

# Affordable Food for Thought

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## NUTRITION INFORMATION

It is a common practice for faculty members to use high-cost textbooks for the purpose of introducing new information to college students. Due to cost, there is growing financial pressures on students. Likewise, the necessary disposal of quickly outdated textbooks suggests that the model is ultimately unsustainable. This recipe provides affordable alternatives to high-cost textbooks and offers librarians the tools to assist faculty members with redesigning courses using open educational resources (OERs).

OERs are “teaching, learning and research materials in any medium—digital or otherwise—that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions,” according to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation webpage on OERs. Moreover, open educational resources are sustainable due to their no-cost or low-cost options (i.e., print options). In addition, OERs provide a method of saving space in libraries as a benefit. As more faculty adopt OERs, libraries may not have to support large textbook reserve collections. This can also lead to budgetary savings that can be used on other library resources to support student success.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Define and identify OERs that can be incorporated into current curricula.
- Acquire knowledge about the search tools available to find OERs and to lead OER literacy initiatives.
- Explore strategies to promote OERs campus-wide.

## NUMBER SERVED

As many as possible, a coalition of the willing

## COOKING TIME

10–30 hours of prep time to research OERs, open-access journals, and Creative Commons–licensed materials; create promotion materials to promote OER initiatives; create a visual presentation to share with the campus community; and print visual aids and articles

## DIETARY GUIDELINES

Attending a college or a university is an important endeavor and milestone in the lives of many people. This endeavor can, however, be quite costly. The cost of textbooks is rising at a rate of four times inflation, while, according to the US Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, the costs of attending public colleges and universities are increasing by 34 percent. Without open education and open access, education

may be financially out of reach for some people. The James E. Shepard Memorial Library at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) has committed its staff and resources to the important work of eliminating educational barriers with the incorporation of OERs.

The rising costs of textbooks can be a major barrier to student success and hinder course retention. According to 2014 report *Fixing the Broken Textbook Market* by the US Public Interest Research Group, 65 percent of students have decided not to buy at least one textbook because they could not afford the cost. This is a systematic multidisciplinary challenge that impacts many students. Our librarians have worked to advocate and promote the use of library resources and OERs to assist faculty with revamping current courses with affordable alternatives. The overarching goal of promoting OERs is to ensure that all students have equal access to course materials on the first day of class.

## INGREDIENTS AND EQUIPMENT

- Classroom with presentation screen and computer for librarians to present OERs and library resources to faculty, staff, and students
- Presentation software (PowerPoint, Google Slides, Prezi, Keynote, etc.)

- Software to create promotional materials (Adobe Spark, Canva, Publisher, etc.)
- Internet
- Librarians
- LibGuides or a resource page
- Folders including key articles and other pertinent information about open educational resources and any visual aids
- Teaching faculty (full- and part-time)
- Library support staff to help with planning and logistics
- Students
- University administration or other stakeholders

### COOKING METHOD

1. Acquire knowledge about OERs by exploring the academic literature (scholarly articles, books, media), attending webinars or conference presentations, and viewing other libraries' OER LibGuides and videos. In addition, reach out to librarians and faculty members currently using OERs to garner ideas and suggestions on promoting OERs. Moreover, it may be helpful to search for foundations and other educational organizations that have an interest in this topic.
2. Learn about Creative Commons licensing in order to help faculty and other stakeholders understand how creators want to share their work and what the different Creative Commons copyright licenses specify. A hallmark of OERs is an "intellectual property license that permits their free use and

re-purposing," according to Smith in "Ruminations on Research." Gaining an understanding will allow for OER works to be used as intended.

3. Identify collaborators within the library and outside the library to help promote and advocate for OER initiatives
4. Conduct an OER information session with collaborators to ensure that they are well versed in the benefits of OERs so they can be effective advocates.
5. Develop a strategic marketing plan to promote OERs to campus stakeholders. Invite students to tell their stories about how buying high-cost textbooks negatively impacts student success and retention.
6. Plan an OER event schedule. Develop events such as a lunch-and-learn. Ask to be on the agenda at faculty and student government association meetings to introduce OERs to the campus community.
7. Be prepared to work with faculty members in small groups and in one-on-one sessions to assist them with identifying OERs and library resources to redesign courses.
8. Assess for success. Engage in ongoing outreach and assessment efforts to determine content quality and promotional efforts.
9. Suggest that faculty members evaluate students' experiences with OERs. Use this survey data to reach out to other faculty members and assist them in adopting OERs.

### ALLERGY WARNING

Explaining Creative Commons can feel like you are dwelling in minute details. Using infographics to explain the different licenses will assist the process greatly. Moreover, you may encounter resistance from faculty or the university bookstore. A pilot program with one or two willing faculty members can assist with resistant faculty. To counter resistance from the university bookstore, propose a print-on-demand option at the bookstore when students want a print copy of an OER textbook. This suggestion will create a possible collaborative partnership with the bookstore and another possible revenue stream for the bookstore. You may need to continue to follow up with the bookstore to ensure success.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### Key Research on OER

- Bober, Chris. "Open Educational Resources: An Annotated Bibliography for Librarians." *Education Libraries* 40 (2017). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1178190.pdf>.
- Grewe, Kim E., and W. Preston Davis. "The Impact of Enrollment in an OER Course on Student Learning Outcomes." *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* 18, no. 4 (June 2017). Accessed from ProQuest.
- Hilton, John, III. "Open Educational Resources and College Textbook Choices: A Review of Research on Efficacy and Perceptions." *Educational Technology, Research and Development* 64, no. 4 (August 2016): 573–90. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-016-9434-9>.

Ikahihifo, Tarah K., Kristian J. Spring, Jane Rosecrans, and Josh Watson. "Assessing the Savings from Open Educational Resources on Student Academic Goals." *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* 18, no. 7 (November 2017). Accessed from ProQuest.

Massis, Bruce. "Libraries and OER." *New Library World* 117, no. 11/12 (2016): 768–71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/NLW-09-2016-0064>.

### Find Open Textbooks

BCcampus OpenEd. "Find Open Textbooks." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://open.bccampus.ca/find-open-textbooks/>.

Center for Open Education, University of Minnesota. "Open Textbook Library." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks>.

COT Education. "Continuing Our Support for Open Textbooks." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://coteducation.com/continuing-our-support-for-open-textbooks/>.

MERLOT. "SmartSearch." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>.

Openstax homepage. Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://openstax.org>.

SUNY OER Services. "Open SUNY Textbooks." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://textbooks.opensuny.org>.

Wikibooks homepage. Accessed April 8, 2019. [https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Main_Page).

### Organizations That Support or Discuss Open Educational Resources

EDUCAUSE. "Open Educational Resources (OER)." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://library.educause.edu/topics/teaching-and-learning/open-educational-resources-oer>.

NAACP. "Open Educational Resources: Equity and Opportunities." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://www.naacp.org/campaigns/open-education-resources-equity-opportunities/>.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "Open Educational Resources (OER)." Accessed April 8, 2019. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/access-to-knowledge/open-educational-resources/what-are-open-educational-resources-oers/>.

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. "Open Educational Resources." August 3, 2016. <https://hewlett.org/strategy/open-educational-resources/>.

### Additional OER Resources

Affordable Learning Georgia homepage. Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/>.

Creative Commons homepage. Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://creativecommons.org/>.

Creative Commons. "What We Do." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://creativecommons.org/about/>.

Deep Web Technologies. "Mason OER Metafinder (MOM)." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://oer.deepwebaccess.com/oer/desktop/en/search.html>.

Searches seventeen different sites for OER content.

NC Live. "Open Education North Carolina." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://www.nclive.org/OENC>.

OER Commons. "OER Commons and Open Education." Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://www.oercommons.org/about>.

Open Education Group "OER Research Toolkit." Accessed April 8, 2019. <http://openedgroup.org/toolkit>.

Senack, Ethan. *Fixing the Broken Textbook Market: How Students Respond to High Textbook Costs and Demand Alternatives*. Washington, DC: Center for Public Interest Research, 2014. <https://uspig.org/reports/usp/fixing-broken-textbook-market>.

Smith, Marshall S. "Ruminations on Research on Open Educational Resources." William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, January 3, 2014. <https://hewlett.org/library/ruminations-on-research-on-open-educational-resources/>.

Student PIRGs. "Student Group Releases New Report on Textbook Prices." News release. Accessed April 8, 2019. <https://studentpirgs.org/news/sp/student-group-releases-new-report-textbook-prices>.