

Broadening your curriculum

with inclusive OERs

Have you seen the calls to diversify your curriculum? What does that mean? And how can you do that?

Diversifying your curriculum means that you are intentional and inclusive of diverse voices and perspectives in your course materials. One should highlight marginalized communities' contributions, experiences, and expertise rather than solely focus on the historically dominant narratives.

Creating Open Education Resources (OERs) for your course that are inclusive and culturally responsible are a great way to take a step toward diversifying your curriculum.

OERs are teaching resources that are free, accessible, and shareable and have either an open license or are in the public domain (UNESCO).

“The idea of inclusive learning and teaching for me is a safe environment where every student can learn and at the same time, be respected, have freedom to express their ideas, be included no matter their background, and being able to participate with no restrictions.” WPI Student



Objectives of this guide:

- Understand the role of OERs in building an inclusive curriculum
- Learn steps to creating OERs for your course
- Audit OERs for openness and inclusion
- Take steps to create supplemental instructor notes
- Disseminate the adaptations and publish them online

Social Justice Principle	Example
Redistribution	Free educational resources, especially for those who could be excluded from education or become more likely to fail due to lack of access
Recognition	Socio-cultural diversity in the open curriculum. Inclusion of images, case studies, knowledge, etc. of people in marginalized groups. Recognition of diverse views and experiences as legitimate.
Representation	Self-determination of marginalized people and groups to speak for themselves. Co-construction of materials for or about learners by learners and ensuring equal space.

Social Justice Principles as they connect to open education (Lambert, 2018).

OERs and Social Justice

Key ways that OERs address equity issues

Historically marginalized communities are systematically unrecognized and underrepresented in STEM materials (Sleeter & Grant, 2011; Becker & Nilsson, 2021).

Furthermore, open materials do not necessarily translate into achieving greater equity and inclusivity (DeRosa & Robison 2017; Croft & Brown 2020)

OERs can address social justice issues by aligning with social justice principles of redistribution, recognition, and representation (Lambert, 2018). Creating or co-creating OERs that are intentional in their connection with social justice can increase student access, develop deeper student relationships with course content, and strengthen collaborative capacity to pursue the larger goals of a more empowered educational ecosystem.

OERs are more than textbooks:

- Texts/sources
- Lesson plans
- Activities/Labs
- Data sets
- Case studies
- Figures/diagrams
- Games/simulations
- Lectures
- Modules
- Syllabi
- Study guides
- Homework
- Assignments
- And more!

References

Becker, M.L. & Nilsson, M.R. (2021). College Chemistry Textbooks Fail on Gender Representation. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 98(4), 1146-1151. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.0c01037>

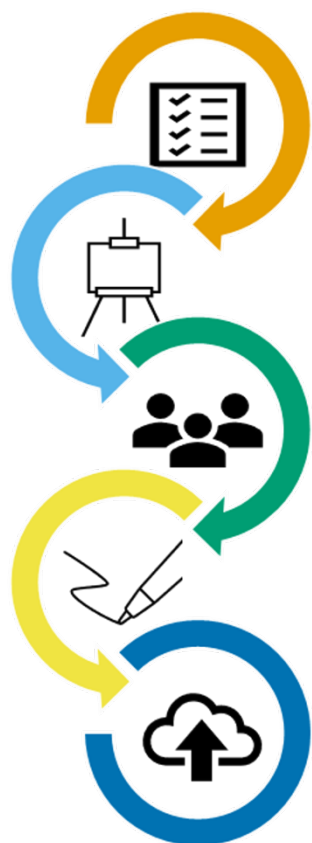
Croft, B. & Brown, M. (2020). Inclusive open education: presumptions, principles, and practices. *Distance Education*, 41(2), 156-170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2020.1757410>

DeRosa, R., & Robinson, S. (2017). From OER to open pedagogy: Harnessing the power of open. In R. S. Jhangiani, & R. Biswas-Diener (Eds.), *Open: The philosophy and practices that are revolutionizing education and science* (pp. 115-124). Ubiquity Press. <https://doi.org/10.5334/bbc.i>

Lambert, S. (2018), "Changing our (dis)course: A distinctive social justice aligned definition of open education", *Journal of Learning for Development*, Vol. 5 No. 3, pp. 225-244, <https://jld.org/index.php/cjld/article/view/290/334>.

Sleeter, C.E., & Grant, C.A. (1991). Race, Class, Gender, and Disability in Current Textbooks. In M. Apple & L.K. Christian-Smith (Eds.), *The Politics of the Textbook* (pp. 78-110). New York, NY: Routledge.

Tips for creating OERs that center diversity



- Plan with course learning objectives
- Create (draw, write, program, etc.)
- Receive reviews and feedback
- Rework, revise and edit
- Submit!

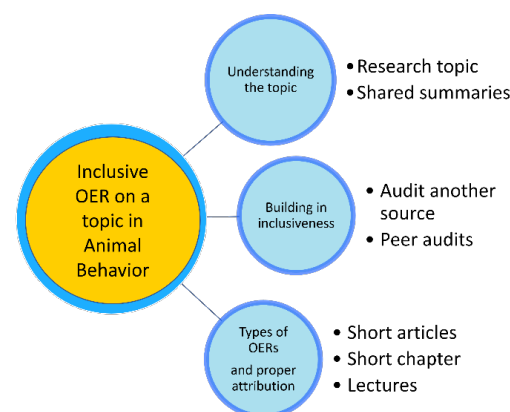
Take your time and get student input when creating or co-creating OER materials!

More strategies...

Use examples: Integrate examples into classroom lectures and activities so that students get familiar with different types of OERs and can reference them later in their own project progress.

Set clear expectations: Be clear that you do not expect projects to solve the world's inclusivity problem. As a community, we use OERs to improve respect, recognition, and representation of experiences and contributions in the discipline- *one OER at a time*.

Provide a map: Provide a framework or visual summary for the project to facilitate student understanding of the process (Fig below). If they have never completed a project like this before, students appreciate structures to help guide them.



Strategies to create inclusive OERs

First and foremost, we offer our perspective on promising practices and strategies for the implementation of OERs across courses and experiences.

Leverage institutional resources:

Connect with your librarians- bring them into the classroom to talk and provide information about copyright and expanding sources to represent a diversity of voices (Fig 10). Bring in your technology staff to help students with design elements or work on different platforms.

Start small- you do not have to change out all materials from your course at once. Instead, add one OER element in here and there into where you could easily replace a similar component

Use a scientist/engineer/researcher spotlight to highlight the expertise of a person from a marginalized community.

Engage students as co-creators of OER materials. A great example is for students to write or contribute to case studies or scholar highlights.

Student choice: Allow students the agency to make decisions about their OER project topic, format, and platform of delivery. As a class, explore the variety of platforms where students can publish their work.

Recruit near peers: Once you have students who have experience, bring them back the next year to be mentors to the teams. Don't forget to hire those students so you can pay them!



Privacy and openness: Each student should have the opportunity to decide which copyright license applies to their writing and have the right to remove their name from any public document. Provide clear documentation on these topics for your students.

Peer review process and OERs: Just like conventional textbooks, OER materials can be peer reviewed. See [Chapter 5.2: Feedback & Review Overview](#) in the open text, *The Rebus Guide to Publishing Open Textbooks (So Far)* for more information on how to get peer reviews of your materials. If creating teaching materials, expand the reviewers and ask other colleagues, students, and librarians to assist in the peer review process.

Look broad and narrowly for platforms to publish your OER materials. OERCommons is a great place to share with a broad audience but also look to professional societies and other platforms in your discipline where you can publish your work.

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Don't forget to integrate OERs in teaching, research, and promotion!

Driving OER Sustainability for Student Success (DOERS3) 's website (<https://www.doers3.org/tenure-and-promotion.html>) encourages you to consider how your work with inclusive OERs improves student learning outcomes, contributes to campus innovation, increases student engagement, reduces cost to students, is used in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTOL), disseminates knowledge to larger audiences, connects to presentations, publications, and grants. Complete their Contribution Matrix for ideas on how to document and communicate your efforts.

RECOMMENDED CITATION: Bakermans, M.H. (2023). Centering diversity and inclusion in courses when creating or co-creating OERs: a quick guide. Open Pedagogy Professional Learning Community. Worcester Polytechnic Institute.