



When considering course materials, it's important to weigh the pros and cons of different options. Open Educational Resources (OER) have gained attention as a potential cost-saving solution, but they may not be the right fit for everyone.

This guide will help you compare OER with McGraw Hill's Affordable Access models and outline tradeoffs in the following areas:

- **Development Costs:** High costs and time-intensive customization often burden faculty and institutions.
- **Resource Gaps:** Many OER lack essential resources like instructor guides or accessibility compliance, leading to inconsistent student experiences and non-compliance with legal requirements (required by April 24, 2026).

- **Hidden Expenses:** Institutions frequently incur costs for staffing support or to reformat materials to ensure accessibility and privacy compliance, which can ultimately be passed down to students.

Explore the following table to gain a clear understanding of the benefits and challenges of each option so you can make an informed decision for your courses and your institution.

✓ Yes ✗ No L Limited

Product Features	McGraw Hill	OpenStax	Lumen	Hawkes	Top Hat	Creative Commons	Did you know?
Is it FREE?	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	<p>OER content is only free to the student at the most basic level in digital form. Print always carries a cost, whether students print out the content themselves or purchase a print copy. If instructors choose to add any supplemental tools, multi-media, assessments, and/or reporting functionality, the price goes up substantially, and, in most cases, this does not include instructor support material. In fact, the median price of OER is \$60 per student, whether student paid or grant funded.*</p> <p>Pricing to the institution in Inclusive Access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ McGraw Hill starts at \$35 ■ Lumen starts at \$35 ■ Hawkes starts at \$36 ■ Top Hat starts at \$30
High-Quality Content	✓	✗	L	L	L	✗	<p>McGraw Hill (MH) authors are comprised of world-renowned researchers, practitioners, and experts in their fields. They are selected not only for their expertise, but also for their ability to organize content in a way that maximizes student understanding of complicated concepts through proper instructional design.</p> <p>MH puts all text and supplementary content through a rigorous process of peer, expert, and product team reviews to obtain the highest level of accuracy.</p> <p>OER content has been found to contain hundreds of errors. In fact, having excessive errors is one of the top complaints about OER from both students and instructors.</p>
Robust Learning Platforms	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	<p>MH creates adaptive, dynamic, and engaging content, based in research, that is designed to improve student learning outcomes by personalizing the learning experience.</p> <p>Each MH learning platform provides a unique collection of animations, simulations, videos, interactive exercises, effective lab content, and dynamic resources designed to maximize learning for the individual student and subject area.</p>

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Instructor Resources	✓	✗	L	L	L	✗	<p>Instructors report the lack of teaching and learning support resources as one of the top reasons for their dissatisfaction with OER, followed closely by too much time/effort needed to effectively curate and continuously vet content for accuracy and availability.*</p> <p>MH provides multiple, curated instructor tools such as lecture notes, test banks, PowerPoints, and lesson plans at no additional charge to ensure teaching success.</p> <p>MH provides lecture slides with accessibility in mind. Alt text for images, a requirement for users of screen readers, is included.</p>
Robust Reporting	✓	✗	L	✗	✗	✗	<p>MH's robust reporting tools allow instructors to anticipate teaching needs before class, identify at-risk students, analyze performance on learning objectives, and see where they need to spend more or less time—for an individual student or their entire class.</p>
Product Training and Support for Faculty and Students	✓	✗	L	L	L	✗	<p>Because OER are limited, so is their support. When using OER, instructors are responsible for solving all issues that arise, including curation of content, correction of content errors, broken or invalid URLs, content that has been incorrectly modified/removed, and platform technical support.</p> <p>MH offers the full spectrum of Support at Every Step for faculty and students. From a vast online library of self-service resources, to personalized 1-on-1 training with our product implementation team and a dedicated customer success team ready to help via chat and/or phone, MH is committed to ensuring instructor and student success.</p>
Currency and Skills Alignment	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	<p>Because OER can be costly to develop and keep updated, it often lacks current skills alignment, references antiquated language, and highlights outdated research.</p>

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Compliance with WCAG Accessibility Standards	✓	✗	L	L	L	✗	From support to content creation to platform development, accessibility is a top priority at McGraw Hill . MH consistently updates their content AND platforms to the most current accessibility standards . However, the same cannot be said for OER , as the standards vary among OER providers. Since most OER are not curated by a single entity, and with limited funding, there is no one to assist faculty with content conversions, making it more difficult and time consuming for faculty and students to acquire accessible content.
Compatibility with Latest LMS Requirements	✓	✗	L	✗	L	✗	MH understands the importance of a seamless user experience. McGraw Hill's LMS Integration provides a more intuitive experience, making access, automation, and security easier than ever before.

*Trends in Usage of Open Education Resources (OER) in Higher Education, 2023

Consider Student Data Privacy

Because OER are open source and access is made publicly available, users can be left vulnerable to malicious code embedded within files, data breaches on platforms hosting OER, phishing attacks targeting users who download OER, and potential vulnerabilities in the underlying platforms used to distribute and manage OER. Essentially, any risk associated with sharing digital content online can apply to OERs, making careful vetting and security measures crucial.

McGraw Hill's Privacy and Cybersecurity offices are committed to partnering with institutions to ensure FERPA compliance and shares publicly its policies and processes for doing so. We comply with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

Cybersecurity Framework and have maintained an "A" rating and the highest security score in the educational publishing industry for the past five years according to a third-party auditor.

MH goes to great lengths to protect user's data from unauthorized access (aka hackers). We limit the amount of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) we collect from users, which instructors, institutions, and students need to determine student progress. MH never provides 3rd parties users' data for marketing purposes or sells user data.