## Project Information

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<tr>
<th><strong>Project Acronym</strong></th>
<th>LORO</th>
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<td><strong>Project Title</strong></td>
<td>Languages Open Resources Online</td>
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<td><strong>Lead Institution</strong></td>
<td>The Open University</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Document Title</strong></th>
<th>Environmental Assessment</th>
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<td>Carmen Tomás, consultant (<a href="mailto:carmen.tomas@ntu.ac.uk">carmen.tomas@ntu.ac.uk</a>)</td>
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Languages Open Resources Online (LORO)

Environmental Assessment

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# Table of contents

Table of contents..........................................................................................i  
List of tables .................................................................................................1  
Executive summary ......................................................................................2  
Project background, context and rationale.....................................................3  
Method ........................................................................................................4  
Participants ..................................................................................................6  
Ethical procedures and consent .....................................................................7  
Data analysis .................................................................................................7  
Results: The questionnaire and focus groups .............................................9  
The tutor profile ..........................................................................................9  
The ICT use and expertise of language tutors in the OU .........................9  
Teaching materials: preferred sources, reuse and storage .......................11  
Sharing of materials: previous experiences ..............................................14  
Attitudes to sharing own materials .............................................................15  
Encouraging qualities of a repository ..........................................................16  
Discouraging qualities of a repository ........................................................17  
Concept and previous experience of language repositories ....................19  
Preferred functions of a repository .............................................................21  
Ground rules of a repository .........................................................................23  
Summary of findings and discussion ...........................................................26  
Recommendations .......................................................................................30  
Training needs ............................................................................................31  
Appendices .................................................................................................32  
Appendix I The questionnaire ....................................................................32  
Appendix II The focus groups .....................................................................39  
Appendix III Participants: profiling information .......................................41  
Bibliography ...............................................................................................42
List of tables

Table 1 ICT use 10
Table 2 Ability to perform ICT-related tasks 11
Table 3 Sources of materials and frequency 12
Table 4 Modification of teaching materials and frequency 13
Table 5 Storage of materials 13
Table 6 Sharing of materials and modes 14
Table 7 Encouraging factors to use a repository 16
Table 8 Discouraging qualities of a repository 17
Table 9 Previous experience of language repositories 19
Table 10 Functions of a repository 21
Table 11 Ground rules 23
Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the initial evaluation exercise to establish the range of experience and views of Open University (OU) languages tutors in their development and sharing of teaching materials. This evaluation exercise precedes the official launch of an OU institutional language materials repository (LORO Languages Open Materials Online). This evaluation seeks to support the project by providing a snapshot of the attitudes, practices of language tutors in the OU towards sharing resources and using such an online method.

The evaluation exercise has consisted of two phases. The first phase consisted in an online questionnaire filled in by approximately one third of the total number of language tutors. The second phase consisted in a series of focus groups. 33 participants took part in focus groups.

The questionnaire responses and the focus group discussions reveal the following key points (see results and summary sections at the end of the report):

- Language tutors in the OU are confident in the main with using a range of ICT tools. Despite this, there are applications that are not widely used and tutors might need help and support in using Web 2.0 type of applications.
- At present there is not an established culture of sharing teaching materials amongst tutors.
- There are some misconceptions about language repositories being traditional websites with activities on them.
- Language materials repositories are used outside of the OU by a small percentage of tutors.
- Language materials repositories are used in the main to borrow resources and much less to upload and share resources.
- Reasons for not using language materials repositories relate to the absence of awareness of their existence, confusion or lack of awareness of their affordances and also other issues to do with confidence and needing skills to use them.
- Despite these facts, it was found a large proportion of tutors who have a clearly positive and welcoming attitude to a system that will enable learning from others, obtaining feedback on materials and discussions for professional development has been found. This was even clearer in discussions around an institutional repository. The opportunity to make resources that are tailored to specific needs of OU courses is a very important factor for tutors.
- There are recurrent issues and barriers to sharing that concern tutors: time, lack of remuneration, trust and ethical issues, poor quality of resources, potential issues in acknowledging authorship.
- Ground rules are an issue where no overall group consensus was found. There are divergent views that range from highly controlled central regulation to those who, on issues such as authorship and quality, reflect a more organic approach relying on existing professionalism within the institution. There are a range of concerns regarding regulation of several issues and if not regulation, there needs to be a code of practice dealing with potential scenarios that might put authors at a disadvantage.
Project background, context and rationale

The LORO (Languages Open Materials Online) project is an initiative funded by JISC. The OU is the leading institution. As partners to this project, the University of Southampton have customised an existing language repository (Language Box) to suit the OU. The project is directed by Anna Comas-Quinn and is located in the Department of Languages (DoLs). The DoLs provides 7 languages in total (German, French, Spanish, Italian, English, Welsh, and Chinese). It has over 7000 students.

The mode of learning in the OU is supported distance learning that comprises materials plus tutorial support by a tutor who also marks and provides feedback on the assignments. The OU is organised into regions and tutors teaching for the same course may not necessarily meet since they teach in different regions. There is a central course team for each module that coordinates, regulates and produces the distance learning materials and assessment. Although orchestrated by a central course team, the same courses are tutored nationally by different tutors. There are obvious issues of duplication of work in that all tutors create their own materials and there are very few opportunities to share and discuss tutorial materials with other colleagues.

Historically, the sharing of materials in the OU language tutor community has evolved in parallel with the introduction of technology as a mode of tutorial delivery. The development of tutorial materials when all courses were face to face was up to the tutors. With the adoption of online conferencing systems such as Lyceum (in 2002) the central course teams have sought to support language tutors by creating and distributing teaching materials via the course websites or in CDs. In this way, materials are only available to the course tutors and the systemic sharing and distributing of teaching materials in the DoLs have been unidirectional and top-down. Normally, the materials distributed by central course teams are restricted for the use of language tutors in a specific language course. Other initiatives to share materials and spread good practice involving the wider tutor community have varied largely depending on the regional centre and the course. These initiatives have been relatively small scale, reaching a small group of tutors and only for limited periods of time. The levels of success have varied according to region and course. The lack of sustained and larger scale initiatives presupposes some limits and constraints in the development of a culture of sharing of materials amongst language tutors.

LORO (Language Open Materials Online) is a language resource repository designed to provide an online platform to allow all language tutors in DoLs to view, store, share and manage tutorial materials for all language courses. LORO is centralised, it will be accessible to all language tutors and represents a sustained initiative that will provide a permanent platform. These features present a different approach to previous modes of sharing teaching materials in the DoLs. These features overcome some of the problems found with preceding initiatives that did not achieve a great impact due to being localised sharing initiatives (i.e. regional). At present, the delivery through course websites, due to technical constrains, is exclusive to the tutors in a particular course. LORO overcomes the limits of course websites by offering an opportunity to access materials from any level and any language. Most importantly, the establishment of LORO as a central and sustained platform might contribute to
building a nationwide community of language tutors that share and discuss good practice. Its design is based on the Language Box model inspired on features familiar in Web 2.0 technologies. The rationale is that this helps to overcome some of the technological problems of other language repositories in the past (Millard, Howard et al. 2009).

The repository opens an unprecedented opportunity for ALs to share language teaching materials with other tutors nationwide and via an established, centralised and permanent online system. The current report presents an evaluation that is being conducted alongside the development and implementation of LORO to gather information on tutors’ current practices, ranges of experience and views on sharing of teaching materials in general but also through language repositories. The information gathered will be used to inform decisions in the project and to provide a guide on the training needs of users.

The evaluation exercise seeks to answer the following questions:

1 Who are our tutors?
2 How much ICT expertise do they have?
3 How do tutors manage their materials?
4 Do tutors share materials? How do they share and reuse teaching materials?
5 What do tutors know about repositories?
6 What do tutors expect about repositories?
7 What are the barriers and issues that concern tutors in the use of repositories?
8 What are the views of tutors in relation to ground rules of a repository?

**Method**

Prior to the official launch of LORO in the DoLs, an evaluation has been conducted to establish the range of experience and views on using online language resource repositories. It sought to elicit attitudes towards reusing them and sharing of own materials in general and via language repositories. In order to obtain information on these central issues, the first step has consisted in an online questionnaire to provide an initial index. Focus groups with a subset of questionnaire tutors have been also designed to provide deeper insights into the same set of issues but equally to validate the data.

*Questionnaire: purpose and design*
The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain background information and an overview of the range of backgrounds, expertise, experience and views of ALs in different areas. An online questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the following aspects:

- personal information (Questions 1 – 5)
- use of different IT-based applications to source teaching materials (Questions 6, 7 and 8);
- common reuse of materials from others (Question 9);
- modes of storing material (Question 10)
- experience of sharing own materials (Question 11);
- attitudes to sharing own materials (Question 12);
- expectations of a language repository qualities (Questions 13, 14, 16) and ground rules (Question 17);
- experience of language repositories (Question 15)

The types of questions and elicitation modes used were varied. The full questionnaire can be seen in Appendix I. Different type of questions and modes of elicitation of information included closed lists of pre-specified items were used in many cases and were complemented with open comment boxes to gain further insights. Other types of responses were multiple answers of pre-specified closed lists where tutors were asked to select three most important options. These were also complemented with an open comment box. Open comment boxes on their own were used in one question (Question 12) as this was aimed at gathering attitudes toward sharing. The last two questions in the questionnaire requested voluntary participation in a set of focus groups to follow up on issues elicited from the questionnaire. A small payment of £30 was offered for participation in the follow up focus group.

The questionnaire was distributed online in order to reach a national pool of tutors nationally. Despite reaching a large amount of tutors there are known shortcomings with this mode of delivery. This does not guarantee a response from all tutors and there are known shortcomings like the technical difficulties experienced resulting in a number of incomplete questionnaires. This mode of delivery might presuppose a bias on the sample since quite naturally those with a positive attitude towards technology or sympathetic towards the project goals might be more likely to respond. This might have had an impact on the sample. The possible implications on the sample are discussed below (see Participants section).

Focus groups: purpose and design

The purpose of the focus groups was to triangulate questionnaire responses as well as expand and provide deeper insights into key themes.

The discussion was conducted using Elluminate which is an online conferencing system to allow tutors from different regions to meet and discuss key topics. Elluminate is a relatively recent tool introduced in the OU. Prior to starting discussions, to warrant full participation, an overview of key features of Elluminate was presented to tutors followed by practising using the microphone, the chat program and voting facilities.
A set of questions were written on PowerPoint in a presentation mode to help guide the discussion and present the questions written to the group (see Appendix II for focus group agenda and stimuli). They key issues covered were:

- Normal uses of internet in preparing their teaching materials to start tutors discussing their experiences
- Notions and concept of language repository
- Uses of a language repository: reasons for use, regularity of use and specific applications
- Expectations of functionalities of a language repository (in general);
- Expectations of LORO
- Notions of how quality control should take place
- Teaching materials and authorship: notions and views
- Teaching materials and copyright issues: notions.

Three groups of eleven tutors each were recruited from the pool of questionnaire participants. The duration of the online focus groups was approximately of one hour and a half. The same topics for group discussion were presented in the same way to all three groups and this would allow for triangulation of the responses across the three groups rendering a group view.

The medium deployed, Elluminate involves online connection and this affects at times the quality of the transmission of voice. It is likely that participating members may at times not hear others. An online chat program is part of Elluminate and this was used as part of the discussion as it was difficult to have all eleven participating members contributing at once. The chat and spoken discussion both took place in parallel to record responses from participants. The chat responses were invited and then revisited by the moderator to prompt further discussions on emerging views on the chat.

Recording of the entire focus groups sessions were done via Elluminate. This recorded the complete session showing the screen and tutors interactions as they occurred. Additional screen captures were taken for back up purposes. The online chat text that occurred during the focus groups was also saved separately immediately after the session.

**Participants**

An invitation via email to take part in the online questionnaire was sent to 330 language tutors in the OU. The invitation included an explanation of the overarching goals of the research exercise and a link to the online questionnaire. The questionnaire was open for a period of two weeks and a reminder was sent one week prior to closure of the questionnaire. A total of 129 tutors filled in the questionnaire voluntarily. Questionnaires were anonymous. The sample was random and self-selected as all language tutors had an equal chance to participate.

Focus group participation was requested as a follow up to tutors from the questionnaire. A total of 33 tutors agreed to take part in the focus groups voluntarily. A minor payment was offered to tutors since focus group sessions were expected to last at least one hour and a half. The sample of focus group tutors was self-selected.
and could bear a bias since Elluminate was the announced medium and it might have
discouraged those who are not familiar with the tool.

Both the online questionnaire and Elluminate focus groups, the electronic medium
could bias the representativeness of the sample offering the views of those who are
more positive or open to using online tools. Despite this possible bias, within the OU
institutional context, email and online conferencing tools for meeting are used
frequently and progressively are becoming the default modes of communication. In
this sense, the bias would be minimal.

**Ethical procedures and consent**

In the invitations sent to tutors to take part in the online questionnaire and in the focus
groups the nature of the project and intended uses of the data were explained to the
tutors.

Prior to starting recording in the focus group sessions, language tutors were taken
through all the features of Elluminate to enable them to contribute fully. Following
this, the purposes of the project and the session, and the modes of recording were
explained. After this they were asked for their consent to voluntarily take part. This
was recorded for future reference.

**Data analysis**

*Data analysis: Questionnaire*

The results of the questionnaire are presented as percentages of responses in different
categories for the pre-specified options. In this report these are analysed in a
descriptive manner. The responses are ranked on some occasions and in others the top
three choices are identified. Comments from the open comment boxes that
complemented this type of questions are also reported.

Where responses requested that tutors stated the three most important aspects, the
analysis will present the factors ranked in the three top positions as an index of the
view of the majority.

In the case of question 12 where the elicitation mode was an open comment box,
responses were coded and quantified as will be described in the description to the
report of results of that question.

Percentages are worked out on the basis of the total number of participants (129).
However, given certain irregularities in the completion of questionnaires, different
questions in the questionnaire were filled in by different numbers. The percentages
are worked out on the basis of the total number of participants in each question. All
the percentages obtained are rounded to the nearest whole number.

*Data analysis: Focus groups*
The data from the focus groups was transcribed and the chat discussions also saved for analysis. The analysis of focus groups’ verbal data is thematic. After establishing the key issues perceived as significant, all three groups are contrasted to establish to what extent there is an overall group agreement or where there are divergent stances and the nature of these. The analysis then seeks to discern where group views prevail and the nature and range of diverse points of view. Finally, the focus groups themes and responses will be contrasted with questionnaire results to integrate them in the final discussion of findings.

The numbers of participants fluctuated throughout sessions due to several technical reasons (loosing connection, not hearing amongst others). The analysis presents distinctions on consensual perspectives and those issues where there is less group agreement. In this case individuals and divergent views are presented. Participant numbers are used since it is not possible to work out a reliable percentage. The analysis seeks to identify prevailing group views and the range of points of view and experiences.
Results: The questionnaire and focus groups

In the following sections the results from the questionnaire and the three focus group sessions are reported. These are reported jointly under the common themes explored.

The tutor profile

Responses to the online questionnaire were collected from 129 out of the initial 330 language tutors that had been invited to fill in the questionnaire. Questions 1 to 5 elicited background information on the questionnaire participants. The complete details are presented in Appendix III. The sample was representative of all language courses in different presentations (face to face and online course presentations). Some of the tutors also had experience of teaching different levels or other presentation, face to face or online.

The sample of tutors was comprised by tutors at different stages of experience of OU tutoring. 70 per cent of the tutors were experienced tutors who had worked for the OU for three years and more. The remaining 30 per cent were in the first year or second year of employment with the OU. This ensures that the responses cover a range of levels of experience.

The composition of tutors presents a mixed make up of different employment situations. A 17 per cent the OU is their only employment. A 60 per cent of tutors teach in other HE and adult education institutions which provides them with experience of other educational settings. A ten per cent teach in primary and secondary contexts. Finally, a thirteen per cent work in other employment not related to teaching.

The sample of tutors represents a 40 per cent of the total number of language tutors in the OU. The profiling responses show that the sample of tutors would bring a range of perspectives from different levels of experience in teaching and situations within the OU and from other institutions.

The ICT use and expertise of language tutors in the OU

The responses to Question 6 present responses related to the ICT tools and applications generally available to tutors and their use. Question 7 obtained self-perceived responses on the level of ability in relation to ICT of language tutors and the tools most used.

Language tutors were given a list of OU tools and generic ICT based tools in Question 6. They were asked to select as many as they used normally in their work as an OU language tutor. Table 1 shows in descending order the group responses. The three top applications used are TutorHome (an OU closed virtual environment with access to course websites, student information, and all other administration related and materials), an electronic system for coursework submission (e-TMA system), and thirdly, course websites. These three applications were used by over 95 per cent of tutors.
The middle positions in the rank (four to seven in Table 1) show that between 50 and 65 per cent of participating language tutors use the following applications: Audacity; Lyceum; First Class forums; Audio recording. These are online tools that have been available in the past 7 years.

Elluminate and StudentHome are used by just over a third of language tutors. Elluminate is a relatively recent development in the OU which was introduced in 2009 and is being gradually introduced in courses. StudentHome is the equivalent to TutorHome for students, with all administration, course information and materials in one virtual environment.

The applications used the least are (in descending order): Moodle forums in course websites; OU Library; Blogs and Wikis. The last two applications in this list are also gradually being introduced at present.

Table 1 ICT use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank position</th>
<th>Which of the following OU tools or sites do you currently use in your work as an Associate Lecturer? (tick all that apply)</th>
<th>Response percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tutorhome</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>eTMA system</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Course website</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Audacity</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lyceum</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>FirstClass forums</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Audio Recording Tool</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Studenthome</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Elluminate</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Moodle forums in course websites</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>OU Library</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Wikis</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 7 elicited data on self-reported levels of confidence of language tutors in relation to performing a range of ICT-related tasks. Table 2 below shows the responses to the question and these have been ranked in descending order. The skills that most tutors are able to perform (performed by 90 per cent or more) were word processing, searching the Internet, handling audio files and texting from a mobile. The second tier of skills (positions 5 to 9 in Table 2) relates to tasks that two thirds or more of the tutors could perform. These included using PowerPoint, uploading photos taken with a camera; using spreadsheets and using Lyceum.

Positions 10 to 20 show the range of skills in which the level of self-perceived ability is lower, with larger proportions of language tutors that never tried or would need help in performing those tasks. The applications in this category are largely Web 2.0 type applications: online community platforms or social networking, blogs, wikis, management of audio files, videoconferencing and the use of online tutoring tools (Lyceum and Elluminate). Table 2 offers the complete overview of the most widely used to those less used applications.
### Table 2 Ability to perform ICT-related tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank position</th>
<th>Are you able to do the following?</th>
<th>Yes percent</th>
<th>With help percent</th>
<th>No/Never tried percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>create and save a word processed document</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>search for a site using Google or another search engine</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>create and save an audio file</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>use text messaging on a mobile phone</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>create and save a presentation (such as powerpoint)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>upload photos taken with a digital camera</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>create and save a spreadsheet</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>create and use a Lyceum screen</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>send an instant message</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>use skype to make or take a phone call</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>use online community platforms or social networking sites (such as Facebook)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>use a webcam to take part in a video conference</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>connect to the internet using wifi</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>add entries to a wiki</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>locate tunes and make playlists on an MP3 player</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>create a blog</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>create and use an Elluminate screen</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>connect to the internet with a mobile phone</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>upload your own videos to YouTube</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>use social bookmarking tools (such as Delicious)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teaching materials: preferred sources, reuse and storage

In this section responses to Questions 8 to 10 in the questionnaire are presented profiling aspects of the management of teaching materials. The preferred sources for teaching materials, ways in which tutors reuse materials from others and how they store their materials are detailed below.

Language tutors were asked to state the frequency (always, often, sometimes or never) with which they used materials from a closed list of possible sources (Question 8). Table 3 shows the percentages of responses to these. The *often* and *sometimes* responses have been combined into one representing regular frequency.

Table 3 data suggests that the largest percentages of language tutors tend to prefer obtaining materials from Course Teams and their own materials always or often.

The internet (both general sites and language specific), textbooks or materials they created for another job if not always, they are regular sources of materials. Despite
this, a small proportion of tutors never use the internet (neither general nor language specific sites) in their material preparation. The least preferred modes of obtaining materials are the Staff tutors in the regions and the OU library.

Table 3 Sources of materials and frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In my work as an AL for the OU, I get my teaching materials from…</th>
<th>Always percent</th>
<th>*Often-sometimes percent</th>
<th>Never percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the course team</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create my own materials from scratch</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the internet (general sites)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the internet (languages-specific sites)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my other job (what I’ve prepared for another institution)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages textbooks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other ALs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the OU library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Staff Tutor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*combined percentage of responses to some times or often

Focus groups: use of the internet in preparing tutorial teaching materials

The focus groups gathered more detailed information about the preferred uses of internet in preparing teaching materials. In discussions with all three groups most language tutors use internet for the following purposes:

- To obtain pictures to serve as visual stimulus for discussions or worksheets;
- To source authentic language samples from generic websites (newspapers, weather information);
- Specific language websites for materials (on specific grammar points, BBC site) or help (online dictionaries, grammar reference)

Occasionally, tutors referred to the medium of the tutorial as part of their need for specific types of materials. For example, in the group 1 having to prepare Lyceum slides was a reason to source pictures (via Google). Similarly, the web-tour facility in Elluminate opened the opportunity to show YouTube videos to students as part of tutorials in Elluminate. Although internet is used in the preparation of tutorials for face to face presentations, it appears that the different modes of presentation motivated the use or search for different resource types and formats.

Another common use of the internet is to support students in their independent study and this was indicated in all three groups by tutors. Tutors normally send useful web-links (for grammar points, to practice listening of authentic language). Others encouraged the exchange amongst students of useful links. One tutor has built a language resource repository for students in other non-OU teaching work.

A few cases indicated that some tutors do not use the internet in preparing teaching materials. One indicated not knowing how to use internet. Two further cases (in group 3) indicated that materials provided by Course Teams were sufficient.
**Material reuse**

Question 9 sought to elicit types of reuse of OU teaching materials provided by Course Teams. Language tutors were asked to state the frequency with which they reuse OU materials provided by course teams and for a range of reasons (Question 9). The largest proportion of responses reflects that modification of materials is frequent for all the range of reasons provided. Between 68 and 80 per cent of language tutors reuse the materials for all the reasons provided (to suit group, to update it, to suit personal style) regularly (see column often or sometimes in Table 4). Although the responses show that modification of materials is a common practice, there are regular occasions (often/sometimes) in which language tutors may use materials provided by the OU without modification (68 per cent).

The lowest percentages in the table reveal that very rarely tutors use OU teaching materials without modifying them. Only a 5 per cent of tutors stated that they never modify what the OU provides. 21 per cent stated that they always modify what the OU provides.

In the open comment section to Question 9, other reasons for modifying OU provided teaching materials were elicited. The comments revealed further reasons to modify the provided materials like to suit the length of tutorials, to simplify or enrich them. Some tutors commented on not being aware that Course Teams provided materials.

Finally, Question 10 elicited the modes in which language tutors prefer to store tutorial materials. Tutors were asked to select preferred modes of storing materials from a list. Responses to these are shown in Table 4. Most tutors store materials both electronically and on paper (69 per cent). A smaller percentage relies solely on the electronic medium for storage (30 per cent). Only one participant stores materials on paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you use OU tutorial materials provided course teams?</th>
<th>Always percent</th>
<th>*Often-sometimes percent</th>
<th>Never percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use what the OU provides without modification</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I modify what the OU provides to suit my group</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I modify what the OU provides to update it</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I modify what the OU provides to suit my style</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*combined percentage of responses to some times or often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you store your teaching materials at the moment?</th>
<th>Response percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On paper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronically</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both on paper and electronically</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sharing of materials: previous experiences

Tutors were prompted with a list of different ways of sharing their own materials in Question 11. They were asked to state Yes or No to each of the options which are detailed in Table 6 below. A large proportion of responses (74 per cent) reveals that tutors do not often share their materials. Most sharing happens in a reactive manner. 87 per cent of tutors share only if this is requested. The second preferred mode of sharing teaching materials is at a personal and private level (58 per cent) (i.e. sharing with certain colleagues implying that they are chosen colleagues). Forums and staff development events have provided a platform for sharing materials however, only a 36 per cent of tutors have actually shared materials in this way.

The language repositories were the least frequent mode of sharing own teaching materials. Prior experience of language repository use as a medium of sharing materials with others is the least popular mode. 95 per cent of language tutors have never used this mode of sharing.

Table 6 Sharing of materials and modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following OU tools or sites do you currently use in your work as an Associate Lecturer? (tick all that apply)</th>
<th>Yes percent</th>
<th>No percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I send them if somebody asks me</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share them with certain colleagues</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I offer them to colleagues (through forums or at staff development events)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often share my teaching materials</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I send them to my regional/national centre</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I upload them to a teaching materials repository (Jorum, for example)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question also offered an open comment space to elicit additional issues around sharing materials. A total of nineteen tutors offered further insights on issues relating to own resource sharing. These reveal further barriers, aspects on modes of sharing and further reasons for not sharing.

Some tutors’ comments revealed barriers to sharing as reservations:

- **The role of personal contact (face to face)**
  Four tutors indicated that face to face development meetings had been followed by sharing and the absence of these is a reason for sharing becoming less frequent.

- **Reactive rather than proactive willingness to share**
  Two tutors commented on the fact that they had never been prompted to share materials.

- **Practical concerns: remuneration, time, easy to use system**
  Three tutors commented on the implications of uploading materials and the need for a user friendly interface of a repository, the issue of remuneration and time spent in this activity.

- **Lack of awareness**
  Three tutors indicated that the reason for not sharing was the lack of awareness or knowledge and not a lack of interest in doing so.

- **Course teams**
One tutor perceived that course teams have taken the lead in distributing materials.

The mode and medium for sharing, the nature of the platforms and initiatives present a potential barrier to sharing:

- **Sporadic opportunities to share in the OU**
  Two tutors indicated having taken part in ad-hoc projects to share at some point in their tutoring work.

- **Continuous sharing on repositories and wikis outside of the OU**
  Two tutors indicated that they regularly upload on a generic repository and a wiki.

Further comments revealed that the problem in using online repositories might be one of lack of clarity of their use and applications. For example, one tutor perceived that creating tutorials for face to face tutorials might conflict with the idea of an online repository.

**Attitudes to sharing own materials**

Question 12 provides further insights into sharing own teaching materials which were elicited in an open manner. Tutors were asked to express their feelings about sharing out their teaching materials. The responses presented a range of positive, negative and neutral responses:

- **Positive attitude**
  A 57 per cent of language tutors feel positive about sharing materials.

- **Positive but with conditions**
  A 24 per cent of participants expressed a positive attitude but also specified certain conditions for them to share. The conditions expressed by more than one tutor were:
  - Reciprocity was perceived as an issue by ten per cent of tutors
  - Being recognised as an author was indicated by a six per cent of tutors
  - Obtaining feedback was an important condition for a five per cent of tutors.

Other reasons mentioned but by one tutor only were:

- Access by students to the repository would need to be a condition
- Time and incentives were highlighted by one respondent who felt that the extra work might be a barrier to sharing
- Welcoming discussion. One respondent expressed that although preferring own materials, the aspect to discuss materials with others could be a basis for sharing.

- **Negative feeling about sharing**

A smaller percentage of the responses revealed clear negative feelings about sharing. A 10 per cent of tutors felt negatively about sharing due to trust issues about tutors that they do not know personally. Time and payment were perceived as a discouraging factor.
• Neutral attitude
A four per cent of the tutors revealed a neutral attitude towards sharing. This section expressed no feelings or reactions.

One last comment referred to there being sufficient materials provided by the Course Teams. The implication being perhaps that there was no need to create more materials.

**Encouraging qualities of a repository**

In Question 13 tutors were presented with a set of five pre-specified choices and they were asked to select three most important. The group responses reveal that the three most preferred qualities that a repository should include are presented in Table 7 below. These are ranked in order of the percentages of responses. The last two rows in Table 7 present other factors that were perceived as important but by much lower percentages of tutors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following would encourage you to use a repository?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A user friendly online system that is easily accessible and quick to use</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to the creation of a large, frequently used collection of materials</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An effective way of storing, reviewing and linking to or referencing my materials</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being identified clearly as the creator</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to publish and take down my own materials</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to the open comment sections offer insights into a wider set of issues:
- Five tutors indicated remuneration as solely the reason for them to participate;
- Another tutor indicated being given the time to do this work;
- Other repository specific functions were highlighted such as an effective system to locate materials was indicated by one tutor;
- Another set of concerns and values are in the ethical dimension. Two tutors highlighted the idea of reciprocity.

Finally, one participant indicated that nothing would encourage him or her to share materials.

**Focus Groups: Reasons for using a repository and issues**

The focus groups elicited in an open manner positive prior experiences. Using a repository was perceived positively for the following reasons:
- sources of inspiration and ideas
- learn from others
- benefit students
- save time and adapt (rather than reinvent)
- useful for specific points (how to motivate groups, specific grammar points).
However, a set of discouraging issues experienced in the past were also expressed:

- poor search facilities: difficult to find what you need, slow and time consuming
- poor quality of materials, formulaic, stereotypical
- no reviews by users.

**Discouraging qualities of a repository**

A pre-specified list of eight discouraging factors to use a language repository was presented in Question 14. Tutors were asked to select three most important to them (i.e. most discouraging factors). According to group responses, the top three factors to discourage use of a repository were (in order of importance) appear in the first three rows with the highest percentages.

Table 8 Discouraging qualities of a repository

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following would discourage you from making your materials available to others? (tick the three most important to you)</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A complicated, hard to use or slow system</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People appropriating my stuff without acknowledgment</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People misusing my stuff, e.g. adapting inappropriately</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure that I have copyright clearance before sharing can be a problem</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lose control over what happens with my materials</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like to place my own work in a public area</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t trust the technology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t want others to use my stuff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The open comments space invited further insights into other issues that may be important discouraging factors. It is important to highlight that in five cases it was indicated that tutors did not perceive sharing as problematic or were not too concerned but questionnaire required some answers.

The discouraging factors indicated were:

- time
Six tutors mentioned time spent as a possible discouraging factor.

- system aspects
Three tutors further reinforced the most important aspect highlighted in the closed list responses. A good system, reliable, kept up to date, with good access to information were further commented in this section. In fact, one respondent further mentioned that this was the only important factor.

- relevance of own materials
Three tutors indicated the issue of relevance of own materials to others (and vice versa) as a possible discouraging factor. One of these tutors further expanded on the limited reusability of language teaching materials as opposed to other subjects.

- **remuneration**
Three participants revealed concerns about payment for contributing to a repository. One participant also highlighted lack of payment as an issue and the perception of other additional costs such as electricity and internet.

- **reciprocity**
Two tutors commented on the importance of others contributing too.

- **authorship**
Two comments related to issues of authorship. One referred to the expectation to be acknowledged. The second comment reveals a more specific scenario in the reuse of materials:

> "Seeing my name in materials that are loosely based on what I create but do not keep to its spirit"

- **other**
Finally, one last comment related to a specific scenario. One’s materials being used with students by other ALs before the author may discourage sharing.

**Focus groups: Reasons for not using a repository**

The focus groups opened up a discussion about discouraging factors in using a repository. Some of the reasons for a number of tutors for not using a repository related, in all three groups, to the lack of awareness of their existence as well as the lack of knowledge on how to do so or even not ever having been invited.

Other reasons and concerns commonly expressed for not using a repository were:

- **time**
- **copyright issues**: uncertainty about using pictures and materials without permission
- **formality**: too formal a structure and too heavy might be discouraging
- **no personal link**
- **not so many materials found for some languages** (e.g., Italian).

In group 3, it was agreed by half of the group that the materials provided by course teams and the OU were sufficient as there was already enough material. However this was expressed from the point of view and expectation that students would access repositories and there was a perceived conflict since OU students already have a large amount of self-study materials.

**Focus groups: reasons and barriers in contributing to repositories**

Focus groups discussions revealed that although in all groups some tutors were familiar with language resource repositories, not all of those who were familiar with
them had actually contributed with their own materials to repositories. The discussions then sought to elicit the reasons for contributing or not doing so.

The reasons for contributing largely overlap with those stated above for using them but with some other details:
- learning from others
- benefitting students
- enjoy sharing: specially tutors who had noted that they had found useful materials found it important to share their own
- save time to other tutors
- find out about how useful your materials are to others.

The issues experienced by some that deterred them from further use were:
- complicated and difficult systems (e.g. examples quoted in which tutors were not granted access to upload directly)
- after all effort invested they did not feel that it had been useful or repository had been used
- never found benefits and therefore stopped sharing own materials.

In all three groups, there were a high number of tutors who had never contributed to the repositories with their own materials. The reasons for not contributing are presented below in descending order of importance according to the amount of times they were raised:
- lack of awareness or never been invited to do so
- time
- payment
- not knowing how to do it (need skills and training)
- uncertainty about how useful it will be to others
- affiliation: not having been registered or associated with a repository before
- not knowing who will use them as tutors welcome particularly the personal link
- materials in other languages might not be useful.

Concept and previous experience of language repositories

Prior experience with language repositories was elicited by asking tutors to respond Yes or No to whether they had used a language repository (Question 15). Table 9 shows that a large percentage of tutors do not have previous experience of language repositories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have any experience of using learning repositories?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tutors who use a language resource repository were asked to specify it. There were a total of 30 tutors who specified the repository they used. This list online applications used by tutors reveals a mixture of OU specific and external applications. In fact, only two of the applications referred to OU regional repositories one in the North region and the other one in the South.

The remaining 28 applications revealed a mixture of generic language resource websites, college and local education authority repositories, and other specific language repositories (Language Box). The comments also indicated relative uncertainty as to the difference between a repository and web pages that provide materials.

*Focus groups: Prior experiences of language repositories*

As the questionnaire results show, there is a large proportion of tutors who had never used a repository. Amongst those who had experience of repositories these included a broad range of internet and paper based resource banks. Moreover, in all three groups, there were some who had experience of OU repositories but most of these related to regional initiatives or course specific initiatives. Some of the experiences indicated that these OU small scale initiatives only reached limited success due to the low levels of contributors or for the ensuing lack of use. Experiences outside of the OU were very frequent and the types of applications mentioned were:

- Moodle
- Paper based repositories
- Wiki pages
- Index text materials
- other websites (TES, quia, acen to quote some).

Other expectations distilled from common prior experiences in all three groups, was the notion by some that the language repository would be accessible by students. This was in fact a motivating factor for some to contribute to a repository of this sort.

*Focus groups: Notions of the concept of a language repository*

In the focus group discussions dealt with notions of and experiences of language repositories. Tutors were given the option to request clarification on the concept of language repository. In all three groups a small number of tutors expressed doubts with regards to the concept. In general there were doubts about whether language repository was exclusive to the internet (and did not relate to paper based resource repositories), and to the OU (as opposed to all the open ones in the internet). Also during the discussions, doubts were raised as to the extent to which any resource collection is a repository. For example, tutors asked whether Lyceum resource packs may count as repositories.
Preferred functions of a repository

In Question 16 out of a choice of seven pre-specified options, tutors were asked to select the three most important functions of a repository. Table 10 below presents the answers in descending order with the most important aspects in the top four rows. The overall group responses show the most important factors (in descending order). However, the responses show that four were perceived as important functions by approximately half of the tutors. The percentages do not reveal an overall majority for any of the options.

Table 10 Functions of a repository

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you like a languages repository to do for you? (tick the three most important to you)</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give me access to materials as sources for ideas or inspiration</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow me to adapt materials I found</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow me to find materials produced by other ALs</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow me to store and manage my own materials</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow me to access materials produced by course teams</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give me access to a wider pool of materials (stuff from other cultures)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow me to view materials from other languages and levels</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus Groups: Expected advantages of an institutional language resource repository

In the three focus groups, tutors were asked to specify their expectations about a language resource repository. The discussion was followed up with a question specific to LORO to elicit any particular expectations from an institutional language resource repository. In general, both discussions overlapped since tutors already discussed aspects specific to the OU in the discussion aimed at general repositories.

Below the expectations of participating tutors are listed. The ones mentioned first are those that were mentioned more frequently and in all three groups. All lists present most important issues at the top.

- General expectations of an institutional repository

The five first issues of the list below were raised in all three groups and were clearly key general expectations of a language repository:
  - save time: save tutor time but also make searching fast
  - learn from others: an opportunity for development, sharing, getting ideas and inspiration
  - good system: easy to use, well organised, be able to manage own materials
  - students should be able to access materials directly
    - in all three groups the expectation that students will access materials directly was expressed. In Group 2 a discussion evolved into ways in which tutors could facilitate access to materials for students as direct access to the repository might pose additional challenges;
  - avoid duplication
- address authors: although the notion of authorship might be lost when materials are adapted
- feedback and ratings should be part of this so that authors can learn and gain feedback on their work
- offer consistency of the student experience (in groups 1 and 2)
- able to contact author to pursue further discussion on materials (only raised in one group).

- Materials
The first four issues in the list were raised as key expectations in all three groups.

- good quality materials
- specific and tailored to OU courses, units and levels
- usable formats that are easily adaptable to different modes of presentation (Face to face, Lyceum, Elluminate)
- access materials from other languages
- adaptable to other languages and levels
- instructions and notes on how to use in English
- Types: communicative activities, video, audio, grammar activities for student revision
- Copyright free materials (specially photos) that you can use

  - Concerns raised
These are some issues raised in the discussion with different intensity in some of the groups.

- effective resource management. Materials should be organised by: language, level, unit and topic
- transferability of materials created for face to face might not be easily adapted to Lyceum or Elluminate (and vice versa). This issue was discussed more deeply in group 3 although it was raised in group 1 as well
- support for tutors: checking and preparing error-free materials before publishing them
- IT skills training: in two of the groups the need for training was raised as a concern
- languages like Welsh might not receive many contributions and this might affect usefulness of the repository
- in group 3 the view that there are enough materials already and no need for more was expressed
- avoid too much formality: of system becomes too formal that might deter users as it needs to be light and inspire.
Ground rules of a repository

Tutors were given a list of ten rules that should be applied in a language resource repository. They were asked to select the three most important (Question 17). The Table 11 shows four factors at the top that were perceived as important by a large percentage of tutors. The factors are presented in descending order of importance according to the percentage of tutors that perceived them as being key.

Table 11 Ground rules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What ground rules would be important to you when using a repository? (tick the three most important to you)</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials can be downloaded and edited</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials are labelled or described clearly</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials are presented in an appropriate format</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials are quality assured</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials are copyright-cleared</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials are attributed to an author</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials can be bookmarked to make them easy to locate again</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials within the same series, or by the same author are easy to find</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments or ratings on material can be collected and shown</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the author (profile) can be easily accessed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The open comment box elicited further insights. Six of the participants commented that all the aspects were important and some would have wanted to select more than three aspects.

Other comments indicated specific scenarios that also should be regulated:

“materials are linked to a specific course i.e. I would not like to find in an L314 group that the same material had been used the previous year as this might appear unprofessional to the group”

Another tutor commented further on the aspect of ratings:

“Use of materials is very individual - what works for some tutors does not work for others, so ratings are not necessarily helpful”

Focus groups elicited more specific information on the ethical values and issues and quality control, authorship issues, and awareness of copyright issues. These are detailed below.

Focus groups: Ethical values and issues

In all three groups sharing and building a community to help each other was recognised as a value although this was only raised amongst many ethical concerns.

Ethical issues highlighted in all groups were

- reciprocity: that everyone contributes equally. In a very few cases this is not perceived as a problem (two tutors in group 3)
- authorship: Issues of acknowledging authors (more in detail in section below)
- tutor support: tutors need support in developing materials.
**Focus groups: Quality control**

Specific methods of quality control were discussed with tutors in the focus groups. In all three groups three different points of view emerged. One perspective is that there should be a moderator employed to check and revise materials. A second perspective is that the feedback provided by users is a better way to conduct quality control. A third position and expressed only once in group 3 was that quality control should not be a big issue and that tutors themselves can judge the quality of a resource.

Specific issues that need control were also mentioned:
- Equality and diversity in materials
- Copyright issues.

A discussion followed on different methods of providing feedback either by using a ratings system or comments on materials. Overall in all three groups the ratings system (i.e. adding “stars” to rate a resource) was perceived as problematic for some in that it could be damaging and not representative of the resource. The failure of the resource might be the tutor adapting it rather than the resource itself and therefore a rating may misrepresent the resource. Comments and feedback are generally more positively received as they could be more constructive and accurate way acknowledging the role of the tutor adapting the resource.

**Focus groups: Authorship issues**

The discussions around acknowledging authors of materials reveal a common view that it is important to address and value the work of the author. However, there are different attitudes with regards to the formality with which authors should be addressed.

The proportion of tutors who wanted to be addressed formally as authors of materials varied in each group. In group 1 the majority were not concerned. In group 2 the majority (except one) would want to be addressed as authors. The group 3 was balanced in terms of those who wanted to be acknowledged as authors and those who did not feel this was important.

The issues discussed in each group revolved around different aspects. In group 1 the question of “academic identity” was posed. Tutors do not associate their teaching material production to the same as writing a book for example. Secondly, in group 2, the view that it is important to value the author prevailed. In addition it was added that this would enable contacting the author and building discussions and exchanges further. Group 3’s discussion revolved around other sets of issues. For example, practicalities of the extent of the formality with which authorship should be recognised were debated (from simple thanks to a fully formalised procedure of acknowledging a source). It was further recognised that in the process of adapting a resource it is transformed and hence authorship no longer traceable to the original. However, in this group, two tutors presented the view that on the web, all is public and when publishing via this medium the users should be aware that they lose control over what they publish and give up authorship.
Focus groups: Awareness of copyright issues

In general in all three groups there was some awareness of some possible copyright issues. For example, in all three groups pictures were raised as a big risk area around which many felt uncertain how they needed to handle it both in terms of using materials by others and potential publishing of own materials. In all three groups were previous experiences and training on Lyceum and Elluminate where some tutors had gained some awareness of copyright issues (mostly relating to the use of pictures).
Summary of findings and discussion

1 Who are our tutors?

The largest proportion of OU language tutors also work in other HE institutions. Therefore, the experiences and views reflected in this survey exercise represent experiences from various HE institutions and other primary and secondary teaching background.

2 How much ICT expertise do they have?

○ The levels of self-reported ability to perform several ICT related tasks reveal a generally confident group of tutors. Tutors have a positive attitude in using most ICT tools.

○ Web 2.0 type applications are used by half of participating tutors. These are further discussed in the training needs section below.

○ The electronic medium is a popular method of storing materials. In the main, storing of materials is done both on paper and electronic formats. Some other tutors rely solely on the electronic format for resource storage.

3 How do tutors manage their materials?

○ The majority of tutors prefer to create their own materials

○ The internet is used extensively for material preparation. The focus groups suggest some popular uses of internet: grammar activities on specific points, videos, pictures, audio, authentic language samples and up to date information (see discussion below on recommendations).

4 Do tutors share materials? How do they share and reuse teaching materials?

○ Results indicate that in the reuse of materials from others it is very likely that materials will be modified. Only in very few occasions tutors will use materials without modifying them.

○ A large proportion of tutors use materials provided by the course teams. This is a positive factor in that it suggests that OU relevant and specific materials are used by others. It also indicates the one way and predominantly top-down history in sharing materials so far. A few regional or course specific initiatives have been reported where language tutors contributed to a repository.

○ Tutors revealed a very positive attitude towards sharing materials (an 80 per cent approximately). Despite this, the actual percentage that stated normally sharing materials is very low. Most sharing takes place in a reactive manner (being prompted to share) and it is preferred to share with known colleagues. Also the stated positive attitude to the idea of sharing, a proportion of tutors raised concerns or possible barriers (these are presented in Question 7).
5 What do tutors know about repositories? What are the common previous experiences of language resource repositories?

- Language resource repositories are the least preferred online tool used to develop teaching materials. This is in comparison to CTs materials, general internet sites and language specific sites.
- However, discussions in focus groups revealed further insights into the reasons behind the low percentage of users of repositories:
  - lack of knowledge of the notion of language repositories and what they offer
  - invitation (never been invited to take part)
  - skills or lack of confidence on how to use them

- Language resource repositories are mostly used to borrow materials or ideas (36 tutors stated using repositories). Only six of these stated having ever uploaded their own materials. Focus groups further gathered insights into this and the few tutors who use language repositories (outside of OU) to upload their own do this sporadically
- The examples of “repositories” used by tutors reveal slight lack of clarity about the difference between websites that contain materials and repositories.

6 What do tutors expect of repositories?

- Language repositories in general are perceived very positively by tutors for the following opportunities:
  - Learn from others, obtain ideas and inspiration
  - Reciprocity
  - opportunity for professional development: to gain feedback from other colleagues on their materials and learning from colleagues (how others deal with common issues in a course)
  - save time and avoid duplication of work (or “reinventing the wheel”)
  - being valued as an author
  - support students
  - repository is used and frequently updated

- Student access to repository: overall focus group discussions reveal a general expectation that students should benefit from the repository. Many ALs expect that repository should be accessible to students as this is a further motivating factor for them to engage. Despite this, it was recognised that this would pose a further layer of complexity to regulation.

- The idea of an institutional (OU specific) repository is very attractive to tutors for the following reasons:
  - potential provision of very specific materials to course specific issues and needs. Examples of these might be the provision of specific grammar activities relevant to a course, materials to stimulate group interaction, and materials that deal with specific issues of a course
  - copyright free materials
formats of materials that take into account institutional diverse modes of delivery. Formats of materials should vary for face to face tutorials, Elluminate, Lyceum amongst other forthcoming tools.

There is a set of key critical factors for tutors to engage with a repository:
- the quality and usefulness of materials;
- a good system: search, organisation, and management;
- adaptability of materials both in terms of content and formats in which they are stored. For example a resource for Elluminate might be ideal in PowerPoint but much less adaptable to face to face as this might take time to convert to other suitable formats for printing;

7 What are the barriers and issues that concern tutors in the use of repositories?

The barriers to the use or potential discouraging factors to the use of a repository relate to:
- Time consuming process and a bad or complicated system
- Remuneration
- trust issues and reciprocity
- Quality of the materials
- Addressing authors
- Lack of feedback from users on materials. There has to be a clear perceived benefit to sharing materials.

Other concerns that tutors raised are:
- Training needs
- Support in helping tutors check errors of a resource
- Transferability of materials
- Usefulness of materials shared

Finally, there is a very small section of tutors who expressed that they do not see the purpose that a repository will fulfil as there are more than enough materials at present. There are a lot of materials already available to students and in the courses and more could turn out to be overwhelming.

8 What are the views of tutors in relation to ground rules of a repository?

The issues surrounding aspects of regulation of an institutional repository is the area where less group overall consensus is found.

- Ground rules: several tutors indicated that all factors presented for possible regulation (in Questionnaire) were important.
- Ground rules relating to authorship present many grey areas where careful attention needs to be paid to scenarios where the author of a resource may be disadvantaged if their materials are used before by others. Despite the need to regulate, some view this as an organic process that may be founded on existing
principles of trust and professionalism in the institution. Further discussions in the focus groups on authorship revealed an area where, unlike other issues, there existed little group agreement or consensus on what constitutes authorship and the different degrees of formality with which this should be addressed;

- Quality control and the different modes of ensuring quality of materials was also debated. Diverse views were expressed reflecting different degrees of control. Some view that there needs to be a moderator on quality others viewed that user feedback would act as a quality control mechanism and finally, others, viewed that it is up to the user to judge the quality of a resource.

In sum, this evaluation shows that at present in the OU there is not an established or cohesive culture of sharing materials amongst tutors. This is partly due to the nature of initiatives in the past that have been too local or not sustained. In this sense, LORO represents a radical alternative to previous modes for its centralised, large scale character and the possibility for tutors to share which is unprecedented. Only a minor part of tutors reuse materials of others frequently and use language repositories (of the sort of LORO). Despite this a very positive attitude to a language resource repository has been expressed by a majority of tutors for the opportunities to share and professional development that an institutional repository entails. Moreover, despite there being a large number of important barriers that will test LORO (the effectiveness of the system, the quality of the materials and the management of sharing, its regulation), it is important to note that its use may be encouraged through a clear presentation of its advantages (over those of other repositories or resource banks experienced in the past) and the support of IT skills to facilitate tutors’ engagement. It is also important to note that the lack of payment and time given to tutors to polish materials for publishing them on the repository, are clear barriers and the personal benefits experienced will have to exceed or compensate the time invested. The sections below present some recommendations and training areas.

**Limitations of the evaluation**

- Possible bias in the sample

The OU as an organization relies heavily in online modes of communication specially with language tutors who work in the distance. Language tutors in the OU use online modes of communication and this is an intrinsic part of the role. Despite this specific context, both the online and focus groups were conducted via online media. It is therefore possible that some may have been keener than others to deploy this type of media. As a result the views and responses represented might be from a group of keen and motivated participants who are at ease with this mode of communication. This might pose biases to the responses especially since the focus of the evaluation is an online tool for sharing.
Possible biases in the responses

Every effort has been made to ensure at all times that participants were aware that they could express their views freely. However, the research project is clearly driven from within the institution itself and participating tutors in the questionnaire and the focus groups were aware of this fact. This might limit the validity of some responses and expressions of interest to take part in the study. It is possible that participating tutors might have felt under a tacit pressure to express positive attitudes. Therefore the results of this evaluation have to be interpreted with this contextual limiting factor in mind.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings discussed above, this section elaborates on some key success factors of LORO. These key issues are presented from the point of view of tutors attitudes and views and it assumes an effective system at technical levels (search facilities, storage etc). Besides system factors, key success factors for LORO to be rolled out effectively and for tutors to engage might be:

- Professional development tool: LORO may be best presented as a tool for professional development and inspiration mainly. Secondly, the borrowing of materials may vary widely and this represents a secondary advantage in comparison to the clear personal advantages for self and professional development;
- The quality and usefulness of materials is crucial to guarantee reuse and adaptability. Some ways of enhancing this might be:
  - Encourage uploading and sharing frequently needed types of materials: the evaluation revealed that tutors tend to search the online for audiovisual material (Videos, pictures, audio) and specific activities on grammar points;
  - Materials should be clearly linked to particular OU course issues (themes, units, specific issues);
  - Quality of the materials: there are different views amongst tutors on how quality control should be enhanced and the OU needs to present a clear stance and guidance;
  - Format and adaptability of materials: formats in which materials are stored and medium of delivery might deserve some consideration as tutors raised issues experienced in the past;
  - Content and adaptability of materials: discussions with tutors suggest that a repository is best used as a source for inspiration (firstly) and secondly, the reuse of materials. It is suggested that some guidance should be provided in this spirit and on most effective ways of representing teaching materials for others in the lightest manner so as to encourage adaptability of the ideas and secondly, exact reproduction of a resource. Discussions with tutors suggested that fine granularity of representation (e.g. an idea, an activity for a specific grammatical aspect) may be better than larger units such as an entire lesson plan (for a review on this issue see Hatch and Grossman 2009).
• Students must benefit from the repository. Although this is not a barrier it is important to deal with the prevailing expectation that students will access repositories. In many cases it was valued that students should access the repository directly for independent study or revision.
  o There exists a great expectation that benefitting students is a main purpose of LORO and this will motivate tutors to contribute. It is suggested that since this is a tool exclusive for tutors, the ways in which tutors might maximise students benefit should be discussed. For example, in one group it was agreed that tutors could distribute a resource to their group if it is really useful for independent study or grammar revision;

• Ground rules: according to questionnaire responses, all areas for regulation are important. However, issues that need specific attention due to the range of diverse views are: addressing authorship of materials, ensuring and enhancing contributions and dealing with copyright issues.

Training needs

Following from the discussions above, below are some key areas that need to be carefully dealt with in presentations of LORO and training:

• Present LORO: its key features and how this might differ from previous modes and barriers of other media for sharing in the past (how is it different from wikis, or publicly available repositories). Also, how LORO overcomes technical problems of previous systems: poor quality of materials, too formalised process, and time consuming process;

• At least half of the participating tutors in the questionnaire showed that they do not use social networking sites. LORO is inspired on features of this type of applications (Web 2.0 social networking sites). Therefore some training or at least an introduction may be offered to support those who are not familiar with this type of applications;

• Tutors will benefit from some guidance on copyright issues on how to publish materials and use those of others;

• Addressing authorship of materials: notions of authorship (to what extent an author remains an author) and how to address materials (extent of formality in addressing authors);

• Representing teaching materials to enhance relevance and adaptability for other tutors. It is suggested that some training sessions might offer guidance on aspects of simplification in presenting teaching materials (lighter presentation of ideas rather than too much detail), specific and relevance to OU course to mention, and considerations of formats.
Appendices

Appendix I The questionnaire

1. Personal information

1. Which OU language course or courses do you currently teach?
   - L192
   - LZX192
   - L193
   - LZX193
   - L194
   - LZX194
   - L195

2. Which OU language course or courses have you taught in the last five years?
   - L192
   - LZX192
   - L193
   - LZX193
   - L194
   - LZX194
   - L195
   - LZX195
   - L120
   - LZX120

3. For which region/nation do you work? (tick all that apply)
   - R01 – London
   - R02 – South
   - R03 – South West
   - R04 – West Midlands
   - R05 – East Midlands
   - R06 – East of England
   - R07 – Yorkshire
   - R08 – North West
   - R09 – North
   - R10 – Wales
   - R11 – Scotland
   - R12 – Ireland
   - R13 – South East
4. How long have you worked as a languages AL for the OU?
- Less than one year
- Between one and three years
- More than three years

5. Which of the following best describes your employment outside the OU (tick just one option):
- My OU work is my only employment
- I work part-time but not in teaching
- I work full-time but not in teaching
- I teach part-time in Higher Education
- I teach full-time in Higher Education
- I teach part-time in Further/Adult Education
- I teach full-time in Further/Adult Education
- I teach part-time in Primary/Secondary school
- I teach full-time in Primary/Secondary school

2. ICT experience

6. Which of the following OU tools or sites do you currently use in your work as an Associate Lecturer? (tick all that apply)
- Tutorhome
- Studenthome
- Course website
- OU Library
- Lyceum
- Elluminate
- eTMA system
- Audacity
- Audio Recording Tool
- FirstClass forums
- Moodle forums in course websites
- Blogs
- Wikis
- Other (please specify)

7. Are you able to do the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>With help</th>
<th>No / Never tried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>With help</td>
<td>No / Never tried</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you able to do the following? use text messaging on a mobile phone
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>With help</th>
<th>No / Never tried</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>create and save a word processed document</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connect to the internet with a mobile phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locate tunes and make playlists on an MP3 player</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create and save a spreadsheet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upload photos taken with a digital camera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>search for a site using Google or another search engine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create and save a presentation (such as powerpoint)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use online community platforms or social networking sites (such as Facebook)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create a blog</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>add entries to a wiki</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create and save an audio file</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upload your own videos to YouTube</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send an instant message</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>use a webcam to take part in a video conference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>create and use a Lyceum screen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>use skype to make or take a phone call</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use social bookmarking tools (such as Delicious)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create and use an</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Your teaching materials

8. In my work as an AL for the OU, I get my teaching materials from…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the course team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Staff Tutor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>other ALs</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my other job (what I've</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared for another</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>institution)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the internet (general sites)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the internet (languages-specific sites)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the OU library languages</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>textbooks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create my own materials from scratch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. How do you use OU tutorial materials provided course teams?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use what the OU provides without modification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I modify what the OU provides to suit my group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I modify what the OU provides to update it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I modify what the OU provides to suit my style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I modify what the OU provides for another reason (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. How do you store your teaching materials at the moment?
- On paper
- Electronically
- Both on paper and electronically

11. Do you share your own tutorial materials (handouts, forum messages, activities, etc) with other tutors?
- Yes
- No

I often share my teaching materials
- Yes
- No
I send them if somebody asks me
- Yes
- No
I offer them to colleagues (through forums or at staff development events)
- Yes
- No
I share them with certain colleagues
- Yes
- No
I send them to my regional/national centre
- Yes
- No
I upload them to a teaching materials repository (Jorum, for example)
- Yes
- No

Comments:

12. How do you feel about others using materials that you have produced?

13. Which of the following would encourage you to make your materials available to others? (tick the three most important to you)
- A user friendly online system that is easily accessible and quick to use
- Being able to publish and take down my own materials
- Being identified clearly as the creator
- Contributing to the creation of a large, frequently used collection of materials
- An effective way of storing, reviewing and linking to or referencing my materials
- Other (please specify)

14. Which of the following would discourage you from making your materials available
to others? (tick the three most important to you)
☐ A complicated, hard to use or slow system
☐ People appropriating my stuff without acknowledgment
☐ People misusing my stuff, e.g. adapting inappropriately
☐ I don’t like to place my own work in a public area
☐ I don’t want others to use my stuff
☐ I lose control over what happens with my materials
☐ Making sure that I have copyright clearance before sharing can be a problem
☐ I don’t trust the technology
☐ Other (please specify)

4. Repositories

“A digital repository is a type of information retrieval system. It’s an online, searchable database of digital materials, stored locally or accessed remotely through computer networks.”

15. Do you have any experience of using learning repositories?
☐ Yes
☐ No
If yes, please specify

16. What would you like a languages repository to do for you? (tick the three most important to you)
☐ Allow me to store and manage my own materials
☐ Allow me to access materials produced by course teams
☐ Allow me to find materials produced by other ALs
☐ Allow me to view materials from other languages and levels
☐ Allow me to adapt materials I found
☐ Give me access to a wider pool of materials (stuff from other cultures)
☐ Give me access to materials as sources for ideas or inspiration

Comments

17. What ground rules would be important to you when using a repository? (tick the three most important to you)
☐ Materials are quality assured
☐ Materials are attributed to an author
☐ Materials are copyright-cleared
☐ Materials are presented in an appropriate format
☐ Materials are labelled or described clearly
☐ Materials can be downloaded and edited
☐ Information about the author (profile) can be easily accessed
☐ Comments or ratings on material can be collected and shown
☐ Materials can be bookmarked to make them easy to locate again
☐ Materials within the same series, or by the same author are easy to find

Comments

5. Collaboration

18. Would you be willing to contribute to an online focus group to discuss some of these issues further? (A payment of £30 will be made for participation in a focus group for a maximum of 1.5 hours)
☐ No
☐ Yes

19. If yes, please indicate which focus groups you would be available to participate in and provide a contact email address.
☐ Thursday 16th July 7 - 8.30pm
☐ Friday 17th July 10 - 11.30am
☐ Friday 17th July 7 – 8.30pm

Contact

email

20. If there is anything else that you would like to tell us about your experience, or any comments on the project or the questionnaire, please use the space below.
Appendix II The focus groups

1 PREPARATION – elluminate
   • To SPEAK:
     – press the mic icon and speak
     – when you finish press icon again to release so that other people can talk
   • CHAT box
   • VOTING buttons
   • RAISE hand
   • Your consent to take part
   • This session is going to be recorded. A record will be available for a short period on this space for some technical reasons. Once we have created a backup copy this will be deleted.

2 PARTICIPANT CONSENT
   • All information provided will be kept confidential and anonymous
   • Do you agree with the following?
     – That you understand the purpose of the focus group
     – That you give consent for the session to be recorded for LORO research purposes
     – That the data you provide will be kept anonymous and confidential. Any quotes used in the reports will be anonymised.
     – That you agree to taking part and with the data being used in the ways described
   Please VOTE to confirm your consent or disagreement.

3 Question 1
   In preparing tutorials:
   - do you ever use the internet?
   Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
   - what do you normally use and why is it helpful?

4 Question 2
   Do you use or have you ever used a language repository? (*if anyone not sure what this means please raise hand)
   - Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
   Why or why not?

5 Question 2a
   Have you ever uploaded materials onto these repositories?
   - Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
   Why?
   If YES, How regularly?

6 Question 3
   What do you think a language repository should do for you?
   Raise any features that you think would be essential or really beneficial
Why?

7 Question 4
All of you have heard from LORO, do you know what LORO is about?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
can you describe what do you know about LORO?
Question 4a
What are your expectations from LORO?
Question 4b
In what ways do you think you will use it?

8 Question 5
LORO will provide the opportunity to reuse materials of others and share your own....
Do you think there are ethical values?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
Why?
Do you think there are any ethical issues?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
Why?

9 Question 6
Have you got any ideas about how quality control should take place?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
• Question 6a.
• Do you know how ratings systems work?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
• How would you feel about having a system where your work is rated and you can also rate other colleagues’ work?

10 Question 7
When you have reused a resource from a repository or offered by another source, did you acknowledge the author or source?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
• Would you want to be acknowledged as authors?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
If YES, How?
If NO, Why?

11 Question 8
Have you come across copyright issues in your use of repositories or that of others?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
If yes, what are they?

12 Can you think of any challenges?
-Reply using voting buttons: Yes or No
If NO, Why?
If YES, what are they?
### Appendix III Participants: profiling information

#### Number of years in OU employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between one and three years</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than three years</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answered question</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skipped question</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

#### Employment situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer options</th>
<th>Response percent</th>
<th>Response count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My OU work is my only employment</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other employment NOT in teaching (part and full time)</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other HE &amp; Adult teaching employment (part and full time)</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other primary secondary teaching employment (part and full time)</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answered question</strong></td>
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<td>128</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skipped question</strong></td>
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Bibliography
