

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Lumen Learning's Waymaker Courseware Elevates the "Person" in Personalized Learning

Digital course materials offer a uniquely affordable, human-centered approach to strengthen student success in high-enrollment college courses

PORTLAND, Ore. (October 26, 2015) – With the introduction of [Waymaker](#), its personalized learning courseware, the open education company [Lumen Learning](#) is setting a new standard for educational technology solutions that enhance the most human elements of the learning process. Noted for its work helping colleges and universities improve student success through the effective adoption of [open educational resources \(OER\)](#), Lumen is now combining OER with learning science insights to deliver a personalized learning experience with a deep commitment to both affordability and quality.

“Some personalized and adaptive learning products overuse algorithms in ways that deny students the opportunity to stretch their metacognitive muscles and learn how to learn for themselves,” said David Wiley, chief academic officer of Lumen Learning and the primary architect of the learning model behind Waymaker. “In those cases, the Machine assumes all decisions about what, when and how long to study, taking choice and control away from students and instructors. We believe this approach is fundamentally flawed when it comes to supporting both learning in class and lifelong learning. Waymaker gives students and faculty better insights and tools to make their own decisions about how to learn most effectively.”

Waymaker offers four primary interventions that are well-grounded in research and represent a significant shift compared to what students experience in a typical college course. First, by using OER-based content, Waymaker gives every student automatic day one access to the course materials they need to succeed. Textbook affordability becomes a non-issue. Second, Waymaker applies a Mastery Learning-inspired approach, using quizzes and other assessments as learning activities, and not just measurement activities. Students get more than one chance to complete each assessment, along with feedback about where to focus to improve performance. Third, Waymaker uses learning data to provide students with personalized recommendations about where to focus their attention to improve learning. Fourth, Waymaker helps faculty identify and connect with students individually when and where they need help and encouragement. Research suggests these personal relationships can significantly impact student learning.

“From this fall’s courseware pilot, we are seeing great validation for each part of the learning model behind the courseware,” said Kim Thanos, CEO of Lumen Learning. “We are also identifying critical points where Waymaker can shape positive behaviors among students and faculty to strengthen learning and engagement. Since continuous improvement is a big part of our culture and process, we

are excited to continue testing and refining Waymaker as we understand more about what works, and why.”

During fall term 2015, Waymaker courseware is being piloted by more than 2,000 students at 12 institutions across the U.S. Pilot faculty and students are using the course materials in traditional face-to-face classroom settings, as well as hybrid and fully online courses. Lumen is capturing feedback from instructors and students, along with behavioral and student performance data to glean new insights about how to improve student learning. Research findings drive ongoing improvements to the courseware.

“Affordability, access and student engagement are near-universal problems for U.S. higher education today,” said JoAnna Schilling, vice president for academic affairs and assistant superintendent at [Cerritos College](#), one of the institutions piloting Waymaker during the 2015-2016 academic year. “Solutions like Waymaker hold promise for helping us reach students earlier and in more individualized, targeted ways, with better tools to make a positive impact on student success. Lumen Learning is forging an innovative path for how colleges and universities can use open educational resources to strengthen learning for all students.”

All Waymaker course content carries an open, Creative Commons license. To develop the courses, the company works with subject matter experts to curate the best available OER including text, video, simulations and other content, such as the peer-reviewed *Microeconomics* and *Macroeconomics* textbooks from [OpenStax College](#). Lumen then adapts the content and creates new resources that it also publishes under a Creative Commons attribution license. The result is high-quality, cohesive courseware and a new wealth of open educational resources that are freely available.

To use Waymaker, Lumen charges institutions a low-cost support fee for the personalized learning courseware package. This per-student fee amounts to a fraction of the cost of a typical commercial textbook or online access fee. The support package includes delivery of course materials in Lumen’s customization-friendly courseware platform, instrumentation of content and assessments, personalization tools, integration with the institution’s learning management system (LMS), training and technical support. Current college-level courses in pilot include *Microeconomics*, *Macroeconomics*, and *Introduction to Business. Principles of Marketing* and other subjects are planned for spring 2016 and beyond.

Waymaker was developed as part of the Next Generation Courseware Challenge, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## About Lumen Learning

Lumen Learning helps higher education institutions improve affordability, access and student success by supporting wide-scale adoption of open educational resources (OER). We provide low-cost supported open courseware to help institutions transition high enrollment courses to OER. Lumen’s supported courseware has been used by over 60 higher education institutions, including six of the 20 largest U.S. community colleges. Lumen courseware typically reduces total spend on textbooks and course materials by 90%, while often achieving improvements in student success upwards of 10%. Educational resources created by Lumen are published under the Creative Commons Attribution license and contributed back to the education community. Visit us at [lumenlearning.com](http://lumenlearning.com). Follow us on Twitter at [@LumenLearning](https://twitter.com/LumenLearning).

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