

Letter from the Editor

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the newest edition of the *International Journal of Open Educational Resources*. You will find a variety of articles about ways in which open educational resources are changing the landscape of learning and education. Let's dive in!

Our first article is titled “Contributors to the Successful Implementation of OER Program Components,” by Whitchurch and Jensen (2023). This insightful work highlights key findings from recent research on the implementation of open educational resources (OER) programs in higher education. Despite the well-documented challenges institutions face in adopting OER, many have successfully established OER programs with similar components across different campuses. This study delves into whether the success of OER programs—defined by their continuity and growth—can be predicted based on institutional characteristics. The findings reveal minimal positive correlations between the characteristics of institutions and the successful implementation of OER components. However, some program components did show positive interrelations, suggesting that while institutional characteristics might not dictate OER success, the interplay among program components could be influential. This implies that OER program implementation is highly individualistic, necessitating each institution to carve its unique pathway to success. Furthermore, the research uncovers experiential implementation themes that could guide those managing OER programs, offering a nuanced understanding of what contributes to an effective OER strategy.

Up next is “No Cost and Low-Cost Schedule Designation and Student Enrollment Behavior at Oregon Community Colleges and Public Universities” by McNulty, Hofer, and Lantrip (2023). This article presents research aimed to assess the impact of the no- and low-cost course labeling initiative across Oregon's public community colleges and universities on student enrollment patterns, particularly focusing on its effect on historically marginalized student groups. The study posed three main questions: (1) the comparison in enrollment rates between courses with and without the cost designation, (2) the demographic composition of students in these two course types, and (3) any differences in the average number of credits students pursued in designated versus non-designated courses. The analysis, which included data from six public higher education institutions in Oregon, utilized Factorial ANOVA for the first and third questions and One-Way ANOVA for the second. Findings revealed that courses with the cost designation had higher enrollment rates, students in courses without the designation registered for more credits—though this did not have a significant practical impact, and a greater presence of historically underserved students in cost-designated courses. While the study's results might not be widely applicable due to its constraints, they offer a

methodology that could be applied in other contexts. The outcomes are significant for various stakeholders, including educators, support staff, and policy makers, suggesting directions for refining these course designations to enhance student support in Oregon's higher education system.

This next work is "Can You Tell the Difference? A Comparative Syllabus Analysis of OER and Traditional Textbooks." Khaydarvo, Peterson, Miller, Ad-elakun, and Batasaihan (2023) present their study and investigated the effects of no- and low-cost course labels on student enrollment at Oregon's public community colleges and universities, with a focus on historically marginalized student groups. It examined enrollment rates, student demographics, and credit loads in courses with and without these labels. Analysis from six institutions showed higher enrollment in labeled courses, more credits taken in unlabeled courses (with minimal practical impact), and more historically underserved students in labeled courses. Despite limitations affecting generalizability, the findings provide insights for educational stakeholders and suggest the potential for applying this research approach in other contexts to improve student support mechanisms in higher education.

This volume wraps up with "Strategies to Empower students through open pedagogy and citizen science." The authors of this compelling work, McKenney, Gates, Giller, Tully, Leggett, Luke, Cross, and Krieg (2024) explore open pedagogy and citizen science as both aim to enhance individual contributions to science and education, promoting a global community engagement. This approach advocates for merging open pedagogy with citizen science to empower students, enhancing learning, inclusion, and accessibility. Such integration encourages student-driven education and research, increasing engagement and allowing students to create materials, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and applicability beyond academia, like in job or graduate school applications. By contributing to public knowledge, students also develop civic responsibility and connection to diverse communities. Effective teaching models combine student involvement in citizen science projects with the communication of their findings to broader communities, ranging from simple social media engagements to complex, interconnected projects. Despite challenges like the need for revised educational standards and criteria in academia, this blended approach can equip students with crucial skills in assessing and communicating scientific information, preparing them as future global leaders.

I want to close by giving a very warm welcome to IJOER's new co-editor, Linda Ashar, JD. Linda has been with the journal for a couple of months and is already making significant contributions. Welcome aboard, Linda.

Lastly, please know that the IJOER together with JOLRAP (*Journal of Online Learning Research and Practice*) is co-sponsoring the inaugural (and free!) online conference title, *AI and the Future of Education: Disruptive Teaching and*

Learning Models. Please visit this link (<https://www.ipsonet.org/aiconference/>) for more information and also see the back cover of this issue. This free, virtual conference will convene Thursday, August 1 – Friday, August 2, 2024.

Again, thanks for reading.

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