



AY2015-16 Alt-Textbook Initiative Final Report and Recommendations

Background

The high costs of textbooks can inhibit student success. According to 2014 research by Student PIRGs (Public Interest Research Groups), 65% of students in their survey decided against buying a textbook because it was too expensive, even though many of them (94%) were concerned that doing so would hurt their grade.

The University Libraries spends close to \$5 million a year on high-quality content and according to OHIO's financial aid office, each OHIO student spends an average of \$990 on course materials per year. While overhauling a course that has traditionally been taught with a textbook is not an insignificant task, instructors can save students money by making use of already purchased library-content and/or the growing number of quality open education resources in their courses. Additionally, research shows that 93% of students who use open education resources do as well or better than those using traditional materials.

Summary of the Initiative

Intent: Lower student costs by increasing the number of courses open or licensed library content instead of textbooks.

Success Measure: 10 instructors complete the program and eliminate or significantly reduce the cost of their course materials by at least \$10,000 in aggregate.

Mechanism: Offer a financial incentive and personal assistance to instructors to spend time identifying and integrating the substitute content. Instructors of courses affecting 100 or more students received \$1,000 incentive and instructors of courses with less than 100 students received \$500.

Funding Source: Dean of the Libraries' operating funds; initial budget \$5000

Requirements to Receive the Incentive: Participants must attend a workshop, meet with a librarian, and respond to the final survey and data gathering information.

Process and Timeline:

October 22, 2015 - January 15, 2016	Applications accepted
November – February 2016	Applicants interviewed in order to determine their needs
January – March 2016	Workshops developed
March 23 and 25, 2016	Alt-Textbook workshops (same 2-hr workshop offered 2x)
May 2016	Final survey and data gathering
June 2016	Incentives awarded
Summer and Fall 16 and Spring 17	Courses with new content implemented

Workshop Partners: Academic Technology, Center for Teaching & Learning

Workshop Content:

Hour 1

1. Welcome, introductions, and agenda review
2. How librarians can help with this project
3. How the Center for Teaching and Learning can help with this project
4. How instructional technologists can help with this project
5. Copyright and fair use basics
6. Using “Libraries Content Folder” in Blackboard

Hour 2

Breakout sessions (15 mins each – choose 3 or 4)

- Finding media and image content
- Integrating media and image content into your course
- Intro to Backward Design
- Finding open educational resources
- Work with a librarian individually or in small groups
- Work with a technologist individually or in small groups

Results

- 70% (26 instructors) completed the program and changed at least some content in **23 courses**
 - Arts & Sciences (4): Anthropology, English, Physics, Math; undergraduate
 - Business (6): Management, MIS, undergraduate
 - Communication (4): Journalism, Media Arts & Studies; undergraduate
 - Education (2): Counseling; graduate
 - Engineering (4): Industrial and Systems, Mechanical, Civil; undergraduate
 - Fine Arts (4): Art + Design; undergraduate
 - RHE (4): Technical and Applied Science, Political Science, Education
- 48% (11) of the courses had enrollments over 99 students in one academic year.
- **2358 students will see a \$236,213 savings in textbooks in the 2016-17 AY**
- **Total cost of the incentives was \$16,000**
- 61% (17) of the participants who completed the program said they would recommend it to their colleagues, 17% (10) said it depends, 1 person said probably not
- Most valuable aspects of the program, as rated by program completers:
 - Copyright information and education
 - Working one-on-one with a librarian
 - Open education resource guides
 - Discussions with other faculty
 - Assistance finding media
- Constructive comments about improving the program included longer workshop sessions offered more often and in more convenient and effective ways for regional campus attendance

Recommendations

- Provide ongoing copyright education and support for instructors.

- Showcase OHIO examples of courses using a wide variety of open and library content, and stories of successful transition from traditional textbooks.
- The Library continues to coordinate and administer the program but that incentive funding be handled from another budget and details of incentive eligibility tighten (how to handle multiple people working on same class, etc.).
- The call for participants happen in early fall with workshops and longer breakout sessions (with librarians and technologists) available later in fall and over break (or implement a learning community model).
- Integrate opportunities for learning about TopHat or other course-content related support technologies.
- In addition to time, help finding appropriate content, and guidance on copyright concerns, some faculty also want help turning their own content into course material, which entails a wide variety of needs from assessment mechanisms to platforms to designers and illustrators, depending on the specific faculty member.

Comments from participants who completed the program in response to the prompt, "Please provide any additional information that could help us improve this program."

More flexible scheduling. I know that you tried, but my spring semester was so busy, I had a difficult time trying to attend the sessions offered.

The workshop was useful. However, I feel that the sessions should be more structured and centered in an agenda. It is a good idea to rely on questions and discussion. Unfortunately if one person knows more about the topic, that person will ask advanced questions that are out of reach for others.

Also, the time for each session in the workshop was not enough.

Great initiative. I think now we established a relationship with our librarian that I am sure will help in the future.

I had trouble finding what I wanted through the links. However, after meeting with Jessica, I feel more confident that I can find the materials to replace a textbook and exercise book that I have been wedded to for 14 years. I also plan to share a film/documentary list that Jessica is working on with my colleagues. I also plan to share the video resources handout with my colleagues. I had no idea what was accessible through Alden. It's difficult to learn these things without having some dedicated time. I appreciate the opportunity to connect with technologists and librarians.

It is hard to get around using a textbook or at least partly using a book for this kind of course. Some presentation of past successes in the program (I understand this is the first time it's been run) might help future participants to see what they could do with the resources we've got. It might be a good idea to showcase an alt-textbook course once in a while either through a presentation, web featurette, etc. Might be good press for the program, too.

Time for small group discussion (with library/technology staff and with fellow faculty) was most valuable, yet also most difficult to make happen. More required/formal small-group sessions -- say one per month, with 3-5 faculty and one facilitator -- during the semester would have been very helpful. Since needs can be very different across disciplines / types of courses, so having the whole group meet

is overwhelming and non-specific. Yet certain basic kinds of needs tend to overlap among some fields, so a few more small group sessions would be useful.

I find it essential that the program could offer valuable sources of information for references, books, papers and reports. For the particular case of engineering courses, integrating numerical examples and practical hands-on projects usually makes the difference for the student's learning experience. The program could offer computational resources for rapid development of graphics, diagrams, sketches that could help the instructor to construct alternative material more efficiently and effectively, and with less time investing. The program also could help the developer to access pay-per-view content online from other institutions that could complement the generation of handouts and lecture notes for the students.

This workshop was extremely helpful. I would have welcome more time for each workshop though.

One issue I am having is that the Safari Books Online site will only allow 100 students to use the site at any given time. With 250 students in the class during the same semester, it may become frustrating for students who have to use the site frequently to read their course material if they are unable to access the site on a consistent and reliable schedule.

I just need some one on one advice as to what is possible. I have the vision just need some assistance implementing.

It takes a lot of time to create resources that are otherwise available through a publisher. More incentives are needed.

I appreciated the opportunity to select and attend various mini-information sessions. I wonder if these could be provided for a longer period of time, with more structure related to start/end times. It may also be helpful to have a couple different workshops throughout the semester.

Thank you. I am looking forward to using my new knowledge to structure my EDCE 6200 course and additional courses. I will also continue seeking ways to reduce cost through more structured use of library owned materials.

I don't know if it is because I am overseas right now (on sabbatical) but I feel the communications for this program have been pretty weak, so far. It was impossible to understand what was going on in the live video link for the first hour of that talk, and then I was not included in whatever happened in the second hour (and nothing was communicated to me about what happened in the second hour). Right now, I have no idea what I am supposed to be doing.

It's a great program. I believe that sooner or later the Blackboard question will need to be addressed. It is a baroque and less than reliable technology that makes it sometimes hard for students and faculty to exchange information effectively. With textbooks being offered through Blackboard, this might become a more pressing issue.

The two things I found most valuable were learning more about copyright and working with my librarian. Perhaps a hand-out on copyright law would be useful.

I am hoping that this is an ongoing service, as I look forward to implementing this into other courses. It will be great to meet with a librarian who can help me with this vision. Thanks!

For the regional attendees, it would have been nice to have videoconferencing of some of the break out sessions during the library info session.

The workshop was excellent - perhaps a follow up meeting, or even a second optional workshop to encourage collaboration during course development.

Students pay a tremendous amount of money for textbooks that some will never crack open again. In these days of electronic media, they can find information faster than the instructors. We MUST adapt in order to stay ahead of the curve. I find myself constantly scanning the internet on sites such as TED talks and youtube to find information to support the text. Providing students with interactive, electronic instructional materials promotes the use of the "text." I think we need to focus on moving away from the hard copy textbook that costs hundreds of dollars to a more accessible and age-appropriate form in an electronic, interactive version.

I appreciated the structure of the first meeting with brief sections of content and opportunities to choose additional areas of particular interest specific to our needs. The resources and handouts provided were helpful and useful in preparing one's class.

Please keep offering this program. I find my students won't order the textbook, even if it is required. Other faculty will benefit - though I also will spread the word!