

**Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants
Proposal Form**

Institution Name	Georgia Southwestern State University		
Team Members (Name, Title, Department and email address for each)	Dr. Judy Orton Grissett, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychology and Sociology, judy.grissett@gsw.edu Dr. Charles Huffman, Professor of Psychology and Department Chair of Department of Psychology and Sociology, charles.huffman@gsw.edu		
Sponsor, Title, Department	Dr. Brian Adler, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Academic Affairs at Georgia Southwestern State University		
Course Name, Course Number and Semester Offered (Spring 2015 Required)	PSYC 1101- Introduction to Psychology Spring 2015		
Average Number of Students in the Course	40	Number Course sessions per Academic year	11
Award Category (pick one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials <input type="checkbox"/> OpenStax Textbooks <input type="checkbox"/> Course Pack Pilots		
List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, & cost for each item)	<i>Psychology in Everyday Life,</i> <i>3rd Ed. (textbook)</i> <i>Textbook is required.</i>	<i>\$100 (new)</i> Total Cost- \$100	
Projected Per Student Cost	\$100	Projected Per Student Savings (%)	100%

1. PROJECT GOALS

The purpose of the proposed project is threefold. Our first goal is to pilot a no-cost textbook for students taking Introduction to Psychology, a Top 50 USG Lower Division course. Our second goal is to conduct an empirical investigation examining the effects of adopting a no-cost textbook on student attitudes and performance (e.g., end-of-course grades, DFW rates) compared to students who are using a traditional textbook. That is, we aim to better understand the benefits and challenges of adopting a no-cost textbook in a lower-division core course. Finally, we intend to use this as an opportunity to share our experiences and promote the use of no-cost materials for classroom use at Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) and other institutions. This will be the first no-cost textbook adopted at GSW, so we expect to share our experiences with other faculty through an on-campus forum in Fall 2015. More broadly, we plan to share our experiences and findings at a state or regional conference and through ALG information sessions, newsletter, and website.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In line with our three goals, we see three main problems related to affordable learning options for our students. First, rising textbook costs is a problem for college students. According to the not-for-profit organization, College Board, the average student spends \$1200 on textbooks and supplies each year (2014). A recent Wall Street Journal article states this cost is only increasing, as textbook publishers have increased their prices 6% per year over the last ten years (Mitchell, 2014). As a result, students may not purchase textbooks for their classes, causing students to receive lower grades or to withdraw from a course, ultimately affecting the student and the university. Second, there is an overall lack of empirical data examining the effects of using no-cost materials in college classrooms. Finally, there is a general lack of awareness of no-cost materials at our university.

As stakeholders affected by these problems, students, faculty, and university administrators at GSW may benefit from this project. Students, who may not purchase a textbook due to cost or carry the financial burden of purchasing pricey textbooks, may find relief of financial stress, increased retention in courses, and improved grades due to having increased access to affordable learning materials. Faculty and administrators, who are impacted by students' retention and DFW rates (e.g., funding that depends on retention rates), may see improved retention and perhaps enrollment rates if affordable learning options are available to students.

1.2 TRANSFORMATION ACTION PLAN

We plan to implement Charles Stangor's no-cost online textbook "Introduction to Psychology" for students taking Dr. Orton Grissett's Introduction to Psychology in Spring

2015. This text was selected because of online recommendations made by other faculty, as well as its user-friendliness relative to comparable online texts. To accommodate the new textbook, the course syllabus will be revised to include the chapters and topics covered in Stangor’s text.

We will conduct a mixed methods study, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand the impact of the no-cost textbook on student performance and satisfaction. Specifically, we aim to examine how it affects students’ a) use of a textbook, b) academic performance, c) retention and DFW rates, and d) perceptions of no-costs textbooks. To measure students’ willingness to use the textbook and their perceptions of no-cost textbooks, we will implement a survey at the end of the semester that examines how often students used their textbook and their perceived strengths and weaknesses of the textbook. To measure academic performance and retention rates, we will collect and compare data on final course grades and DFW rates across Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 classes. In order to examine potential effects of student background on use and effectiveness of the textbook, we will collect and analyze student data, namely age, gender, race, GPA, academic standing, and course load.

Dr. Orton Grissett will be teaching two sections of Introduction to Psychology during Spring 2015. She will only adopt the no-cost textbook in one class, allowing the other class to serve as a control. We will collect data at three stages. During initial data collection, we will collect student background data (e.g., age, gender, GPA). During the course mid-term, we will collect mid-term grades and retention rates for students (based on course drop-rates). Our final data collection will involve collecting students’ final grades and DFW reports. We will also collect qualitative feedback regarding perceived benefits and drawbacks of using a no-cost online textbook.

1.3 TIMELINE

Dates	Activities/Goals
September 28- November 26, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit contractual timeline along with statement of work - Participate in online and in-person meetings as set forth by the ALG initiative
September 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct literature review for proposed research project - Develop surveys for qualitative portion of project - Write IRB protocol - Plan Spring 2015 course schedule, write syllabus, and select specific course to implement open-source textbook
October 2014	Submit IRB protocol for review
November 2014	Attain IRB approval
December 19, 2014	Submit first status report
January 2015	- Begin implementation of open-source textbook

	- Collect initial student background data
March 2015	Collect mid-term data (i.e., mid-term grades and course drop-rates)
May 2015	- Collect final data - Write final report
Before June 1	Submit final report

1.4 BUDGET

We are requesting \$10,800 to fund our proposed project, including \$10,000 for salary compensation for faculty team members (\$5000/team member x 2 team members = \$10,000) and \$800 for travel expenses to a state/regional conference.

1.5 SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Our plan is to pilot a no-cost textbook with 40 students in an Introduction to Psychology course with the intention of expanding the use of no-cost texts to future Introduction to Psychology courses. With more than 400 students taking Introduction to Psychology at our university each year and a potential \$100 average savings per student, that is more than \$40,000 per year in our discipline alone. Sociology, which is part of our department, offers on average 7 Introduction to Sociology courses (also a Top 50 USG Lower Division course) each year and would be a natural extension for adopting affordable materials in the future.

Dr. Orton Grissett serves as GSW's Campus Champion for USG's Affordable Learning Georgia initiative. As Campus Champion, Dr. Orton Grissett is responsible for providing resources and up-to-date information about open-source materials to GSW faculty. By utilizing no-cost texts in her classrooms, Dr. Orton Grissett will be able to share her personal experiences with other faculty on campus.

1.6 REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

College Board. (2014). Quick guide: College costs. Retrieved from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>

Mitchell, J. (2014, August 27). A tough lesson for college textbook publishers. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com>

Please see attached letter of support from Dr. Brian Adler, GSW's Vice-President of Academic Affairs.