CELT Teaching with Technology Panel: Open Educational Resources and Beyond

This panel is about strategies and pedagogy, rather than a showcase of the electronic publishing resources, so it is an all-encompassing conversation about the place that digital content might have in your Canvas courses and decisions instructors might face.

Questions:

1. For those of you teaching, what were your reasons to use or not to use an OER in your course?
2. What support options do instructors at ISU have with OERs and the digital publishers?
3. If you are to advise a new instructor, would you recommend teaching with an OER?

# Pedagogy and decisions

* Affordable course materials come in different forms, from open web-resources that can be freely customized for your teaching needs to affordable publisher interactive digital content that integrates with Canvas. Become familiar with [affordable course content options at ISU.](https://www.provost.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/about/Initiatives/Affordable%20Course%20Materials.pdf)
* Open Educational Resources (OER) can be freely accessed, re-used and modified and thus present the most money-saving potential for students. By using OERs for teaching and learning, instructors accommodate students who are unable to purchase required materials, and/ or struggling with financial debt. Customizable OERs are also a way to improve the quality of curricula and customize teaching based on your students’ needs.
* OERs require time and effort investment from interested instructors who might need to inspect the quality of OERs resources and modify them before using in the classrooms. Since OERs are associated with open licenses, recognizing and reinforcing intellectual ownership, and most importantly, understanding how such licenses work might be a challenge.
* Instructors must allow sufficient time to become familiar with an OER they are planning to use in their courses. Allocate time to exploring every aspect of the OER you are planning to use and trust your guts: if the content is ridden with errors, you might want to edit it before using or stay away from using it. Although grammar and spelling mistakes may be common, too many of them should raise a red flag.
* Align an OER with your course learning objectives. Does the selected OER expose students to worthwhile content and thus contributes to student achievement of the planned learning outcomes? Is it explicitly connected to student experiences in your course? Does it use current knowledge and model academic integrity?
* Ensure that OER content is adhering to accessibility guidelines from using readable and accessible fonts to being appropriately rendered across multiple platforms. Explore the [Flexible Learning for Open Education](https://floeproject.org/) for great information on designing OERs for diverse learners.
* Not sure how to get started? [Find a trailblazer in your department or college](https://www.oer.iastate.edu/trailblazers) and have a conversation about the lessons they learned.
* Wondering about existing resources and support at ISU? [Explore ISU’s Open Educational Resources webpage](https://www.oer.iastate.edu/resources-and-support), which also lists the grant opportunities which promote the use of OERs on campus.