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OER Engagement: Accessible Guidance for Faculty and Departments

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Overview

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- **Background:** *My OER Experience*
- **The Cost of *Not* Using OER:** Impact to Students
- **Resources:** Making OER Effortless & Accessible
- **Sourcing Shorthand:** Where to Your OER
- **Learn and Earn Opportunities:** 2025
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Definition of OER

- **At MSU Denver, we define OER as:**
- Educational materials that can be freely downloaded, edited, and shared to better serve all students
- **Why use OER?:**
 - Creates courses with low or no cost for materials
 - Makes courses more inclusive, accessible and attractive to prospective students
 - Increases innovation, improves course design and creates interdisciplinary collaboration

Background: *My OER Experience*

- 1st year as new faculty, “I didn’t know what I didn’t know.”
 - Inherited Hypothesis articles & videos
 - Chose low cost texts, but didn’t get designation
 - Learned from an OER student intern, became a student
- 2nd year, more intentional, but miles to go...
 - Joined an OER FLC
 - Overhauled materials to OER and low/no cost only
 - Registered for low/no cost designations
 - Faculty advisor for next OER intern
- Year 3+, no cost only and making my own OER!

The Cost Of *Not* Using OER

- Non OER textbooks are rising at a rate of 4 times inflation.
- Seven out of 10 students won't purchase a textbook due to cost.
- 60% of students must delay purchasing textbooks until they receive their financial aid and scholarship funds.
- Latinx and first-generation students are more negatively impacted by high textbook costs.
- **In 2022-23, students saved up to \$2,348,000 through OER adoption and other use of low-cost materials across a wide range of courses!**

* MSU Denver OER



Resources: Making OER Effortless

- **Replace Textbooks:** Use an OER textbook like "Media, Society, Culture and You" by Mark Poepel, which covers essential topics in media studies and is freely accessible
- **Use Supplementary Materials:** Incorporate OER videos from platforms like YouTube
- **Create Custom Course Packs:** Mix and match chapters from various OER textbooks
- **Interactive Assignments:** Use platforms like StoryCenter to design interactive assignments where students create and share their own digital stories
- **Open Syllabi:** Share your course syllabus on OER Commons, allowing other educators to adapt it for their courses
- **Adapt Existing OER:** Modify an existing OER textbook to include more relevant examples and case studies to your specific course
- **Library Resources:** Utilize free access to academic journals and e-books
- **Encourage Open Pedagogy:** Have students create and share their own OER materials like video tutorials or investigative reports

Resources: Making OER Accessible

- **Provide Alternative Text for Images:**
 - Add descriptive alt text to all images, diagrams, and charts.
 - Ensure the alt text conveys the same information as the image.
- **Caption Videos:**
 - Use tools like YouTube's automatic captioning and then edit for accuracy
- **Ensure Navigability:**
 - Use headings, subheadings, lists, and consistent formatting
 - Ensure that headings are properly tagged
- **Offer Multiple Formats:**
 - Provide materials in various formats such as PDF, ePub, and Word documents.
 - Ensure that all formats are accessible and can be used with assistive technologies.

Resources: Making OER Accessible

- **Check Color Contrast:**

- Use high-contrast color schemes to ensure readability
- Tools like the WebAIM Color Contrast Checker can help you test color combinations.

- **Use Accessible Fonts:**

- Choose fonts that are easy to read, such as Arial, Verdana, or Tahoma.
- Avoid using too many different fonts and ensure text size is sufficient.

- **Include Transcripts for Audio:**

- Provide transcripts for all audio content
- Ensure transcripts are accurate and easily accessible.

- **Test with Assistive Technologies:**

- Regularly test your materials with screen readers and other assistive technologies.
- Tools like NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access) or JAWS (Job Access With Speech) can help you test accessibility.

OER Sourcing Shorthand

- Here are some of my favorite places to find accessible OER:
- **Open Textbook Library**: Offers a wide range of open textbooks, freely available to download, edit, and distribute.
- **OER Commons**: Curated collections of open textbooks and full courses organized by discipline
- **LibreTexts**: A comprehensive platform offering variety of open, accessible textbooks in various subjects, including STEM, social sciences, and humanities. Includes options for adjusting text size and color contrast.
- **OpenStax**: Hosts high-quality, peer-reviewed, openly licensed textbooks that are free online and low-cost in print. Textbooks are designed with accessibility in mind, including features like alt text for images, high-contrast colors, and multiple formats (PDF, HTML, ePub) for ease of access.
- **MERLOT**: Provides free and open online teaching, learning, and faculty development services through an international education community. Reviewed for accessibility, ensuring they meet the needs of diverse learners.

My Spring OER Inspiration!

- All of my classes will be participating in the [1 Book/1 Project/2 Transform](#) and we will collectively read "[First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers](#)" by Loung Ung. These books will be provided to students at no charge and will culminate in all students attending the keynote/book signing with the author on April 2nd.
- For JMP 1010, I'm going to continue with [Think Again by Adam Grant](#) as our book club pick. There are limited copies available online for free via the Auraria Library, first come first serve. Paperbacks are \$10.37 and Hardcover are \$11, earning 1010 a "Low Cost" course designation.
- For JMP 2700, I'm trying this OER Book: [The Evolving World of Public Relations](#) Making 2700 a "Free" course materials designation.
- For JMP 4740, I'm using this resource I found on OER Commons, [Crisis Communication](#). This is a free OER course book, earning a "Free" course materials designation.

Upcoming Learn & Earn Opportunities:

- **Workshop and Review:** Attend a 90 min. intro to open licensing and OER, then review a textbook (or other substantial OER) for a \$200 stipend. [Dec. 13th from 10 - 11:30 am on Teams.](#)
- **OER Adoption Stipends:** Working to adopt open educational resources for a spring, summer, or fall 2025 courses? [Apply for a \\$750 OER adoption stipend by Feb. 14th.](#)
- **Spring 2025 OER FLC:** A faculty learning community about OER for MSU Denver faculty facilitated by Brian Healy & Emily Ragan. [Earn \\$500 for attending at least 5 of 7 sessions.](#) Begins Feb. 7th.
- **Online OER Faculty Training:** Course explores OER resources and integration. Participants earn a digital badge and certificate of completion. [Begins February 17, 2025.](#)



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**Questions,
Comments?**

Thank You, CTLD!