**Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants**

**Final Report**

**Date: June 1, 2015**

**Grant Number: 10**

**Institution Name(s): The University of Georgia**

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**Project Lead: Deanna L. Cozart**

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers: EDUC 2120, Exploring Socio-cultural Perspectives on Diversity**

**Semester Project Began: Fall 2014**

**Semester of Implementation: Spring 2015**

**Average Number of Students Per Course Section: 36**

**Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation: 3**

**Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation: 99**

**1. List of Resources Used in the Textbook Transformation**

This list includes all of the compiled readings for a no-cost-to-students grant. The table below has each resource organized by module, in the order they are completed for the class.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module 1 - Multiculturalism** | | | |
| Title | Author | License | URL |
| ‘Defining Multicultural Education for School Reform’ – Chapter 2 in Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education (6th edition) | Sonia Nieto & Patty Bode | Library eReserves |  |
| ‘Multiculturalism: Battleground or Meeting Ground?’ | Ronald Takaki | Library - Galelio |  |
| ‘Multiculturalism: E Pluribus Plures’ | Diane Ravitch | Library - Galelio |  |
| **Module 2 - Race/Ethnicity** | | | |
| ‘Defining Racism’ – Chapter 1 in Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? | Beverly Tatum | Library eReserves |  |
| ‘White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack’ | Peggy Macintosh | Library eReserves |  |
| ‘Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth’ – Chapter 1 in Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, & Family Life | Annette Lareau | Library eReserves |  |
| **Module 3 - Class / Socioeconomic Status** | | | |
| ‘At the Edge of Poverty’ – Introduction in The Working Poor: Invisible in America | David Shipler | Library eReserves |  |
| Pedagogy of the Oppressed – Chapter 2 | Paulo Friere | Library eReserves |  |
| The High Cost of Poverty’ – Washington Post, 2009 | DeNeen L. Brown | External Resource | http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/17/AR2009051702053.html |
| **Module 4 - Gender / Sexual Identity** | | | |
| A Labor Market Punishing to Mothers’ – NY Times, 2010 | David Leonhardt | External Resource | http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/04/business/economy/04leonhardt.html?\_r=0 |
| ‘A Motherhood Penalty vs. a Fatherhood Bonus’ – NY Times, 2014 | [Claire Cain Miller](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/m/claire_cain_miller/index.html) | External Resource | http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/upshot/a-child-helps-your-career-if-youre-a-man.html |
| ‘Generation LGBTQIA’ – NY Times, 2013 | Michael Schulman | External Resource | http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/10/fashion/generation-lgbtqia.html?pagewanted=all |
| **Module 5 - Exceptionality** | | | |
| ‘What Should Teachers Do | Lisa Delpit | External Resource | http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/ebonics/ebdelpit.shtml |
| **Module 6 - Language, Immigration, and Geography** | | | |
| ‘In Arizona, Complaints of an Accent’ – NY Times, 2011 | Marc Lacey | External Resource | http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/25/us/in-arizona-complaints-that-an-accent-can-hinder-a-teachers-career.html?pagewanted=all |
| Let Them In’ – Forbes, 2010 | Philippe Legrain | External Resource | http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2010/0628/special-report-immigration-opening-borders-mexico-let-them-in.html |
| ‘My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant’ – NY Times, 2011 | Jose Antonio Vargas | External Resource | http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/magazine/my-life-as-an-undocumented-immigrant.html?pagewanted=all |
| **Module 7 - Religion** | | | |
| ‘Ramadan Poses Challenges’ – NY Times, 2012. | Sam Borden | External Resource | http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/01/sports/olympics/ramadan-poses-challenges-for-muslims-at-the-olympics.html?\_r=0 |

**2. Narrative**

Section A

I first heard about the Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation grants last summer, and it was definitely very intriguing to me. I have always been interested in improving EDUC 2120, and I loved the idea of being able to customize the readings in my course better to the topics. There are many different textbooks out there for classes similar to EDUC 2120, however in my experience, I have never found one I was completely satisfied with. Thus, I was left asking my students to spend over $100 for a book that was just okay in terms of content, with some chapters we would skip over entirely.

As I submitted my original proposal, the no-cost-to-student option was most interesting to me. I anticipated being able to locate many open resources, particularly in the field of education, and I was excited to compile those into something like a digital course pack of readings. At that point, we (Amy Ingalls and I) were uncertain as to whether we would use a LibGuide or digital course pack format. However, as we began working on compiling the different readings, and reviewing different OER repositories, like OpenStax and Merlot, we found there were very limited resources available for education courses, and even fewer resources that directly related to the course content for EDUC 2120. This was ultimately, the biggest challenge we faced implementing this project; we could create something that would be no-cost-to-students, but we could not create something that would be entirely open. Given this limitation, however, I think we did a strong job compiling a diverse set of readings for students in EDUC 2120 that met both the instructional goals and Area F competencies for the course.

One of the major instructional outcomes of this project was the freedom that comes with eliminating a textbook. Suddenly, as I reviewed my notes for my classes, I realized there were things I was covering, not because they are relevant to the field, but simply because there was a section in the previous textbook about it. For example, we discuss class and socioeconomic status at length in this course. It is important for students to understand the components that make up socioeconomic status to provide context when we discuss the complications that can arise in education. One of the most confusing components for students is the idea of wealth, that assets minus liabilities equal net worth, aka wealth. Wealth eventually contributes to power (another component), and impacts policy and social issues we see in the United States. By eliminating the textbook and condensing topics, I was able to spend a full week of the course exploring this concept with my students, including helping them to create a budget based on their first year teaching salary. This was not something I had ever included prior to this project; yet, several students mentioned this activity on their final course evaluations as being one of the best experiences they had in the course.

Additionally, I found that during the implementation of this project in Spring 2015, my students were more likely to have read the readings for class than they have been in prior semesters. When I asked them about this, and based on their feedback outlined in the data included in section four, they mentioned how having the list of compiled readings was helpful in two ways. One, they knew the articles must be important if I had selected to include them, and two, they were more specifically relevant to the course and our classroom activities than the more general content of a traditional textbook. Further, because more of the students were actually reading the articles, book chapters, etc., our class discussions were more meaningful and well informed.

Section B

**Instructor Perspective**

The biggest lesson for me over the course of the project was the incredible control I have over my courses when the textbook is eliminated. I did not realize prior to this project the amount of power I had to really set the tone for the course and the relevancy for the readings. As I began teaching this course as a doctoral student six years ago, I simply walked into the format the professor before me used. However, over time, I have certainly gained my own expertise over the content and the most effective ways to teach it, but I had never considered how important the reading materials were to the class. There was so much freedom in eliminating the textbook that I was able to actually select new and recent pieces that directly related to the topic we were discussing. As you will see in the data analysis below, this was something the students found particularly powerful as well.

Further, because during this first project we found so few open resources for education, it inspired us to pursue and additional ALG Round 2 Transformation-at-Scale grant to actually take the next step and create resources for foundations of education courses that would truly be open for our students and students around the state. I think additional time to implement the project would have been helpful, particularly in compiling resources and designing the best way to measure what we were doing. The limited time frame made us rush a few decisions that could have been better flushed out with a little more time. Overall though, I am incredibly satisfied with the outcomes of this project.

**Instructional Designer Perspective**

As the instructional designer, I encountered two major challenges to accomplishing the task of providing no-cost to student materials for EDUC 2120. The first challenge was technological. We started off planning on using a Libguide to host the content. However, using a LibGuide at our institution would mean that we would have to go through a librarian to add or edit content as they were not able provide us with LibGuide accounts. Knowing that we would need to have more access to the content than this would allow, we decided to look for another platform.

Fortunately, our institution offers WordPress sites to faculty, so we requested one for this project. The WordPress site allows us complete access to edit and maintain our content as needed. As the instructional designer, I wish I could edit the structure of the template to have more control over categorizing and presetting the information, but the temple we are using is WCAG compliant so what is lacking in customization is balanced out with accessibility.

The second challenge was locating open resources that were high quality and met the learning objectives. After meeting with our ALG librarian, Nadine Cohen, we determined that a better course of action would be to locate library resources for this current iteration of the course and plan for creating the open resources we could not locate in a future project. A particularly frustrating part of this process was locating USG library resources. Many of the identified articles are available through UGA databases, but not available to the whole USG system. We finally decided to use these resources as they were most appropriate for the learning objectives and in order to offer the content to everyone we would provide the citation information so that instructors at other USG institutions could work with their libraries to gain access to the materials. This was not our original intent with this project and it was disappointing. However, it was a good first step and helped in identifying the material that needs to be created as open educational resources.

**3. Quotes**

“I read everything that was asked and I loved not having to buy a book. It saved me money that I really needed and I had no issues with the readings online. Great setup!”

“I really enjoyed reading the relevant and recent articles compared to a dull textbook. The issues we talked about are ever-changing, so it was nice to see news items and scholarly articles that deal with the issues as they appear currently.”

“I loved that there was no textbook in this class. Of times, I feel like I waste a lot of money on textbooks that I end up not even using. However, the reading materials in this class were all provided online, and I actually looked forward to the readings given each week. Most of the time, I found them quite enjoyable to read, and they were very relevant to the material being learned in class all of the time.”

“The reading materials for this course were AMAZING. I’m not just saying that because I didn’t have to pay for a textbook (although that was nice) but because I could be certain what I was reading was both relevant and the best source of information for the topic we were discussing. A textbook can be restricting to what and how material is presented and the use of articles meant Dr. Cozart had the freedom to bring in material that was actually pertinent to our topics. I was extremely grateful for this form of reading.”

**4. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures**

**Pre-Implementation Results**

The initial proposal for this no-cost-to-students materials project was submitted early during the Fall 2014 semester. Thus, a traditional textbook was used with three different course sections of EDUC 2120 at The University of Georgia. The course sizes were, 29, 44, and 44, after four recorded withdrawals. For these sections, the course textbook, Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society, was recommended, but not required. The grant for this project was awarded in October of 2014, so Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was awarded in December of 2014 to survey students about their impressions and usefulness of the textbook.

Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used to evaluate initial student responses prior to implementation of this project. For quantitative measures, the withdrawal and failure rates were calculated at 3.30% and 0%, respectively for Fall 2014. (*Note: UGA does not keep a record of drops from courses during drop/add, so that measure is not discussed in this analysis.*)

Additionally, to better understand how important the textbook was to student success in the class, as well as to gauge how helpful the students found the textbook, two Likert-scale items were included on the final course evaluation where, strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5. Of the 117 enrolled students, 103 completed the survey, with individual section response rates at 86%, 84%, and 93%, and an overall response rate of 88.03%.

The first question stated, “*The textbook, Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society, was important to my success in this class*,” had a mean score of 2.87, meaning more than half of students disagreed with this statement, and felt that the textbook was not important to their success in the course. The second item stated, “*I found the course textbook engaging and helpful*”. The mean score for this item was 2.92 with a median score of 3. This tells us that slightly more than half of students were neutral or disagreed with their statement, and did not feel the textbook was engaging or helpful.

Both of these were important outcomes, as the results gave me confidence students would not be negatively impacted in their course success by eliminating the textbook in the subsequent semester. Further, these results also provided some evidence students were not all utilizing the textbook to help them in the course.

Qualitative measures were also used to provide context to the student responses on the quantitative items. Specifically, an open-ended question asked students, “*Please provide feedback on your use and evaluation of the course textbook*.” Because the textbook was going to be eliminated the following semester, Spring 2015, it was important to understand students’ thoughts on the textbook that spent a semester using it. The student statements were coded according to themes that emerged across the responses. While 103 students completed the survey, only 90 responded to the open-ended question (87.38%). Five major themes emerged during the coding process providing insight to how students were actually utilizing the textbook for the course: (1) students did not purchase the textbook, (2) students purchased the textbook, but did not use it, (3) students purchased the textbook and rarely used it, (4) students found it helpful for the course, and (5) students used the textbook as a reference to expand on course topics. A summary of these findings is presented in the table below.

*Table 1. Student Feedback Themes on Original Course Textbook*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Number of Responses** | **Percentage of Respondents** |
| Did not purchase textbook | 26 | 28.89% |
| Purchased textbook, did not use | 27 | 30.00% |
| Purchased textbook, rarely used | 23 | 25.56% |
| Purchased textbook, found helpful | 18 | 20.00% |
| Purchased textbook, used as reference | 17 | 18.89% |

These findings are in keeping with other data that have shown typically about 30% of students do not purchase the textbook for a course (Schick & Marklein, 2013). However, it is equally as interesting that another third of the class did purchase the textbook and found it helpful and useful to their success in the class. This is supported by the quantitative data where 34 students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the textbook was important to their success in the class. Thus, with so many students who did like having a book, it was essential to consider how to replace this with the no cost materials in implementation. Unfortunately, this data was not available until early January, meaning I was unable to consider this perspective in the online compilation of readings used in Spring 2015.

**Post-Implementation Results**

The no-cost-to-students materials project was implemented in three different course sections of EDUC 2120 at The University of Georgia in Spring 2015. The course sizes were, 44, 28, and 27 after three recorded withdrawals, for a total 99 students.

Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used to evaluate the student responses to this project. For quantitative measures, the withdrawal and failure rates were calculated, at 2.94% and 0%, respectively. This did not represent a statistically significant difference from the calculations pre-implementation in Fall 2014. Given this is a required course, I would not expect significant variance here; unless a student changes their major, they must receive a grade of C or higher in EDUC 2120 to obtain teacher certification in Georgia and complete an education degree program.

Additionally, three Likert-scale items were included on the final course evaluation where the scale was as follows: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5. Two sections of the course had 100% participation in the survey, while the other section had 93% participation. This means 97 out of 99 students completed the survey. The specific items stated, “*I would have been more successful in this class with a traditional textbook*;” “*Online readings were important to my success in this class*;” and, “*The course reading materials were helpful and engaging*.”

The first item, “*I would have been more successful in this class with a traditional textbook*,” had a mean score of 2.16 and a median score of 1, meaning the majority of students felt that a traditional textbook would not have helped them to be more successful in the course. However, 18 students (18.56%) strongly agreed with this. Given the results of the pre-implementation survey, there does appear to be a group of students who really utilize and appreciate having something for expansion on course topics and as an additional resource.

The second item stated, “*Online readings were important to my success in this class,*” and had a mean score of 4.25 and a median of 4 (agree). Very few (n = 5) disagreed with this statement. The last item stated, “*The course reading materials were helpful and engaging*.” This item had the highest and most positive student response with a mean of 4.39 and median of 5 (strongly agree). This is further supported by the evidence from the qualitative measures described below where over 88% of students reported the course readings were helpful and important to their course success. This provides an interesting contrast to the textbook only students from Fall 2014 where similar statements only had means of 2.87 and 2.92.

In order to understand student experiences in more detail during implementation, an open-ended survey question was used. The question read, “*Please provide feedback on your use and evaluation of the online course reading materials*.” Of those, 85 students responded to this specific question. Responses were coded and analyzed to uncover common themes to provide additional insight to the quantitative results. The responses fell into six major themes: (1) students appreciated the cost savings of the implementation, (2) students appreciated the accessibility of materials, i.e. always available online versus only when you have the book with you, (3) students appreciated the relevancy of the selected readings and variety of authors, (4) students overall found the online readings helpful and beneficial to them in the course, (5) students disliked readings in general, and (6) students disliked the online readings specifically. A summary of these findings is presented in the table below.

*Table 2. Student Feedback Themes on Online Course Reading Materials*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Number of Responses** | **Percentage of Respondents** |
| Cost savings | 15 | 17.65% |
| Accessibility/online anytime | 6 | 7.06% |
| Relevancy/diversity of perspectives | 30 | 35.30% |
| Overall helpful and/or beneficial | 75 | 88.24% |
| Dislike course readings in general | 5 | 5.88% |
| Dislike online readings | 5 | 5.88% |

In preparing for the implementation, I would have considered cost to be the greatest advantage of this project. Research clearly tells us the costs of higher education have been increasing and students spend upwards of $1,200 per academic year on textbooks (College Board, 2013). However, cost was only the third most frequently mentioned item in the student feedback. Rather, aside from the vast majority of students who mentioned they found the readings helpful or beneficial (n=75, 88%), the other most reported student feedback was that they appreciated the relevancy of the selected readings and variety of authors using online course readings as opposed to a traditional textbook.

On this theme, over one third (n=30, 35%) of students included statements like, *“[T]he readings were more current and showed things that really were happening in society and not a hypothetical*, “ and “*The issues we talked about are ever-changing, so it was nice to see news items and scholarly articles that deal with issues as they appear currently*.” Other students commented, “*It’s all recent stuff so that kept me more involved and it was also coming from multiple places helped prove the point of the material*,” and, “*The reading material allowed us the use of perspectives from different people instead of using a more structured reading [textbook]*.”

This was certainly a message that I like to send to my students, that I hope they will become scholars, not simply students, and I strive to create a compilation of readings that meets that end. For example, the readings by Sonia Nieto, Diane Ravitch, Beverly Tatum, Paulo Friere, and others are authors these students will encounter should they continue in a graduate program in education; thus, I find it valuable to introduce them as authorities in the field now. Additionally, using an online compilation of readings also gives me to ability to customize to course content more than with a traditional textbook (one of the goals from the initial grant proposal), and I am honestly surprised that the students liked that as much as they did. Many cited that as a main factor for their success in the class.

While the vast majority of students seemed to enjoy the online readings and textbook elimination in the course, there were certainly a few who thought having a textbook would have improved their course success. One of the main comments that resonated with me stated, *“[I]f I had a general question about something there was no real place to look with a guaranteed answer*.” This was particularly concerning to me given that during pre-implementation in Fall 2014, 18 (20.00%) students reported the book helpful and 17 (18.89%) reported using it as a reference tool to augment topics discussed in class. Further, the quantitative Likert question, “*I would have been more successful in this class with a traditional textbook*,” showed 18 Spring 2015 students (18.56%) strongly agreed with this statement. Even though I would have been glad to discuss any topics students found confusing in more detail, I understand the possible frustrations voiced in this feedback. It is certainly significant and frequent enough that I would want to consider reference options for my students in the future. This is somewhat encouraging to me though, as we are currently in the process of developing an entirely open website with textbook-style content specific to the course as a part of an ALG Round 2 Transformation-at-Scale project.

**5. Sustainability Plan**

The information for the no-cost to student materials for EDUC 2120: Exploring Socio-Cultural Perspectives on Diversity will be hosted on a University of Georgia WordPress site located at <http://ctlsites.uga.edu/openeduc/>. The University of Georgia’s Center for Teaching and Learning provides WordPress sites to faculty through a Multisite projected called CTL Sites (<http://ctlsites.uga.edu/>). Using this platform ensures we are using a university supported tool which provides stability of service and technical support. Additionally, the CTL Sites use accessible templates to ensure the content meets accessibility requirements. WordPress sites are easily edited and maintained. As new content becomes available or when links die, one of the team members will log in to the site and update as needed. Additionally, Dr. Cozart will continue to use this resource for three sections of EDUC 2120 during Fall 2015 with 120 students. This will be modified for continued use in EDUC 2120 through an ALG Round 2 Transformation at Scale project that should be implemented in Spring 2016.

**6. Future Plans**

This project has truly been transformative for me in terms of how I select materials for the class and in the real needs of my students. Too often, instructors do not ask questions that will tell us how our course materials are being used, and without that knowledge, we may miss significant pieces of how we can improve learning outcomes for our students. Knowing the value many students place on having a textbook as a reference for the course is already influencing our approach to the new OER’s we are developing as a part of the ALG Round 2 grants.

Additionally, the findings regarding the value students place on have a variety of authors to read and current texts seem very timely. I am already making plans to develop this into a manuscript for submission in the coming months with additional data analysis utilizing grade distributions across the different semesters. Further, I have already submitted a conference proposal about this project to the American Educational Studies Association’s annual conference for November 2015. I expect to hear about its acceptance very soon.

Also, given that this course is taught across the University of Georgia, I think it is important that other instructors of EDUC 2120 be made aware of this project and this resource. I plan to submit a proposal to present on this at the USG Teaching and Learning Conference in the spring of 2016, as well as at the UGA College of Education’s Innovative Teaching and Technology Conference in October of 2015. I have no doubt that others will be interested to learn about these outcomes and how to more effectively utilize content in their courses.

**7. Description of Photograph**

Two photographs have been included with this submission.

ALG R1 #10 Photo A:

*(left-right) Ms. Amy Ingalls, Instructional Designer; Dr. Deanna Cozart, Team Lead and Instructor of Record*

ALG R1 #10 Photo B: All are students from one of the course sections of EDUC 2120, Spring 2015 at The University of Georgia unless otherwise indicated.

*Front Row: (left-right) Jennifer Guyre, Alison Jibilan, Kaitlin Mitchell, Adelynne Devore, Caroline Moore, Sarah Becker, Myra Collier, Dr. Deanna Cozart (Team Lead and Instructor of Record), Meredith Miles, Laura Norris, Emily Moore, Sarah Evanowski, Ms. Amy Ingalls (Instructional Designer)*

*Back Row: (left-right) Allison Hinson, Zariah Lewis, MacKenzie Maynard, Samantha Whisner, Kelsey Morgan, William Rossman, Nicholas Bouwman, Jeremy Mitchell, Marshall Chumley, Kameron Abernathy, Stephen Cox*

**References:**

The College Board. (2013). *Trends in college pricing 2013*. Washington, DC: Author.

Shick, D., & Marklein, M.B. (2013, August 20). College students say no to textbooks. *USA Today.*