

Open Educational Resources: What, Why, & How

Focus on Student Learning Workshop

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Introduction

Overview

- ▶ What is OER?
- ▶ Why do we OER?
- ▶ Tools for creating OER
- ▶ Using the Brightspace LOR at Shepherd

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What

What is OER?

“Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research materials intentionally created and licensed to be free for the end user to own, share, and in most cases, modify.” – [Wikipedia](#) (CC-BY-SA 4.0 International)

The 5 R's of OER

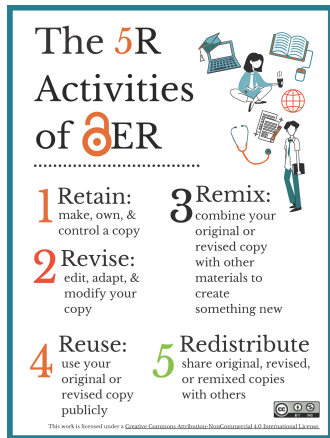


Figure 1: [The 5R Activities of OER](#), by Elizabeth Speer (CC-BY-NC 4.0 International)

Related Concepts: FLOSS & OA



Figure 2: Richard Stallman speaking in Oslo as Saint GNUcius in 2009, by Gisle Hannemyr (CC-BY-SA 2.0 Generic)

Example: MIT OpenCourseWare

- “MIT OpenCourseWare is a free and open collection of material from thousands of MIT courses, covering the entire MIT curriculum.”
- [MIT OpenCourseWare](#) (CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 International)



Figure 3: MIT computer scientist Hal Abelson was involved in founding both OpenCourseWare and Creative Commons. [Photo by Joi Ito](#) (CC-BY 2.0 Generic)

Creative Commons

- Creative Commons “empowers individuals and communities around the world through technical, legal, and policy solutions that enable the sharing of education, culture, and science in the public interest.”
- [Creative Commons](#) (CC-BY 4.0 International)

Why

Benefits to Students

According to Abbey K. Elder, in [The OER Starter Kit](#) (CC-BY 4.0 International), OER benefits students through cost savings and access to a quality education. Notably, OER provides students “the opportunity to engage with your content before, during, and after your course”.

Benefits to Instructors

According to Abbey K. Elder, in [The OER Starter Kit](#) (CC-BY 4.0 International), “the freedom to adapt OER to instructional needs is often the most attractive aspect of OER.”

As [James Dovel notes](#) (CC-BY 4.0 International), OER “improved my teaching, excited the students, created new materials, fulfilled numerous tenure requirements, and provided experiential learning opportunities.”

Results in West Virginia

“Since its launch in 2021, Open Learning WV has helped West Virginia college students save an estimated \$9.6 million on course materials by promoting the adoption of Open Educational Resources. . . ” – [WV Higher Education Policy Commission](#), 2025-04-17.

WVHEPC has accomplished this partly through a series of [grants](#) that encourage faculty to adopt, adapt, and create OER.

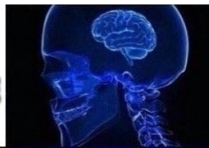
Example OER: Szarka's Excel Tutorials

Szarka's Excel Tutorials on the Shepherd Brightspace LOR
(CC-BY-NC 4.0 International)

How

OER Strategies

**ADOPT OER
IN YOUR COURSE**



**CURATE
COLLECTIONS
OF OER**



**ADAPT &
IMPROVE
EXISTING OER**



**CREATE
NEW OER WORKS**



Figure 4: Adopt, Curate, Adapt, Improve, Create



**SHEPHERD
UNIVERSITY**

Finding OER to Adopt/Adapt

- ▶ MERLOT
- ▶ OER Commons
- ▶ Pressbooks
- ▶ MIT OpenCourseWare
- ▶ OpenStax
- ▶ SkillsCommons
- ▶ ...any many more!

Curation Example: Brit-Lit OER

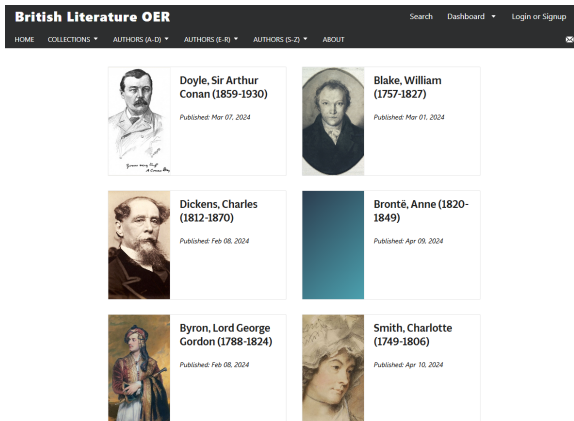


Figure 5: [Brit-Lit OER](#) by [Jeremy Larance](#) (CC-BY-NC 4.0 International)

OSS Tools for Adapting/Creating OER

- ▶ **Markdown**: an easy-to-read, easy-to-write plain text format
- ▶ **LaTeX**: a document preparation system
- ▶ **Pandoc**: a universal document converter
- ▶ **GNU Image Manipulation Program**: a venerable cross-platform image editor
- ▶ **Audacity**: a venerable cross-platform audio editor
- ▶ **Open Broadcaster Software**: free & open source software for video recording and live streaming
- ▶ **Kdenlive**: a venerable cross-platform multitrack video editor built on KDE & QT frameworks

Excelsior!

2025 OER Challenge Grant

A team comprising six CoB faculty, an instructional designer, and an LMS administrator at Shepherd has been awarded one of ten \$25,000 OER Challenge Grants for the 2025–2026 academic year.

- ▶ Expand the number of BADM core courses using OER from 7 to 12
- ▶ Create a redistributable open-pedagogy course framework
- ▶ Improve adoptability of OER at Shepherd & beyond via content packaging & use of the Brightspace LOR
- ▶ Develop training materials for faculty & staff at Shepherd & beyond

Contact

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