



University Center for **Teaching and Learning**

Open Educational Resource (OER) for your course

As you plan for remote teaching, you might consider adopting or adapting an Open Educational Resource (OER) for your course. OERs are course materials, such as textbooks, workbooks, and assignments, which have been licensed to be freely used, adapted, and distributed. Not only does replacing an expensive textbook with an OER decrease the financial burden on your students, it also can give you the opportunity to adapt your learning resources to the way you want to teach your subject matter, instead of the other way around.

OERs are especially relevant right now, given the need to be flexible in course planning and sensitive to the challenges our students face. With sky-high unemployment rates and health dangers associated with many of the part-time jobs normally available to students, reducing the costs to students of learning resources is especially vital. Additionally, you are probably having to put significant time into redesigning your courses at the moment. Spending a bit of time up-front searching for and evaluating the fit of existing OER available for your use may save you a lot of time in the long-run if you identify and adopt an OER for your course.

In addition to OERs, there is a wealth of other free educational resources available online, the distinction being that OERs permit you to adapt and redistribute these resources, while other resources may only allow you to share them with your students as-is or direct your students to use them where they live on the internet. For example, many Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) allow free auditing, and YouTube videos are free to watch or to embed in your course site.

For all OERs and free resources, you will want to carefully evaluate the quality of the resource as a learning tool, and the fit with your learning objectives, before deciding to incorporate them into your course. There is a lot of great information on finding OER for use in your course in the [ULS OER libguide](#). [Contact us](#) or the [University Library System](#) for more information and assistance.

If you do decide to use OER in your course, the University Store can post that information in their listings, help link students to the material from their website and may be able to give your students the option to purchase low-cost print versions of your OER material, if available. OER information, as well as questions about how the store can support your OER usage, can be directed to John Burns (mjvb9@pitt.edu), Course Materials buyer at the University Store.