

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

Please complete per inline instructions; completed form not to exceed four pages.

Institution Name	Valdosta State University		
Team Members (Name, Title, Department and email address for each)	<p>Dr. Shirley Andrews Professor Early Childhood & Special Education Department spandrew@valdosta.edu</p> <p>Ms. Nancy Sartin Instructor Early Childhood & Special Education Department nasartin@valdosta.edu</p> <p>Dr. Anthony Scheffler Associate Dean, COEHS ajscheffler@valdosta.edu</p>		
Sponsor, Title, Department	VSU College of Education and Human Services, Department of Early Childhood & Special Education		
Course Name, Course Number and Semester Offered (Spring 2015 Required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECED 4500-Science and Technology in Early Childhood Education • Offered each spring and fall semester 		
Average Number of Students in the Course	56	Number Course sessions per Academic year	Two
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 .	<u>Teaching Science Through Inquiry and Investigation</u> by Terry L. Contant (Required)	<i>Cost of single text: \$99.00</i> Total Cost of course associated texts per class: $\$99 \times 56 \text{ students} = \$5,544$	
Projected Per Student Cost	\$0.00	Projected Per Student Savings (%)	100%

1. PROJECT GOALS

- Reduce student educational expenses by identifying and building a resource library of dynamic, science-focused and pedagogy related free open content materials for teacher candidates completing ECED 4500-Science and Technology in Early Childhood Education.
- Train a cadre of faculty who can model for other faculty members the acquisition, organization and effective curricular integration of open educational resources (OER).
- Provide a foundation for the expansion of the OER materials to serve both pre- and in-service educators pursuing the STEM teacher certification endorsements (currently in development).

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The high cost to students of textbooks and course materials, particularly those associated with STEM related courses, continues to increase, adding to students' growing financial burden and potentially inhibiting academic success (Trombitas K., 2012). These commercially prepared materials are often static both in their content and approach, making it difficult to realize the potential that can come from marrying digital content, distance education technologies, and resource-based learning (Butcher, 2011). In addition, the use of these traditional materials can inhibit an instructor's ability to easily provide in-depth, current, individualized instruction which is tailored to the needs of students.

Students pursuing early childhood teacher education are affected by the problems that arise from the use of traditional commercial course materials, both in their cost and static quality. Additionally, Early Childhood and Special Education faculty have found that these materials restrict the flexibility of their instructional approach and, in time, become dated.

By leveraging the advantages of free open educational resources as proposed herein, we will be better able to ensure that: (1) the limitations of traditional course materials are abated; (2) student costs are reduced; (3) access to and use of a broad range of current, high quality learning resources is assured; (4) the quality of instruction is positively impacted; and (5) student learning is facilitated.

1.2 TRANSFORMATION ACTION PLAN

The transformation plan will include the following:

- While ensuring alignment with the approved objectives of the course, the team will work with students, K-5 educators and program faculty to identify and organize pertinent OER for use in the course.
- An OER site will be constructed in order to provide free content and pedagogical course materials for students in EDEC 4500. These materials will also serve as a

foundation for continued growth as a STEM teaching/learning resource library for additional teacher education courses.

- The course syllabus will be updated to show alignment between the OER, course content and instructional design.
- Two student surveys (using scaled and open-ended items) will be administered during the course via Qualtrics to solicit feedback on the perceived quality and relevance of the OER, and their impact on learning. Summary results will be shared with program faculty and stakeholders. Suggestions for changes/improvements will be solicited.
- The course instructor(s) will be surveyed/interviewed to solicit feedback on the perceived effectiveness, ease of use, and impact on student learning of the OER. Input will provide a basis for improvements/adjustments.
- Upon completion of the course, students' grades in the OER course will be compared statistically to grades of students in the same non-OER course taken in the past.
- The drop, fail and withdrawal rates of students in the OER course will be compared to students in past non-OER sections and reported as delta percentages. The results will be analyzed and interpreted along with student and faculty survey results relative to the intended outcomes of the grant.
- Results of the analysis will be reported along with suggestions for changes to benefit the students and instructors.

1.3 TIMELINE

2014

- September 28: Project initiation meeting with primary team members , Department Head, Associate Dean, and College Dean
- October 2: Meet with associated program faculty
- October 6: Begin biweekly (or as needed) progress meetings with Associate Dean
- October 8-15: Meet with selected K-5 teacher STEM teams to solicit input
- October 8-17: Define associated website with COEHS Webmaster and University Web Services
- October 8- November 19: Gather, annotate and integrate resources into course website
- November 16: complete alignment of OER resources with course activities/objectives within course syllabus
- November 20: Launch course resource website
- December 1: First status report submitted

2015

- January 12: Course begins
- February 2: Launch initial student opinion survey

- February 16: Begin making adjustments/additions to OER based on results of student survey
- April 13: Launch final Qualtrics opinion survey of students in course
- April 30: Final report submitted

1.4 BUDGET

Dr. Shirley Andrews: \$5,000

Upon successful completion of the grant, a stipend of \$5,000 will be paid to Dr. Andrews in accordance with the applicable university policies and procedures.

Ms. Nancy Sartin: \$5,000

Upon successful completion of the grant, a stipend of \$5,000 will be paid to Ms. Nancy Sartin in accordance with the applicable university policies and procedures.

Travel and Lodging (if required) for training: \$800.00

Any excess funds will be used to prepare and disseminate information regarding the availability and utilization of the OER.

1.5 SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

- As in the past, the courses will be offered each fall and spring semester using the free open educational resources.
- The OER course materials will be reviewed by the associated faculty member(s) prior to the beginning of the semester in which the course is taught.
- Based on student survey results (see timeline), changes in the content and organization of the OER materials will be implemented as needed.
- Alignment within the OER materials and the associated course objectives and activities in the course syllabus will be reviewed by the program faculty annually and adjustments will be made as appropriate.

1.6 REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Butcher, N. (2011). *A basic guide to open educational resources (oer)*. A. Kanwar, & S. Uvalic-Trumbic (Eds.). Retrieved from <http://www.col.org/PublicationDocuments/Basic-Guide-To-OER.pdf>.

Trombitas, K. (2012, July). *Financial stress: An everyday reality for college students*. Retrieved from <https://www.cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/InceptiaFinancialStresswhitepaper.pdf>

ATTACHMENTS

Letter of Support from: Interim Dean, Department Head



JAMES L. & DOROTHY H. DEWAR COLLEGE *of* EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES

August 28, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grant proposal submitted by the Valdosta State University College of Education and Human Services, Department of Early Childhood Education and Special Education. There has been a national focus on STEM education and so it was most fitting to craft a proposal that would reduce barriers to STEM education and facilitate teacher education in science. The College of Education and Human Services will support the proposed project by all means necessary to ensure its success. Further, we commit to not only sustaining this open educational resources (OER) project for the ECED 4500 Science and Technology in Early Childhood Education course following the life of this grant, but will use this opportunity to develop a model for expanding OER in other education courses.

Sincerely,

Festus Obiakor, Ph.D.
Professor and Head
Department of Early Childhood & Special Education

Brian Gerber, Ph.D.
Interim Dean
Dewar College of Education & Human Services

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