

## Open Education Web Site Provides Free Access to College Course Materials

by Lenore Horowitz, Professor, Mathematics, Science and Technology Department, Schenectady County Community College



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Recently Schenectady County Community College ([SCCC](#)) launched its open education communityWeb site, Capital District Open Education ([CDOE](#)), which grants free and open access to course content provided by instructors at the college.



The project materialized due to the efforts and foresight of faculty wishing to promote the Open Education Resources movement by freely sharing educational materials using the technology of the World Wide Web. Providing access to all learners, not only those with access to traditional, contact education, is the primary goal of the project. Ultimately, it has the potential to expand educational access to a significantly larger number of learners via inter-networked computers.



By offering educational materials for free, [SCCC extends its brand](#) with every resource shared and expands the awareness of the institution worldwide. The project soundly identifies with the SUNY chancellor's "[The Power of SUNY: Strategic Plan 2010 & Beyond](#)" document, which includes, as a theme -- Globalization and the idea of Open SUNY. Open SUNY envisions the ability to "network students with faculty and peers from across the state and throughout the world through social and emerging technologies and link them to the best in open educational resources."

"The Open Education project demonstrates Schenectady County Community College's commitment to excellence in teaching and being innovative in how the institution engages the community in learning outside of the traditional classroom. Additionally, this project is a good example of a new educational paradigm that will meet a learning style for a new generation of students. Clearly, the Open Education project is an integral part of SCCC's [Gateway to Excellence: Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015](#)," said Dr. Quintin Bullock, President of Schenectady County Community College.

[Open educational resources](#) traditionally include full courses, course materials, modules, tutorials, e-textbooks, streaming videos, software, and more. Due to the time constraints of this project, we chose to offer free access to existing online courses.



The project investigated open source software systems for mounting the materials on the web. Keeping with the spirit of free and open, we determined that the easiest solution, by far, was to open online courses to the public in [our SLN](#) course management environment. Several SCCC faculty were approached with the idea of offering their course material freely to the community. Many were enthusiastic to contribute. "Because I am so passionate about [my course] HUS133, Child Maltreatment, I am seriously considering this [CDOE] option. The potential is there to save more children from abuse than I can via the traditional classroom setting alone," said Tammy Calhoun, Associate Professor in the SCCC Humanities and Social Sciences Department. The enlisted courses were adjusted to conform to open access practices and made available under the [Creative Commons](#) Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License.



SCCC's open education Web site endeavor [is open](#) and available to the world and continues as an ongoing SCCC activity. Future plans include measuring Web site traffic to determine Web site usage and the administration of a user web-based survey to obtain additional assessment data as well as soliciting additional courses from SCCC faculty.



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