



## BREAKING IT OPEN: OER Updates & Events

A Newsletter of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education OER Advisory Council

# Celebrating Open Access Week

October 14, 2022

## What is Open Access?

While both **Open Education Resources** and **Open Access** materials are equitable, free and available online, they are not one and the same. According to the University of Mary Washington, "[Open Access](#) refers to teaching, learning, and research materials that are available free online for anyone to use as is, *but they may not be revised, remixed, or redistributed.*" In contrast to OER, OA materials cannot be modified.

OA enables the use of sustainable and equitable research practices mainly by removing the financial barriers which hinder researchers around the world. OA also benefits authors, who can disseminate their work to a wider audience, thereby increasing its impact. According to [Open Society Foundations](#), about 28% of peer-reviewed articles are currently available through OA, and this statistic continues to rise.

## How can researchers identify and locate OA resources?

There are numerous OA discovery tools that aid researchers by pointing them to OA journal results, dissertations, and other OA scholarly works. These include [the Digital Commons Network](#), [the Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#), [the Public Library of Science \(PLOS\) Collections](#), and [PeerJ](#).

Individual publishers also provide access to pre-selected OA journal content via their own commercial websites. Examples include [Elsevier Open Access](#), [SpringerOpen](#), [Wiley Open Access](#), [Taylor & Francis Open Journals](#), and [Oxford University Press](#). Selected full text OA books are also available through these publisher's websites. Alternatively, researchers can use search tools such as the [Directory of Open Access Books \(DOAB\)](#), or [Open Access Books on JSTOR](#) to find vendors' OA content.

Open Access principles and practices continue to make high-quality academic research more visible and accessible than ever before, providing researchers with an unencumbered path to innovation and discovery.

## The Student View

I recently had the opportunity to interview Framingham State University student Freshman Jude Ejiolor about his experiences with open educational resources (OER) and open pedagogy.

Jude was completely new to the world of OER when he registered for English Professor Patricia Lynne's Spring 2022 Composition I Class. As he was navigating the world of university expenses, Jude had noted that "I thought that paying for the class and then having to pay for extra materials that are necessary to learn in the class was a little odd." Although he wasn't aware before signing up for her class that Professor Lynne would be using an OER textbook, upon being informed that she would be using one and what that meant, Jude quickly realized that this course would not cost him additional money to take.

Professor Lynne explained that she felt that using this OER textbook was the best way to help all her students excel as they learned the class material. This version of her book, titled "Reading and Writing Successfully in College: A Guide for Students", was a draft, not a final, fixed version. When their professor told them that she would be seeking their feedback about what using her OER had been like, Jude said that he found that "strange at first, but it made sense for the fact that we as the students using it were the best ones to give feedback." He had no problem with the textbook during the semester, commenting that he "had nothing negative to say about her OER."

The class was also told there was going to be an assignment where the students could gather or create materials that might possibly be added to the textbook later, to enhance it. This was to be Jude's first experience participating in an open pedagogy assignment. Since she might potentially be using student-created work in the next version of her textbook, Professor Lynne distributed a release form so that her students could give (or withhold) their permission for her

to make use of their work. Jude readily signed the form, explaining that he'd "wanted to help her complete her OER so she could have the best tools possible and give the next class to use her textbook a greater experience than our own."

Near the end of the semester, Jude and his fellow students had an opportunity to look for openly-licensed materials online that might make good additions to their textbook. A librarian visited the class to instruct the students in the basics of the Creative Commons open licenses that they would be encountering, in order to help them locate materials whose license would complement and not conflict with the license of Professor Lynne's book. Jude recalls that during the open pedagogy assignment, "I felt like an author of sorts in my own right assisting in editing a piece of work" and that when it was over, "felt that it was necessary to the work we were doing and felt accomplished with what I'd done."

Jude found this first experience of using OER to be a very positive one. "I feel like it's something all classes should incorporate to help future students as they learn," he told me, adding that open pedagogy "couldn't hurt" and would probably benefit all classes in general. When asked what he would want to tell faculty who were new to OER and open pedagogy, Jude said that open education and soliciting student feedback would "help add things to your curriculum that won't only benefit you with feedback and us with learning, but also future students as they come in."

-- Rebecca Dowgiert, Scholarly Communications Librarian at the Henry Whittemore Library at Framingham State University

*"Reading and Writing Successfully in College: A Guide for Students" by Patricia Lynne, is a [ROTEL](#) grant-funded OER.*

*The author wishes to thank Mr. Ejiolor for his time and interview answers.*

## An OER Olympian

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the OER Advisory Council announced the DHE's first annual OER Olympics. The Council created this award to recognize faculty members who have adopted, adapted or created OER and use them in their class(es). Students, faculty and staff members, or administrators could nominate a faculty member from their institution, or faculty could nominate themselves by the February 7<sup>th</sup> deadline. Judges Bob Awkward, Jessica Berthisel, Karen Hines, Carolyn Michaud, and Andrea Milligan evaluated submissions based on quality, quantity of depth, effect of outreach, and actual/potential impact. They awarded first place (gold) posthumously to Nikolaus Sucher of Roxbury Community College.

As a pioneer in OER at Roxbury Community College, Nikolaus developed lab manuals for Biology 1 & 2 (SCI 103 & 104), Genetics (SCI 200), and an LSAMP Bioinformatics course along with textbooks for Biology 1 (SCI 103), Genetics (SCI 200), and Microbiology (SCI 204). Nikolaus also developed both a lab manual and textbook for Neuroanatomy (BIO 400) at Salem State University. These textbooks are available online:

- <https://nikolaussucher.github.io/biology-text/index.html>
- <https://nikolaussucher.github.io/microbiology-text/>
- <https://nikolaussucher.github.io/bio-one/>
- <https://nikolaussucher.github.io/bio-one-all-online/>
- <https://nikolaussucher.github.io/bio-two/>
- <https://nikolaussucher.github.io/bioinformatics/>
- <https://nikolaussucher.github.io/genetics-text/>
- <https://nikolaussucher.github.io/neuroanatomy-text/index.html>

Nikolaus encouraged continuous learning by allowing students to suggest edits, find errors and improve these OER materials through extra credit opportunities. Nikolaus Sucher significantly impacted his students, the local community and his colleagues. His brilliance and humility continues to show through his work and widely available open educational resources.

## Upcoming Events

**Title:** Webinar: Finding Open Educational Resources

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, October 19, 12:30-1:00p.m.

Interested in open educational resources, but not sure where to find ones which might work for your courses? In this 30-minute session, you'll become familiar with the most popular, established OER repositories. Or perhaps you'd prefer a meta search engine, which searches multiple websites at once? And you may not have known that the Whittemore Library's OER Guide for faculty includes top OER textbook recommendations to get you started. Whatever your preference, you'll see demonstrations that will take some of the mystery out of finding OER that will be relevant to you, while also learning about OER assessment tools. Plus, learn about our NEW Textbook Affordability Review service!

**For more information and to register:** <https://framingham.libcal.com/event/9706347>

**Title:** UMass Amherst Open Access Week Keynote. Micah Vandegrift: "Open to Change: Possibilities and Probabilities"

**Date and Time:** Monday, October 24, 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Presenters:** Micah Vandegrift

**Description:** The grand challenges of our day are being met with grand visions for the future. An opportunity sits at the intersection of climate change, open science, and community engagement. This talk will speak to what is distinctive about that opportunity in 2022, especially in light of the fresh directions in U.S. research policy, and will offer a case study in what that might look like. Micah Vandegrift will speak from experience and his recent research, and will provide attendees with a foundation and a forecast.

Micah Vandegrift advocates for the evolution of policies and technologies that maximize the dissemination and public impact of scholarship. As NC State University Libraries' first Open Knowledge Librarian, Micah is dedicated to building programs and projects that enable the research and learning community to embrace open principles and practices. He was the lead Principal Investigator for Visualizing Digital Scholarship in Libraries and Learning Spaces (Immersive Scholar) funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Micah studied open science policy and infrastructure in The Netherlands and Denmark as a Fulbright-Schuman Research Fellow, and previously worked as the Director of Digital Scholarship at Florida State University.

**For more information and to register:** <https://libcal.library.umass.edu/event/9719690>

**Title:** Setting a Course for Open Pedagogy Success

**Date and Time:** Tuesday, October 25th, 2-3 p.m.

**Presenters:** Christina Riehman-Murphy and Bryan McGeary

Christina Riehman-Murphy is the Open and Affordable Educational Resources Librarian at Penn State University, and Bryan McGeary is the Learning Design and Open Education Engagement Librarian at Pennsylvania State University. Both are SPARC Open Education Leadership Fellows.

**Description:** In this interactive workshop, we'll cover foundational knowledge about what open pedagogy is and what it can look like in practice as well as best practices and project management considerations for open pedagogy projects. We'll also discuss such issues as student agency, assessment, and the role of open pedagogy in fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. We also will introduce the Open Pedagogy Project Roadmap, an openly licensed, step-by-step, module-based, discipline-agnostic project management guide for instructors to think through the process of scoping, implementing, sustaining, and sharing their own open pedagogy projects.

**Register:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A094BACAD2AA5F85-setting>

**Title: A Successful Grant: Inclusive Teaching & Equitable Learning**

**Description:** Join us virtually for an engaging discussion of A Successful Grant Program: Inclusive Teaching & Equitable Learning. Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA) Associate Prof. of Mathematics and grant administrator Rebecca Norton will outline an exceptional grant program that led to effective OER results produced by teams of MMA faculty. Sponsored by the DHE's OER Advisory Council. Specifics on the training faculty received and the resulting OER content they created will be reviewed.

**Speaker:** Dr. Rebecca Norton, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Grant Administrator, Massachusetts Maritime Academy

**Date and Time:** Tuesday, October 25, 2022 1-2 p.m.

**Zoom:**

[https://maritime-edu.zoom.us/j/97137876731?pwd=UkVCM2tVckRFeU1PT0ZSWIRqcF](https://maritime-edu.zoom.us/j/97137876731?pwd=UkVCM2tVckRFeU1PT0ZSWIRqcFQ2Zz09)

[Q2Zz09](#)

**Sponsored by:** The DHE's OER Advisory Council

**Title: Open Educational Resources in the COVID Era**

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, October 26th from 2-4 p.m. ([Register here!](#)); Thursday, November 3, 2022 from 10a.m.-12p.m. ([Register here!](#))

**Description:** Now more than ever, college students have a serious need for low-cost, readily available, digitally flexible course materials. It's the perfect time to learn more about how Open Educational Resources (OER) provides solutions for you and your students! This Zoom-based webinar will introduce you to the basics of OER, provide context for the vital way OER helps our students (particularly low-income students), offer key definitions and considerations related to OER adoption, and outline steps for getting started with incorporating OER in your own classes.

Faculty who have not attended this workshop in the past will be eligible for a \$200 stipend if they participate in the workshop as well as submit an open textbook review.

**Title: Open for Climate Justice: Conversations with the Earth**

**Date and Time:** Thursday, October 27th from 2 pm until 2:45 pm

**Description:** Larry McKenna, Associate Professor and Chair Dept. of the Environment, Society and Sustainability at Framingham State University, will speak briefly about his experience writing his new, openly-licensed, ROTEL grant-funded climate change textbook 'Conversations with the Earth', then lead an interactive Q and A session for the remainder of this 45-minute session. Professor McKenna says "...there's positive news here. We still have the power to stop the worst consequences of climate change. We have agency. And we can do it-we must do it-in our

lifetimes. ROTEL will allow *Conversations with the Earth* to bring the science, the policy and the ethics of climate change to a wide audience.”

**Register:** <https://framingham.libcal.com/event/9752959>

For more information, or to share an upcoming event, [click here](#).



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