

WHAT ARE OER?

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (<http://hewlett.org/>) says:

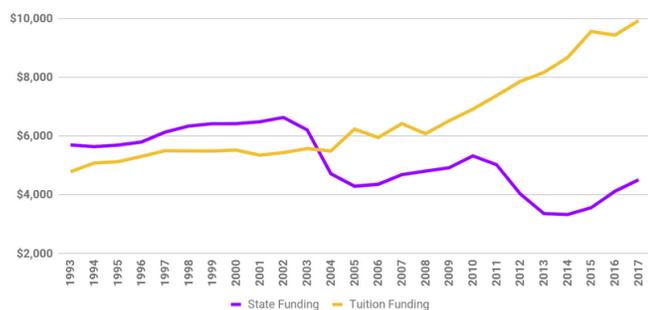
*“OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their **free** use and re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, **textbooks**, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge.”*

OER include **textbooks**. But also **software, videos, test banks, etc.** They are **free**, in that their cost is \$0. They are also open to **re-purposing by others**, in that they may be **modified, customized, excerpted, mixed with other works, etc.**

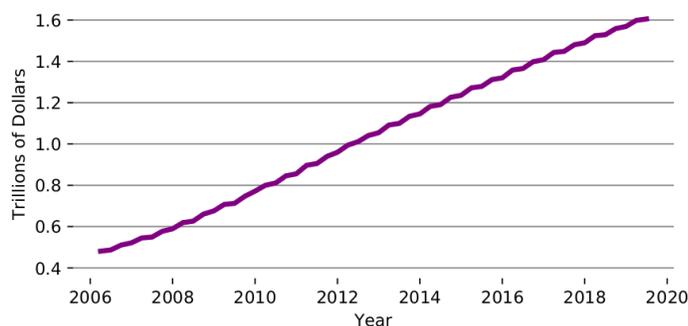
WHY USE OER?

Reason 1: Student Economic Issues. Some graphs:

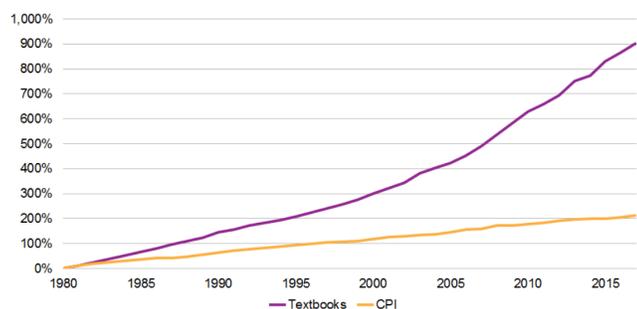
Funding Sources For Colorado Higher Ed¹



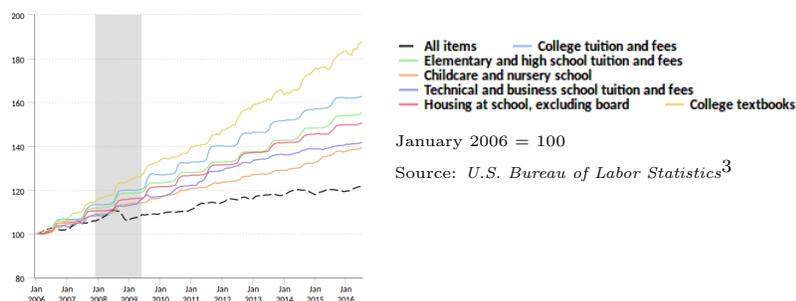
Total Student Debt in the U.S.²



Increase of Textbook Costs and CPI Since 1980³



Relative Costs of Education-related Items, 2006-16



This has real consequences for CSU-Pueblo students, of whom⁴:

- **45%** were food insecure at some time in the past month
- **53%** were housing insecure at some time in the past year
- **17%** were homeless at some time in the previous year

Moral: Students today are under enormous economic pressures and a major contributor is textbook cost. The best textbook in the world is worthless to students who cannot afford to buy it.

Reason 2: More Academic Freedom. The freedom to **customize, modify, excerpt, remix, and re-purpose** OER gives faculty enormous control of their pedagogy. Only an instructor using an OER may

- reorder sections of their text as they desire,
- remove pesky typos, examples that confuse more than illuminate, distracting side panels, *etc.*,
- add that perfect example/diagram/story which before they were only able to share out loud in person,
- change homework assignments in the text because the solutions are in wide circulation or they have thought of more interesting ones,
- combine large sections of several different works in a way that *fair use* might not allow,
- only change the course resources and syllabus when and how they want, not at the whim of a publisher releasing a new edition of some textbook,
- share back to the global scholarly commons any changes and improvements they may have made to an OER, building their academic reputation,
- involve students in the creation and/or curation of the resources used in class, and
- adapt course materials to a particular place, culture, language, or historical moment.

None of the above are possible with traditional textbooks/educational resources under all-rights-reserved copyrights!

Moral: Instructors have real academic freedom in the classroom *only* when using OER.



“OER One-Pager for CSU-Pueblo,” Jonathan Poritz, poritz.net/j/share/CSUPEHonepager2019, 22 Aug 2019 09:13MDT
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¹Source: State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, <https://www.shceo.org>

²Source: U.S. Federal Reserve, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/g19/HIST/default.htm>

³Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov>

⁴Source: report for CSU-Pueblo by the Hope Center for College, Community and Justice (<https://hope4college.com/>) at Temple University

WHERE CAN YOU FIND OER?

There is a robust ecosystem of OER for a wide range of disciplines and pedagogical uses, but it is harder to find desired OER than it is to take a call from a publisher's rep in the highly concentrated commercial textbook industry. Look in

- The **Open Textbook Library**, <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/>: a curated list of around 650 high quality texts, many with detailed peer reviews
- **OpenStax**, <https://openstax.org/>: a collection of texts that are so beautiful and similar to the kinds of things commercial publishers offer (except they're OER!) that they're used on hundreds of campuses
- MERLOT (<https://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>) and OER Commons (<https://www.oercommons.org/>).
- The search consolidator OASIS (<https://oasis.geneseo.edu/>).
- Many high quality resources are in small repositories, in discipline-specific collections, and even on personal pages. You can ask for a particular resource on several OER **listservs**.
- It pays to ask your librarians: they have amazing search super-powers.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN OER WORK, AT CSU-PUEBLO AND ELSEWHERE?

At CSU-Pueblo, activities supporting OER are jointly run by the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Library, and are overseen by the **PuebloOER Committee**: Rhonda Gonzales, Margie Massey, Adam Pocius, Jonathan Poritz, Leticia Steffen, and Alexis Wolstein. Our website (under construction) is <https://www.csupueblo.edu/open-education/>.

Our campus OER efforts are a part of the Board of Governors' funding of Vision 2028. We will thus be able to support your OER work in a variety of ways – no project is too large or too small, seek help at the CTL and Library!

The Colorado Department of Higher Education sponsors OER-related activities including a grant program, an annual OER conference, regular webinars on topics of interest to the open education community, a program to train and support **Open Ambassadors** [JP and AW are our current campus ambassadors], *etc.*. CDHE OER work is overseen by a state **OER Council** [on which JP serves]. For more info, see <https://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/oer-in-colorado/>.

A variety of regional, national, and international organizations are active in OER. If you want to take advantage of, or contribute to, their work, the PuebloOER committee can help you

HOW CAN YOU ADOPT, ADAPT, AND CREATE OER?

The “re-purposing by other” aspect of OER, described by David Wiley⁵ as **the 5Rs** – the abilities to **Retain, Reuse, Revise, Remix, and Redistribute** – are guaranteed **Creative Commons Licenses**⁶ (one is at the bottom of the other page of this document). OER users should look for such statements and apply them to their own works.

OER are often used as ebooks (zero distribution cost!), but can also be purchased in physical form (*e.g.*, OpenStax books and various OER from print-on-demand services) at minimal cost.

CSU-Pueblo has used state grant funds to purchase a hosted instance of the publishing platform **PressBooks**; see <https://csupueblo.pressbooks.pub/> (under construction). It is fairly straightforward to copy existing PB OER (there are many – PB is very widely used in the OER world) to our PB instance, where they can be preserved unchanged or easily adapted to a particular instructor's purposes.

OER software includes physics simulations, programming environments, statistics software, and on-line homework systems. Some of these are hosted elsewhere and are nevertheless free to use. Others might need to be hosted here at CSU-Pueblo, for which the PuebloOER committee members could provide support.

WHEN WILL OER-RELATED ACTIVITIES BE HAPPENING AT CSU-PUEBLO?

In the first week or so of the semester, there will be an announcement of an application process for **mini-grants to support the work of adopting, adapting, or creating OER**. Please consider applying: we have state grant money to use for this!

Another round of state OER grants – drawn from a \$1million allocation for this purpose (which is twice the amount of last year) – will be disbursed this coming year. **If you have OER work which could use support [even large projects!], speak to the PuebloOER team and we can make a specific request for you.** This application is due 1 November 2019.

The CDHE will be running another **Open Ambassador** training on 18 October 2019 at Front Range Community College in Ft Collins. If you are interested in this, speak to the PuebloOER committee.

We will also be having roughly monthly **seminars/workshops on all things OER** to which the entire campus community is invited: keep an eye out for announcements in the email digest.

Let's make CSU-Pueblo a DOER [Default OER] campus, where unless there is a very good reason, classes will default to using OER ~ for the price, the quality, and the academic freedom.

⁵5Rs of Open, <http://opencontent.org/definition/>

⁶for much more information, see *Creative Commons Cheat Sheet for University Faculty*, <https://poritz.net/j/share/CCcheat.pdf>