Open Syllabus Analytics: Overview

https://analytics.opensyllabus.org
Open Syllabus Analytics is a tool for exploring millions of anonymized syllabi and other curricular materials collected from thousands of colleges and universities around the world. Analytics helps instructors design classes, students explore fields, publishers develop books, and educators at all levels better understand the curriculum of higher education. It is a window onto higher education as a global project built from millions of decisions about what and how to teach.
Analytics is designed to answer questions about the use of books, articles, and other materials in teaching — at the classroom level and as classroom choices aggregate into programs and fields. A common pattern is to search for a title, see what’s frequently assigned with it, explore changes in its classroom use over time, and view a range of syllabi that assign it. Analytics captures patterns of use and also contexts of use.
It’s easy to compose nuanced searches across any of the major categories in the OS dataset: titles, authors, schools, fields, countries, publishers, syllabi, and learning outcomes.

It’s possible, for example, to search for syllabi by topic, assigned title, school, year ranges, school type, and other criteria.

Conversely, it’s possible search for assigned titles based on a topic search of syllabi. And limit results to nursing classes in Australia, or to California 2-year colleges, or to openly-licensed works, or other narrow criteria.
Analytics is also the only source of teaching-based ‘altmetrics’ that can help faculty claim credit for work with teaching applications. This dimension of faculty work is chronically undervalued because it has been difficult to measure. Not with Analytics.
Florida International University (FIU) is a public research university with its main campus in Miami-Dade County. Founded in 1972, the school opened its doors to students in 1978. FIU has grown to become the third-largest university in Florida and the fifth-largest in the United States by enrollment. FIU is a constituent part of the State University System of Florida. In 2021, it was ranked #1 in the Florida Board of Governors performance funding, and had over $246 million in research expenditures. The university is classified among "R1: Doctoral Universities – Very High research activity." FIU has 11 colleges and more than 40 centers, facilities, labs, and institutes that offer more than 200 programs of study. It has an annual budget of over $1.7 billion and an annual economic impact of over $5 billion. The university is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). FIU's intercollegiate sports teams, the FIU Panthers, compete in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I and the Conference USA (C-USA). FIU's varsity sports teams have won five athletic championships and Panther athletes have won various individual NCAA national championships. Kenneth A. Ferrer, President of FIU since 2012.

Every school has a profile page in Analytics. These pages provide a means of exploring institutional collections and drilling down into fields and programs. It also captures changes in program curricula over time.
Analytics provides abbreviated, anonymized views of all syllabi in its collection. This view consists of the core descriptive fields — title, code, date, institution, description, learning outcomes, topic outlines, and assigned texts. It does not provide information about the instructor or detailed assignment and assessment information.

Open Syllabus currently holds 20.9 million syllabi, built primarily by scraping public sources. The collection is anglophone but global, with extensive representation of the UK, Australia, Canada, and most European countries.
Learning outcome views are another way to explore and compare approaches to teaching. Analytics supports school and subject-level searches of learning outcomes as well as comparison across programs. Future versions will be able to provide gap analysis and crosswalks to disciplinary and professional learning taxonomies.
Analytics also has dashboards with more specialized views and capabilities. Currently there are three: OER Metrics, Trends, and Gender Statistics.

Future dashboards will focus on skills-based curricular analysis and ‘conversion pathways’ for schools trying to expand open textbook adoption.
OER Metrics is a dashboard for mapping patterns of adoption of Open Educational Resource (OER) textbooks and Open Access (OA) monographs. It’s the only source of system-level demand-side data in the OA/OER ecosystem.

OER Metrics data can be used as a quality signal for selecting OER titles, a research tool for title development or sponsorship, or as a window onto OER adoption by ‘peer programs,’ which is an important input into decisions to migrate courses or programs to open titles.
Trends is a tool for composing keyword or phrase searches across the full text of the Open Syllabus collection. It provides a way to explore intuitions about the status of topics in the curriculum.

Future versions will do more to surface trending concepts and themes.
The **Gender Statistics** dashboard maps the gender ratios of authors and instructors across fields, schools, and countries. It provides a way to measure gender equity efforts, including school and program performance against national averages.
Open Syllabus is incorporating course catalog data, which will add comprehensive information about program structure and course offerings. The OS collection will become two-tiered, with catalog entries linked to syllabi.

The first application of this work is the Course Matcher, which predicts course equivalence across millions of classes at hundreds of schools in order make course transfer simpler and more transparent for students and staff.
Open Syllabus makes anonymized versions of its dataset available for academic research. Open Syllabus has provided datasets to more than sixty academic teams for work on issues ranging from employment skills to pedagogical change to innovation in fields. Hundreds of other research projects rely on Open Syllabus’s publicly-available tools.
Analytics is split into **Free**, **Trial**, and **Subscription** versions. The Free version caps data at 2019, doesn’t show syllabi, and blocks a number of advanced features. The Trial version requires a sign up and provides access to the Subscription version for 30 days. The Subscription version is for schools, publishers, and other educational providers.

Analytics subscriptions are institution-wide and manage access either via email domain or single sign-on standards.
Base pricing is based on school and organization size and type, and has a number of available modifiers.

Open Syllabus also works with Lyrasis to serve the US library community.

If you have questions or would like to learn more, please write us at:

analytics@opensyllabus.org
Open Syllabus Analytics is a local syllabus archive for schools and a global archive for higher education.

We work on challenges that require system-level views of teaching and learning.

We do so to improve teaching and to make higher education more accessible and navigable to students.

We are a non-profit organization aligned with the goals and values of the institutions that contribute to our work.

And we need your help both as users of Open Syllabus services and as contributors to the archive.