Universal design for universal design:
How to build universal design into your O.E.R. initiative

New York City College of Technology, CUNY
Brooklyn, NY

Cailean Cooney, Open Education Librarian
Andrew McKinney, OER Coordinator
Bree Zuckerman, Instructional Technologist
New York City College of Technology, CUNY

City University of New York (CUNY)
- Federation of 24 colleges
- > 270,000 students

NYCCT a.k.a “City Tech”
- Urban commuter college in downtown Brooklyn
- Baccalaureate & Associate degrees
City Tech Students and Faculty

**Students**
- 61% < $30k household income
- 27% work more than 20 hours per week
- Majority African-American, Hispanic, Asian
- 38% born outside of U.S. (175 countries)
- 73% speak language other than English at home

**Faculty**
- PhD and professional degrees
  - Architects, Chefs, Biologists, Dentists, Physicists...
- 411 full-time + 1,030 part-time
Goals for today

Context

● Institutional context
● OER program
  ○ Our approach
● Behind the scenes tour

Application

● Practical strategies to diffuse accessibility and usability principles throughout OER initiatives
  ○ Practice critique
  ○ Map support documentation to Universal Design for Learning Guidelines
OER Initiative

- $ Stipend
- Traditional Publisher Textbook → OER
  - Zero-cost materials
- 4 Professional development seminars
  - Basics, putting together site skeleton, working session
- Develop OER over one term + pilot in the next term
- Create OER website for public access (WordPress multisite)

Platform: The OpenLab

- Wordpress multisite enhanced by BuddyPress to create a social teaching and learning platform

“City Tech’s OpenLab is an open-source digital platform where students, faculty, and staff can meet to learn, work, and share their ideas. Its goals are to support teaching and learning, enable connection and collaboration, and strengthen the intellectual and social life of the college community.”

Learn more at: https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/about/
Welcome, Bree Zuckerman

Hi, Bree Zuckerman

Need Help?
Visit the Help section or contact us with a question.

Open Pedagogy on the OpenLab
Join us on Fri at 3:30 PM in the Faculty Commons (N227) for our second Open Pedagogy Event of the semester: Learn More and See More.

Stay up-to-date with the OpenLab
The Open Road
For all things OpenLab news, workshops, events, community, and support!

The Buzz
Follow our student bloggers as they post about life at City Tech and beyond!

Africana Folklore: AFR1130
Spring 2018 Professor Evangelista

Course Profile Syllabus Readings Assignments

Africana Folklore

Welcome to Africana Folklore. This course explores the oral, customary and material folklore of Africans and their descendants in the Americas and the Caribbean. We will use readings and films to examine various ways West African folklore was transmitted and survived in the New World, and how Africans in the Americas created new oral, customary and material traditions.

We will compare and contrast fictional and historical folk characters from Africa, the Northern and Southern American hemispheres, with a special focus on the English, Spanish and French-speaking Caribbean. We will examine some of the customs and practices that continue to exist in those regions and how all have contributed to global culture. In addition to required readings, there will also be weekly writing exercises.

This course is designed to help prepare you for further academic study in general, and African, African-American and Caribbean studies, specifically. It will introduce you to the various disciplines that inform the study of people of African descent worldwide.

Dr. Javiera Evangelista
Office: Atrium 434
Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00–3:00 pm
Email: jevangelista@citytech.cuny.edu

Search for Course

Find Library Materials
Find books, media, and more

Everything

Search Advanced Search

Africana Folklore in Motion Across...
Phase 1: Professional Development

Strengthen professional development programming around usability & accessibility

- 3 structured seminars (6 hrs)
  - OER fundamentals
  - Creative Commons, Finding / Selecting materials, Attribution
  - Accessibility, usability, pedagogy
- 1 working session (2 hrs)
Challenge

How do we support faculty to develop usable and accessible OERs?
Challenges

Faculty autonomy

- Academic freedom
- [Librarians] treading into instructional design
- The politics of authority at the University
  - Course coordination or lack thereof
  - Disciplinary factors

Austerity

- Adjunctification of higher education
- Corporatization of higher education
Goals

- Improve professional development with universal design principles
- Test results of our programming (OER sites) with student feedback
- Incorporate student feedback into programming
Welcome to the homepage of this site.

WE WILL BE USING THIS SITE FOR ALL OF OUR ASSIGNED WORK IN THIS COURSE. PLEASE READ BELOW TO FIND OUT WHERE TO LOCATE EVERYTHING THAT YOU NEED ON THE SITE. ALL COURSE MATERIALS ARE INCLUDED HERE.
Excessive Menu Items

- HOME
- ADA
- ASSIGNMENTS
- CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM
- COURSE MATERIALS
- COURSE OUTLINE
- DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
- DISCUSSION GUIDES FOR FILMS
- FINAL
- GRADING
- POLICIES
- WELCOME-OVERVIEW
Final Exams, Final Grades, and eClass Folders

SUBJECT: Final Exams

DATE: December 5, 2023

TO: First Year Students

FROM: Teaching Assistant

Fine motor skills obstacle course - 00:05.30 seconds
Peaks and Pits
Peak!

- Faculty member who had worked with the OpenLab and the OL team many times
- Very open to critique and embraced instruction
- Took to the suggestion of using a citation format with links for readings

**Unit 1: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality**

**Week 2:**


“Sex and Gender.” Introduction to Sociology 20. *Rice University*. Accessed at [OER Commons](https://commoner.oercommons.org) (licensed under CC BY 4.0).

**Week 3:**


Faculty who met one on one during a semester 4 times after taking the seminar
Would fight suggestions throughout
Had a very hard time with proper citation and licensing practices
Peak(s)!

- Have seen incremental improvements each round of the review process
- Two Peaks
  - Review process: more structured, streamlined, easier
  - Quality of OER sites: improvement over time, especially:
    - Customized header image and site homepage
    - More streamlined menus
    - Incorporation of visible CC license for site
    - Fewer accessibility issues

Colorado by Bryce Bradford is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.
Peak & Pit - Combo!

- Teaching faculty how to create a hyperlink while formatting materials in a citation / context friendly way

**Week 6: Luso-America / Brazil**

**Read**

- Africana Folklore Guide, Unit 3, Dr. Stephen James, Professor Emeritus, NYGCT (Pdf)
  - Only read pages 117-139
  - Only read pages 139- until the end

**View**

- Afro-Brazilian Quilombo Fears Change in Land Laws, Aljazeera English (YouTube)
- Capoeira, Mestre Bembe (YouTube)
  - Only watch the first 20 minutes of the film.
Highlights from Seminar 3: Designing your OER

Posted on April 10, 2017 by Callean Cooney

Finally posting materials from our third seminar! Thanks for some great discussions – hope these resources will stimulate further inquiry/dialogue.

- Slides from the third seminar are available here
- Visit the website of City Tech’s Center for Student Accessibility for additional information/feedback

About the Program
City Tech Library supports faculty to replace textbooks with no-cost open/alternative course materials through a faculty development program called OER Fellowships.

Learn more about open educational resources (OERs) here.
What is UDL?

- CAST defines Universal Design for Learning as a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.
- This framework is broken into 3 parts
  - Engagement - For purposeful, motivated learners, stimulate interest and motivation for learning.
  - Representation - For resourceful, knowledgeable learners, present information and content in different ways.
  - Action and Expression - For strategic, goal-directed learners, differentiate the ways that students can express what they know.
OER Creation Checklist

- We found that faculty struggled without clear guidelines
- We could do this in a face to face workshop or in one on one meetings but faculty needed something to come back to
- Links go to help documentation on the OpenLab
Abstracted OER Checklist

- Abstracting the checklist away from the specificity of the OpenLab allows for quicker, easier adoption
- Basic structure stays the same
- Emphasis is on basic site elements and usability and accessibility

Site Structure
- Site Title
  - Have you clearly demarcated the title of the site in a prominent and visible place?
  - If there is a header image, have you made sure it meets accessibility standards?
- Homepage
  - Does the initial landing page of the site orient users (students/other faculty/the general public) to the basic nature of the site. Does it succinctly address what and who the site is for?
- Menu/Navigation
  - If you have a navigation menu on your site, are your menu labels short, succinct, and readily understandable to students?
  - Does your menu contain the minimum number of items possible?
  - If you use drop-downs in your menu, have you included links to all drop-down items on the top-level page?
- Sidebars
  - If your site has sidebars, are they kept to a minimum in order to increase readability and avoid overloading the reader?

License and Attribution
- Does all content on your site comply with intellectual property law and permission guidelines?
- Are authorship and licensing permissions prominently displayed on your site?
- Do all images used on your site include attribution as captions under the image or on a separate attributions page?

Usability and Accessibility
- Have you reviewed your university’s accessibility documentation? If your university doesn’t have comprehensive accessibility documentation, have you reviewed other accessibility documentation from other universities like the University of Minnesota’s Accessible U?
- Have you added alt text to all your images?
- Are you using headings effectively for easier scanning and accessibility?
- Are you “chunking” the content on your site, for easier reading and scanning?
- Have you made sure text and images on your site have a high color contrast ratio for
Goals of the Checklist

Support scaffolding

Checklist → Criteria → Framework

Checklist: list of requirements

Criteria: standards to judge quality

Framework: supporting structure to build from
Towards an evaluation spreadsheet

Version 1

- Each reviewer added all feedback in a single cell
- Difficult to manage
- Communicating feedback to faculty was time-intensive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINK</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>MB</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>AL</th>
<th>AM</th>
<th>JT</th>
<th>BZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know if 5 attributes are needed on landing page. Primary nav is well organized. Cross link weekly assignments to lecture schedule to facilitate ease of access. Will lectures be posted online? Link Case Studies from landing page to increase usability particularly for students accessing on mobile. Are case studies authored by professor? If not, need attribution. HTML is great for accessibility. Resources page currently blank. Textbook on syllabus problematic as other’s mention.</td>
<td>Links needed on Mission page (<a href="https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/hmg3601-oer/policies/">https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/hmg3601-oer/policies/</a>)</td>
<td>Concerns to the good number of YouTube videos from traditional media having greater potential for link rot? Case studies could be put all on one page? Who created the case studies? There is no attribution, just a cc-by-nc-sa license.</td>
<td>clear menu titles; needs CC license; deactivate widgets on right sidebar; readings: clear organization; the link for the first reading doesn’t go to the exact section; consider making printable versions of readings available.</td>
<td>There is a non-OER required textbook on the syllabus. Well-organized assignment list with working links. Something is funny about the Syllabus drop down menu, though; isHMG Mission &amp; Policies a natural child of the Syllabus top level nav item?</td>
<td>Overall clear organization with decent accessibility. Could use headings where appropriate (weekly assignments page, syllabus page, etc) to increase accessibility. Would like to see “Case Studies” and “Resources” pages have links to subpages to avoid problems with dropdowns. Also, 2011 has issues with dropdowns on mobile so best case would be to put the links to the subpages in the top level nav.</td>
<td>Attribution: Good that he’s included description and 5 attributes of OER on the home page, but it’s unclear whether he intends the material to be entirely in public domain or if he wants to use a CC license with attribution. Mentions public domain &amp; CC, but doesn’t specify a license anywhere on the site. Organization: Overall clear site organization, although this could be improved with a few small adjustments: (1) Consider including syllabus and Mission/Policies together on the same page to simplify. Can use TOC plugin if he feels it’s too much content on one page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Version 2**: combined the checklist and the evaluation criteria to provide a more structured and streamlined evaluation process.
Accountability

“Below are recommendations for your OER. As a condition of the program, please review and address these items before the start of the semester. If you have questions, don't hesitate to reach out.

If you'd like to make edits during the OER Refresh workshop, please come by!

January 23, 2019
11 - 12:30 pm / 2 - 3:30 pm
Room L540”
OER feedback template: example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Homepage</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Change the current home page (which is formatted from a default “Hello World” blog post) to a <strong>static page</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Add additional information and context to the homepage to better orient students to the purpose of the site and what they can find/do on the site. (Example: <a href="https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/evangelista1130fa2016th/">https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/evangelista1130fa2016th/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be helpful to add instructor <strong>contact info</strong> in a text widget on the side bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change default <strong>site tagline</strong> from “Just another OpenLab Site” to sum up the site in a few words (e.g. “An OER for Introduction to Sociology”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decrease / revise the size of the header image - the space between the site title and the menu could be confusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Remove inactive widgets (Archives, Comments, etc.) and <strong>de-activate</strong> Comments on pages where commenting will not be used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Incomplete</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Portions of the site look like content still needs to be added - please update for the start of the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is the “” page under construction? If not, you can remove this page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are you planning to use the “Policies” page? Recommend folding any policies into the Syllabus and removing Policies page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At its current state, the course materials do not appear <strong>customized enough for the students</strong>, especially so with the readings and lecture notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Authorship / Licensing / Attribution / Copyright**
Providing feedback to faculty: Ideal approaches

● Useful to have a single person cull all feedback
  ○ Helpful that Cailean is coordinator of the initiative, the “enforcer”

● Similar to best practices for feedback on student writing
  ○ Avoid overwhelming with too many details > Focus on structure, argument, and evidence
  ○ E.g.: Writing Comments on Student Work

● Avoid overwhelming faculty with small details - focus on:
  ○ Overall usability, site structure
  ○ Site is accessible to a wide variety of users and different devices
  ○ Clarity in license and attribution throughout the site

● Strike a balance between constructive criticism and positive feedback

● Tone is clear, firm, and authoritative, but also friendly
Activity
Activity

1. Collectively critique an O.E.R. site
   a. Purpose:
      i. Generate raw feedback together,
      ii. This process has no explicit guidance - a chance to “freewheel”

2. Introduce U.D.L. Chart and “Checkpoints”
   a. Purpose:
      i. Pivot to abstracted principles of U.D.L.
      ii. Consider and individually reflect upon the value of the principles

3. Map U.D.L. Checkpoints to O.E.R. Website Creation Checklist
   a. Purpose:
      i. Engage with both documents in application

4. Revisit O.E.R. site critique with guiding principles and documentation
   a. Purpose:
      i. Test out the U.D.L. framework and the OER Creation Checklist
      ii. Ponder
1. Site to review: https://bit.ly/2uz54kw
### 2. Mapping U.D.L. Checkpoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.D.L. Checkpoint</th>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Why is this concept important?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Offer ways of customizing the display of information</td>
<td>Representation &gt; Perception</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Offer alternatives for visual information</td>
<td>Representation &gt; Perception</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols</td>
<td>Representation &gt; Language &amp; symbols</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships</td>
<td>Representation &gt; Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Takeaways

Modelling

Transparency - making knowledge and thinking processes visible

Cultural awareness

What is this?

Who is it for?
References / Documents

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

OER Creation Checklist

U.D.L. Checkpoints table
Selected Resources

About Universal Design for Learning

- U.D.L. Guidelines, CAST
- U.D.L. Syllabus, UDL ON CAMPUS website

About City Tech’s OER Initiative

- OER Faculty Fellowship website
- Building a Culture of Open Pedagogy from the Platform Up

CBOX OpenLab Platform

- OpenLab Showcase
Want your own OpenLab?

- CBOX OpenLab is a free open-source software platform for teaching, learning, and collaboration.
- Created by a collaboration between the OpenLab and CUNY Graduate Center’s Commons In A Box (CBOX) teams
- [https://cbox.org](https://cbox.org)
Questions?

Get in touch!

- Cailean Cooney: ccooney@citytech.cuny.edu
- Andy McKinney: Andrew.Mckinney@cuny.edu
- Bree Zuckerman: bzuckerman@citytech.cuny.edu