

My OER Book

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MY OER BOOK

Clint Lalonde

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1

DER INTRODUCTION

DER Introduction

Summary

Overview of the open educational resources movement and available tools.

1. Lesson: Introduction

Lesson Components

- Fast Fact
- Skills/Objectives
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

Fast Fact

According to [Wikipedia](#), OER is a term that was first adopted at UNESCO's 2002 Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries funded by the Hewlett Foundation. The definition OER is:

“digitized materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and re-use for teaching, learning and research”

Skills/Objectives

Learners will be able to:

1. Define and describe OER.
2. List the advantages and disadvantages of OER use.

Success Indicators

1. Learner memberships in OER community websites.
2. Learner-generated posting to open forum about OER issues.

2. Introduction

Definition

Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning materials freely available in the public domain. A [definition of OER](#) from the The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is:

“OER are teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming

videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials or techniques used to support access to knowledge.”

The term OER has been used to refer to learning materials such as:

- [Learning objects](#) (quizzes, crossword puzzles, flashcards, animations, etc.)
- [Audio lectures](#)
- Audiovideo lectures
- [Images](#)
- Sounds and music
- Entire course content and [open courseware](#)
- [Collections of journal articles](#) and institutional repositories
- [Textbooks](#)

Background

[Hewlett Foundation](#) has taken a pioneering role in the development and use of OER with its support of many initiatives: “The Open Educational Resources movement began in 2001 when the Hewlett and the Andrew W. Mellon foundations jointly funded MIT OpenCourseWare (OCW), the first institution committed to making all of its course materials freely available. Since then, more than 60 additional institutions have launched OpenCourseWare Web sites.” Just some of the many OER initiatives supported by the Hewlett Foundation include:

- [MIT Open Courseware](#)
- [Foothill-De Anza Community College District, Sharing Of Free Intellectual Assets \(Sofia\)](#)
- [Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health OpenCourseWare](#)
- [Tufts University OpenCourseWare](#)
- [Utah State University OpenCourseWare](#)
- [eduCommons](#)
- [Carnegie Mellon University, Open Learning Initiative](#)

- [Monterey Institute for Technology, Online Advanced Placement courses](#)
- [Connexions](#)
- [Internet Archive, Education](#)

The Open Educational Resources movement is part of a global effort to make knowledge available to all. The UNESCO's [Virtual University Forum](#) provides an overview about definitions, initiatives, and community-building. Many repositories of open learning materials are listed at the Open [Educational Resources \(OER\) Index](#).

Some benefits of OER include:

- Fosters pedagogical innovation and relevance that avoids teaching from the textbook
- Broadens use of alternatives to textbooks while maintaining instructional quality
- Lowers costs of course materials for students

Some disadvantages of OER include:

- Quality of available OER materials inconsistent
- Materials may not meet Section 508 ADA accessibility or SCORM requirements and must be modify to bring into compliance
- No common standard for review of OER accuracy and quality
- Need to check accuracy of content
- Customization necessary to match departmental and/or college curriculum requirements
- Technical requirements to access vary
- Technological determinism created by the delivery tool

Case Study

In his May 2006 article [“Bye the Book My year of teaching envi-](#)

ronmental science without a textbook” Eric Pallant describes how he and co-professor Terry Bensele experimented with teaching their Introduction to Environmental Science course at Allegheny College with no textbook. Instead they used a variety of open educational resources. Based on self-report, 41 of 46 students in their first-semester class read the same or more than they would have in a textbook.

The experiment proved successful enough that the entire academic department has embraced the concept of OER. Faculty have distributed the work of collecting and banking websites for common use.

Sustainability

Recently, several websites have become available that provide tools to support the identification, development, use, re-use, collaboration, and delivery of open learning content including searching and organization of content. Some websites, such as: [OER Commons](#), [Open Learn](#), [Open Content](#), [WikiEducator](#), [Connexions](#), [OWL Institute](#), and [OERderves](#), are devoted to nurturing online learning communities, wikis, and blogs on various aspects of OER. Also, a new journal has gone online with a focus on OER: [Eduforge: The International Journal of Open Education Resources](#).

Support for OER Use on Campus

In order to promote use of OER across campus, the challenges must be identified and addressed. Results of a two-year study are presented in the article “[Why Study Users: An Environmental Scan of Use and Users of Digital Resources in the Humanities and Social Sciences Undergraduate Education](#).” Based on this study, barriers to use of digital resources including the lack of direct relevance to their preferred pedagogical approaches, and insufficient time and classroom resources. Challenges

- Resources for faculty support

- Quality assurance of learning materials
- Limited availability of fully vetted and comprehensive learning materials in some disciplines
- Articulation and transfer issues
- Printing and computer lab demands on campus by students
- Identification of collaborative tools for development, use, and delivery of OER learning materials
- Fostering use of the tools by faculty
- Compliance with federal and state accessibility requirements

Resources Needed to Support Faculty Use and Development of OER

- Training
- Technical assistance
- Software
- Hardware
- Release time

3. Activity

Experience

1. Get connected and become a part of the OER movement community:

- Go to [OER Commons](#). [Join](#) and sign up to receive e-news.
- Go to [Open Learn](#). [Browse topics](#), [register](#) to become a part of the OER community, sign up for the newsletter, and [tell one friend about Open Learn](#).
- Go to Rice University's [Connexions](#) to read the [feedback](#) from users and then register.

2. Read at least one of the following about the OER movement:

- [Models for Sustainable Open Educational Resources](#) by Stephen Downes, January 30, 2006
- [The Current State of Open Educational Resources](#) by David Wiley, February 3, 2006
- [Open Educational Resources: Toward a New Educational Paradigm](#) by Petrides & Jimes, October 2006

Reflect

1. Once you have [joined OER Commons](#), make your own posting to the [OER Matters Discussions](#) area. Click on OER Matters Teaching and Learning Forum to answer the following question:

“Opening up new avenues for teachers and learners to select and augment learning resources that meet one’s unique teaching and learning needs is the basic mission behind OER. But how do OER impact teaching and learning and what are the issues that we need to take into consideration?”

Apply

Now that you have a general idea of what OER is all about, you should be ready to make a couple of decisions:

1. Do you want to learn more about OER?
 - Decide which lessons you want to complete in this tutorial.
 - Decide the order in which you want to complete the lessons that makes the most sense for your learning needs.
2. Do you want to get the most out of this learning experience?
 - Invite a colleague to join you in this tutorial.
 - Complete all the exercises listed in the Activity component of each Lesson.

Review Questions

1. What are Open Educational Resources?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages to using OER for teaching?

Resources

- [Models for Sustainable Open Educational Resources](#)
- [The Current State of Open Educational Resources](#)
- [A Review of the Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Movement](#)
- [Open Educational Resources: Toward a New Educational Paradigm](#)
- [Open Educational Resources: Opportunities and Challenges](#)
- [Open Educational Resources Serve the World](#)
- [Giving Knowledge for Free: The Emergence of Open Educational Resources](#)
- [The Future of Free Information](#)

2

DER PUBLIC DOMAIN TEXTBOOK SOURCES

DER Public Domain Textbook Sources

Summary

Overview of alternatives to textbooks.

1. DER Sources of Public Domain Textbooks

Lesson Components

- Fast Fact
- Skills/Objectives
- Success Indicators
- Introduction
- Activity
- Review questions
- Resources

Fast Fact

Project Gutenberg has 20,000 free books in its Online Book Catalog and is the oldest producer of free ebooks on the Internet.

Skills/Objectives

Learners will be able to:

- Locate sources of public domain textbooks.
- Establish criteria for selection of public domain textbooks.

Success Indicators

- Lesson plan developed that incorporates use of a public domain textbook.

2. Introduction

Faculty often find the task of selecting reading materials or textbooks for a course daunting. Instructors can ease the selection process by establishing and following criteria such as quantity, quality, accuracy, currency, reading level, relevance, and reliability.

Whether due to passion for the course topic or simply hasty decision-making, some instructors make the mistake of selecting and assigning an overwhelming amount of reading for their students. Try estimating how many minutes students will need

to complete each reading assignment and adjust your selection of learning materials accordingly. Another concern is that information provided to students, especially in printed textbooks, can quickly become outdated.

Criteria/Guidelines for Selection of Materials

- Quality of content, literary merit and format
- Timeliness
- Favorable reviews
- Permanence/lasting value
- Authority: author
- Scope
- Physical quality
- Format: print, CD-ROM, online, etc.
- reading level

Two major efforts to promote the development and sharing of public domain textbooks are [Connexions](#) and [Wikibooks](#). [Free Textbook Search](#) allows users to search for free textbooks in 113 sites in English, German, French, Dutch or Swedish.

[Connexions](#) is a project at Rice University supported by the Hewlett Foundation to promote collaborative development, free sharing, and rapid publishing of scholarly content on the Web. Content is organized in small modules that are easily connected into larger courses. All content is free to use and reuse under the Creative Commons “attribution” license.

[Wikibooks](#) is a Wikimedia project started in 2003 with the mission to create a free collection of open-content textbooks that anyone can edit.

Collections of books that are freely available include [Project Gutenberg](#), [Read Print](#), [Bartleby](#), [Online Books](#), [Electronic Text Service](#), and the [Open Book Project](#).

Project Gutenberg has 20,000 free books in its Online Book Catalog and is the oldest producer of free ebooks on the Inter-

net. The mission of [Project Gutenberg](#) is to encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. In an effort to promote intercultural understanding, the [World Digital Library](#) plans to make available significant primary materials from cultures around the world, including manuscripts, maps, rare books, musical scores, recordings, films, prints, photographs, architectural drawings, and other significant cultural materials.

[The Assayer](#) displays a list of textbooks that are freely available in many disciplines. For an example, see these [introductory physics textbooks](#) and [Liberte](#), a first-year collegel French textbook. The [Internet Public Library](#) provides a comprehensive list of books that are available on the internet. A [video tour](#) of the site is available. Examples of free available eBooks from [Bartleby](#):

- [The Harvard Classics Shelf of Fiction](#)
- [The Oxford Shakespeare](#)
- [Anatomy of the Human Body](#)
- [The World Factbook, 2003](#)
- [Online Sapiens](#)

Two sources of audio books in the public domain are [LibriVox](#) and [Loudlit](#). [LibriVox](#) provides free audiobooks from the public domain with several options for listening.

[Loudlit](#) provides a text of great literary masterpieces as well as high quality audio to help readers improve their spelling, punctuation and paragraph structure. Loudlit literature includes children's stories, poetry, short stories, and novels.

Other sources of textbook learning materials are digital collections of [institutional repositories](#) at universities and [self-archiving](#) by authors on the internet. Some of these include:

- [Scholarship of the California Digital Library](#)
- [MIT textbooks](#)
- [Hofstra University Hofprints-Hofstra University E-Print Archive](#)
- [Cornell Race, Ethnicity, and Religion Project](#)

3. Activity

Experience

1. Identify some learning materials at [Project Gutenberg](#).
2. [Go to Wikibooks](#) to identify textbooks in your teaching discipline.
3. Consider using Wikibooks for a [class project](#); read the guidelines.
4. Take a [tour](#) of Connexions to find out if it has resources of use to you in your teaching.

Reflect

1. [Create an account](#) at Project Gutenberg then post your own review of a textbook.

Apply

1. [Distributed Proofreaders](#). Help create an eBook.
2. [Contribute](#) to Wikibooks by editing pages, creating new pages, publicizing Wikibooks, and many other ways, such as donating.

Review Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages to using public domain textbooks for teaching?
2. What are the most useful sources of public domain textbooks in your discipline and why?

Resources

- [Project Gutenberg](#)

- [The 7 Things You Should Know About E-Books](#)