**Abstract**

East Central University’s (ECU) Linscheid Library in partnership with Oklahoma State University Libraries (OSU), Redlands Community College (RCC) and the Oklahoma Community of Online Learning Excellence (COLE) request $427,404 in National Leadership Grant funding for a three-year project to create and disseminate a research methodology for evaluating the efficacy of Open Educational Resources (OER) in increasing lifelong learning competencies. The PI is Marla Lobley, Public Services Librarian at ECU. The co-PIs are Kathy Essmiller, Assistant Professor and OER Librarian at OSU and Rose Marie Moore, Chief Academic and Compliance Officer, RCC. This project will take place from September 2020- August 2023.

The goals of the project are to develop a research toolkit for studying the efficacy of OER on increasing lifelong learning competencies and to develop an OER for librarians on how to create robust research methodologies for studying teaching and learning. The project was created to address the lack of robust research methodology in OER efficacy studies and the lack of librarian knowledge in conducting research. Addressing these problems through the lens of lifelong learning creates opportunities for librarians to promote and evaluate OER across disciplines and contexts. This project can help position libraries to have considerable influence on a variety of educational institutions in addition to colleges and universities. In year one, the PIs will create the research methodology. In year two, they will test for reliability and validity. In year three, they will use the methodology to conduct a multi-institutional study evaluating the impact of OER on lifelong learning competencies. In addition to the research toolkit and OER on research methodologies, deliverables of the project include two scholarly papers and the dataset from the multi-institutional study.

This project explores OER efficacy in a way that can make conducting OER efficacy research more accessible to faculty and librarians. It also provides a resource to make research more accessible to librarians, even if they are not working with OER. Academic librarians who are promoting OER often find it difficult to persuade faculty that adopting OER is worth the time investment. The exploratory work of this project opens the door for stronger research that can help convince faculty and administrators that OER are crucial to the viability of higher education institutions.