

Stretched Too Thin: Leveling the Educational Landscape through OERs and Open Degree Plans

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Abstract

As the educational landscape continues to shift and change, many adult learners are looking for an affordable opportunity to finish what they have started and complete a college degree or advance into graduate studies. While the high cost of a college degree often is a barrier, there are ways to level the educational playing field through OERs and alternative credit sources. For example, open educational resources (OERs) offer an opportunity to help promote educational equity through free resources. Often, many adult learners struggle with the high cost of textbooks and other course material needed to be successful in a course. Additionally, many adult learners have a gap in formal academic studies and writing. This can be a challenge as supplemental learning tools can be costly, yet needed to be successful. Due to financial constraints, many learners are not able to purchase required course materials putting them at an academic disadvantage, impacting successful completion of a college degree. OERs provide an opportunity to promote student success through free quality, resources. Additionally, OERs are an excellent way to provide supplemental materials for learners needing additional academic assistance. This paper provides information on open educational resources (OERs), open degree plans, competency-based education, and prior learning assessment.

Keywords: open educational resources, adult learning, prior learning assessment, competency-based education, educational equity