Materials Matter: Open Education Resources (OER) in Delaware
MATERIALS
MATTER
BACKGROUND

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The web has opened countless doors to potential teaching material—but is any of it good? RTC members surveyed hundreds of local educators about open educational resources (OER): freely accessible, openly licensed text, media, and other digital assets. Find out what teachers had to say about online materials, and how schools can support them in vetting for quality.
MATERIALS MATTER

*What do we mean when we say “materials?”*

Learning materials can cover a broad array of things used in the classroom. Examples include:

- Individual lesson plans
- In class worksheets
- Hands on classroom activities and associated materials
- Homework assignments and/or worksheets
- Instructional videos
- Textbooks
- Lesson plans for teachers
- Grading rubrics
- Assessments

*Source: Brookings*
The research is conclusive and convincing: high-quality teaching materials make a difference

- Quality instructional materials can have an impact as large as or larger than the impact of teacher quality on students (see Evaluating Impact of Quality Instructional Materials for Teacher Preparation overview). Additionally, the cumulative impact of such curriculum is statistically significant over time.

- Teachers need access to quality materials to adapt for their classroom based on the needs of their students so that they can provide a better education for students.
MATERIAL MATTERS: OER

Open educational resources (OER) are freely accessible, openly licensed text, media, and other digital assets that are useful for teaching, learning, and assessment, as well as for research purposes. The term OER describes publicly accessible materials and resources for any user to use, re-mix, improve and redistribute under some licenses.

Teachers Share Top 3 Benefits To OER

1. High quality OER can save teachers significant time and effort on resource development ad advance student learning inside and outside the classroom – 84%

2. Save time and/or money finding or creating tools for my classroom – 70%

3. Improved access to classroom tools and curriculum – 58%

Source: Surveyed Delaware Teachers
MATERIALS MATTER: HOW ARE OER USED?

- An OER can serve as its own curriculum material, or complement existing ones
- An OER can range from a primary source material to a lesson unit to an assessment to a curriculum

**Top 7 Most Helpful Educational Materials**

1. Curriculum
2. Lessons
3. Books (digital and/or printed)
4. Lesson planning tools
5. Streaming Videos
6. Quizzes and/or tests
7. Homework

Source: Surveyed Delaware Teachers
MATERIALS MATTER

How are states and districts taking advantage of OER?

- Some districts and states have own OER libraries
- Some rely on existing web-based platforms
MATERIALS MATTERS: WHAT TEACHERS SAY

While Delaware teachers are somewhat familiar with OER, 22 percent say they use OER once per month, 20 percent say once per week, and 24 percent say they never use OER.

Source: Surveyed Delaware Teachers
MATERIALS MATTER

Not all High Quality Materials are OER, and not all OER are High Quality Materials.
WHAT SHOULD CHANGE?
WHAT SHOULD CHANGE?

We’re asking teachers to be both creators of content and deliverers, two very different skills.

There plenty of OER options out there; many teachers use websites like Pinterest or TeachersPayTeachers to find materials and activities for students. But these resources often vary in quality and aren’t vetted by any official body to ensure alignment with standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>% teachers familiar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TeachersPayTeachers</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khan Academy</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage New York</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smarter Balanced Digital Library</td>
<td>34%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Surveyed Delaware Teachers
WHAT SHOULD CHANGE?

Teachers want more support to realize the promise of high-quality OER.

While there are vast quantities of material online, teachers say they could use more help in making informed choices when it comes to resources they use with students.

64% OF TEACHERS AGREE THAT OER ARE A VALUABLE TOOL AND THAT THE STATE SHOULD DO MORE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY OPEN RESOURCES

Source: Surveyed Delaware Teachers
OER AND EQUITY: WHAT SHOULD CHANGE?

Challenges around instructional materials are most problematic for the neediest students

- Less experienced educators, who often serve high-need students, are sometimes creating or using less-than-stellar materials
  - Similar students with access to high-quality materials could see accelerated learning
  - Teachers cite a lack of content tailored to English learners, special education students

In a study of five school systems, students spent most of their time in schools without access to four key resources:
  - grade-appropriate assignments
  - strong instruction
  - deep engagement
  - teachers who hold high expectations.

- Students of color, students from low-income families, English language learners, and students with disabilities had less access to resources
NOW WHAT?
NOW WHAT: WHAT TEACHERS SAY

64% OF TEACHERS AGREE THAT OER ARE A VALUABLE TOOL AND THAT THE STATE SHOULD DO MORE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY OPEN RESOURCES.
NOW WHAT: WHAT TEACHERS SAY

Using OER

- **53%** want a platform with a ratings system where users can rate the quality of various materials on different characteristics

- **36%** want a repository where they use a vetting process/rubric with master educators assessing quality

**Top four barriers to using OER**

1. Not enough time to find and modify resources appropriately

2. Cannot find enough resources for my subject

3. Resources aren’t high quality

4. My school/district does not encourage necessary collaboration to facilitate the use of OER (lack of support)
NOW WHAT: THE OPPORTUNITY

Based on demand from the field and examples in other states and districts, Delaware can support Delaware teachers with OER.

- Schoology in Delaware: Are we maximizing its use?
- OER usage
- Desire for vetted repository
- Need for support
- Small size
FIND MORE INFORMATION

- Open Education Resources: Overview and Definition
- OER Commons
- Goodbye textbooks, hello free online resources
- What are Open Education Resources?