

# Towards defining uncreative teaching as an act of normalised open educational practice and the ethical sharing of pedagogical ideas- A provocation

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## Abstract

This think piece is an exploration into uncreative writing, a literary movement, and its potential connection to open education and creativity that may be of interest to educators in primary, secondary, further and higher education when reflecting on their practice and sense making to create stimulating learning experiences for their students through the cross-fertilisation of ideas as part of normal educational practice. Uncreative teaching as a concept is defined and shared in this article to trigger a discussion with the wider educational community to further deepen our understanding in this area and identify possible connections between uncreative writing, open education and teaching itself. In the mind of the author, uncreative teaching may provide an alternative lens to explore innovative teaching practices, and how they are generated and adapted across educational settings and disciplines. The travels of pedagogical ideas as acts of uncreative teaching in the form of normalised OEP and OER, that demonstrate academic integrity and respect the originator's work could help us shape our wider understanding of open education across the education sector as normalised practice and help educators to open up to new ways of thinking and practice to enrich and transform teaching and learning in a range of settings.

**Author:** "I am not creative" is something I hear educators say a lot. Could this article help them break free?

## Background: Uncreative writing, a confession

The concept of uncreative writing was introduced during the MA in Creative Writing course, at the University of Salford. It was, at least initially, difficult to understand and appreciate what this was about. The term "uncreative writing" in itself seemed confusing. It sounded like a provocation. Kessels (2016, pg.48) in his booknotes writes that "Most creative professionals look to fellow professionals for inspiration. But when ideas are borrowed, modified and cannibalized from within, they are rarely innovative or original." This was not written specifically with writing in mind but creativity more generally. However, somehow it helped understanding the term uncreative writing as he is referring to what is taken from others, and how ideas by others, are used as an inspiration for new work.

Conceptual writing, a term synonymously used to uncreative writing, seemed more appropriate. According to Goldsmith (2005, 98) "in conceptual writing the idea or concept is the most important

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aspect of the work. When a conceptual form of writing is used, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the text.” The conceptual link the uncreative writer makes to the ready-made text seems to be the driving force in the uncreative writing process. Through readings and the course, it became apparent that uncreative writing is a relatively new practice while the arts are at least 50 years ahead of other disciplines and have been practising uncreative expression not as a peripheral form (Goldsmith, 2011a, 124). This generated the following question: Could it be that uncreative practice has always been present in learning and teaching?

Joining the MA course in Creative Writing was an act of liberation. Academic writing is steeped in tradition and conservatism. Creative writing is a breath of fresh air, it gives wings to experiment and be playful. Some may argue that this is also possible in academic writing and perhaps it could make that type of writing more understood and less wooden. Writing can be triggered through a seed of an idea, something that Smith (2005) calls reference-based strategies. Smith (2005) also refers to language-based strategies for creative writing, where the seed is captured in a word, a phrase. Goldsmith (2011a, 15) adds text-based strategies. This is defined as writing in which existing texts are re-used. Goldsmith focuses particularly on the re-use of digital texts and claims that “[...] digital media has set the stage for a literary revolution.” This revolution, he claims, will come from working with these texts and alternative representations of these instead of making up new ones. Goldsmith (2011a, 24) says characteristically “... we aren’t hammering away on typewriters; instead – focused all day on powerful machines with infinite possibilities, connected to networks with a number of equally infinite possibilities – the writer’s role is being significantly challenged, expanded, and updated.” Smith (2005, 5) has said that “language is like clay in your hand” Goldsmith (2011a, 27) seems to agree and sees “language as putty, language to wrap your hands around, to caress, mold, strangle”. The inventiveness of the writer focuses on recycling... and upcycling of text that is already there. It does sound like a radical proposition and re-think of what creative writing means to us but maybe it isn’t that radical and it has been happening perhaps more quietly for centuries. Goldsmith (2015, 14) notes the following.

“Word very well might not only be written but rather to be shared, moved, and manipulated, sometimes by humans, more often by machines, providing us with an extraordinary opportunity to reconsider what writing is and to define new roles for the writer. While traditional notions of writing are primarily focused on “originality” and “creativity”, the digital environment fosters new skills sets that include “manipulation” and “management” of the heaps of already existent and ever-increasing language.”

### **Being uncreative as a creative act**

Playfulness with text in relation to creative writing is questioned. There may be more conservatism than originally thought. Goldsmith (2015) is not claiming that creativity is not needed in creative writing. On the contrary creativity seems to matter together with originality and what he calls manipulation for example, which is defined as a creative act of re-invention.

Moving for a moment away from uncreative writing to understanding how creative ideas emerge and are generated, Harris’ (1998, online) framework provides some useful insights:

***“Evolution***

*new ideas from existing ideas*

***Synthesis***

*combination of existing ideas*

***Revolution***

*brand new ideas*

***Re-application***

*existing ideas in new light*

***Changing direction***

*new path when old doesn't work”*

A closer examination of Harris' (1998, online) framework on the different ways creative ideas are generated, seems to suggest that “revolution” is the only possibility to give birth to an idea that doesn't exist already. What is perhaps unusual is that the word “revolution” (roots in latin “revolve” and “revolutio”) and the meaning it has been given by Harris, starting from nothing, a blank canvas, seems to be opposed to the common etymology of the prefix “re-” (again) but maybe this is exactly the point Harris is making. To start again Goldsmith (2011a) talks about ideas being constantly re-used and re-purposed and Kleon (2012, pg. 9) characterises everything as a “mashup”, a mixture of ideas that already exist. There is a common thread in their thinking and positioning and while Goldsmith related his thoughts to written language, Kleon refers more broadly to creative work. While it can be said Goldsmith's and Kleon's words remind us of characteristics associated with creativity, there is more to it. We often define creativity as something that is new and of value (National Advisory Committee on Creative & Cultural Education, 1999), produces unusual connections between ideas, processes and people (Knight, 2002) and works within constraints and limitations to propose novel solutions (Thomas & Seely Brown, 2011).

Is uncreative writing therefore the right term to use when referring to the re-use of text in new shapes and forms? Isn't creativity a pre-requisite for this to happen? And are technical skills needed too as suggested by Haensler (2019)? And artistic? Does “uncreative” relate to the use of an existing text? Even the filtering, curating of text is a creative act and a critical one too. And what about rules? Existing rules may be ignored, but new ones are generated in the process of uncreative writing and in uncreative expression more generally. Ali (2013) acknowledges that this is common practice in poetry where own rules are invented. The deep engagement with text is what will lead us into new explorations. Kleon (2012, 140) says characteristically “Creativity isn't just the things we choose to put in, it's the things we choose to leave out.” This sounds very much like strategies used in uncreative writing. Marczevska (2018) sees that shift in understanding what Goldsmith means by creativity and not that creativity is absent in uncreative writing. Perhaps it is a widening of what is understood of creativity within the context of creative writing that opens new possibilities of expression and creation that start life primarily in the digital networked world, maximising what has been created already. Does Harris' (1998) framework on the emergence of creative ideas help us see the connections more clearly? Haven't humans always copied and pasted (Goldsmith, 2011b)? What changed? The scale? The medium? And the way this is done due to the available networked technologies and applications that provide access to unlimited text

on the internet?

Goldsmith's (2011a, xvii, xix) words are powerful reminders of past and present use of language creations and the endless opportunities digital networked technologies have afforded which are experienced on an everyday basis by all of us. In his own words

“Before digital language, words were almost always found imprisoned on a page. How different it is today, when digitised language can be poured into any conceivable container [...] the possibilities are endless. You could say that this isn't writing, and in the traditional sense, you'd be right. But this is where things get interesting: we aren't hammering away on typewriters. Instead, focused all day on powerful machines with infinite possibilities, connected to networks with a number of equally infinite possibilities, writers and their role are being significantly challenged, expanded and updated.”

In Lethern's (2007) essay, which according to Goldsmith (2011b) is not original, the important role of the open source movement and the wider gift economies played in the creation of new work, including the open education movement is illuminated.

Copying and pasting seems to be presented as a sophisticated activity in the context of creative writing. A craft perhaps. One that involves criticality, judgement, and creativity, to select and deselect, to dismantle, to synthesise and re-appropriate text, in a new shape and form. Also, to come up and make up new rules. The process is subjective and frozen in time and one that will produce unique outputs and does require deep engagement, criticality and creativity.

An uncreative writing experiment conducted on one of Goldsmith's (2011b, online) articles led to the construction of the following uncreative writing manifesto (Figure 5.1). The author clarifies here that what follows is not an act of plagiarism or academic misconduct but an uncreative writing experiment. The process of curating verbatim extracts from Goldsmith's paper based on the author's selection criteria is modelled here using uncreative writing strategies. The author consciously and deliberately copied and pasted authentic extracts from Goldsmith's paper in which he defines uncreative writing that were important to the author of this paper. After selecting and curating these extracts, these were sorted alphabetically and repurposed in order to construct the following uncreative writing manifesto using an uncreative writing technique. The output is a random re-arrangement of Goldsmith's (2011b, online) words and phrases used in the original paper. How original is the new creation? As Goldsmith's (2011b) notes originality is indeed often questioned in uncreative writing. However, the manifesto that follows stands on its own feet as something that is new based on all that is borrowed from the same source. The text has also been italicised to show that these are existing extracts that have however been re-arranged.

*A creative writer is an explorer*  
*A groundbreaker*  
*A recipe for disaster*  
*Accused of robbing*  
*An explosion of writers employing strategies of copying and appropriation*  
*Art*  
*Authorless*  
*Authorship in a more conceptual way*  
*Being emotionally moved by that process*  
*Celebration*  
*Choose*  
*Code*  
*Collision*  
*Commonplace*  
*Contemporary*  
*Context is the new content*  
*Cutting and pasting*  
*Cutting and pasting*  
*Cutting and pasting all that time*  
*Cutting and pasting are integral to the writing process*  
*Democratic classroom*  
*Digital culture*  
*Enthusiasm for the future*  
*Falseness*  
*Folly to dismiss quality*  
*Full-time enabler*  
*How ideas of literature have been shared, riffed, culled, reused, recycled, swiped, stolen, quoted, lifted, duplicated, gifted, appropriated, mimicked, and pirated for as long as literature has existed*  
***I do not wish to add any more***  
*Identity theft, repurposing papers, patchworking, sampling, plundering and stealing*  
*If you don't want it copied, don't put it online*  
*In academia, patchwriting is considered an offence*  
*Inauthenticity*  
*Intentionally unoriginal*  
*It's impossible to suspend judgement*  
*Joy*  
*Knowing*  
*Language hoarders*  
*Liberation from constraints*  
*Lost opportunity for literary creativity*  
*Mastery of information and its dissemination*  
*Moments of unanticipated beauty*  
*Moving language from one place to another*  
*Music*  
*Nameless*  
*Party host*

*Patchwriting, a way of weaving together various shards of other people's words*  
*Penalised for... originality and creativity*  
*Plagiaristic tendencies*  
*Planning and decisions are made beforehand*  
*Rarely intersecting*  
*Reconstruct*  
*Reframed*  
*Relevant*  
*Results are distinctly analogue*  
*Rewarded for plagiarism*  
*Rich fruits of shared culture*  
*Students*  
*Tear down clichés*  
*Technology driven*  
*The act of choosing and reframing tells us as much about ourselves as our story*  
*The mainstream and avant-garde*  
*The new writing has an electronic gleam it is eye*  
*The Web as ways of constructing literature*  
*Thrive*  
*Throw judgement and quality out of the window – trouble*  
*To question*  
*Tracks constructed from other tracks*  
*Traffic cop*  
*Unauthored*  
*Unoriginality*  
*Unsigned*  
*We must learn to negotiate the vast quantity that exists*  
*What to include*  
*What to leave out*  
*Word processing, databasing, recycling, appropriation, intentional plagiarism, identity ciphering, and intensive programming*  
*Writing is stuck*

**Figure 5.1: Uncreative writing manifestobased on Goldsmith (2011b, online)**

### **Discussion: Connecting the unrelated**

After demystifying uncreative writing, “uncreativity” in the context of teaching emerged as an idea in the author’s thinking. The reflective process was messy, confusing (Schön, 1987). It always is. But it seemed that there was a seed in there, somewhere, that mattered and was worth exploring. An attempt is made to link uncreative writing as an act and tactic that displays similarities to open education and could lead towards a definition of uncreative teaching. The exploration of unrelated domains opened new ways of thinking and revealed novel connections, links and commonalities and the transposition of ideas from literature to (open) education and creativity. When the idea of open education as uncreative practice was still very much half-baked, it was shared during a session with educators studying towards their teaching qualification at the University of Manchester that had a focus on open education (Nerantzi, 2020).

In the same way in uncreative writing something that exists already is re-used, after it is conceptually interrogated and reshaped into a new output, completely detached from the original that stands on its own feet, the educator may take an approach they either experienced themselves, heard or read about and make it their own through appropriating and adopting it into their practice. This process and act is defined as “uncreative teaching”. In other words the re-purposing and re-mixing of strategies and approaches that have been used in one educational setting to a different one. Something that is borrowed and based on a teaching intervention, an activity, an approach that has been used by others or themselves also in other settings. Isn't this a form of copying and pasting? Similar to what is happening in uncreative writing? Perhaps not exactly pasting but pasting in a broader sense that again does require conceptual engagement and investment that will lead to re-creation and re-invention as an uncreative expression as known from literature.

As mentioned already, almost no idea is a completely new idea (Harris, 1998; Resnick, 2017). Only revolution is seen as the generation of brand new ideas, at least according to Harris. Could the same be said about teaching? How much of teaching is revolutionary? Is it a fact that most teaching approaches, strategies and tactics are indeed borrowed from other individuals and practices we have seen, heard, read about elsewhere in other contexts? But also our own? Things the educator has used before in other settings and is now re-appropriating and remixing? If this is the case, could we say that teaching is an uncreative act or tactic? A tactic as defined by de Certeau (1984) an act used by the powerless to seize opportunities to bring about change, in contrast to strategy used by those in power to impose and dictate. Tactics are invisible, flexible and dynamic spaces by nature and provide a fertile ground for experimentation, creativity and empowerment as a form of democratic participation of practitioners in higher education (Hammond, 2017). Evidence suggests what drives practitioners to innovate and change their practices is less a response to mandates from those in power, and more the desire to enhance students' learning and the desire to experiment (Nerantzi & Thomas, 2019). Pulker and Kukulska-Hulme (2020) came to similar conclusions in the context of re-use of OER by online language teachers.

Modelling practices and enabling educators to experience different learning and teaching approaches can lead to deep and critical reflection and lead to changes in practice and indeed transformation (Nerantzi et al. 2014). Land (2004) called this academic development orientation modeller-broker. An orientation, which according to Neame (2013, 332) has “viral powers” and can “infect” others (Neame, 2013, 342). The focus here is on ideas, tactics and approaches that can be infectious and travel.

Travel in this context means openly sharing and re-appropriating. It is openness that not only allows ideas to travel further but it is also essential for creativity and colonisation of ideas (Resnick, 2017; van Broekhoven et al., 2020).

Sharing is fundamental to the open education movement and its social justice mission to improve and widen access to education for all and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Weller (2014, 136) states characteristically that “sharing as widely as possible should be at the heart of educational practice.” Educators are interested in creating stimulating learning experiences to support their students' learning, in schools, colleges and universities. They do this through introducing informed changes to their practice

and the learning resources based on evidence and through experimentation and innovation (Nerantzi & Thomas, 2019). Often ideas and approaches they use are “borrowed”, shared by peers locally or in the open, also within networks (Cronin, 2017) and communities as they bring enrichment (Havemann& Roberts, 2021). In Hegarty’s (2015) Eight Attributes of Open Pedagogy, sharing ideas and resources as well as creativity and innovation feature among attributes such as community and learner contribution. Learner contribution and co-creation of educational activities, resources and experiences is an interesting proposition that some educators are adopting. The 5C Framework (connecting, communicating, curating, collaborating, creating) for social learning (Nerantzi &Beckingham, 2014; Nerantzi &Beckingham, 2015) could provide a scaffold to enable this and develop student competencies but also engage students in uncreative teaching or even uncreative learning with their peers and educators.

Ashwin (2020) recognises that teaching is done with colleagues in the form of preparation, planning, designing curricula, activities and resources and evaluating practice. Educators open-up their practices and share learning resources but top-down interventions are also not excluded (Raj et al., 2021). According to the UNESCO (2019, 2) definition “Open Educational Resources are learning, teaching and research resources in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, repurpose, adaptation and redistribution by others.” This definition also presents a lifecycle of OER with a focus on re-usability. Something that reminds of what Goldsmith (2015) calls “manipulation” or re-invention in uncreative writing. A closer investigation also reveals connections to Harris’ (1998) Creative ideas generation approaches mentioned earlier.

The above shows a connection between OER as defined by UNESCO 2019) and the concept of uncreative writing but also how creative ideas are generated (Harris, 1998). When relating these to education, the concept of uncreative teaching is emerging.

Through this inquiry, an attempt is made to connect uncreative writing with uncreative teaching and open education. The conceptual understanding and the implications for teaching and learning are still under development. Thoughts and ideas are still fresh and dynamic but there is something that makes the link between uncreative writing, open education and uncreative teaching attractive and relevant.

The manifesto of uncreative teaching (Figure 5.2) generated through the uncreative writing manifesto (Figure 5.1) provides some insights and parallels for further exploration to open new ways of thinking, being and practising. It can be used as a discussion trigger with educators and students. Earlier in this paper, the author explained the process used to construct the uncreative writing manifesto using uncreative writing techniques. In the following, the author goes one step further and replaces “writing” and “writer” with “teaching” and “teacher” preserving the remaining textual elements and structure without reshuffling the original words and phrases from Goldsmith’s (2011b) paper. Again, this is a deliberate act of experimentation using uncreative writing strategies through which something new is created based on something that exists already and does not constitute an act of plagiarism. The text has been italicised to illustrate that the majority of text has been extracted from Goldsmith (2011b) with the exception of the replacement rule for specific words as mentioned above.



*A creative teacher is an explorer*  
*A groundbreaker*  
*A recipe for disaster*  
*Accused of robbing*  
*An explosion of teachers employing strategies of copying and appropriation*  
*Art*  
*Authorless*  
*Authoring teaching in a more conceptual way*  
*Being emotionally moved by that process*  
*Celebration*  
*Choose*  
*Code*  
*Collision*  
*Commonplace*  
*Contemporary*  
*Context is the new content*  
*Cutting and pasting*  
*Cutting and pasting*  
*Cutting and pasting all that time*  
*Cutting and pasting are integral to the teaching process*  
*Democratic classroom*  
*Digital culture*  
*Enthusiasm for the future*  
*Falseness*  
*Folly to dismiss quality*  
*Full-time enabler*  
*How ideas of teaching have been shared, riffed, culled, reused, recycled, swiped, stolen, quoted,*  
*lifted, duplicated, gifted, appropriated, mimicked, and pirated for as long as teaching has existed*  
*I do not wish to add any more*  
*Identity theft, repurposing resources, patchworking, sampling, plundering and stealing*  
*If you don't want it copied, don't put it online*  
*In academia, patchwriting is considered an offence*  
*Inauthenticity*  
*Intentionally unoriginal*  
*It's impossible to suspend judgement*  
*Joy*  
*Knowing*  
*Language hoarders*  
*Liberation from constraints*  
*Lost opportunity for creativity in teaching*  
*Mastery of information and its dissemination*  
*Moments of unanticipated beauty*  
*Moving teaching from one place to another*  
*Music*  
*Nameless*  
*Party host*  
*Patch teaching, a way of weaving together various shards of other people's words*

*Penalised for... originality and creativity*  
*Plagiaristic tendencies*  
*Planning and decisions are made beforehand*  
*Rarely intersecting*  
*Reconstruct*  
*Reframed*  
*Relevant*  
*Results are distinctly analog*  
*Rewarded for plagiarism*  
*Rich fruits of shared culture*  
*Students*  
*Tear down clichés*  
*Technology driven*  
*The act of choosing and reframing tells us as much about ourselves as our story*  
*The mainstream and avant-garde*  
*The new teaching has an electronic gleam it is eye*  
*The Web as ways of constructing teaching*  
*Thrive*  
*Throw judgement and quality out of the window – trouble*  
*To question*  
*Tracks constructed from other tracks*  
*Traffic cop*  
*Unauthored*  
*Unoriginality*  
*Unsigned*  
*We must learn to negotiate the vast quantity that exists*  
*What to include*  
*What to leave out*  
*Word processing, databasing, recycling, appropriation, intentional plagiarism, identity ciphering, and intensive programming*  
*Teaching is stuck*

**Figure 5.2 : Uncreative teaching manifestobased on Goldsmith (2011b, online)**

In the same way “uncreative writing” is a creative act that maximises what exists already, open education can be an enabler for uncreative teaching that aids the development of learning resources, practices and innovations based on existing ideas in other domains or contexts. While this has been enabled more than ever before thanks to digital networked technologies, open and social media and related practices, it is important to respect the creators and acknowledge where ideas come from. History and practices have shown that this has not always been the case. What needs to happen to encourage ethical practice and secure academic integrity?

Creative Commons licenses for example are widely used in open education to provide legal protection of copyrighted work. They act as a permission to use the original work according to the specific license agreement, and related legal rights and restrictions that come with it. They also require that the creator be attributed which could be interpreted that these licenses are conditional or even a contract (Hietanen, 2007). While open licenses enable ideas to travel, derivatives, novel combinations and mashups can be

created if and when legally enabled through a particular open license. However, evidence suggests that such licenses may also create challenges for the wider distribution and adaptation of original work and can lead to abuse (Katz, 2006; Bissell, 2009). Therefore, it is recommended to read the license under which the work has been made available carefully to avoid unauthorised use of the work that may have legal implications for the individual and the organisation (Baas & Schuwer, 2021).

### **Ideas travel**

Ideas grow, evolve and spread when they are shared. This also applies to pedagogical ideas in the form of resources, practices, processes, frameworks and models as well as initiatives and programmes. James and Brookfield (2014, 205-206) state characteristically “We need peers to bounce ideas off, to ask us productive troublesome questions, to introduce us to new possibilities, and to alert us to omissions in our thinking.” The diversity of peers and the collaborations that are fostered with peers shape the richness of the ideas that are generated (Bateson & Martin, 2013). Treviranus (2016, 7) emphasizes that “it is our variability that gives us collective strength.” Kessels (2016, 48) also recognises the role others play in ideas generation but warns that “when ideas are borrowed, modified and cannibalised from within, they are rarely innovative or original.” This is of course a broad generalisation and questionable. Harris (1998) articulated that most creative ideas are borrowed from other ideas. Does this fact make them less valuable, valued or even creative? Defining creativity as the generation of ideas and innovation the application of these (Bateson and Martin, 2013) may help better understand the innovative character of novel applications and the re-appropriation of existing ideas in multiple and diverse domains and contexts and better understand how and where they travel to, how ideas spread and evolve.

What follows is a synoptic reference to a recent collaborative open education project which brought to light some of the vulnerabilities faced by open educators. These were reported by respondents, open educators from across the world, and may also provide some insights into how educators who share their ideas and enable them to travel feel more widely, and shed light on issues around academic integrity and good educational practice.

### **Food for thought**

Sharing ideas is what makes them survive, grow and travel further. As teaching is about sharing and helping others learn and develop, including other educators, there is probably an open educator in all educators and what is defined in this article as uncreative teaching may be wide-spread already across the education sector, just not articulated as such.

A recent Global OER Graduate Network (GO-GN) Fellowship project associated with the collaborative creation of an open picture book about the values of open education, which also has features of uncreative expression as it repurposes artwork and snippets of existing stories (Nerantzi et al. 2021), brought the vulnerabilities and strengths of those who see themselves as open educators to light (Roberts, et al., 2020). As a link has been made between open education and uncreative teaching in this article, these seem to be relevant to be considered in the context of uncreative teaching. The findings shine light on some of the downsides and pitfalls associated with the travelling of pedagogical ideas in the open and their appropriation in different contexts.

As part of the open picture book project, a survey instrument was constructed as a form of inquiry to collate views from the wider open education community about what open education meant to them, the importance it had for them and the challenges. The responses would be considered during the co-creation of an open picture book about the values of open education. In total, 95 responses were received, from 16 countries in 5 continents from the wider open education community. The survey was completed by 58 individuals, 2 further responses were provided via a related OEGlobal20 conference activity, and 35 respondents participated during a workshop.

The thematic analysis linked to perceived open educators' vulnerabilities and strengths as expressed by the respondents is reported in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 : Vulnerabilities and strengths of open educators (Roberts et al., 2020, online)**

<b>Vulnerabilities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
exploitation	18	Social	22
fragile	16	Resourcefulness	14
<b>curiosity</b>	8	Determination	13
isolation	7	Persistence	11
<b>generosity</b>	6	Supportive	10
altruism	6	<b>Bold</b>	9
<b>bold</b>	3	flexible	8
unpopular	1	collaborative	6
		<b>curiosity</b>	6
		freedom	5
		<b>generosity</b>	2

Table 5.2 indicates how open education is lived by those who engage in it. The findings illustrate how curiosity, boldness and generosity can be interpreted as vulnerabilities and strengths. Being exploited and feeling fragile seem to be the top vulnerabilities reported. Sharing seems to come naturally as open educators are very much interested in helping and supporting others to improve educational experiences. Thanks to digital networked technologies and related practices this can happen more than ever before and at scale (Bissell, 2009). Unfortunately, the ease with which anything digital can be duplicated also creates opportunities for malignant practice (Liu, 2004). Responses indicated participants often put others before themselves. Is their open and giving nature what makes open educators vulnerable? Do others take advantage of their generosity? Their social character and resourcefulness appear as top strengths together with determination, persistence and support that follow, possibly indicating the driving force and motivations of open educators to be bold, generous, curious and share their ideas, practices and research with the wider communities to bring about social change. This study generated many questions that are worth investigating further.

While uncreative teaching enables the appropriation of ideas, resources and practices of others, it does not mean that the originator(s) of these can or should be ignored or forgotten. It will be important for those using the work of others to attribute it clearly and respectfully whenever used to address some of the vulnerabilities mentioned above and apply good academic practice principles.

## Conclusions

Uncreative writing provided an alternative lense to explore open education, practices and resources and illuminate its connections to creativity, how ideas are generated and what enables them to travel through re-use and re-appropriation often based on open licensing agreements. The concept of uncreative teaching emerged as a result of this reflective inquiry. It relates to teaching in the school, college and higher education sector holistically. Uncreative teaching is teaching that is based on existing pedagogical ideas borrowed from other contexts, adopted, adapted and re-invented possibly using OER and OEP but not exclusively. It will be useful to explore if uncreative teaching as a concept and educational tactic could play the role of a connector or bridge to spread open education and boost creativity and innovation across the education sector. Could the angle of uncreative teaching help open education to be recognised as normal and integrated collaborative practice within the curriculum and lead to transformative teaching and learning?

While it is recognised that pedagogical ideas that are shared, travel more widely and spread innovative approaches beyond localised practices, the open picture book project and particularly findings reported linked to the vulnerabilities of open educators ring alarm bells that echo concerns relating to abuse. The findings warrant further research to gain deeper insights into these particular experiences to find ways to protect educators and their pedagogical ideas but also spread their ideas in a respectful and lawful manner.

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