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New website harnesses open resources to save students money

OLYMPIA, Wash. – The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) today launched OPEN Washington, a website that connects faculty to the nation’s finest open resources to save students money.

With [OPEN Washington](#), SBCTC assembles links to top quality open educational resource collections and adds step-by-step training and other tools to help instructors identify, adopt and modify relevant materials. The goal is to make the best materials available to all students at a cost much lower than that of published textbooks.

The Open Educational Resources (OER) available through OPEN Washington are released under licenses managed by the nonprofit [Creative Commons](#), allowing users to reuse, alter and repurpose the content with attribution.

OPEN Washington extends Washington state’s groundbreaking work in open education in a significant new direction. With funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Washington state Legislature, SBCTC and community college faculty built the [Open Course Library](#), a collection of open course materials for 81 of the community and technical college system’s highest-enrolled courses. SBCTC has also implemented an ‘open’ policy that ensures products of public and grant-funded educational projects at community and technical colleges are openly licensed and freely available.

In addition to assembling a high-quality collection of resources, OPEN Washington provides training materials and resources, stories of the impact of successful OER use in the Washington community and technical college system, and a community-driven Q&A forum to help instructors learn open licensing and how to use, license and modify OER in their own teaching. SBCTC’s “How to Use OER” training course is nationally recognized for its success in teaching instructors and librarians how to use OER the right way. A self-paced version of that course is available on OPEN Washington.

“The value of the new site is that it provides a one-stop center for instructors and anyone else to find open resources and use them effectively,” said Mark Jenkins, SBCTC director for eLearning and open education. “OPEN Washington gives us the means to represent the best of what’s out there in OER and to provide help and resources for both new and experienced instructors committed to teaching with it.”

SBCTC is one of five organizations nationwide to provide training and support to all U.S. Department of Labor TAACCCT grantees (Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training) through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Products resulting from the DOL grants must be openly licensed. The other partners in this grant are Creative Commons, Stanford University, Carnegie Mellon University and the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST).

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About the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges:

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is led by a Governor-appointed board and provides leadership, advocacy, and coordination for Washington’s system of 34 public community and technical colleges. Each year, nearly 400,000 students train for the workforce, prepare to transfer to a university, gain basic math and English skills, or pursue continuing education. Visit our website at SBCTC.edu.

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