Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

JANET SYMMONS

MEd (Brock University, 2013)
BEd (Brock University, 2010)

“A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of University Educators as They Use Open Educational Resources”

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Wednesday, April 28, 2021
10:30 A.M.
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Valerie Irvine, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Allyson Hadwin, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UVic (Member)
Dr. David Leach, Department of Writing, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Bonnie Stewart, Faculty of Education, University of Windsor

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Kimberly Speers, School of Public Administration, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Previous studies uncovered a number of challenges OER adopters may face, resulting in a number of recommendations; however, these suggestions were not founded on lived experiences of educators who have experienced OER challenges and do not provide potential OER educators with positive examples to model their teaching and course design practices. A reflective lifeworld research (Dahlberg et al. 2008) approach was employed in this phenomenological study. Eleven educators who used OERs in their teaching practices in Canadian public universities were interviewed about their lived experiences with obstacles encountered when adopting, modifying, and/or creating OERs, and their perceived changes to their facilitation practices. A phenomenological analysis indicates the essential meaning of the phenomenon is understood as a device rooted in educators’ motivation to support students beyond the classroom. The first of the three key findings indicate educators are motivated to use OERs primarily to ease their financial burden and to have up-to-date teaching and learning material. Additionally, educators who modify and create OERs are often challenged with lack of time. The third finding was that technology continues to challenge educators’, particularly when using Pressbooks, even though these professors appear to have good digital technology skills. The key recommendations for educators who create and modify OER textbooks is to use word processing software to upload the books to repositories. Using familiar software rather than learning Pressbooks and coding will save educators’ time. This study calls on other researchers to build on these results, with further qualitative studies, in an effort to gain a clear understanding of the lived experiences of educators who encounter OER challenges. The results and findings add to the growing body of the few qualitative motivation studies that examines postsecondary educators who use OERs. Finally, replacing SDT’s intrinsic regulatory style with the tripartite taxonomy may be useful for future researchers to incorporate into their studies.