

**LEARNING THROUGH SHARING :  
OPEN RESOURCES, OPEN PRACTICES, OPEN COMMUNICATION**

**Open Resources, Open Practices:  
professional conversations with language teachers**

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***Abstract:***

Over the past decade more and more Open Educational Resources have been made available for teaching and learning. The use and reuse of OER for teaching and learning, however, also triggers changes in the practices of teaching professionals.

This paper draws on the experience of setting up a repository of OER for language teachers at the Department of Languages at the UK Open University. The collection (Languages Open Resources Online, [www.loro.open.ac.uk](http://www.loro.open.ac.uk)), has over 1500 resources published by the Department and by individual teachers. In the three years since the repository was set up, we have been working with teachers on initiatives to promote sharing and more open practices.

One of the difficulties of working with open resources and open practices is, however, as Beetham (2011) puts it, that “the open is the enemy of the knowable” – investigating open practices is indeed not without difficulty. This study builds on the idea of Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) as a collaborative, developmental activity (Bell, 2005), which has lately been adapted to teaching in blended environments (Hatzipanagos and Lygo-Baker 2006, Bennett and Barp, 2008 Swinglehurst et al, 2008), and uses it as a tool through which to conduct professional conversations with teachers about why and how they use OER in their teaching.

In the study, ten language teachers of French, Spanish and Italian for beginners were interviewed before a lesson to observe how they selected and adapted OER for their teaching. After the lesson, the teachers were interviewed again, reflected on their teaching, and engaged in a professional conversation with the researcher with the aim of making their tacit knowledge and their reflections in and on action in the context of using OER more explicit.