Adding Value & Reducing Cost in Higher Education with Open Education Resources

Sarah Beaubien, Scholarly Communications Outreach Coordinator

Grand Valley State University Libraries

beaubisa@gvsu.edu

Open

- Access
- Source
- Data
- Science

Open

- Education
- Textbook
- MOOCS

# Open Education Resources Defined

OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others.

Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge.

Realities of the commercial textbook environment

CPI: College Textbooks vs. CPI: All Items vs. CPI: Recreational Books, Jan. 1998 to July 2013

Used with permission from Mark Perry, Carpe Diem, www.aei-ideas.org/channel/carpe-diem/
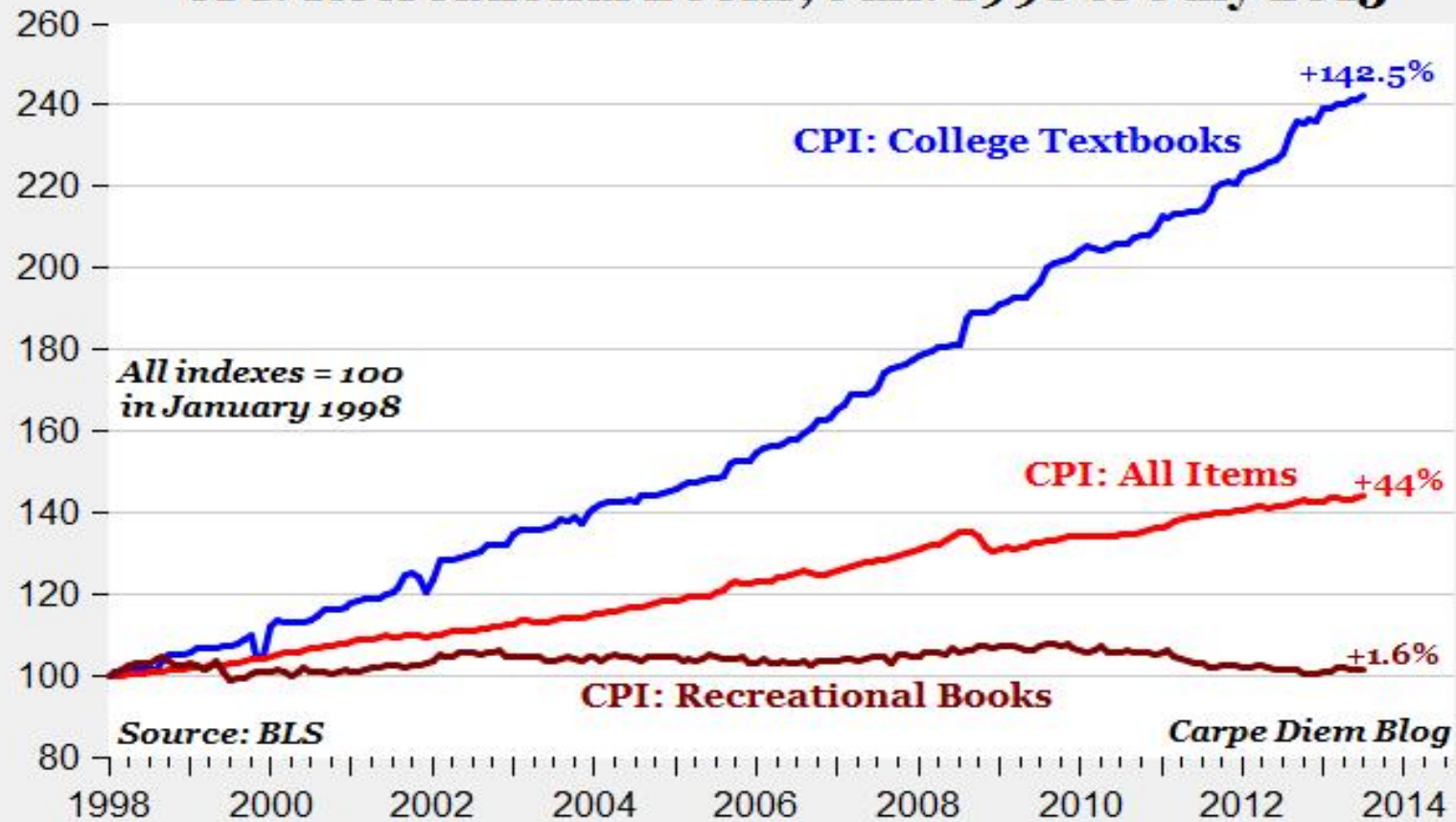
Difficult choices for students

- Textbooks cost average $662 per year (NACS)

- 7 in 10 students have chosen to not purchase a required text due to cost (Redden)

Difficult choices for students

- Cost of textbook & materials is one of two primary reasons for students
  - Dropping out of college
  - Deciding not to attend college (Gates Foundation)

- 10.6% withdrew from course, 7.2% report failing course due to inability to purchase textbook (Morris-Babb & Henderson)

Factors that influence faculty textbook selection

1. Quality

2. Time to locate and review

3. Author credentials/reputation

4. Supplemental materials, added features

5. Lowering costs for students

From Morris-Babb & Henderson

What value do open education resources add to the academy?

Benefits for students

- Cost-free alternative to commercial textbooks

- Increased access to content

- Access to supplemental course materials

Benefits for students

- Deeper engagement with course & textbook

- Potential to have a role in selecting or creating course content

Benefits for teachers

- Control & freedom to adapt or create materials to fit your course and teaching style

- Retain your copyright

Benefits for teachers

- Showcase teaching excellence

- Increased student engagement

- Relatively easy to update

Benefits for others

- Extend reach & visibility of institution

- Fits educational mission of universities

- Allow other educators to adapt, re-use, build on content

- Provide high quality content for community, international learners, underfunded learners

High fives for OER

Barriers to using & creating OER

- Time consuming to find and create content

- Difficult to locate high quality, *course-appropriate* materials

- Lack of copyright expertise/conflicting licenses

Barriers to using & creating OER

- Lack of peer review

- Not rewarded in terms of tenure & promotion

- Technological concerns (hosting, perpetual access, media formats, etc.)

Overcoming the challenges

Time consuming to find and create content

- Collaborate! Improves quality, saves time, and produces OER with broader audience suitability

- Start with what you already have: labs, course exercises, course notes, that dusty old manuscript, etc.

- Involve your students in selecting, evaluating, adapting and even creating content

Difficult to locate appropriate high-quality materials

- Opportunity for librarian & faculty collaboration

- Here are just a few places to look (some include peer review)
  - Connexions: http://cnx.org/
  - Directory of Open Access Books: http://www.doabooks.org/
  - InTech (open science): http://www.intechopen.com/
  - MERLOT: http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm
  - OER Commons: http://www.oercommons.org/
  - Open Textbook Library: https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/

- Check for discipline specific OER repositories

Copyright & Licensing

- Creative Commons
  - Machine & human readable licenses created by legal experts

  - Different licenses to select from

  - Let others know how they may use your work

  - Search for content licensed by others

What about peer review?

- Some general and discipline-specific OER repositories offer peer review services (e.g., Open Textbook Library, American Institute of Mathematics Open Textbook Initiative, etc.)

- Collaborate with colleagues for a measure of quality control

- Tap into professional networks: post drafts and invite expert reviewers

Sounds nice, but will it help me earn tenure & promotion?

- Consider describing OER as evidence of **teaching** excellence

- Provide context:

  – Did the work go through some type of peer-review?

  – Can you provide any metrics (e.g., citation counts, downloads, social media data, letters of support from other faculty)?

  – How has how using and/or creating OER enhanced your teaching?

Hosting, preserving, providing access

- Consider how your students, or other learners, will access & interact with the content

- Submit your open education resources to highly regarded OER repositories (as many as you like…it's licensed for sharing)

- Does the content fit the scope of your institutional repository? If so, deposit there for discoverability and archiving.

Case Studies from Grand Valley State University

The author rights advocate: Ted Sundstrom

Mathematical Reasoning
Writing and Proof

Ted Sundstrom
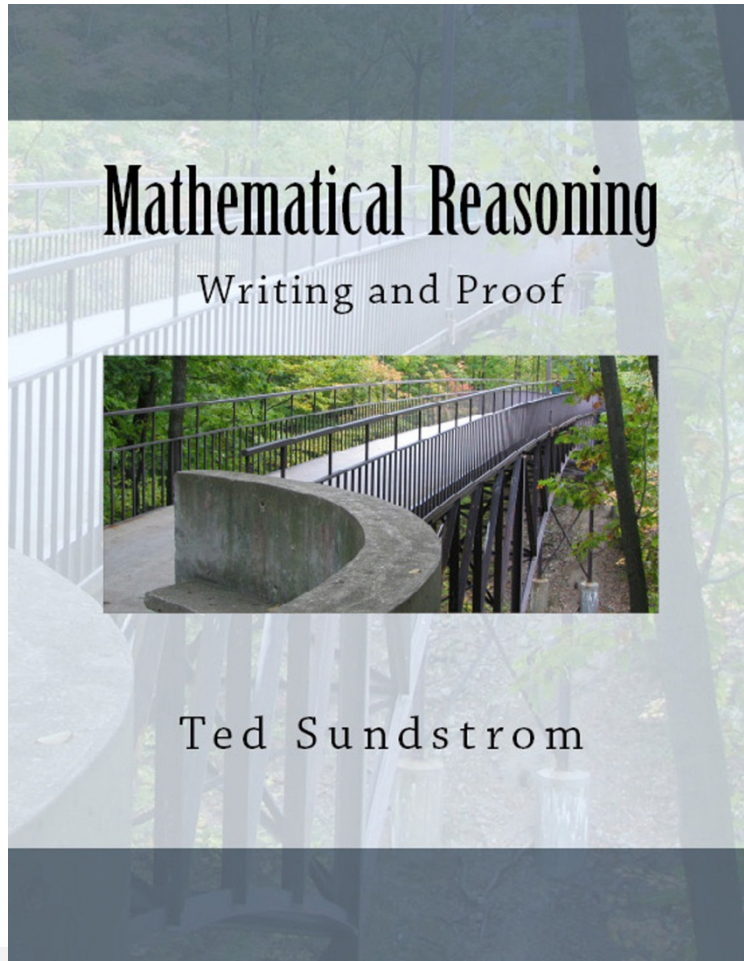
- Two previous editions with Pearson

- Successfully negotiated with publisher return of all copyright for 3rd edition

Mathematical Reasoning: Writing and Proof

- Hosted in GVSU repository, other OER repositories

- Reviewed by American Institute of Mathematics Open Textbook Initiative

- Creative Commons licensed

- Includes links to supplemental files

- 2,282 downloads since July 2013

Feedback from the author and students

- Author has received thank you messages from students at GVSU and other institutions for making this text available

- Ted Sundstrom says: "The goal should be the same professional quality for open-source books as for commercially produced books"

  – Ask colleagues and other users of the book to provide feedback

  – Aim for professional-level copy editing (get help if possible)

  – Market and distribute widely

The champion of all things open: Charles Lowe

writing spaces
readings on writing
volume 1

edited by charles lowe and pavel zemliansky
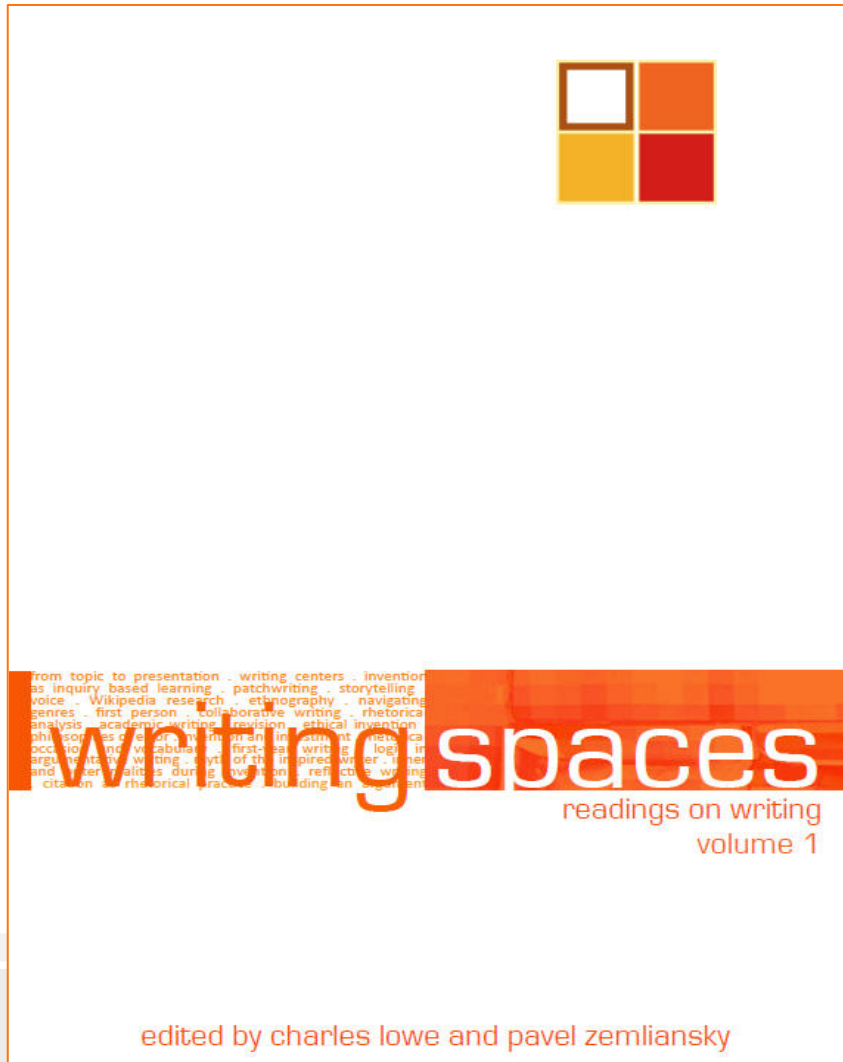
- Writing Spaces (2 volumes & web writing style guide)

- Edited by Charles Lowe & Pavel Zemliansky

- Peer reviewed essays about writing, composed by teachers for a student audience

Writing Spaces & Web Writing Style Guide

- Multi-stage peer review and editing process

- Creative Commons licensed

- Print on demand option

- Hosted in GVSU repository and many other locations

- 2,832 downloads of Web Writing Style Guide since spring 2012

Advice from Charles Lowe

- Lesson for new OER authors: think essays, single readings, not full manuscript textbooks:

  – More modular for plugging into a curriculum

  – Less ambitious for authors

  – Easier to get editors/reviewers to help

Initiatives at other institutions

UMass Amherst Open Education Initiative

- Offer grants to incentivize faculty to use, adapt, or create OER

- Successful implementation across disciplines

- Since the program began in 2011, they have saved students more than **$750,000**

- http://guides.library.umass.edu/oer

open.michigan

- Facilitates the use, creation, and distribution of OER by providing support & resources

"Open.Michigan encourages researchers, learners, and instructors to maximize the impact and reach of their scholarly work through open sharing. In other words, you create and we help you share."

http://open.umich.edu/

The common factor is: incentivize

- Provide or facilitate opportunities for faculty to engage in the OER movement:
  - Funding
  - Educational programming
  - Collaboration
  - Technical support

What can we do without additional resources?

- Librarians

  – Talk and listen. Talk about OER, listen to faculty. Find out what they need. Do you have existing resources that can meet their needs?

  – Assist with licensing/copyright questions

What can we do without additional resources?

- Librarians
  - Provide educational programming & workshops

  - Gather and share information

  - Provide technological expertise and/or services (e.g., hosting, preservation, metadata consultation)

What can we do without additional resources?

- Faculty
  - Become conversant with Creative Commons licenses (and fair use)

  - Collaborate with colleagues to save time and improve quality

  - Start the conversation in your department…how does OER fit your T&P guidelines?

What can we do without additional resources?

- Faculty

  - Look to your discipline. Many professional associations are talking about OER, or offering related services.

  - Consult your librarians!

A final thought

From the perspective of Richard Baraniuk, the Director of OpenStax College, a publisher of open textbooks:

"I think there's going to be a lot of experiments—a lot of them will fail, but some will be successful…My biggest piece of advice would be to work toward projects and initiatives that focus on student learning as the ultimate outcome." (Bell)

Sources Consulted

- Bell, Steven. "Openness to textbook alternatives is growing." *Library Journal*, October 2, 2013 http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/10/opinion/steven-bell/openness-to-textbooks-alternatives-is-growing-from-the-bell-tower/. (2012).

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "With Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them." August 23, 2011. http://www.publicagenda.org/pages/with-their-whole-lives-ahead-of-them

- Morris-Babb, Meredith, and Susie Henderson. "An Experiment in Open-Access Textbook Publishing: Changing the World One Textbook at a Time." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 43, no. 2

Sources Consulted

- National Association of College Stores http://www.nacs.org/

- Perry, Mark. "The college textbook bubble and how the "open educational resources" movement is going up against the textbook cartel." AEI Ideas. October 2, 2013. http://www.aei-ideas.org/2012/12/the-college-textbook-bubble-and-how-the-open-educational-resources-movement-is-going-up-against-the-textbook-cartel

- Redden, Molly. "7 in 10 Students Have Skipped Buying a Textbook Because of Its Cost, Survey Finds." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 23, 2011

- Student spending on textbooks continues to decline: http://www.nacs.org/advocacynewsmedia/pressreleases/studentspendingontextbookscontinuestodecline.aspx

I welcome your questions

Sarah Beaubien

Scholarly Communications Outreach Coordinator

Grand Valley State University Libraries

beaubisa@gvsu.edu