



MATC Open Access Initiative

Making education more accessible and affordable with OER

Promising Practice

Implemented by: Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC)

Where: Wisconsin, USA

Status: May 2020 to May 2025

Summary: Between 2020 and 2024, the MATC Open Access Team worked diligently to expand low cost and no cost textbook classroom options across the college through regular communication, events, and courses for MATC administration, faculty, staff and students. The team comprises representatives of the library, faculty, students and a group of part-time faculty working as open educational resources (OER) facilitators.

Overview

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC)

MATC is based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and serves Milwaukee County, parts of Ozaukee County and Germantown. The college is located in the Midwest region of the United States of America and features four campuses, education sites, a variety of in-person and/or online education modalities, and offers more than 180 associate degree, diploma, certificate and apprenticeship programmes. MATC programmes are grouped into seven academic and career pathways through a guided pathways model.

Serving 30,000 highly diverse students

MATC serves more than 30,000 students per year and is the largest technical college in Wisconsin. The student body is diverse - 55% of students identify as people of color. 90% of students are enrolled in part-time courses. MATC students' average age is 29, including some high school students (because of a dual enrollment programme), recent high school graduates, and working adults. Degree programmes are also available for the incarcerated and recently incarcerated population through the Second Chance Pell Grant programme.

Description

Promoting the value of Open Education

MATC's Open Access Team formed during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to promote awareness of high-quality, open access materials. The faculty-led team consisted of a faculty coordinator, a library liaison, student ambassador, and a group of part-time faculty working as OER facilitators. They created a school-specific OER logo and an MATC OER web page highlighting the basics of OER, from what it is to how to find materials for courses. The team also created an OER email, a shared online space, and started forming a community.

Creating OER courses

In the years that followed, the team met regularly to discuss what was needed to help MATC progress in creating OER courses. Pathway facilitators coordinated with the deans and faculty members of the college's seven academic and career pathways. Also, the team leader offered semesters-long introduction to OER courses for faculty across our campuses. Furthermore, the team coordinated with other campus committees and teams that could help promote OER. One pathway facilitator became a communications coordinator tasked with maintaining and updating the OER website, campuswide communications, and a newsletter that includes an MATC faculty feature and key local, regional, national, and international opportunities and announcements.

<https://guides.matc.edu/oer>



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OER and Textbook Alternatives: Intro to OER

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What is OER?



"Open educational resources (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."

<http://www.hewlett.org/programs/education/open-educational-resources>

Involving students

Most recently, a student ambassador was hired to help promote student awareness of OER and did so by interacting with students at college events, collaborating with the District Student Association to develop and implement strategies for promoting OER to the entire student body and more.

A collaborative effort

Together, the OER team worked to:

- Create MATC-specific definitions of No Cost (NC)/ Low Cost (LC)
- Communicate and collaborate with faculty, advisors and students
- Label and track NC/LC courses
- Create OER educational materials for students and faculty
- Facilitate OER educational programming online and at annual faculty events
- Participate in OER Week each year by organizing OER promotional events at MATC
- Present at local, regional and international conferences on our progress
- Coordinate with MATC marketing
- Garner funding for, distribute and manage OER grants to help faculty adapt and create OER

Objectives

We work to continuously:

- Promote awareness among faculty and students
- Promote a growth mindset for change
- Continue to support our faculty and students
- Expand the number of OER course offerings across the college

Outcomes and impact

Massive savings and improved access

Due to the efforts of our OER team and faculty who have embraced the OER initiative since 2020, we have been able to save our students over \$5 million in textbook costs in only three years. Building on this success, our continued efforts in 2023 and 2024 have led to more savings. Some research on OER shows it has a positive impact on student access to textbooks and promotes student-centered pedagogy, as well as diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and overall college savings.

BOOKS WEIGHING DOWN YOUR BACKPACK AND WALLET?

Register for **NO COST** or **LOW COST** textbook courses

Log in to MATC Self-Service

1. Go to matc.edu.
2. Click on Menu and then click on Student/Employee Login.
3. Scroll down and click on Self-Service.



Access Course Catalog

1. Select the Term and Subject.
2. Scroll down to Course Type and select No Cost Books/Materials.



If a No Cost textbook is not available for the subject that you selected, then select **Low Cost Books/Mats<\$50**.

Questions? oyer@matc.edu



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Furthermore, the MATC Open Access Team has managed numerous MATC faculty OER grants and US-\$345,000 in state OER grants.

Conversion to OER

55 classes have been converted to OER, with 36 additional courses currently being developed. 17 Culinary Arts courses have been converted to OER. The Health Service Management programme has been guided in its efforts to become a zero textbook cost (ZTC) programme by 2025.

Challenges

1. We had to define OER for MATC, share what OER is with all members of the college, and promote the creation of OER courses across our four campuses in each department of the seven pathways and Community Education
2. We have had to educate administration and faculty about the benefits of OER
3. As faculty began to create OER courses, we needed to help students learn about OER and how to sign up for OER courses

Insights

A faculty-led open access team—consisting of a faculty coordinator, a library liaison, student ambassador, and a group of part-time faculty working as OER facilitators—has proven to be very successful at MATC. We recommend this model to other institutions.

Next steps

The college will continue to move forward to promote OER and improve the lives of MATC students. The Wisconsin Technical College System Grant for 2023–2025 is an additional moving force for continued OER development at MATC. We are using grants for the creation and adoption of OER materials in courses and will continue promoting low cost/no cost textbooks as a possible promotional tool to drive enrollment. As we look to the future, we will work to continuously:

- Promote awareness among faculty, students
- Promote a growth mindset for change
- Continue to support our faculty and students
- Expand the number of OER course offerings across the college

To support with that and to sustain the efforts, college management decided to create a full time position for an OER coordinator.

Learn more

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To learn more about the MATC OER activities, visit:
<https://guides.matc.edu/oer>

Discover other practices

The UNESCO-UNEVOC innovative and promising practices database presents successful projects tackling key themes in TVET, such as entrepreneurship, youth employment, the green transition, digitalization, private sector engagement and more.

Learn more on our website at:
<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/promisingpractices>

Questions or comments? Contact our team at:
unevoc-pp@unesco.org

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