution in the sense that it's a, it's a way of looking at things and it's an approach and it's a lot of work. And if you can do it by yourself, but that's unsustainable, I think from an instructor point of view, I think, to, to turn this into something, that you, you know, you can't really say, oh, I'm going to do open education by myself. And I won't talk to anybody. I mean, that's kind of defeating the purpose. The the network of people is part of part and parcel. I think of the success of it all is because you have that.



Joel ([26:45](#)):

You have other people who right from the beginning are, are not just willing to, but, you know, um, uh, advocates of sharing and supporting, and it, isn't a quid pro quo kind of, environment, right? You're not, no one's keeping tally on, on what's shared and you know, that kind of thing. So, yeah, jumping in the deep end, jump in it's the water is warm. And I think if you're going to, it depends on who you're, if you're talking to, if it's, if you have the opportunity to do a learning task as a learner using open education, then yeah. Jump in. If you are interested in engaging it in your educational practices, then maybe do one as a learner first and, and experience the process yourself. And I think that would sell it, you know, by its own merits.

Nicole ([27:47](#)):

I always love connecting with other students who have gone through and an open educational experience and gaining their perspective on it. I always love connecting with Joel because I continuously walk away with ideas for different bumper stickers. So I'll be making, don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good, if anyone's interested in one of those. And I think jump in the water's warm is another fun one for open, and it fits with a lot of the metaphors that have been running through all of these episodes. Thanks so much for joining us for this week's episode of, into the open, into the open would not be possible without the support of the #GO-GNnetwork. Just like Joel mentioned, if you're new to open education, having a solid network can help you through the process, and #GO-GN is just that network and a great place to start. If you're new to this whole world into the open was created and developed by Dr. Verena Roberts, Heather Van Struen, and myself, Nicole Neutzling until next time

Speaker 4 ([28:54](#)):

[inaudible].