

Calm Tech Choices for Open Education: *A Usability and Equity Framework for Faculty Support*

Fanny Tsai, M.S.
Instructional Designer
University of California, Irvine
Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation (DTEI)



Today's Journey



- ❖ The OER landscape at UCI: Current trends and the “shiny tool” challenge.



- ❖ The Four Lenses Framework: A practical guide for usability and equity.



- ❖ Case Studies in Action: Real-world examples from our MES and LIFTED programs.



- ❖ Reflective Practice: Applying the lenses to your own open education work.

Virtual Land Acknowledgement

We pay our respects to all Ancestors, and Elders, and to all our relatives past, present and emerging.

*We find ourselves today in Calgary
Canada:
let's acknowledge the traditional
territories of the people of the
Treaty 7 region in southern Alberta.*

*I am joining you virtually from Irvine,
California:
let's acknowledge the traditional,
ancestral, and unceded territory of the
Acjachemen and Tongva peoples.*

 Where are you joining from today? Please share your location in the chat!

The Growth of OER at UC Irvine

- **The Milestone**

Massive shift toward OER adoption.

- **The Risk**

“Shiny tool” overload

- **The Goal**

Sustainable and equitable tech choices.

34

Designated OER Courses (W26)

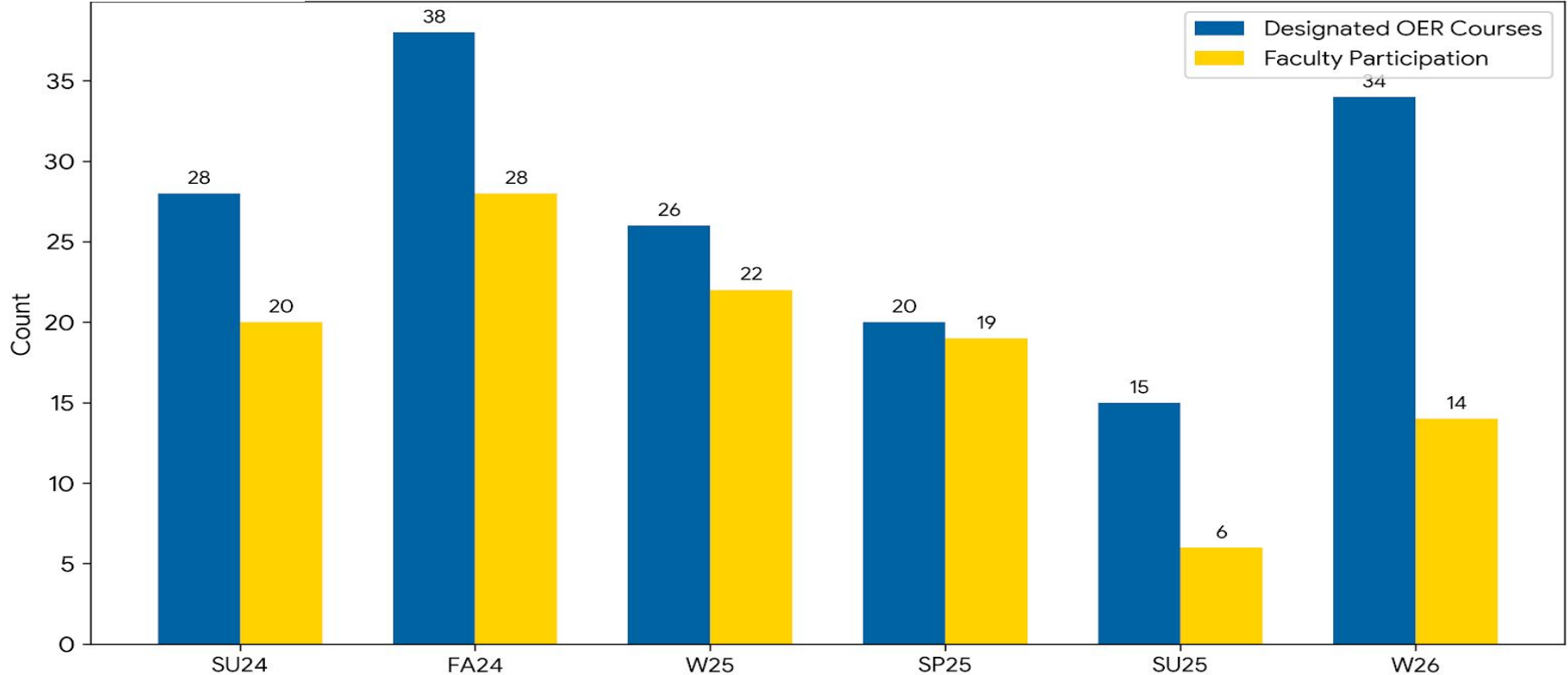
14

Active Faculty Members



OER Adoption Trends

Growth of OER Courses and Faculty Participation at UCI



Even with a data collection gap during our bookstore transition in Fall 2025, the trend is clear: faculty are consistently adopting open resources. To manage this momentum, we needed a practical decision-making structure.

The Four Lenses Framework

A practical guide to help faculty avoid “shiny tool” overload and uncover hidden barriers before a course even begins.



Access & Equity

Identifying hidden barriers like device limits and low bandwidth.



Usability

Minimizing cognitive load and navigation challenges for students.



Pedagogical Fit

Aligning technology choices directly with core learning objectives.



Sustainability

Evaluating long-term reliability and platform stability over time.

Case Study 1 - The “Open Platform” Trap

Open Platform Trap- Before: In-Person

The screenshot shows a learning management system interface with a cluttered layout. It features three main sections: 'Readings', 'Class recordings', and 'Discussion Reactions and Concept Maps'. Each section has a progress indicator (0% of Total) and a list of items. The 'Readings' section includes 'All Articles'. The 'Class recordings' section includes four links to recordings from 10/2 to 10/31. The 'Discussion Reactions and Concept Maps' section includes three weekly entries with due dates and point values.

Section	Item	Progress
Readings	All Articles	0% of Total
Class recordings	Link to Class recording 10/2	0% of Total
	Link to Class recording 10/16	0% of Total
	Link to Class recording 10/23	0% of Total
	Link to Class recording 10/31	0% of Total
Discussion Reactions and Concept Maps	Week2: Reactions and Concepts	25% of Total
	Week 3: Reactions and Concepts	25% of Total
	Week4: Reactions and Concepts	25% of Total

Cluttered - After:

The screenshot shows a learning management system interface with a clean, organized layout. It features a single column of ten items, each represented by a blue rounded rectangle with a yellow circular icon containing a week number. The items are: 1. The Learning Analytics Lifecycle, 2. Learning in Contexts, 3. Text as Data, 4. Network & Relationships, 5. Visual Learning Analytics & Interpretation, 6. Predictive Modeling & Inference, 7. Ethics Across the Lifecycle, 8. Translating Analytics for Stakeholders, 9. Presentation Gallery (Asynchronous), and 10. Reflection & The Future of Learning Analytics.

Week	Item
1	The Learning Analytics Lifecycle
2	Learning in Contexts
3	Text as Data
4	Network & Relationships
5	Visual Learning Analytics & Interpretation
6	Predictive Modeling & Inference
7	Ethics Across the Lifecycle
8	Translating Analytics for Stakeholders
9	Presentation Gallery (Asynchronous)
10	Reflection & The Future of Learning Analytics

Case Study 2: Extreme Access Barriers

The Challenge (LIFTED Program)

Incarcerated students do not have standard internet access. An instructor provided a massive, 300-page OER PDF, creating a severe usability and device barrier.

The Framework in Action

Using the Access and Pedagogical Fit lenses, we didn't just upload the PDF. We legally remixed the OER content, breaking it down into offline-friendly, native text pages within Canvas.

Result: A truly equitable learning experience that respected strict technical constraints.



Welcome to the OHRP Human Research Protection Foundational Training. The purpose of this course is to provide essential knowledge about the ethical principles and federal regulations that guide research involving human participants. This training supports the responsible conduct of research by helping investigators understand the role of IRBs, the research process, and the importance of human subjects research.

Whether you are new to research or have a foundation in research, this training is critical to your success. We hope this training supports your commitment to conducting research ethically and responsibly.

Lesson Parts (Roadmap)

1	Part 1: Institutional Assurance of Regulatory Compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none">Part 1: Institutional Assurance of Regulatory ComplianceQuiz 5 - 1a: Institutional Assurance of Regulatory CompliancePart 1: Institutional Engagement in ResearchQuiz 5 - 1b: Institutional EngagementPart 1: Institutional Certification of IRB Review and Approval of Research and External IRBs and Institutional RelianceQuiz 5 - 1c: External IRBs and Institutional Reliance
2	Part 2: Institutional Certification <ul style="list-style-type: none">Part 2: Institutional CertificationQuiz 5 - 2: Institutional Policies and Procedures and IRB Written Procedures
3	Part 3: Beyond Regulatory Compliance <ul style="list-style-type: none">Part 3: Beyond Regulatory ComplianceQuiz 5 - 3: Beyond Regulatory Compliance

How It Works

- Read:** Review the PDFs in each lesson.
- Complete:** Complete all required items to unlock the next lesson.
- Lesson Quizzes:** Each lesson ends with a quiz designed to check your understanding of the key concepts. Take the quiz at the end of each lesson. You may attempt the quiz multiple times until you reach 100% to move to the next lesson.
- Final Assessment:** After completing all lessons, you will take a **Wrap-Up Final Quiz** that includes questions from across the course.
- Passing Requirement:** Learners must score **80% or higher** on the final quiz to successfully complete the training.
- Attempts:** Multiple attempts are allowed.

Important Note About External Resources: Some documents included in this course reference videos or external web links from the original OHRP material. These external resources are not

Key Consultation Takeaways



Four-Lens Framework

A four-lens framework for evaluating open education tools.



Surface Barriers Early

A practical way to surface student access and usability considerations early.



Guide Conversations

Simple questions that guide faculty through open assignment and OER decisions.



Equity & Sustainability

Awareness of common equity and sustainability barriers during tool selection.

Which Lens Resonates With Your Work?



- **Access & Equity:** Does this tool create a barrier for students with limited internet or specific device constraints?
- **Usability:** Does the interface reduce cognitive load, or is it a "shiny tool" that complicates navigation?
- **Pedagogical Fit:** Does the technology directly support the learning objective, or is it an unnecessary layer?
- **Sustainability:** Can this resource be legally remixed and maintained over time without "breaking"?



Thank You!

Thank you for participating and exploring calm tech design with me.

Email: shufent@uci.edu