

## **AGHE Teaching Brief OER - OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCES**

**(Adapted from the OER resource guide created by Sophie Forrester, Lasell University, and licensed under a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License)**

### **OER - OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW**

#### **What Are OER?**

**Open educational resources (OER)** are tools that educators can use to supplement or build a course. Many OER are free for anyone to reuse, revise, remix and redistribute, making them a low-cost, tailored solution for faculty and students.

OER include:

- Textbooks, articles, books, and other resources shared online with an open license
- Teaching objects created by an instructor
- Library resources, including eBooks, articles, and streaming video
- Other copyrighted material shared under fair use

#### **Why Use OER?**

- OER reduce costs for students.
- OER make courses more accessible, especially to online students, by making all course materials available through your institution's LMS.
- OER facilitate the inclusion of multiple voices and points of view throughout a course's required reading.
- OER allow for multimedia-rich courses.
- OER allow you to build a textbook for your course, not a course for your textbook.
- OER keep course material current.

#### **How Can I Use OER?**

- Start early! The process can take a while.
- Start small. You may want to replace just one unit instead of the whole course.
- Meet with your technology librarian to start finding sources.
- Meet with your institution's instructional support staff to organize sources in your LMS.

## MAKING THE OER CASE

### Affordability

OER offer a low- or no-cost alternative to traditional textbooks in a time when students have an increasingly difficult time paying for books, while books continue to become more expensive. According to a [2014 report from the Student Public Interest Research Group](#), a majority of students have reported not buying a textbook because of the cost, and almost half of the students reported that textbook costs were a deciding factor in how many classes they took each semester. [Stephens and Pickavance \(2017\)](#) note that "While faculty and administrators have little control over the rising cost of tuition, they are able to offer students ... OER," which "can deliver comparable results for students as traditional textbooks, but at no cost."

### Academic Achievement

At the University of Georgia, [Colvard et al. \(2018\)](#) found an increase in A through B+ grades and a decrease in B through DFW grades for Pell-eligible students in courses that use OER. Other studies including [Grewe & Davis \(2017\)](#) have also found that OER implementation is correlated to higher final grades. [Hilton & Laman \(2012\)](#) found that after implementing OER in an introductory psychology class, students' final grades and exam scores improved, and the number of student withdrawals was halved.

### Flexibility

In addition to being free of charge, OER are free to use and expand upon, following the terms of their licenses. Most OER have these features, known as the 5 R's:

- **Redistribute:** The ability to make copies of the OER for others
- **Retain:** The ability to keep copies of the OER for yourself
- **Revise:** The ability to make changes to the OER to suit your needs, or to keep it up to date
- **Reuse:** The ability to use the OER content in a novel way
- **Remix:** The ability to use pieces of the OER and, if desired, to combine it with other OER

As a result, OER are highly customizable for individual instructors and courses, allowing you to use a text that contains exactly what you need. *These definitions are based on [original writing](#) by David Wiley, which was published freely under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license.* In a [2019 survey \(Lin\)](#), a majority of students surveyed preferred OER because of their cost savings, their multimedia and varied content, and the ability to access course materials any way that they can access the Internet.

### Accessibility and Equity

Unlike printed textbooks, OER are presented in a format that makes them easily compatible with screen readers and BrailleNotes for visually impaired learners. They also offer improved accessibility for all users, for instance allowing the font to be easily enlarged. Students of color and Pell-eligible students have shown an improvement in their academic performance when using OER instead of a traditional textbook ([Colvard et al., 2018](#); [Grewe & Davis, 2017](#)).

## SOME OER LOGISTICS

### Online Resources to get You Started

[The OER Starter Kit Workbook](#) This project, designed for instructors who are new to OER, offers worksheets for teachers to reflect as they begin to explore and create OER. Its five sections include: Getting Started, Copyright, Finding OER, Teaching with OER, and Creating OER. Each chapter is accompanied with learning objectives and most chapters feature interactive elements and opportunities for readers to engage with the text.

### Linking to OER

#### Why Link?

When reusing an online resource, such as to use it in an online course, the best practice is to link to it, rather than uploading a copy. Doing so helps you stay on the right side of copyright law. It's still a good idea to keep a copy for yourself in case the original source is taken down, but best practice is to post it for others only if and when that happens. When posting a copy of work you don't own, the fair use doctrine may apply - but remember, fair use is more limited than you may think. Linking rather than copying allows you, in essence, to bypass the need to apply fair use, since you are sending users to the original source.

#### What Are Permalinks?

When linking to articles in library databases, it's important to use **Permalinks** (also called persistent URLs, or PURLs) when bookmarking or citing articles. In some databases, copying or bookmarking the URL from the address bar won't work as that URL expires after a period of time - usually an hour. Using a Permalink ensures that you can always access the article again. See below how to find Permalinks in most library databases.

#### EBSCOhost Example

1. In the **Tools** section on the right of the screen, click **Permalink**
2. Copy the **Permalink** from the box that appears above the article title.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying an EBSCOhost search results page. The address bar shows the URL: <https://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=7&sid=3673fd80-efac-4d47-8f92-2ac1faf83b7%40sessionmgr4007>. The page title is "Implementing an online writing assessment strategy for gerontology." The article details are as follows:

Authors:	Brown, Pamela S., Programs in Gerontology, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL, US Hanks, Roma S., Programs in Gerontology, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL, US, <a href="mailto:rhanks@usouthal.edu">rhanks@usouthal.edu</a>
Address:	Hanks, Roma S., University of South Alabama, Programs in Gerontology, Mobile, AL, US, 36688, <a href="mailto:rhanks@usouthal.edu">rhanks@usouthal.edu</a>
Source:	Educational Gerontology, Vol 34(5), May, 2008, pp. 397-399.
NLM Title Abbreviation:	Educ Gerontol
Page Count:	3
Publisher:	United Kingdom : Taylor & Francis
ISSN:	0360-1277 (Print) 1521-0472 (Electronic)
Language:	English

The 'Tools' sidebar on the right includes options like Google Drive, Add to folder, Print, E-mail, Save, Cite, Export, Create Note, and Permalink. A red arrow points to the 'Permalink' button in the 'Tools' section. Another red arrow points to the 'Permalink' text box above the article title, which contains the URL: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=psyh&AN=2008-056>

## BEGIN EXPLORING OER FOR GERONTOLOGY, AGING AND LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT

### Books and Readings

- IntechOpen: Gerontology <https://www.intechopen.com/books/gerontology>
- NOBA: Aging <https://nobaproject.com/modules/aging>
- Psychology Introduction (Development Chapter): OpenStax <https://openstax.org/books/psychology-2e/pages/9-introduction>
- Introduction to Sociology (Introduction to Aging and the Elderly): OpenStax <https://openstax.org/books/introduction-sociology-2e/pages/13-introduction-to-aging-and-the-elderly>
- Psychology Through the Lifespan: OER Commons <https://www.oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/61178/overview> (see also links to sources after “derivative of...”)
- Introduction to Sociology (Aging and the Elderly): OER Commons <https://www.oercommons.org/courseware/unit/8437>
- The Evolution of Aging: MERLOT <https://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=1115588>
- Lifespan Development: A Psychological Perspective <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/lifespan-development-a-psychological-perspective>
- Global Women's Issues: Women in the World Today <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/global-women-s-issues-women-in-the-world-today-extended-version>

### Courses

- MIT Open CourseWare (Aging) <https://ocw.mit.edu/search/ocwsearch.htm?q=aging> (Adult Development) <https://ocw.mit.edu/search/ocwsearch.htm?q=adult%20development>
- OER Commons <https://www.oercommons.org/courses/lifespan-psychology-psyc-200>
- Johns Hopkins University (Aging) <http://ocw.jhsph.edu/index.cfm/go/imageLib:il.search/#courses> (Lifespan Development) <http://ocw.jhsph.edu/index.cfm/go/imageLib:il.search/#courses>

### Other OER

- Aging Collection Resources: OER Commons <https://www.oercommons.org/curated-collections/297>
- Portal of Geriatrics Online Education <https://www.pogoe.org/> offers a free collection of expert-contributed geriatrics educational materials for educators and learners.

## MORE OER TO EXPLORE

Due to the constantly evolving nature of OER, there is no one catalog for OER. The sources linked below are among the most useful at present. ***Some will have materials related to gerontology/aging/lifespan development now, others may have more in the future – perhaps provided by AGHE members!***

### Explore Open Textbooks

- [OASIS](#) A tool that searches 75 sources for all types of OER.
- [Open Textbook Library](#) Open Textbook Library's books have been reviewed by faculty from a variety of colleges and universities to assess their quality. All textbooks are either used at multiple higher education institutions; or affiliated with an institution, scholarly society, or professional organization.
- [OpenStax](#) OpenStax offers peer-reviewed OER textbooks that meet scope and sequence requirements for most college courses. Low-cost print editions are also available.
- [OER Commons](#) A repository with 73,000 kinds of OER, along with tools for creating OER, training on how to use OER and the ability to create OER.
- [Rebus Press](#) Openly licensed textbooks created by members of the Rebus OER group.
- [BCcampus OpenEd](#) Peer-reviewed textbooks collected by the province of British Columbia.]
- [CSU Bakersfield: Open Educational Resources](#) Powerful OER search tools grouped by subject, from the library at California State University Bakersfield.
- [Directory of Open Access Books \(DOAB\)](#) A collection of open, peer-reviewed academic books on a variety of subjects.
- [The Global Text Project](#) The Global Text Project publishes electronic texts for students in the developing world. It also maintains a database of links to books for such students. Global Text Project books have been internationalized and converted to a standard format using OpenOffice. You can access individual chapters and modify them.
- [2012 Book Archive](#) Archive of a small project by Andy Schmitz to archive Creative Commons-licensed copies of all the books which were available online from a textbook publisher at the end of 2012, focusing on (mostly entry-level) college textbooks.
- [MIT Online Textbooks](#) Some of these online textbooks are open-licensed electronic versions of print books. Others are self-published online books, or course notes which are so thorough that they serve as an alternative to a conventional textbook.
- [OpenTextBookStore](#) Open textbooks for a variety of math courses.
- [Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources](#) A joint effort by individual community colleges, regional and statewide consortia, and many other educational partners to develop and use open educational resources, open textbooks, and open courseware to expand access to higher education and improve teaching and learning.
- [Lansing Community College - OER by Discipline](#) A collection of OER recommendations from the Lansing (Mich.) Community College Library.
- [Open Oregon Educational Resources](#) Textbooks produced by the Open Oregon project, intended for first- and second-year college students.

## Explore Open Public Domain Literature

- [Standard Ebooks](#) A nonprofit project that produces openly licensed proofread, consistently formatted editions of public domain eBooks.
- [Project Gutenberg](#) The internet's largest collection of free public-domain eBooks, with over 60,000 books available.
- [Feedbooks](#) A commercial eBook platform that also offers gratis, consistently formatted editions of public domain books.
- [Wikisource](#) Public domain literature, historical texts, and laws.
- [eBooks@Adelaide](#) An archive of the now-closed project from the University of Adelaide, offering around 3,000 public domain eBooks targeted at Australian users.

## Explore Lumen Learning

Lumen Learning is a for-profit company that provides a platform for OER courses. However, because all of their courses use exclusively OER content, they can be a valuable resource for finding OER texts. Lumen offers several catalogs of their courses:

- [Open NYS Catalog](#) Lumen courses used at schools in the SUNY and CUNY systems.
- [Lumen Community-Developed Courses](#) Lumen courses developed at outside institutions.
- [Lumen Course Catalog](#) Courses developed by Lumen using OER texts.
- [Achieving the Dream Courses](#) Courses developed for the Open Educational Resources Degree Initiative, led by Achieving the Dream.
- [Boundless Course Catalog](#) Courses developed by the defunct educational company Boundless.

## Explore Open Articles

- [Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#) A community-curated online directory that indexes and provides access to high quality, open access, peer-reviewed journals.
- [BMC](#) Open access journals in STEM and the social sciences from Springer. Formerly BioMed Central.
- [PubMed Central \(PMC\)](#) A free full-text archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- [Public Library of Science \(PLOS\)](#) One of the largest publishers of open access articles, including articles in every discipline, with a focus on life science.
- [SpringerOpen](#) Additional open access titles across multiple disciplines from Springer.
- [Wiley Open Access](#) Open access journals in life science and the social sciences from Springer.

## Explore Open Courses

- [MIT Open Courseware](#) Material from thousands of MIT courses, including syllabi, instructional material (such as lecture notes or reading lists), and learning activities (such as assignments or exams).
- [Saylor Academy](#) Peer-reviewed open courses including videos, readings, and quizzes. Saylor partners with many different institutions to create open courses.
- [Open Learning Initiative](#) Open courses from Carnegie Mellon University.
- [Open Course Library](#) The Open Course Library (OCL) is a collection of shareable course materials, including syllabi, course activities, readings, and assessments designed by teams of college faculty, instructional designers, librarians, and other experts. Some materials are paired with low cost textbooks (\$30 or less). Many of the courses can be taught at no cost to students.