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# The Four Seasons of Collaboration: Managing a Multi-Campus OER Effort

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# The metaphor of the Four Seasons

## Collaboration is like the four seasons

- For each collaborative relationship...gauge the other's readiness and willingness to work together. Their readiness and willingness levels can be compared to different seasons.
  - **Spring:** moving in a positive direction
  - **Summer:** excited to work together
  - **Fall:** hesitant but not resistant, cool but not cold
  - **Winter:** resistant, relationship at its coldest
- With this framework, we know how we should interact with our collaborators. Just like we have ways to keep cool in the warmer seasons and ways to bundle up to stay warm in the colder ones, we can thrive in any collaborative relationship we find ourselves in.



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## Spring phase

Moving in a positive direction

- A library dean and an instructional designer decided to take their campus model and collaborate with other institutions
- Library Deans of 3 other universities wanted to collaborate
- A state grant opportunity presented itself to fund the project

# The Project

- Minnstate Multi-Campus Collaboration Grant
- \$80,000 was requested to provide professional development to faculty from four state universities
- Librarians and instructional designers were recruited from each institution
- One instructional designer was lead on the project
- A project Graduate Assistant handled logistics

**ADOPTING, ADAPTING and/or DEVELOPING:**  
Using OER and Library Resources to provide Course Materials Online at No Cost for Students



**Concerned about textbook prices? So are we!**



**Join our multi-campus OER cohort and help students save money while tailoring your course *your way!***

**Choose from multiple projects:**

- **Adopt existing OER to replace expensive textbooks**
- **Author your own OER or publish your course openly**
- **Develop and implement a research project around OER**
- **Design assignments in your class to promote student open authoring**



**Apply to join a cohort of faculty from across the Minnstate system in reducing costs for students!**

- **Receive quality professional development on Open Education**
- **Earn \$1000 for transforming your course or conducting research**
- **Present at the spring OER Summit**
- **Enjoy the flexibility and control that openly licensed content gives you**

Cohort application: <https://link.mnsu.edu/oercohort>

# The Participants

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37 faculty participated from 4 state universities



Each received a \$1000 stipend to complete one of four types of OER work

Adopt  
Author  
Research  
Lead students in OER authoring (Open Pedagogy)



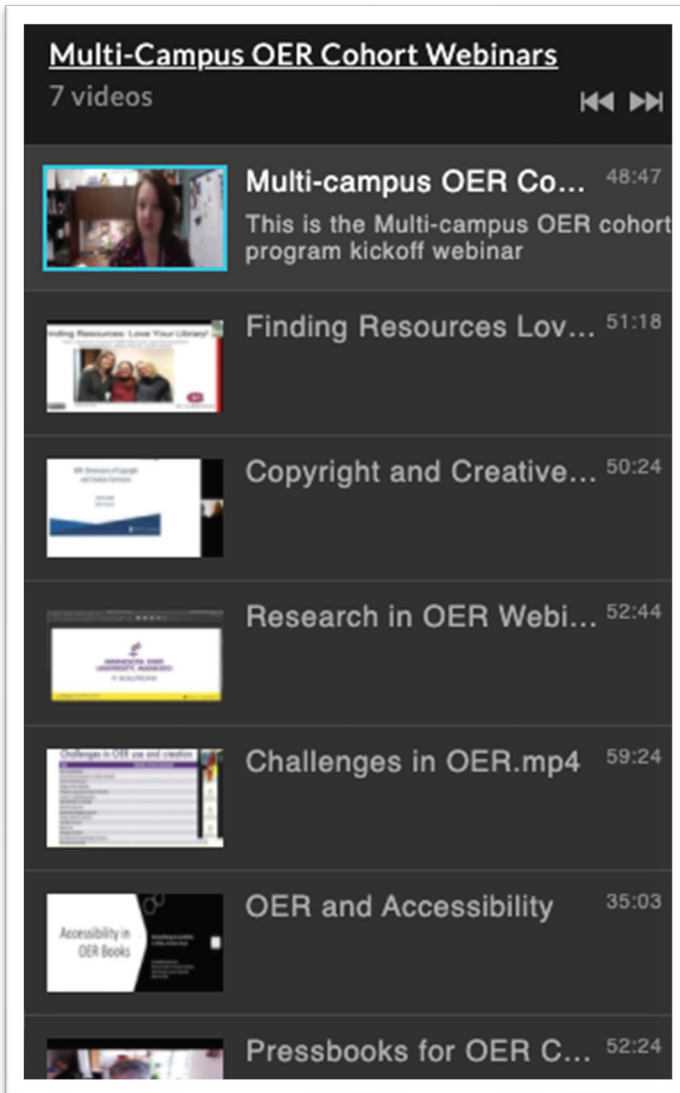
# It's

# SUMMER

## Summer phase

Excited to work together

- Applications were collected and participants confirmed by September
- All participants were eager to plan their projects – some wanted to do multiple projects!
- Project leadership team held regular meetings and collaborated on overall project plan
- Funding was in place and necessary inter-agency agreements were completed



## The Plan

- Online cohort meetings were planned to start in November and would continue once a month
- Some campuses held additional on-campus meetings
- A series of webinars was planned to provide information about OER
- An OER Summit was planned for April 2020 for participants to showcase their projects
- Full day retreats were planned for the Leadership Team





Fall Phase

Hesitant but not resistant, cool but not cold





# The work begins

- By the second cohort meeting, participants were feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work they had planned
- Leadership team worked to rally participants with in-person meetings on each campus
- By the first cohort meeting, it was difficult to find volunteers to host the webinars
- Collaboration among the leadership team fell off
- All in-person events were canceled
- One participant dropped out

A snowman stands in a vast, flat, snow-covered landscape under a dramatic, cloudy sky. The snowman is constructed from three snowballs, wearing a dark brown top hat with a light-colored band, a bright yellow scarf, and has a carrot nose and a wide, black, curved smile. Its arms are made of thin, dark sticks. Three black buttons are visible on its chest. The background shows a distant, low horizon line with some faint structures and trees under a sky with soft, wispy clouds and a hint of sunset or sunrise light.

# Winter phase

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Resistant, relationship at its coldest

# Continuing on to the second semester

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Leadership team meetings shortened and were finally ceased



Many participants weren't responding to emails or coming to webinars or in-person meetings



Many were working one-on-one with the lead instructional designer rather than their campus contact



# COVID -19

And then....

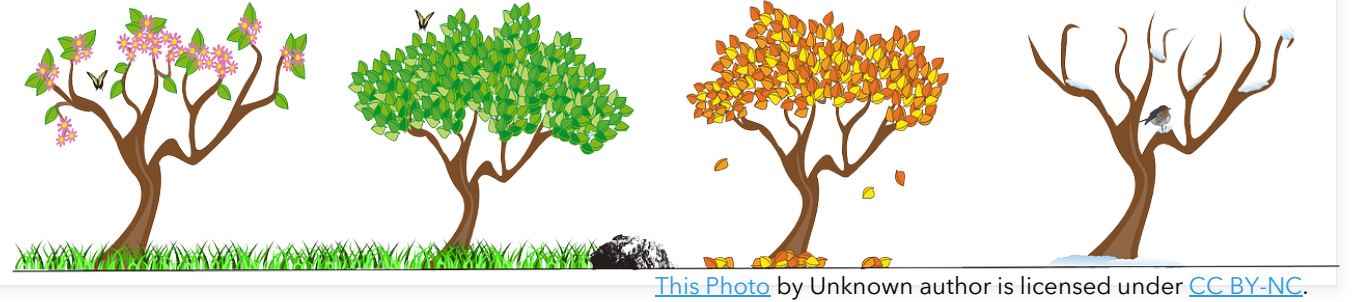
## Adjustments were made

The leadership team shifted gears

OER summit was canceled

Reports were accepted in lieu of presentations from all remaining 36 participants

# The Good News!



- All 36 participants completed a meaningful OER adoption project
- We came in just under budget!
- A playlist of professional development videos about OER was created and can be shared
- A design case will be written from the experience



*"We cannot change the weather, but we can be equipped to thrive in any condition" ~ Tan Huynh*



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## The Takeaways

- Start earlier in the academic year if possible
- Define leadership roles and tasks early in the project (delegate!)
- Find an accountability mechanism for participants
- Encourage participant collaboration and peer support
- Communicate often
- Do some social engineering!
- Encourage collaborators to take ownership and use collaborate language
- Be flexible!
- Follow up post-project (surveys, etc.) so you can measure long-term success