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Chapter 1: What is OER?

This section will explain what OER stands for and the requirements according to the CUNY grant.

What Is OER?

As you may know, OER stands for Open Educational Resources. This essentially means that your course does not require students to purchase a textbook, and all the course readings and assignments are made available online, following Fair Use copyright considerations.

An official definition for OER according to CCNY’s OER staff:

“Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others.” UNESCO, adapted by Creative Commons

Does OER = ZTC?

ZTC and OER courses are not the same. Zero Textbook Cost (ZERO/ZTC) simply means that there is no textbook cost for your particular course. ZTC classes are at least 3 undergraduate credits and the designation is focused on required texts, not where the readings come from and how they are licensed, or the additional course materials. In fact, a course may even be considered ZTC if the purchase price for required supplies, homework system or online platform are less than $40.

All instructors are encouraged to consider how they can lower student costs and move towards ZTC designation. If your course requires no textbook, and/or you provide a course pack to your students, your course can be listed as ZTC on CUNYFirst and Akademos. However, this does not mean the course is OER.

OER courses incur no student cost, as the materials are free and easily accessible to not only your students, but also others outside of your course. This means that using Blackboard as your course hosting platform is not “OER-friendly”, as only students who are registered and cleared by the Bursar are able to access your site. You may use Blackboard in conjunction with your course, for uploading assignments, plagiarism checks, and grading, but the course materials need to be posted on a site that provides access to students outside of the course as well. In addition, OER course texts must have Creative Commons (CC) licenses. OER includes and goes far beyond textbooks.

One exception regarding textbooks: if teaching a FIQWS course, it is fine for a class to reference readings in required texts from the topic course, but students should not be assigned separate readings from this text in your course.
Again, OER courses, including content materials and assignments, must be available online to a wide audience, and have the proper copyright permissions for the use, adaptation, revision, and distribution by others of the uploaded/accessible materials. (See copyright/fair use section for more details.)

**CUNY/CCNY OER Grant**

CCNY received a grant in for 2017-18 school year as part of $8M New York State split between SUNY and CUNY schools to increase OER offerings with the goal of saving students from purchasing textbooks.

According to a 2018 article from *Inside Higher Ed*, “…SUNY and CUNY, respectively, re-engineered roughly 3,700 and 1,500 course sections that served roughly 56,000 and 40,000 students. By using OER instead of traditional textbooks, officials say, students in the sections were estimated to have saved about $12 million.” ([Inside Higher Ed.com “New York Doubles Down...”](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/29/new-york-doubles-down-on-oer)

This large success led to both schools receiving an additional $8M for the 2018-19 academic year. Currently, reports from last year’s funding and a new application are under review. CCNY expects to receive continued funding in the new application cycle. Part of this is due to the interest expressed by English instructors in converting or adopting courses, attending workshops, and participating in projects that study implementation or provide additional instructional material for these newly designed courses.

English instructors who participate in the OER workshops (generally offered once or twice a semester) receive $300 for attending a 5 hour workshop led by CCNY’s OER staff.

**Develop and convert** a course to OER, and you will receive an additional $700 once the course has been officially adopted by CCNY. Keep in mind that this amount may change depending on the grant funding, which is updated on an annual basis and expected to decline in the future, as the need for new OER courses will decline.

**Adopt** a previously created and approved OER course from another instructor, you will receive $300 for completing the training and $200 for adopting a course.

- Attending OER workshop $300
- Developing course adopted by CCNY $700
- Adopting previously created course $200

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1 Note that the current additional funding for the course conversion ($700) is dependent on grant stipulations; for the English Department this includes Composition courses (FIQWS, ENG 110, 210, etc.), not Literature or Creative Writing.
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**Steps To Create Or Adopt An OER Course**

1. Complete required CCNY OER training workshop (CCNY OER)  
2. Decide whether you will convert or adopt a course  
3. Confirm interest in converting or adopting a course (CCNY OER)  
   a. Complete paperwork (PA-F7) and time sheets for stipend  
4. Inform Director First Year Writing Program and/or Dept. Chairperson and Dir. of Administration (ENG)  
5. Create account and upload CC licensed content to CUNY Academic Works  
6. Develop course on CUNY Academic Commons or other free platform  
   a. Blackboard cannot be sole platform  
   b. Privacy settings should still protect students’ rights  
7. Send course link and CC licensed content to OER team  
8. Ensure that CUNYFirst indicates course as ZTC/OER  
9. Update Akademos or other textbook ordering site and select “Adoptions not Required/Course uses OER/Zero-cost materials”  
   a. This step should be completed as soon as possible to assist students during registration, within two (2) weeks of the call for book orders  
10. If you miss the deadline, retroactively code course (ENG)
Chapter 2: Why OER?

This section will focus on the benefits of creating, or adopting an OER course.

Is It Really Worth The Time?

While the process may seem complicated and time consuming, these efforts have a tremendous impact on student satisfaction and extend learning beyond classroom, and campus walls. Reports show that many students avoid taking certain courses because of the prohibitive costs of textbooks that add up quickly, class after class, semester after semester. With the proliferation of materials available online, and the increased digital savvy of our students and selves, creating or adopting an OER course is a literally a “gift that keeps on giving”.

OER Benefits For Instructors & Students

As an instructor, while the initial investment in creating or adopting an OER course may seem exhausting, the preparation ensures that your syllabus, schedule, and materials are extremely organized, far in advance of the beginning of the semester. Not only will this save you plenty of time later on, when papers begin piling up and hours seem to evaporate, it also ensures that your students will have easy access to all documents and assignments, preventing the confusion and excuses that often come with missing handouts and lost, or inaccessible materials. Another great benefit is the knowledge that all students will be accessing the same materials, not different editions of textbooks or online versions. OER courses provide the perfect opportunity for the entire class to finally be on the same page.

In addition, using a website hosting platform like CUNY Academic Commons, where students are also encouraged to build their required portfolios, provides a scaffolded learning experience that gives them practice and preparation for their own website. It also has the benefit of making you an expert and strengthens technological skills sure to be of increased importance in this digital age, in the classroom and beyond.

Students will be able to access course materials whenever necessary, and on a platform that is much more mobile-friendly than Blackboard. Students have more freedom and flexibility to print documents or read ahead, if they’re accelerated learners. While they may be overwhelmed by the materials and links, with detailed information and time built in to allow them to get familiar and up-to-speed, students will quickly adapt to the technology and feel more empowered by the transparency and accessibility. Another benefit of using CUNY Academic Commons, a Wordpress site, is that it presents text and media in a “blog” format, much more recognizable to students than the staid, stark quality of Blackboard. This will help students to more
consistently consider clarity of communication, media, and design when creating and submitting work.

Let’s not forget the powerful ecological impact of minimizing the use of paper, saving not only trees, but also reducing pollution in our communities and around the world. While some students may truly prefer paper, their student technology fees will more than cover the texts they choose to print.

Finally, as mentioned before, the generous funds to support OER development and adoption won’t be around forever. As instructors increasingly convert courses and accessible materials multiply, the need for new courses diminishes, along with the financial incentive to fund their creation. At this juncture, however, you can be part of the movement to provide greater access to excellent learning to students, regardless of their academic institution, financial situation, or major. Not only can your OER course provide plenty of material to build your professional portfolio, it also contributes to the development of instructors in your institution and others online, strengthening your network and collegial interactions. Your materials will be have copyrights and be available to learners of diverse ages and backgrounds, as well as contribute to the open source community and CUNY’s digital archive of instructional tools.
Chapter 3: Copyright and Fair Use

This section will focus on the different types of copyrights and requirements for OER courses.

Copyright Protection

Copyright law is intended to protect creators and their intellectual property. The first copyright law went into effect over 200 years ago in the Copyright Act of 1790. This original law protected work for 14 years + an optional additional 14 years if the copyright was renewed. While the laws have been changed and updated over the years, the principle still remains the same.

These laws vary across geographic boundaries and can be quite complex. As times have changed and publication exponentially increased, the laws have shifted along with the impact on creators and consumers. In academia especially, this has created a boon for publishers who know that students are required to buy textbooks for each course at millions of institutions around the world. While it’s an honor to publish a text purchased and read by so many people, the creators are often on the losing side of this equation, receiving only a tiny share of the sales for their work. Students are also at a major disadvantage as they’re routinely responsible for purchasing new texts, often with few or hardly any changes from past editions.

With the advent of so many online materials, it’s easy to quickly search, download and print text, or photocopy a chapter from a book to distribute to students without paying much attention to finer details of copyright law. However, instructors should consider what texts and materials they have and will use, and the copyrights that apply to each. These distinctions range from the most stringent, and perhaps simple, with Traditional Copyright, to the free usage of work in the Public Domain.

Traditional Copyright

Traditional Copyright means that work cannot be used, adapted, copied, or published without the creator’s permission. All original work is protected under copyright when it is created. Though this law has often been bent or broken, particularly on campuses where instructors copy and distribute materials for “educational purposes” and do not receive direct income from the sale of these products, this practice is problematic. Without permission from the publisher or creator (depending upon their legal rights to the content), this duplication is copyright infringement.
Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding free, creative content on the web. “[T]he Commons’ — the body of work that is available to the public for free and legal sharing, use, repurposing, and remixing.” (creativecommons.org) Creative Commons helps creators to protect their intellectual property for free, and enables them to choose how they would like their work to be used, without requiring consumers to purchase or receive individual permission.

Creative Commons licensing means that a work may be used without the creator’s permission, depending upon specific usage rules. Creators who upload materials are responsible for selecting the appropriate licenses for their work.

There are several types of Creative Commons licenses that detail the extent of duplication, adaption, and even sale, of licensed material. There are four major categories to consider that primarily deal with attribution, financial gain, and adaptation.

**By (BY)**
Author must always be attributed.

**Non-Commercial (NC)**
Material may be used, but not resold for financial gain.

**No Derivatives (ND)**
Can be used and shared, but only in the exact original form

**Share Alike (SA)**
Can be adapted, but must maintain CC license

Combinations of these parameters create the 6 general license types listed below.

[![CC BY](logo.png)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/)
CC/Attribute Author

[![CC BY-SA](logo.png)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/)
CC/Attribute/Share/Change/Keep Same License
Public Domain

Public Domain (PD) means that work can be used, adapted, copied, and published without the creator’s permission. This generally does not include works still “under license” or for use “with permission” (see Wiki).

This pertains to works published 95 years or more ago, or those already included in the Public Domain, without “exclusive intellectual property rights... The works of Shakespeare and Beethoven, and most early silent films... having been created before copyright existed... or expired. Some works are not covered by copyright... the formulae of Newtonian physics, cooking recipes, and all computer software created prior to 1974.” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain)

Using Creative Commons Licenses

The Creative Commons is part of a global network of affiliates and “chapters” in different regions and institutions around the world. They have partnerships with media platforms like bandcamp, Vimeo, YouTube, and Flickr to provide their users with protection rights. CC receives funding from many sources, including organizations like the Rockefeller and MacArthur Foundations, the Center for the Public Domain, and general public interested in contributing to their efforts to increase equity, collaboration, and creativity in a free digital landscape.

CC Licenses are no-cost, easy to use and obtain, simply visit their website, or search for "Creative Common icons". Their “Downloads” page enables you to download high resolution images of their various license buttons, that you save, cut and paste
onto the various document(s)/work(s) you intend to upload. You may also affix these to your personal website.

No membership fee, sign-up is required, however, CC does have a policy for usage, primarily protecting their trademarked logos and icons, which may not be altered their icons/logo buttons in any way, or printed on merchandise for sale. You may request permission from the organization for additional permission, including merchandising rights. Detailed rules can be found on their website.

In addition to displaying the icons on the materials that you’d like to protect, creators must link their work to their appropriate license. When specifying the type, the full license name must be spelled out:

- “Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-ShareAlike United States License 3.0”
- Hyperlink text to CC license webpage
- Use hyphens to connect various types of licenses

Using Creative Commons Materials

Like using the advanced search tool on Google to find content that enables users to legally repost or repurpose content, CC has not only links to materials that have been uploaded using their protective rights, they also have basic rules to follow if reposting materials online.

As you may have noticed in all of the six license types, “BY” or attribution, is included. Much like we teach our students, attribution is the base level. If you use an image/document found on their site, and/or is protected through their copyright, users must follow CC’s “citation” guidelines and policy.

Attributing Sources

The “Attributing Sources” section of the Creative Commons “Use/Remix” webpage shows a picture containing celebratory cupcakes decorated with the CC logo. This is a licensed picture uploaded by a Flikr user, Sixteen Miles of String.

Attribution text beneath the image:
“Creative Commons 10th Birthday Celebration San Francisco” by Timothy Vollmer is licensed under CC BY 2.0
While at first it’s unclear whether Sixteen Miles of String is indeed Timothy Vollmer, the image is clearly titled; and the creator’s name, license type and version are all displayed and hyperlinked.

**Timothy Vollmer** (creator name) is **not** the same person as Sixteen Miles of String, the Flikr user who reposted his material. The hyperlink goes directly to Vollmer’s Flikr page and the original image, labeled with the same title “Creative Commons 10th Birthday Celebration San Francisco” and dated “Taken on December 8, 2012”. Vollmer’s page also includes a CC BY icon, hyperlinked and labeled, “Some rights reserved”. This hyperlink leads to the same license summary page as the “CC BY 2.0” license/version hyperlink on the Creative Commons webpage (described below).

**CC BY 2.0** is hyperlinked and leads to a summary page of the license with the header: “Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)” Beneath, the text notes “This is a human-readable summary of (and not a substitute for) the license. Disclaimer.”

The summary clarifies usage and basic protections, along with hyperlinks to the full license, disclaimer, and for those who might want to use the license for their own work.

“**You are free to:**

- **Share** — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format.
- **Adapt** — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.”
“Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.”

“No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.”

Translation:
- Cite creator and work
- Indicate if you’ve changed the image/text
- Do not format language or context to indicate the creator has a connection to you or specifically supports your work
- Hyperlink to the license on CC website

License Versions

Another interesting feature on the CC License summary page indicates and links to an updated version:

“A new version of this license is available. You should use it for new works, and you may want to relicense existing works under it. No works are automatically put under the new license, however.”

Sound familiar? Similar to traditional copyright law, the licenses shift as legal concerns and usage increases. Works licensed under previous versions are only protected to the extent their specific version describes. It is up to the creator to relicense and “update” their protections. While Vollmer’s original image was protected with 2.0, Creative Common’s website is currently using a 4.0 version.

Creative Commons Attributions Best Practices

Using the test example of the screenshot from CC’s webpage, how should the image be properly attributed? Does it belong to the original creator, Timothy Vollmer? To the Flikr user who reposted? To Creative Commons, since that’s where the image came from, or to the latest “photographer” who captured a screenshot?

Regardless of the additional licenses, all CC licenses have the CC and BY icons, meaning they are protected under CC copyrights and the basic attribution rights; and therefore must be properly labeled and linked.

TASL. TASL. TASL. Remember that. CC’s “Best Practices” links to Wikipedia and this explanation:
Title - Specific works must be named, using quotation marks
Author - Author(s) must be named, different authors for different works
Source - Original materials must be linked for different works
License - Licenses and version listed, must be linked to CC license

So according to these rules, both Vollmer and Creative Commons must be listed as content creators and CC license holders, though their licenses differ. The image could be renamed, but must include the official title, which belongs to Vollmer.

Title
For example, the image could be labeled: “Screenshot of Creative Commons Use/Remix page with ‘Creative Commons 10th Birthday Celebration San Francisco’ by Timothy Vollmer” or “Screenshot ‘Creative Commons 10th Birthday Celebration San Francisco’ by Timothy Vollmer”

Author
Both Vollmer and CC have rights, and since the screenshot is from CC, it only makes sense to credit them as well.

Source
The main question here is where did the image come from? The screenshot came from CC’s webpage, not Vollmer’s original image.

Licenses
Both Vollmer and Creative Commons have the basic CC BY, but Vollmer has version 2.0 and CC’s website is 4.0. Both should be taken into consideration, but again, the main focus in the newer image, because our usage includes the entire webpage, not just Vollmer’s image.

According to TASL, a good attribution for this work involving multiple authors:

Title image:
“Screenshot of CC Use/Remix Webpage with ‘Creative Commons 10th Birthday Celebration San Francisco’ by Timothy Vollmer”

Author, Source, License:
Terms of use: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0¹ and it can be found here². The original version is attributed to Timothy Vollmer³ under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic License and can be found here⁴.

1. 1st hyperlink to CC BY 4.0 License.
2. 2nd hyperlink to the CC Use/Remix webpage where the screenshot was taken.
3. 3rd hyperlink to Vollmer’s page where the original image is located.
4. 4th hyperlink to the CC BY 4.0 License.

To simplify this, especially since the original artist is named in the new title:

Terms of use: This work is attributed to Creative Commons under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0\(^1\) and can be found here\(^2\).

1. 1st hyperlink to CC BY 4.0 License.
2. 2nd hyperlink to the CC Use/Remix webpage where the screenshot was taken. There they will find Vollmer’s links as well.

As with MLA and APA citation formats, the goal is clarity, as well as accuracy. As long as there is a clear trail that indicates where the original is located, and the most recent and stringent forms of licensing are applied, content users should not be worried that they are breaking the rules.

Please visit the Wiki “Best Practices for Attribution” for more examples.
Chapter 4: OER Materials

This section will help you choose materials to adopt for your course, and help you determine the best options for your course.

What to Consider When Adopting Materials

When adopting OER materials there are several considerations to take into account. First and foremost, in the CCNY English Department, you have the option to create your own OER course, or simply adopt an existing OER course. If it is your first semester teaching, adopting an existing course is a great option that eliminates the need to design a course from scratch. To adopt a course, you can simply import an existing CUNY Academic Commons page to your course page, and use the reading and writing assignments listed in the course syllabus (see Chapter 7, Previously Created Sites).

If you choose to create a new OER course, we recommend following the steps in Chapters 5 and 6 to ensure that your course is designed intentionally and is fully accessible according to ADA standards, in addition to the considerations presented in this chapter. When creating a new course ask yourself the following questions:

• Do I want to adopt a full textbook, or individual articles from multiple sources?
• Do I need to modify the resources I am adopting or will I adopt as-is?
• Do the resources I want to adopt come with supplementary materials such as writing activities and discussion questions, or will I need to provide those myself?
• Beyond textbooks and articles, what other types of OER materials do I wish to include? Podcasts, videos, PowerPoint presentations, images?

Once you have decided what types of material are appropriate for your course, you can begin to search for and evaluate OER materials. When evaluating OER materials, ask yourself the following questions.2

• What is the copyright licensing on the material you are considering adopting?
• Does the OER content fully align with course learning outcomes?
• Is the OER material current and valid?
• Is the OER material appropriate for the target audience?
• What platforms does the OER function on? Macs and Windows? Phones, tablets and computers?
• Is the OER material easily printable (if a text) and readable in printed format?

2Questions adapted from Achieve the Dream by Leslie Ward & Kathleen Landy Queensborough Community College (CUNY) licensed CC BY-NC-SA.
• Does the OER provide appropriate scaffolding?
• Does the OER comply with current ADA accessibility standards? (See Chapter 6)

Additionally, achieve.org has created rubrics for assessing a variety of OER materials.

**Where to Find OER Materials**

The majority of the following resources pertain to OERs in composition courses. If you are teaching a literature course and considering adopting OERs, Project Gutenberg and Manifold are excellent resources to consider. The chapter “OER, Anthologies, and Open Pedagogy in Early American Literature” in *Building Open Infrastructure at CUNY* is an excellent resource outlining considerations for OERs in literature courses.

**Open Textbook Library**

The University of Minnesota’s [Open Textbook Library](https://opentextbook.org/) contains a wide selection of full textbooks on numerous subjects including literature, poetry, rhetoric and composition. This is a great resource if you would like to use a traditional style textbook that costs nothing for your students. Each textbook contains ratings and reviews by instructors who have previously adopted the textbook.

**Open SUNY Textbooks**

[Open SUNY Textbooks](https://open.suny.edu/) is a library of open textbooks written by SUNY faculty and published by State University of New York libraries. There are composition and creative writing textbooks along with literature, poetry and humanities texts.

**MERLOT**

California State University’s [MERLOT](https://merlot.org/) is a database of open educational resources on topics including creative writing, composition, and literature. MERLOT allows you to filter search results by discipline, material type, audience level, mobile platform adaptive texts, and more. As this database collects numerous material types, not just textbooks, the search process is more involved.

**Mason OER Metafinder (MOM)**

The [Mason OER Metafinder](https://mason.oer.metadataportal.org/) (MOM) is an OER search tool that searches across OER databases and compiles the results. Texts include resources for composition, creative writing, and literature. MOM provides ratings for each resource. MOM
allows you to filter by topic, author, publication, document type, source, and format. This tool compiles multiple material types, and so the search process is more involved.

**Directory of Open Access Books**

The [Directory of Open Access Books](#) is a catalog of 16805 Academic peer-reviewed books and chapters from 317 publishers. The books catalogued in this database are more topic-specific than a general textbook. These topics range from topics in composition studies to literary studies. This search tool allows you to filter searches by publisher and publication date.

**Oasis**

[Oasis](#) is a database that compiles OER materials in numerous formats such as course modules, videos, audiobooks, and textbooks. This resource has materials for literature, composition, and creative writing.

**Writing Commons**

[Writing Commons](#) is a creative commons licensed open text website that provides articles on numerous writing topics. This resource is a great place to find individual articles to assign for composition and creative writing courses. Many articles are multimodal, and include videos and images along with the article text.

**WAC Clearinghouse**

The [WAC Clearinghouse](#) has numerous resources including books that focus on writing across the curriculum, new media writing, writing with a broad focus, and special topics in writing. This site also provides open teaching resources such as teaching guides and faculty tip sheets to guide instructors as they teach writing courses.

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s [Writing Center website](#) provides numerous articles and videos on specific writing topics. This is a great resource for individual readings that range from generic composition topics to topics pertaining to writing specific assignments and within specific fields.

**Writing Spaces**
Writing Spaces is an open textbook project for college level composition courses. Each volume of the textbook includes individual article-style chapters that cover specific topics in composition. Topics range from creative writing to academic writing and digital composition. Each article is licensed through Creative Commons.

Bad Ideas About Writing

Bad Ideas About Writing is an open textbook that has compiled tongue-in-cheek chapters about topics in composition. It is a good resource for dispelling common misconceptions about composition, and finding individual articles to assign.

Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is a library of free eBooks in multiple formats. This is a good resource for finding open domain literature. All books are readable from web browsers and built-in eBook readers on multiple platforms.

Manifold

Manifold is a CUNY based publishing platform. You can use Manifold to access eBooks published by fellow CUNY faculty, or to publish an eBook yourself. Manifold is a great way to ensure your students are using the same version of open domain literature. ePub files such as those from Project Gutenberg, Word Docs and HTML files are compatible with Manifold. Manifold allows students to annotate and highlight digital texts, and to collaboratively comment on them.
Chapter 5: Course Design

This section will guide you through principles of course design that will aid in creating a new course or modifying an existing course.

Using Backward Design

Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in their book *Understanding by Design* state, “Our lessons, units, and courses should be logically inferred from the results sought, not derived from the methods, books, and activities with which we are most comfortable. Curriculum should lay out the most effective ways of achieving specific results... in short, the best designs derive backward from the learnings sought.”

Backward design asks the instructor to consider the goals and desired outcomes of the course before creating assignments and designing the schedule of readings for the course. It is focused on student learning and understanding by guiding the instructor through intentional assessment and assignment design. Furthermore, backward design enables an open teaching environment in which students know the purpose of the work they are doing (Wiggins and McTighe 2011). Using backward design while designing an OER course will help to ensure that the writing assignments help students in achieving course goals, and that the OER materials provide students with the knowledge and tools they need to achieve those goals.

Wiggins and McTighe break down backward design into three stages of development: stage one consists of identifying desired results; stage two consists of determining acceptable evidence of meeting results successfully; and, stage three consists of planning learning experiences and instruction based on the previous two stages.

Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

Wiggins and McTighe provide a list of questions which instructors should ask themselves in this stage of design:

- What are the course goals/outcomes as deemed by the department and/or the instructor?
- What long-term transfer goals are targeted?
- What meanings should students make to arrive at important understandings?
- What essential questions will students keep considering?
- What knowledge and skill will students acquire?
- What established goals/standards are targeted?
For composition courses including English 110, FIQWS, and English 21001, 21002, 21003, and 21007 course goals can be found on the CCNY First Year Writing Program website.

Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

In this stage, Wiggins and McTighe suggest instructors ask themselves the following questions:

- What performances and products will reveal evidence of meaning making and transfer?
- By what criteria will performance be assessed, in light of Stage 1 desired results?
- What additional evidence will be collected for all Stage 1 desired results?
- Are the assessments aligned to all Stage 1 elements?

This is the stage in which you will decide what type of assignments will best suit your needs as they align with the course goals. Some assignment types and considerations include:

- Written assignments: low stakes vs. high stakes, creativity level
- Verbal assignments: speeches, presentations, etc.
- Visual assignments: posters, artworks, videos, etc.
- Service learning and application projects

Stage 3: Plan Learning Experience and Instruction

At this point, you are ready to plan the rest of the course, including reading assignments (OER materials) and daily activities. Wiggins and McTighe suggest asking the following questions:

- What activities, experiences, and lessons will lead to achievement of the desired results and success at the assessments?
- How will the learning plan help students achieve transfer, and meaning and acquisition, with increasing independence?
- How will progress be monitored?
- How will the unit be sequenced and differentiated to optimize achievement for all learners?
- Are the learning events in Stage 3 aligned with Stage 1 goals and Stage 2 assessments?

According to Wiggins and McTighe, “a teacher's job is not to simply mention everything in a book or on a topic; our job is to prioritize, make interesting and useful, and ‘uncover’ the content, not merely ‘cover’ it. The textbook should serve as
a resource, not the syllabus, in a focused and effective learning plan.” By following these steps of design, it will help ensure that the OER materials you included in your course are chosen with the intention of providing students the tools for successfully achieving course goals.
Chapter 6: Accessibility and Universal Design for Learning

This section will cover principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and provide resources for further training in accessibility.

What is UDL and why implement it?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a principle of curriculum design that provides all students with equal opportunities to learn regardless of ability, disability, age, gender, and cultural or linguistic background. Implementing UDL principles makes learning better for everyone, in much the same way that sidewalk curb cuts don’t just help those in wheelchairs, but also parents with strollers, skateboarders and roller-skaters, small children and delivery staff with wheeled carts.

UDL is based on three primary principles:

• Multiple means of representation (the “what” of learning)
• Multiple means of student action and expression (the “how” of learning)
• Multiple means of student engagement (the “why” of learning)

For more detailed information on the primary principles of UDL visit CAST’s UDL Guidelines Website.

According to CUNY’s Accessibility training, UDL practices of instruction include:

• A syllabus statement inviting students to meet with the instructor to discuss learning needs
• Multiple delivery and assessing methods that motivate and engage all learners
• Examples that appeal to students with a variety of characteristics with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, disability, and interest
• Regular, accessible, and effective interactions between students and the instructor
• Allowing students to turn in parts of a large project for feedback before the final project is due
• Awareness of processes and resources for disability-related accommodations

Accessibility

Accessibility means ensuring our course documents and activities are accessible to all students. This includes but is not limited to:
• Ensuring PDFs and Word Documents are screen reader friendly
• Ensuring websites are screen reader friendly and work across multiple platforms
• Ensuring PowerPoints are screen reader friendly and readable to students with vision impairments
• Ensuring videos are closed-captioned
• Ensuring important information is not relayed to students using only color-coding

CUNY instructors have the opportunity to complete a self-paced, online course on accessibility in Blackboard that was created by CUNY faculty for CUNY faculty. The course covers how to make online courses and materials accessible to all students. To enroll in the course, select the Blackboard Accessibility Course link in the Accessibility Training tab within Blackboard. More information about the course can be found in the course overview video.

Other resources for accessibility include:

• CUNY IT Accessibility Website
• Reasonable Accommodations: A Faculty Guide to Teaching Students with Disabilities
• CCNY AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services
• Assistive Technology Across CCNY Campuses
Chapter 7: CUNY Academic Commons Course Sites

This section will you step by step through the basics of CUNY Academic Commons and provide easily importable courses for adoption.

Creating a Course Site

Before creating a course site, you must create an Academic Commons account. These steps are identical for everyone and can be shared with your students when they create portfolio sites.

1. Go to the CUNY Academic Commons website
2. Select “Create Account” or “Register” on the top right of the home page.
3. Username must be at least 4 characters, only lowercase letters and numbers
4. Email address must be a CUNY email address

Once you have created your account you can begin creating your course site.

1. Select “Login” on the top right of the home page.
2. Log in using your CUNY email address or username.
3. Hover over drop down list under your name in the top right corner of the page; hover over “My Sites”; select “Create a Site.”
4. You will see three options. For now, select the middle option: “Create a Site.”

You will be redirected to a new page with a form to fill out for site creation.

1. Site domain name must be fifteen characters or less and contain no spaces, special characters or capital letters (this is your website URL)
2. The site title can be changed later, but it suggested to use the name of your course.
3. Fill in campus and primary purpose.
4. Default licence is Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International. Keep this, unless you have a specific reason not to.
5. If you are creating an OER site, you will probably want to make your site open to the public (you can password protect individual pages later if you are not sure of copyright or if you want to create private discussion pages)
6. If you are importing a site, you must select the Default Template. If you don’t, some of the files will not upload.

7. If you are creating a class website for your course from scratch, you can select either the Teaching Template or the Default Template.

8. Click the “Create a Site” button at the bottom of the page. You will be redirected to a page confirming that your site has been created.
Customizing a Course Site

If you are importing a previously created site, skip ahead to the “Previously Created Sites” section of this chapter.

Themes

Selecting a theme is a great way to personalize the appearance of your course site.

1. Go to your dashboard by hovering over your site name on the upper left of the page and selecting “Dashboard” from the drop down menu.
2. Choose “Change your theme completely” or go to Appearance and choose “Themes.”
3. You can try a Live Preview before activating your theme.

4. Remember to Activate and Publish your chosen theme.
Pages

You will now want to create pages for your website. If you selected the Default Template you will have two sample pages. If you selected the Teaching Template, you will have five existing pages: Home, Syllabus, Course Schedule, Resources and posts. You can edit these pages, or add new ones.

1. If you want to create your own home page, or add another page such as one for assignments you will need to add pages.
2. Go to Pages, then All Pages, then Add New.
3. Give your new page a name, and add content if you are ready.
In Edit mode, you can enter text, add images, change the format of your pages, and add hyperlinks. You can copy and paste from completed work, or type directly in the page. You can change visibility, which could be useful if you want to create a private page for discussions or copyright protected work. You can create a page order if you want to assign a parent page to a sequence of pages connected to a larger topic.

To create a password protected page for your class,

1. Select “Password Protected” in the Visibility section on the right side of the screen in your Edit Page section of the Dashboard.
2. Make sure to Update and Save.
3. Share the password with your class.
You can also delete pages by going to pages, selecting the page you wish to delete, and selecting “Move to Trash.”
You can add images and videos to your pages if you wish. If you selected the Teaching Template, your Media Library comes stocked with a number of images. If you want to select specific images for your class, you might want to upload them to your Media Library first.

1. To add an image to a specific page, first open that page.
2. Select Add Media

3. Either select the image from your Media Library or directly from your computer
4. Click “insert into page”
You can easily edit the alignment and size of images using the edit options that appear when you insert the images. You can return to edit images later by clicking on the image in the edit mode on that page.
Remember to Update and save all your changes.

If you selected the Teaching Template, you will be prompted to Add Text or mark the image as Decorative. If you selected the Default Template you can add Alt Text or an image Description either through the edit image tool, or immediately upon uploading the image. This helps students with vision-related issues. Making your site Accessible makes your content readable by students with certain disabilities such as tracking issues or vision impairment. CUNY Academic Commons is set up to ensure that most content is accessible.

The default for most newly created webpages using the Default Template is for the home page to be a blog roll, showing the newest posts. You will want to change the home page settings to a “static home page.” In the Dashboard, go to Settings, then Reading, then select, “Your homepage displays “A static page.” From here you can select the page you wish to display as your home page. Many course sites use the syllabus page as the home page.
Menus

Menus are an important part of making your webpage navigable by your students. Create a menu for your pages to keep them in order and allow you to make easy changes to your sequence.

1. Go to Appearance and then Menus
2. Add or delete any pages to your menu.
3. Drag pages to preferred order
4. Remember to save your menu.
5. Assign your selected menu as Primary.

6. Always remember to save changes.

To be fully accessible:

- All items on the home page should be fully e-reader friendly
- All clickable items should contain a description on the first page that opens
- If you have a drop down menu, you should also have all the information available on the first page to open.
- The first page to open from the home page can explain that there is a drag down menu
- All text and images on Commons websites should be e-reader friendly.
- PDFs created by you should be e-reader friendly. PDFs made by copying pages on a scanner are not always readable.

Plugins

Plugins are additional features that you can add to your course pages to increase its interactivity. There are many plugins to choose from. The most useful plugin is the PDF embedder, which allows you to post PDF content on your pages. BBPress is another useful plugin, particularly if you want to hold online forums or discussions on your class website.

1. Go to Plugins, then Installed Plugins, then search for the plugin you wish to install.
2. Check the box next to this, then select Activate.
3. It should now appear in your list of Installed Plugins and be available for use on your website.

Previously Created Sites

First Year Composition English 110
FIQWS Composition for Truth, Fiction and Photography
FIQWS Composition for Narrative Medicine
English 21001 Writing for the Humanities and Arts
English 21003 Writing for the Sciences

If you upload an existing site, you can add your own welcome, change the dates, and add your own personal touches. You can change the theme, as discussed in the previous section, though not all themes may be compatible with the content of an existing site.

1. Download the .xml file for the related site from the Google Doc folder
2. Create a new Academic Commons course site (select “Default Template” under Site Layout)
3. Navigate to the newly created course site’s dashboard
4. Hover over the “Tools” menu on the left hand side of the screen and select “Import”
5. Click “Run Importer”
6. Click choose file, and select the .xml file you downloaded in step 1
7. Click “Upload File and Import”
8. Select yourself as the post author under the “Import author” options on screen
9. Select “Download and Import File Attachments”
10. Click “Submit”

Further Help

You can contact CUNY Academic Commons support for any questions you have about creating and customizing your website. The email address is: support@cunycommons.zendesk.com

Additionally, you can visit the Commons Help Page for more guides on using the Commons.

At City College, you can also book a one-on-one appointment with staff at the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for help using the CUNY Academic Commons.
Works Cited