OER OPEN EDUCATIONAL
RESOURCES INITIATIVE

ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Articulation, Curriculum, and Open Educational Resources

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Introduction

To expand the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) in the California Community Colleges, it is essential to identify mechanisms for integrating OER into existing practices and policies. Faculty should be encouraged to consider OER as readily as they consider commercial texts. With this in mind, and as a means of responding to the resolution below, this document has been developed to address potential curriculum-oriented concerns with respect to the use of OER and to provide colleges with approaches to consider as they incorporate OER into their processes.

> **Documenting Open Educational Resources Options in Course Outline of Record**
> **(**[Spring 2019, Resolution 09.03](#)**)**
>
> Whereas, In the California Community Colleges, the course outline of record is the official document that establishes, among other things, the content, objectives, and instructional materials for a given course and is the basis for articulation;
>
> Whereas, Both the California State University Chancellor's Office and University of California Office of the President are on record establishing that the use of open educational resources (OER) that are comparable to commercial texts with respect to currency and stability does not jeopardize articulation; and
>
> Whereas, Faculty who wish to use OER may be hesitant to do so if such options are not explicitly indicated on the course outline of record, and faculty who wish to specify OER on course outlines of record may be unclear as to how to do so;
>
> Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges develop guidelines for how to indicate the option of using open educational resources (OER) on course outlines of record; and
>
> Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges encourage local academic senates to develop mechanisms to encourage faculty to consider open educational resources (OER) when developing or revising courses and to document the use of OER on the course outline of record.

OER and Articulation

OER and GE Articulation

A long-standing concern about OER has been its potential impact on articulation. Prior to considering how to document OER in a Course Outline of Record (COR), it is important to ensure that articulation will not be impacted by its use. Fortunately, both the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) systems have provided the California Community Colleges with clear and definitive statements on this matter. And OER-related guidance has been integrated into the [Guiding Notes for](#)

[General Education Course Reviewers](#) (October 2019), a joint publication of the CSU and UC.

But Will if Fly? OER and Articulation

In a 2009 Rostrum article, titled "[But Will It Fly? OER and Articulation"](#) (https://www.asccc.org/content/will-it-fly-oer-and-articulation), the perspectives of the California State University Office of the Chancellor and the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) with respect to OER and articulation were summarized.

The excerpts that follow provide an overview of what is – and is not – acceptable:

What's a Textbook?
For articulation purposes, the term "textbook" does not refer only to boat-anchor compendiums of knowledge, often collectively written, and supplied by textbook publishers with a host of ancillary materials and at ever-increasing prices.

For articulation purposes, the term "textbook" refers to the primary required reading materials students must master in order to complete a course. It does not matter whether such a text is obtained from the college bookstore or via the Internet.

Other courses supplement a primary text with additional required texts; a U. S. History course might require that students purchase both a narrative textbook and supplement it with some combinations of historical monographs, novels, or primary source anthologies. For purposes of articulation, *each* of these varieties of books may be considered a "textbook," though *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* is clearly in a different category from the several standard narrative U.S. history texts required by many community college faculty members. Any combination of these texts may also be made available to students via OER, and the use of *any combination* of these kinds of materials should provide no threat to articulation.

What Won't Fly?
There are electronic teaching materials that would not be adequate to meet the requirements of articulation and transfer. Faculty course notes made available on a website do not constitute a text, though they might provide an excellent *supplement* to a text, whether published in hard copy or via OER. Collections of URLs and webpages are probably also inadequate as substitutes for the rigor and focus provided from a source that requires sustained attention. On the other hand, the integrated use of a variety of scholarly journal articles that are available online may provide a superior level of education for students who are made to realize the way our body of knowledge is advanced by contributions from the academic community at large.

It is important to bear in mind that courses transfer toward a variety of kinds of

requirements: lower-division major requirements, general education requirements, and elective unit requirements. There may be cases in which the use of OER in a course provides no obstacle to elective or GE credit, but where a receiving department may question the appropriateness of a course. In the majority of cases, however, CSU and UC faculty are more likely to be concerned about the range of topics adequately covered and not whether students got their copy of *Moby Dick* from the bookstore or from Bartleby.com.

Statements from the UC and CSU

Because concerns about OER and articulation seem to re-emerge from time to time, the position documented above was confirmed in a 2017 email distributed on the California Intersegmental Articulation Council (CIAC) listserv. The message below was sent on behalf of Nancy Purcille (Transfer Articulation Coordinator, UC Office of the President) and Alison M. Wrynn (State University Associate Dean, Academic Programs, CSU Office of the Chancellor).

> Subject: OER info from CSU and UC
>
> Dear Colleagues,
>
> We continue to receive questions about the use of OER (Open Educational Resources) and if/whether this will impact articulation. I've consulted with Alison Wrynn at CSU. CSU and UCOP are in agreement that:
>
> Open Educational Resources (OER) Textbooks:
>
> - There's been no change on this issue: for CSU and for UC, it's fine to use assembled materials or Open Educational Resources, so long as they're stable and publicly available as published textbooks (and not a list of links).
> - All CSU and UC campus departments consider the content of textbooks when reviewing articulation proposals from the CCCs. The use of online texts is reviewed by campuses on a case-by-case basis for articulation with CCCs.
> - There are multiple CCC courses that use online texts that are approved for CSU- and UC-transferability, and for articulation with CSU and UC campuses.
> - Some CSU and UC campus departments use online texts themselves.

The guidance provided in the Guiding Notes for General Education Course Reviewers, which "have been developed based on recommendations from the faculty and staff who review course outlines proposed for lower-division general education credit" at California's two public university systems offers specific recommendations. These

guidelines "elaborate on state and systemwide policies, adding suggestions and insights from past reviewers." Specific reference to OER is found within the section on textbooks. The 2019-2020 document offers the following:

> **Proposed courses shall include at least one textbook.** Reviewers use the representative text as a way to confirm their understanding of course content. It's understood that the instructor in a given section may choose a different text, but the proposed one is still given close attention. It's expected that the structure of the text will be consistent with the course outline. Including additional reading is a good way to demonstrate that multiple points of view will be evaluated, as a means of developing critical thinking.
>
> Textbooks must be dated within seven years of the course submission date or clearly identified in the outline as a "classic text" in the course outline. Lab science courses must include a clearly identified lab manual in the course outline.
>
> Texts do not need to be published in hard copy. The UC and CSU welcome the use of online texts and other Open Educational Resources (OER), so long as the resource is a stable, bona fide textbook, and not just a collection of links to lecture notes or other web pages.
>
> Open Educational Resources (OER)
> * All CSU and UC campus departments consider the content of textbooks when reviewing articulation proposals from the CCCs. The use of online texts is reviewed by campuses on a case-by-case basis for articulation with CCCs.
> * Multiple CCC courses already use online texts that are approved for CSU- and UC-transferability, and for articulation with CSU and UC campuses.
> * Texts, both online and traditional, must be dated within seven years for most course submissions. Older books should be included if they are considered classics in the field and clearly identified as classics in the course outline (e.g., "classic text" or "discipline classic"). Lab science courses must include a lab manual.

A general search to ensure that all public-facing statements regarding OER and articulation in California are consistent yields the following information [on the textbook requirements page of the UC's TCA (Transferable Course Agreements) policy](#):
* Open Educational Resources (OER), or online/digital texts, are acceptable if they are stable and publicly available as published textbooks, not a list of web links.
* Lab science courses must include a clearly identified lab manual in the COR. Lab manuals from either a publisher or compiled by CCC faculty (e.g., "CHEM 001 Lab Manual, CCC Chemistry department, 2019") are acceptable.
* College Success courses must include a community college catalog. A hyperlink to the online community college catalog is acceptable.

In order for a CCC course to be transferable to the UC, [it must be approved for the TCA](#) ("Courses approved for the TCA count as advanced standing elective credit toward an undergraduate degree at any UC campus and may also be submitted for campus-specific articulation or for IGETC."). The 2nd and 3rd bullet points included above are provided as they demonstrate the acceptability of a "homegrown" lab manual and a hyperlink to a document in specific instances.

As OER has become more "mainstream", it should be much less likely that any faculty member would propose a set of unstable links as their text. The following are examples of what would not be acceptable:

Introduction to Psychology

Chapter 1 – Psychology: Why and What?

[Why it's worth taking psychology](#) (https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201008/why-its-worth-taking-intro-psych)

[Is Psychology a Science?](#) (https://www.simplypsychology.org/science-psychology.html)

[History of Psychology](#) (https://nobaproject.com/modules/history-of-psychology)

Chapter 2 – Research Methods in Psychology

[Research Methods](#) (https://www.simplypsychology.org/research-methods.html)

[Types of Research Studies](#) (https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-psychology/chapter/types-of-research-studies/)

[Ethics in Psychology](#) (https://www.apa.org/topics/ethics)

Integrating OER

How does OER become an integral part of local processes? Arguably the most effective way is to use the Course Outline of Record (COR), the document that delineates the substance of a course. Although colleges' approaches to many things may vary dramatically, they are alike with the respect to most of the components included in the COR. The COR must not only include the substance of the course, but also the resources that will (or may) be used to teach it. Consequently, a logical starting point for integrating OER into the college's curriculum is to indicate how OER are included in the COR. Presented below are principles and practices to consider in making OER an element of your local processes, with samples provided as appropriate.

Introduce the Topic

Before you consider how to make OER a part of the curriculum process, you may need to ensure that OER is a known entity at your college. OER can't become a part of your local culture if no one is even aware of it. It's hard to normalize something that no one has even heard of. If OER has not been the subject of conversations in your local senate or curriculum committee, reach out to those who can help you make that happen and spread the word.

Consult Local Experts

As you advocate for the explicit inclusion of OER in your curriculum processes, consult your Articulation Officer (AO) and Curriculum Chair. As the COR is the means of communicating what our courses are to our transfer partners, your AO can not only offer guidance with respect to how our CORs are reviewed, but may also have unique insight with respect to the practices and perspectives of your local transfer partners.

Incorporate OER Into the College's Curriculum Handbook

Most colleges have a handbook that guides their curriculum process. Below are proposed modifications to the "Representative Texts" section from Cabrillo's curriculum handbook. Modifications are preceded by "(New addition)" and italicized.

Representative Texts

A. Specify text and references or list texts and references that the department has evaluated and determined to be representative of the kinds of college level materials appropriate for the course. (New addition) *Note: Contact the library or campus OER Liaison for assistance finding Zero Textbook Cost resources or Open Educational Resources (OER) that may be available for your discipline.*

B. For purposes of defining "college level," the Curriculum Committee will accept:

- Texts, readers, materials, etc. that have been adopted at other accredited two- or four-year colleges for use in parallel transferable courses, or
- Instructors may provide different evidence, such as reading level analysis, publisher's certification, skill level or other evidence to be submitted to the Curriculum Committee for approval;
- Use of a vocabulary at a level equivalent to that found in college level reading materials;
- Text is an established classic in a given field;
- Text is a standard college text (determination of the status "standard college text" may be achieved by appearance on a standard college publisher's list.);
- Text is a primary source.

The Department shows that use of a text is appropriate by reference to the widespread practice of four- year colleges or a properly conducted job analysis of the relevant occupation. In the latter case, course texts would need to be at a level of competence and complexity to merit being considered as "postsecondary" by the occupational advisory committee. When the materials do not fit into any of these categories, the Department may provide justification of the appropriateness of the college materials.

- Cite the course text using this format:

  Printed Books, one author

  Author (last name first). Title. Edition (if beyond 1st ed). Place of publication: Publisher, Publication year, ISBN.

  Randolph, Mary. Dog Law. 3rd ed. Berkeley: Nolo Press, 1997. ISBN 0873376161.

  Welch, James. Winter in the Blood. New York: Harper & Row, 1974. ISBN 0140086447.

  (New addition)
  Digital Books (OER textbooks)

  Author (last name first). Title. Edition or Version (if beyond 1st). Publisher, Publication year or Revision date. ISBN, URL. License.

  Dillon, Dave. Blueprint for Success in College and Career. Version 1.3. Rebus Community, 2018. ISBN 9781989014042, press.rebus.community/blueprint2/. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Provide Ample Guidance for How to Document OER on a COR

[Santa Ana College's Open Educational Resources Frequently Asked Questions (Extended Version)](#) introduces readers to OER – and addresses a range of questions that relate to curriculum and articulation.

- Can I list an OER textbook on my Course Outline of Record (COR)?
  - Yes, it should be listed on the COR in a way that a reviewer could access the content (e.g., ISBN or URL).
- How should we list an open resource on a Course Outline (COR)?
  - The same as you would a commercial textbook. Using an ISBN is recommended. Include a URL where a reviewer could see the content, especially if the OER text is the only textbook listed on the COR.

- Is it okay to list the textbook on the COR simply as "OER" or as a collection of links to lecture notes or other web pages?
    - No. A textbook must be listed on the COR.
- How do we get an ISBN for an open resource?
    - Some open resources have ISBNs assigned to them; however, ISBNs are not required for use of open resources. An OER textbook can be made available in printed form and an ISBN issued by request through [Montezuma Publishing](#).

The final question above relates to an issue that goes beyond the curriculum realm. Ideally, your OER is available to students before and after your course (i.e., not only accessible via a course management system) and print versions can be obtained. Montezuma is one source that can be used to obtain an ISBN and to make a print version available to students.

Ensure the COR is Honest - and Open

Honest

At many colleges, faculty are encouraged to include a representative commercial or "bound" text on the COR. Given that commercial texts were once the only option, it is understandable that there would be an interest in maintaining the presence of this traditional standard. In the event, however, that the stated text on the COR is the required text and it is OER, the COR should reflect this. Furthermore, where OER might be used for a course, this should also be stated. As a matter of principle, the COR should accurately document the resources that are or might be used for a course. It is important to keep in mind that the COR is not only the basis for articulation, but it is a form of communication to all who teach a given course. Consequently, documenting the option of using OER is essential for promoting its consideration and adoption.

And Open

One advantage of the use of a commercial text is the ready access to information about that text. If the only option on a COR is an OER that is not publically available, that open resource is effectively hidden. As it is critical that anyone reviewing your COR has the ability to review a representative text, ensure that one is provided. As a matter of good practice, any OER employed should be as readily available to students as a commercial text. As you strive for the normalization of OER, consider all elements of access to that OER - not merely integrating it into your curriculum.

Making OER Open and Available

Today, many OER providers make OER texts readily available in various digital formats. In addition, access to a printed copy of your OER may be just a click away. If, however, you have combined various open resources within a Canvas course, finding a way to

make that OER available for review – and accessible by your students before and after your course – may be a challenge. A new functionality of one platform, LibreTexts (LibreTexts.org), now offers a solution. You can export your OER from Canvas and have it imported into LibreTexts. In order to explore LibreTexts and its presentation of OER, go to LibreTexts (libretexts.org) and access the "library" for your discipline. In addition to offering a mechanism for moving content out of Canvas, you can also request that LibreTexts "harvest" an existing OER into its platform to facilitate customization. Contact the OERI's LibreTexts Liaison, Jennifer Rogers, for more information. (jrogers@libretexts.org)

Seek Outside Assistance

Sometimes the only way to effect local change is to bring in assistance from the outside. The ASCCC OER Initiative (asccc-oeri.org) is here to help you with your local OER advocacy efforts. If we can be of assistance, please let us know. (oeri@asccc.org)