

Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants: FCST 1010

Institution Name	Georgia Highlands College		
Team Members (Name, Title, Department and email address for each)	Kim Wheeler, Director of First Year Experience, Department of Humanities, kwheeler@highlands.edu Sarah Hepler, Director of Faculty Academy, Department of eLearning, shepler@highlands.edu		
Sponsor	Renva Watterson, Vice President, Academic Affairs		
Course	Freshman College Studies, FCST 1010, Spring 201		
Average Number of Students in the Course	25	Number Course sessions per Academic year	65
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		
Original course materials	<i>Keys to Success Quick, Required</i>		\$49.50
Projected Per Student Cost	\$0.00	Projected Per Student Savings (%)	100%

PROJECT GOALS

This project seeks to incorporate cost free materials into an already established Freshman College Studies (FCST 1010) course. Most of the FCST 1010 coursework is completed entirely in the learning management system for Georgia Highlands College, Desire to Learn (D2L). The hope of this project is to create an ease of use for students so that all course materials will be accessible through D2L with no cost to students. Course materials to be adopted will be comprised of existing videos, games, quizzes, and journal articles found in Galileo's Films on Demand, Merlot, and other online sources.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Georgia Highlands College 's FCST 1010 course is a fast-paced 10 week course with most of its assignments being completed entirely online. This course covers a myriad of topics including time management, organizational skills, and test-taking skills, along with many other topics. Using and learning these skills is a vital aspect in becoming a successful college student as this course is a requirement for all Learning Support students. Most of the books offered for Freshman College Studies courses lack the vast range of topics covered in this course. Those textbooks which do cover these topics are often found to be unengaging for today's college student. In addition, many FCST 1010 students are reluctant to purchase a textbook for a course which does not last for the duration of a 16 week semester. Lastly, as FCST 1010 is taught by multiple adjunct instructors, building a course which houses its materials completely online will add continuity to the FCST 1010 course.

The stakeholders affected by this problem are the students, the institution, and the instructors. FCST 1010 is a vital part of ensuring success for Learning Support students by teaching skills which cultivate learning in a post-secondary education setting. When these students fail to retain and use the topics taught through this course, institutional retention goals may be impacted. In addition, when multiple adjunct instructors are used to teach a course, the continuity of content taught will most likely be affected.

Using relevant cost-free materials for FCST 1010 allows all course content to be housed in D2L. In doing so, students will have complete access to all course materials without the need to purchase a book. Because materials used in the course will be relevant to the student population, students will be more likely to read and successfully complete this vital course. Student success in this course will assist the institution in achieving retention goals in compliance with Complete College Georgia. Instructors will also have complete access to course materials. Having all instructors use the same course materials will create a continuity of the course and will make FCST 1010 a stronger program.

1.2 TRANSFORMATION ACTION PLAN

The action plan will begin by employing one section of FCST 1010 as a pilot course during the Spring semester of 2015. The pilot course will use only those online materials selected through this project and will not require students to purchase a textbook. The assignments currently used in the FCST 1010 course will remain the same. In addition, students and FCST instructors

will only use those materials located in D2L to complete the course assignments. There will be no textbook required to complete course assignments. The FCST 1010 course syllabus will be adapted to reflect the fact that the course will use no textbook. As the course is housed online in D2L, all course assignments will remain the same. Free online materials will be uploaded into the course.

This project will use both quantitative and qualitative instruments to measure effectiveness of the project. Quantitatively, both a pre-survey and post-survey over textbook preference will be given to all FCST 1010 students to measure students' likeability of using online resources in lieu of a textbook. The pre and post-surveys will be identical in content and will be rated on a Likert-type scale. Surveys will be manually graded by the course professor. Quantitative data will be entered and analyzed through SPSS to determine if there is a statistical significant difference in students' feelings toward textbooks before the course begins and after the completion of the course. Qualitatively, interviews will be conducted with select students in the course prior to the beginning of the piloted course and again at the end of the course. Interview questions will determine students' personal views on using textbooks vs. free online resources. Interviews will be summarized in the final report. The quantitative and qualitative data collected and analyzed will be entered into a final report to demonstrate success of the project.

1.3 TIMELINE

October 1 - October 31st: Selection of GALILEO and MERLOT resources

November 1st-15th: D2L Master Course redesign

January 2015: Implementation of redesigned course in one section of FCST 1010

January 2015 - March 2015: Continuous formative evaluation of redesign with student input

March 2015: Evaluation of Course Redesign (Student Survey and Interviews)

April 2015: Analysis of Evaluation and Course Revision (if needed)

June 2015: Implementation of Redesigned Course - All Summer 2015 FCST 1010 Sections

June 2015 - July 2015: Continuous formative evaluation of redesign with student input

July 2015: Evaluation of Course Redesign (Student Survey and Interviews)

August 2015: Analysis of Evaluation and Course Revision (if needed)

1.4 BUDGET

Kim Wheeler: \$5000

Sarah Hepler: \$5000

Travel: \$800

1.5 SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

FCST 1010 is offered every semester and is required for all students taking learning support classes. Over 60% of all students at Georgia Highlands College fall into this category. Thus, this course redesign will affect the majority of students at our institution. We plan to review and update materials three times a year (May, August, and December). This will allow us to not only ensure that the materials are still available and that links are working but will also allow us to replace any outdated materials. This process is vitally important since MERLOT and GALILEO constantly update their offerings. In addition to reviewing the materials ourselves we will also seek student feedback. We believe that students should be actively involved in course design

since it directly affects their learning experiences. This feedback will be collected informally by both team members using a convenience sample of students enrolled in their classes.

1.6 REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

A body of literature supports our redesign plans. First, OERs are effusively supported across a wide variety of research studies and more reflective pieces. In a study by Bliss et al (2013), community college students and faculty perceived OERs as a positive inclusion to the curriculum. Both groups viewed OERs as equal in quality to traditional materials while also citing perceived increases in cost-savings and learning. Issack (2011) explored the sustainability of OERs and found that “OERs help maintain a good quality level, sustain a viable economic model with reduction of tuition fees for learners, increase access and achieve the intended learning outcomes without any negative impact on the learners' experience”. Not only do OERs increase cost savings and perceived learning but also increase faculty autonomy. By removing the required, proprietary textbook from the classroom faculty are free to remix and reuse resources as needed. In addition, it can be argued that the use of OERs contribute to a more democratic society. According to Koustelini (2012) “this unquestioned use of textbooks contributes to the unquestioned preservation of the social, economic, and political status quo, and it prevents teacher’s involvement in changing the monolithic educational agenda”. Conversely a move away from textbooks subverts this model. Second, primary sources are a powerful learning tool across the curriculum and across different measures of learning. The inclusion and analysis of primary sources has been found to improve students’ general critical thinking skills (Dutt-doner et al, 2007), discipline-specific research skills (Tally & Goldenberg, 2005), and levels of compassion (Farmer et al, 2007). Third, research supports the inclusion of students in course design (Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011). Both McDaniel College and Elon University are currently including students in course design (Walker, 2011). At Elon students “appear to have learned at least as much as students in prior versions of the class; additionally, they reported significantly higher satisfaction with the class, in part because they appreciated that peers had helped to design the course” (Walker, 2011). At McDaniel this process has increased empathy and understanding between students and faculty members (Walker, 2011). Fourth, OERs increase faculty autonomy. By removing the required, proprietary textbook from the classroom faculty are free to remix and reuse resources as needed. In addition, it can be argued that the use of OERs contribute to a more democratic society. According to Koustelini (2012) “this unquestioned use of textbooks contributes to the unquestioned preservation of the social, economic, and political status quo, and it prevents teacher’s involvement in changing the monolithic educational agenda”. Conversely a move away from textbooks subverts this model.

**Please find our letter of support attached from Georgia Highlands College Vice President of Academic Affairs, Renva Watterson.*