**Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants**

**Final Report**

**Date: 05/15/2015**

**Grant Number:** 29

**Institution Name(s):** East Georgia State College-Statesboro

**Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):**

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* Deborah Lee, M.S.; Assistant Professor of Psychology; dlee@ega.edu

**Project Lead:** Tori Kearns, Ph.D.

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers:** General Psychology 1101

**Semester Project Began:** Spring 2015

**Semester of Implementation:** Spring 2015

**Average Number of Students Per Course Section:** 29

**Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation:** 5

**Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation:** 204

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

* All materials were provided by the NOBA Project.
* [http://nobaproject.com/textbooks/tori-kearns-new-textbook](https://paws.ega.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=6fJ1Rkk4sUqnvwXOwz-P-jTDcdNaYNJI2CRdFknRVC30JjZYNfHEcgF0F4i8QlXebCvJWEQsPF0.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fnobaproject.com%2ftextbooks%2ftori-kearns-new-textbook)
* [**http://nobaproject.com/resources**](http://nobaproject.com/resources)
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**2. Narrative**

**A**. Overall, the transformation action plan was executed quite smoothly. We successfully restructured our courses to sync with the selected OER, the NOBA Project. Reviewing the NOBA materials resulted in our finding a source that will remain the required resource for all future general psychology courses, department-wide. The resource was current, polished and most importantly, reader-friendly. The teaching manual provided by the NOBA Project provided myriad opportunities for incorporating in-class exercises that reflected our QEP, critical thinking. While the transformation was relatively smooth, the time constraints presented a challenge by forcing us to evaluate the resource as we progressed through the semester. The NOBA materials were organized in a narrative format, requiring us to rely heavily on our redesigned PowerPoints to guide students in their evaluation of key ideas. The ideal transformative impact on the students was not revealed during this semester. This approach appears to be something to which students will need to acclimate. The success rates did not reflect what we anticipated would occur.

Future Changes:

* Provide students with an option to print/bind the textbook at a very low cost
* Require accountability for reading the materials i.e., in-class summaries, structured reading assignments—preceding a quiz, creating infographics for NOBA sections, encouraging student involvement with the NOBA Project, encourage student collaboration in modifying the text—have them co-create their own textbook, using the NOBA materials
* Provide students access to the book using both Brightspace and the NOBA platform

**3. Quotes**

**“***I found the free textbook to be extremely useful in some cases. It made the material easier to understand because it was written in a somewhat simple manner. “*

*“It is just as useful as having the book in your hand although it is more convenient because it is electronic.”*

*“I like the free textbook because it did not cost me an arm and a leg like most textbooks cost. I was able to print what I needed of the book.”*

-All student quotes came from the open-ended responses submitted using the post-survey, *OER Impact.*

**4. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures**

**a. Quantitative Measures.**

The results of quantitative analyses lend support for using Brightspace D2L as a platform for disseminating free course materials and helping students master course content in general psychology. To estimate the impact of the free textbook on student success in the course (defined as earning a letter grade of C or better), the amount of textbook materials accessed (*M*=38.5%, *SD*= 24.8%) on the Brightspace D2L learning platform by each participating student was recorded and correlated with end-of-course grades. Textbook and related materials consisted of the NOBA text in PDF, Powerpoint© notes, and videos. Percent of access materials ranged widely from 1% to 100%. Also, student GPA’s were retrieved from Banner since GPA was assumed to be strongly correlated with performance in any individual course. The average GPA of participating students was 2.35 with a range of .00 to 4.00. 105 participating students were included in the analyses. Subject retention rate was 100%. All data were compiled into a spreadsheet and imported into IBM SPSS Statistics 22. Student participants were coded to ensure confidentiality.

Student GPA was found to be strongly and positively correlated with the end-of-course grade, *r*(105)= .54, p = .000 as anticipated. Students’ percent of materials accessed was less predictive but still moderately and positively correlated with the end-of-course grade, *r*(105) = .45, p = .000. While prior academic performance provided the better estimate of end-of-course performance, the amount of OER materials students took advantage of during the semester, contributed significantly to their final grade.

 Success rate comparisons were made to further illustrate the impact of the free, high quality materials provided to students during spring 2015. Moderate increases in success rates were observed in some cases. However, a very mild decline was seen in other cases. Although declines could be explained by any number of factors (e.g. evening vs. morning classes, once/week vs. 3-days/week classes, online vs. in-class), the results suggest that some refinement of course delivery will be needed moving forward.

Fall 2014 (Researcher A)

Section #1 (n=31)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **B** | **C** |
| 6 | 9 | 12 |

Percent Success = 87%

Section #2 (n=10)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | B | C |
| 1 | 5 | 2 |

Percent Success = 80%

Spring 2015 (Researcher A)

Section #1 (n=35)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **B** | **C** |
| 7 | 17 | 7 |

Percent Success = 88.5%

Fall 2014 - Spring 2015 (Researcher B)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Fall 2014** | SR | SR | **Spring 2015** |
| 80067: Online | 51% | 48% | 20389: Online |
| 80068: Online | 41% | 44% | 20388: Online |
| 80337: Morning | 79% | 55% | 20362: Morning |
| 80339: Evening | 57% | 42% | 20361: Evening |

In addition to looking at measures of performance, a pre- and post-course Likert scale was constructed to obtain baseline and post-implementation data on student perceptions of textbook use. The scale dimensions were: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly Agree). In the pre-course survey, the strongest agreement (3.9) was found for the belief that an online textbook would increase ease of access to course material. The least agreement (2.57) was found for prior consistent use of textbooks. For the post-course survey the strongest agreement (3.5) was shown for understanding the NOBA textbook. Similar to pre-course ratings, the least agreement (3.17) was found for consistent reading of the NOBA textbook.

Pre-Course Survey Results

**1) In previous courses I read the book on a regular basis.**

| **Strongly Disagree–** | **Disagree–** | **Neutral–** | **Agree–** | **Strongly Agree–** | **Total–** | **Weighted Average–** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **17.65%**12 | **26.47%**18 | **36.76%**25 | **19.12%**13 | **0.00%**0 | 68 | 2.57 |

**2) In previous courses I understood the material in the textbooks.**

| **Strongly Disagree–** | **Disagree–** | **Neutral–** | **Agree–** | **Strongly Agree–** | **Total–** | **Weighted Average–** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2.94%**2 | **19.12%**13 | **39.71%**27 | **36.76%**25 | **1.47%**1 | 68 | 3.15 |

**3) In previous courses I felt like the book helped me to learn the material.**

| **Strongly Disagree–** | **Disagree–** | **Neutral–** | **Agree–** | **Strongly Agree–** | **Total–** | **Weighted Average–** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2.94%**2 | **17.65%**12 | **48.53%**33 | **23.53%**16 | **7.35%**5 | 68 | 3.15 |

**4) I feel like online textbooks would be easier to access than traditional textbooks.**

| **Strongly Disagree–** | **Disagree–** | **Neutral–** | **Agree–** | **Strongly Agree–** | **Total–** | **Weighted Average–** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1.47%**1 | **11.76%**8 | **17.65%**12 | **33.82%**23 | **35.29%**24 | 68 | 3.90 |

Post-Course Survey Results

**1) In this course I read the free textbook provided by the NOBA Project on a regular basis.**

| **Strongly Disagree–** | **Disagree–** | **Neutral–** | **Agree–** | **Strongly Agree–** | **Total–** | **Weighted Average–** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **16.67%**5 | **13.33%**4 | **23.33%**7 | **30.00%**9 | **16.67%**5 | 30 | 3.17 |

**2) In this course I understood the materials in the free textbook provided by the NOBA Project.**

| **Strongly Disagree–** | **Disagree–** | **Neutral–** | **Agree–** | **Strongly Agree–** | **Total–** | **Weighted Average–** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **16.67%**5 | **0.00%**0 | **23.33%**7 | **36.67%**11 | **23.33%**7 | 30 | 3.50 |

**3) In this course I felt like the free textbook provided by the NOBA Project helped me to learn the material.**

| **Strongly Disagree–** | **Disagree–** | **Neutral–** | **Agree–** | **Strongly Agree–** | **Total–** | **Weighted Average–** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **10.00%**3 | **3.33%**1 | **36.67%**11 | **30.00%**9 | **20.00%**6 | 30 | 3.47 |

**4) I feel like the free online textbook provided by the NOBA Project was easier to access than traditional textbooks.**

| **Strongly Disagree–** | **Disagree–** | **Neutral–** | **Agree–** | **Strongly Agree–** | **Total–** | **Weighted Average–** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **10.00%**3 | **23.33%**7 | **16.67%**5 | **23.33%**7 | **26.67%**8 | 30 | 3.33 |

Finally, a pre-course and post-course psychology assessment targeting course learning objectives was used to measure value added from taking the course with the free textbook. Overall, students made measurable gains in their general psychology knowledge. There is ample room for improvement, nonetheless. One challenge these results highlight is making sure core knowledge concepts are clearly communicated using a text that has more of a story-telling style than traditional textbooks.

**Pre/Post-Test Data: Spring 2015**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Pre-Test Average Score** | **Post-Test Average Score** |
| 20389: Online | 11.75/25 | 10.85/25Median= 15 |
| 20388: Online | 13.3/25 | 11.95/25Median= 16 |
| 20362: Morning | 10.25/25 | 12.75/25 |
| 203161: Evening | 9.87/25 | 12/25 |

**b. Qualitative Measures.**

Open-Ended Question Results

In order to further capture student viewpoints, open-ended questions were included. One open-ended question was administered before and after the course. In the pre-course condition, 57 written responses were given by students agreeing to participate. Those 57 responses were coded by theme and agreed upon by the researchers.

*“Describe your past experiences (this can be high school, if you are a college freshman) with*

*textbooks.”*

A) Textbooks cumbersome

B) Textbooks not as useful as class/lectures

C) Textbooks not worth obtaining

D) Textbooks must be directly tied to assignments

E) Textbooks are useful

F) Textbooks not affordable

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **F** |
| 12 (21%) | 13 (22.8%) | 4 (7%) | 15 (26.3%) | 21 (36.8%) | 1 (1.7%) |

In the post-course condition, a much smaller number of written responses were provided by students agreeing to participate. 27 responses were coded by theme and agreed upon by the researchers.

*“Please describe your experience with the free textbook provided by the NOBA project.”*

A) Format helpful

B) Affordability

C) Would prefer a hardcopy text

D) Convenience of electronic resource

E) Good quality

F) Not worth using/helpful

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **F** |
| 1 (3.7%) | 6 (22.2%) | 4 (14.8%) | 5 (18.5%) | 10 (37%) | 5 (18.5%) |

Based on student written responses, the majority of student respondents (81.5%) supported

the use of a free, downloadable and high quality psychology textbook using the D2L Brightspace

learning platform. A small minority of student respondents preferred the use of a traditional,

hardcopy textbook (15%). A small minority of student respondents were indifferent to the use

of any psychology textbook regardless of format (18.5%). The pre-course responses provide

strong support for the ALG Transformation grant mission in that many students find

traditional textbooks to be cumbersome (21%) and ineffectual in relation to classroom

instruction (22.8%). It should be noted that while only one respondent specifically mentioned

that textbooks were unaffordable, several other responses intimated that there was a

cost/value differential that made purchasing textbooks financially prohibitive.

**5. Sustainability Plan**

In the future, all NOBA materials will be offered using both Brightspace and the NOBA platform. The NOBA materials are continually updated; however, any updates deemed necessary by the department can be achieved with the supplementation of appropriate professional literature accessed through Galileo. We will request continued institutional support of our membership to the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, a leading resource for the scholarly developments in psychology. Additionally, we will continue our membership with the OER Commons in order to sustain professional collaboration regarding OERs.

In an effort to improve success rates, students who desire a physical copy of the textbook may be provided with a low-cost option to send the textbook to a printing service for binding. This would ensure that the book is accessible to all students, not just those with an electronic preference. Of those surveyed, 33% reported that the NOBA textbook was not easier to access than traditional textbooks. The sustainability of this endeavor hinges on our ability to meet the textbook needs of all of our students and not just those with an electronic preference.

**6. Future Plans**

* This eye-opening experience has highlighted the essence of the academic conundrum: how to motivate your students to READ! This project was a success for those who actually took advantage of the free resource. The students expressed extreme gratitude for their free textbook, most (per anecdotal evidence) of whom chose not to read it. Some students bought a textbook from a previous semester just so that they “…could have it if they needed it.” The epiphany that blindsided my team is that if the students pay for their book—even though they abhor the loss of such funds—this is incentive enough for them to actually read( a page or two) of their fine, new purchase. If the book is free, only those who seem to possess the academic grit necessary for success will read it (as reflected by the GPA: EOCG correlation), and sadly, this is a relatively small number. Everyone else, due to the absence of purchasing guilt, may never look at the free book at all. So, now ahead lies the challenge: ensuring that all of our students harness this wonderful new resource.
* Future projects will embrace efforts to motivate students to read and understand the value of textbook readings. A prospective paper exploring this idea further may be entitled, *If It’s Free…They Still Won’t Read It: How to Motivate the Reading-Averse.* Additionally, we will continue to work with the NOBA Project, providing feedback on our experiences with their open resources. We may author a paper evaluating the NOBA Project materials.

**7. Description of Photographs:**

The photos have been uploaded separately; however for clarity, the team members are identified below.

 Tori Kearns, Ph.D., Project Leader, Associate Professor of Psychology

 Deborah Lee, M.S., Team Member, Assistant Professor of Psychology