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Potential for innovative teaching - the HRK on Open Educational Resources

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching materials which are freely available under open licences and which can be used repeatedly. Teachers and students can recompile, revise and distribute material such as videos, interactive exercises and simulations produced by others.

In the view of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), OER have the potential to improve teaching and learning processes if they are integrated into suitable teaching concepts. In its meeting today in Berlin, the HRK Senate emphasised that OER can contribute to innovation in higher education teaching because they form a low threshold between face-to-face and online teaching.

Standard OER offer learning materials with a more diverse application than Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and they are also easier to embed in teaching activities. In a resolution, the HRK Senate emphasises that there are also challenges associated with OER concerning quality assurance, copyright and, above all, costs:

These costs, it says, are for development and adaptation. Furthermore, OER require investment in online platforms and corresponding training. Teachers and students need advice on teaching, legal and media issues to enable them to use OER in a meaningful and responsible way, the Senate continues. OER are not cost-cutting instruments.

In the long term, the Senate says, Open Educational Resources can be used to establish a new culture of collaboration characterised by sharing and by communal learning and teaching. A number of pilot activities are being conducted to determine the infrastructures and the competences which must be developed for the sustainable use, creation and distribution of OER.

Text of the resolution