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Spring 2012 Faculty Workshop

## **“Open Educational Resources as an Alternative to Traditional Textbooks”**

May 2, 2012, Marygrove College  
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## Introduction

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I invite you to consider open educational resources as one important approach to **The Textbook Problem**. By “textbook problem” I mean our students’ reluctance to purchase textbooks, either because they think they can do well without them or because the cost is prohibitive.

Our approaches to this problem so far have been to:

- put introductory texts on reserve in the library
- embed into courses library articles and ebooks that have already been paid for by student tuition
- encourage students to rent textbooks, buy them used, or use the electronic version of a textbook
- push the message to students that textbooks are required
- investigate the use of an electronic reserve system

In the next half hour I’d like to focus on **Open Access Textbooks**, which not only address the expense of traditional textbooks but also address what faculty members have identified as shortcomings in traditional textbooks. To illustrate this point, take a look at the comparison chart on the next page.

Although this chart from <http://flatworldknowledge.com/educators> was created to promote the open educational resources at Flat World Knowledge, the comparisons apply to most other open educational resources as well.



## Definition

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Open access textbooks are online, peer-reviewed, and free. “Free” in this case means not only free of charge but free of most permission restrictions; they can be reused, shared, and modified.

## Growth of the open access movement in education

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As evidence of the steady growth and widespread acceptance of open educational resources, note the following (1) headlines, (2) sources of funding, and (3) legislation:

### 1. Headlines

- EDUCAUSE + Center for American Progress: “Dramatically Bringing Down the Cost of Education with OER: How Open Education Resources Unlock the Door to Free Learning.” February 7, 2012.  
[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/02/open\\_education\\_resources.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/02/open_education_resources.html)
- HomeRoom: The Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Education. “Why Open Education Matters” — Video Competition Launches. March 5, 2012.  
<http://www.ed.gov/blog/2012/03/%E2%80%9Cwhy-open-education-matters%E2%80%9D%E2%80%94video-competition-launches/>
- New York Times: “Open Resources: Transforming the Way Knowledge Is Spread.” March 18, 2012.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/19/world/europe/19iht-educlede19.html>
- Chronicle of Higher Education: “The Quiet Revolution in Open Learning” May 15, 2011. <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Quiet-Revolution-in-Open/127545/>
- Many more links are available at the Marygrove Library website:  
<http://research.marygrove.edu/for-faculty/open-access>

### 2. Partners – Financial Incentives – Grants

- Open Society Foundations  
(<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/information/focus/access/grants/open-educational-resources>)

- US Department of Education and the Department of Labor (<http://creativecommons.org/weblog/entry/26100>)
- William & Flora Hewlett Foundation Open Educational Resources (<http://www.hewlett.org/programs/education-program/open-educational-resources>)
- Utah State Office of Education (<http://utahopentextbooks.org/2012/01/25/114/>)
- Saylor Foundation Open Textbook Challenge (<http://www.saylor.org/otc/>)
- Why Open Education Matters: video contest (<http://whyopenedmatters.org>)
- UNESCO <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/access-to-knowledge/open-educational-resources/>
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/>)

### 3. Legislation – Policies

- Georgia Department of Education: Starting in July 2012, the Georgia Virtual School, a program of the Georgia Department of Education, will be focusing on Open Educational Resources for all of its content and learning material. All teacher-created material used in the courses will have the Creative Commons licensing applied. Once created, this material will be made available through the Georgia Virtual Learning website. <http://www.gavirtualschool.org/>
- Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges: All digital software, educational resources and knowledge produced through competitive grants, offered through and/or managed by the SBCTC, will carry a Creative Commons Attribution License. [http://www.sbctc.edu/general/admin/Tab\\_9\\_Open\\_Licensing\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.sbctc.edu/general/admin/Tab_9_Open_Licensing_Policy.pdf)
- State of Washington: HB2337 directs the superintendent of public instruction to support the 295 Washington K-12 school districts in learning about and adopting existing open educational resources aligned with state and common core curricular standards. <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=2337&year=2011>

- State of California: SB1053 would fund a library containing open source textbooks for the 50 most popular lower division courses at the state's colleges and universities. Students could download the textbooks for free or pay about \$20 for a hard copy. [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/sen/sb\\_1051-1100/sb\\_1053\\_bill\\_20120419\\_amended\\_sen\\_v98.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/sen/sb_1051-1100/sb_1053_bill_20120419_amended_sen_v98.html)
- United States: HR4575 Open College Textbook Act of 2010 would authorize grants for the creation, update, or adaption of open textbooks, and for other purposes. <http://www.opencongress.org/bill/111-h4575/text>

## Sources of open access educational resources

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*With few exceptions, the text that follows the name of each resource is taken directly from its website.*

Biodiversity Heritage Library (<http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>) is a consortium of natural history and botanical libraries that cooperate to digitize and make accessible the legacy literature of biodiversity held in their collections and to make that literature available for open access and responsible use as a part of a global “biodiversity commons.” BHL also serves as the foundational literature component of the Encyclopedia of Life (EOL).

Bloomsbury Academic (<http://www.bloomsburyacademic.com/page/OpenContentTitles/open-content-titles>) is an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. Selected research publications in the humanities and social sciences are published on open content licenses, meaning that the full text is available online for free in html format. These titles are also available to buy as pbooks and ebooks.

Carnegie Mellon Open Learning Initiative (<https://oli.web.cmu.edu/openlearning/>) is an open educational resources (OER) project. We provide web-based courses based on a detailed, science-based understanding of how students learn.

CK-12 Foundation (<http://www.ck12.org/flexbook/>) is a non-profit organization with a mission to reduce the cost of textbook materials for the K-12 market both in the U.S. and worldwide. CK-12 is using an open-content, web-based collaborative model termed the “FlexBook.” With these free, common core aligned and NSES aligned digital textbooks, CK-12 intends to pioneer the generation and distribution of high quality educational STEM content that will serve both as core text as well as provide an adaptive environment for learning through the FlexBook Platform.

College Open Textbooks (<http://collegeopentextbooks.org/>). This collection of sixteen educational non-profit and for-profit organizations, affiliated with more than 200 colleges, is focused on driving awareness and adoptions of open textbooks to more than 2000 community and other two-year colleges. This includes providing training for instructors adopting open resources, peer reviews of open textbooks, and mentoring online professional networks that support for authors opening their resources, and other services.

Connexions (<http://cnx.org/>) delivers content for free over the Internet for schools, educators, students, and parents to access 24/7/365. Materials are

easily downloadable to almost any mobile device for use anywhere, anytime. Schools can also order low cost hard copy sets of the materials (textbooks).

Curriki (<http://www.curriki.org/>) is the leading K-12 global community for teachers, students and parents to create, share, and find open learning resources that improve teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

The Directory of Open Access Textbooks (<http://www.doabooks.org/>) is open to all publishers who publish academic, peer reviewed books in Open Access and should contain as many books as possible, provided that these publications are in Open Access and meet academic standards.

Flat World Knowledge (<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/>) was created to provide better textbook options to students and faculty, who are frustrated with the limitations and costs of traditional textbooks. We kept what works: expert authors, editorial development, peer review and teaching supplements. And changed everything else to give choices and control back to students and educators.

Khan Academy (<http://www.khanacademy.org/>) materials and resources are available to you completely free of charge via YouTube or Khan website.

MERLOT (<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>) is a free and open online community of resources designed primarily for faculty, staff and students of higher education from around the world to share their learning materials and pedagogy. MERLOT is a leading edge, user-centered, collection of peer reviewed higher education, online learning materials, catalogued by registered members and a set of faculty development support services.

MIT OpenCourseWare (<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>) is a web-based publication of virtually all MIT course content. OCW is open and available to the world and is a permanent MIT activity.

National Institutes of Health - National Institute of General Medical Sciences (<http://publications.nigms.nih.gov/epublications.htm>). We offer free publications geared to high school and college students on topics including cell biology, genetics, chemistry, structural biology, computational biology and pharmacology.

OER Africa (<http://www.oerafrica.org/>) is an innovative initiative established by the South African Institute for Distance Education (Saide) to play a leading role in driving the development and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) across all education sectors on the African continent.

The Open Courseware Consortium (<http://www.ocwconsortium.org/>) is a worldwide community of hundreds of higher education institutions and associated organizations committed to advancing OpenCourseWare (OCW) and its impact on global education. OCW is a free and open digital publication of high quality educational materials for colleges and universities.

OpenStax College (<http://openstaxcollege.org/>). Our free textbooks are developed and peer-reviewed by educators to ensure they are readable, accurate, and meet the scope and sequence requirements of your course.

The Open University (<http://www.open.ac.uk/>). As part of our mission we are making an increasing amount of Open University teaching and learning resources available free of charge to anyone with access to the internet.

Open Culture (<http://www.openculture.com/>) brings together high-quality cultural & educational media for the worldwide lifelong learning community. Web 2.0 has given us great amounts of intelligent audio and video. It's all free. It's all enriching. But it's also scattered across the web, and not easy to find. Our whole mission is to centralize this content, curate it, and give you access to this high quality content. Free audio books, free online courses, free movies, free language lessons, free ebooks and other enriching content; it's all here.

The Peer 2 Peer University (<http://p2pu.org/en/>) is a grassroots open education project that organizes learning outside of institutional walls and gives learners recognition for their achievements. P2PU creates a model for lifelong learning alongside traditional formal higher education. Leveraging the internet and educational materials openly available online, P2PU enables high-quality low-cost education opportunities.

Project Kaleidoscope (<http://www.project-kaleidoscope.org/>) is implementing a set of fully open general education courses across eight colleges serving predominantly at-risk students. The project will dramatically reduce textbook costs and allow collaborative improvement of course design to improve student success.

The Saylor Foundation (<http://www.saylor.org/>) is a free and open collection of college level courses

**Bonus link:** Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org/>) is the first and largest single collection of free electronic books.

## How to learn more

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- ✓ Explore some of the links above.
- ✓ Check out the Marygrove Library webpage on open access:  
<http://research.marygrove.edu/for-faculty/open-access>.
- ✓ Contact me. I'm eager to continue this conversation with you, and will go out of my way to help you find the best materials for you and your students.

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