Affordable Learning Georgia Affordable Materials Grants  
Transformation Grants Final Report

*(or Textbook Transformation Grants, if R17 or earlier)*

Once you have completed this template, to submit your Final Report, go to the [Final Report submission](https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/xTCCvG) form.

The final report submission form allows you to submit the following:

* This completed narrative document (required)
* Syllabus or syllabi (required)

*If multiple files, compress into one .zip folder*

* Qualitative/Quantitative Measures data files (optional, as needed)

*If multiple files, compress into one .zip folder*

* Photo of your team or a class of your students for future ALG promotions (optional)
* Invoice for the second half of the grant’s award amount (optional)

Follow the instructions on the webpage for uploading your documents. Based on receipt of this report, ALG will process the final payment for your grant. ALG will follow up in the future with post-project grantee surveys and may also request your participation in a publication, presentation, or other event.

# General Information

**Date: 5/20/2025**

**Grant Round: 25**

**Grant Number: 703**

**Institution Name(s): Clayton State University, Georgia State University**

**Project Lead: Andrea Allen**

**Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each): Scott Jacques, Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Georgia State University**

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers: FOSC 1101 Survey of Forensics**

**Semester Project Began: Fall 2025**

**Final Semester of Implementation: Spring 2025**

**Total Number of Students Affected During Project:**

# Narrative

* 1. *Describe the key outcomes, whether positive, negative, or interesting, of your project. Include:*
* *Summary of your transformation experience, including challenges and accomplishments*
* *Transformative impacts on your instruction*
* *Transformative impacts on your students and their performance*
  1. *Describe lessons learned, including any things you would do differently next time.*
  2. *Describe any materials you created or revised/remixed that will be shared with the public. Include the* [*open license your materials will be shared under*](https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/)*—for most materials, this will be an Attribution 4.0 License (CC BY) as required in the Grants Request for Proposals.*

1. **Summary of Transformation Experience: Challenges and Accomplishments**

The transformation of FOSC 1101 from a traditional, costly textbook model to an open access reader has been both rewarding and instructive. One of the primary challenges was identifying and curating high-quality, relevant open access resources to replace the commercial textbook. Ensuring that these materials were accessible, current, and engaging required significant time and collaboration.

A major accomplishment was the successful development of a comprehensive open access reader tailored to the needs of our students. This resource not only eliminates the financial barrier of an $80 textbook, but also promotes equity and accessibility.

**Transformative Impacts on Instruction**

This project has had a very positive impact on my instruction. The shift to open, adaptable materials has allowed me to teach with practical, useful, and timely resources that directly address the evolving topics in forensic science. I am now able to update readings and case studies to reflect current events and advancements in the field, making the course more relevant and engaging for students. The flexibility of the open access reader also supports the integration of active learning strategies, such as case analysis and problem-based discussions, which foster critical thinking and real-world application of knowledge. Overall, this transformation has made my teaching more dynamic, responsive, and student-centered.

**Transformative Impacts on Students and Their Performance**

For students, the most immediate impact has been the removal of the financial barrier posed by the textbook, making the course more accessible to all, especially those from underrepresented or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Early feedback indicates increased student engagement and satisfaction, as the materials are more relevant and easier to access. The incorporation of interactive and up-to-date content has supported deeper learning and improved performance on assessments. Students have also reported feeling more connected to the material, as it reflects current trends and real-world forensic science practices.

**B. Lessons Learned**

One of the most significant lessons learned during this project was the importance of understanding and verifying open licenses for course materials. While there is a wealth of freely available content online, I discovered that not all “open” resources are licensed for unrestricted adaptation and sharing. Specifically, many articles and materials that appeared to be open access did not carry the required Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0) license.

This was a learning curve, as it required me to carefully review the licensing information for each potential resource and, in some cases, to filter out materials that could not be legally remixed or redistributed as part of the open access reader. This process was time-consuming but ultimately essential for ensuring that all materials used in the course complied with the grant requirements and could be freely shared with others.

In the future, I will begin the licensing review process earlier and develop a more systematic approach to tracking the licenses of all potential resources. This experience has reinforced the importance of open licensing literacy when developing OER-based courses.

**C. Materials Created or Revised/Remixed for Public Sharing**

As part of this project, I created and curated an open access reader for FOSC 1101, which includes original and adapted content. All new and revised materials developed through this project will be shared with the public under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (CC BY), as required by the Affordable Learning Georgia grant. This license allows others to freely use, adapt, and build upon these resources, provided proper attribution is given. The open access reader will be hosted in the Affordable Learning Georgia repository and shared via additional platforms such as CrimRxiv to maximize accessibility and impact.

# Quotes

*Provide three quotes from students evaluating their experience with the no-cost learning materials.*

“I like that the digital course tools are simple to get to from anywhere. This makes it easier to study.  They're also well-organized and involved, which keeps me interested and helps me understand the material better.”

“It is very easy to access and do not have to carry around extra textbooks.”

“That it can't be ruined or lost, I tend to waste stuff and lose things so it's very convenient when I don't have to try to salvage or find something for class.”

# Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

## Uniform Measurements Questions

*The following are uniform questions asked to all grant teams. Please answer these to the best of your knowledge.*

**Student Opinion of Materials**

**Was the overall student opinion about the materials used in the course positive, neutral, or negative?**

Total number of students affected in this project: \_\_\_\_40\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Positive: \_\_\_85\_\_\_\_ % of \_\_\_\_40\_\_\_\_ number of respondents
* Neutral: \_\_12\_\_\_\_\_ % of \_\_\_\_40\_\_\_\_ number of respondents
* Negative: \_\_\_3\_\_\_\_ % of \_\_40\_\_\_\_\_\_ number of respondents

**Student Learning Outcomes and Grades**

**Was the overall comparative impact on student performance in terms of learning outcomes and grades in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?**

*Student outcomes should be described in detail in Section 3b.*

Choose One:

* \_X\_\_ Positive: Higher performance outcomes measured over previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Neutral: Same performance outcomes over previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Negative: Lower performance outcomes over previous semester(s)

**Student Drop/Fail/Withdraw (DFW) Rates**

**Was the overall comparative impact on Drop/Fail/Withdraw (DFW) rates in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?**

*Depending on what you and your institution can measure, this may also be known as a drop/failure rate or a withdraw/failure rate.*

\_\_\_15\_\_\_\_% of students, out of a total \_\_40\_\_\_\_\_ students affected, dropped/failed/withdrew from the course in the final semester of implementation.

Choose One:

* \_X\_\_ Positive: This is a lower percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Neutral: This is the same percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Negative: This is a higher percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)

## Measures Narrative

*In this section, summarize the supporting impact data that you are submitting, including all quantitative and qualitative measures of impact on student success and experience. Include all measures as described in your proposal, along with any measures developed after the proposal submission.*

*[When submitting your final report, as noted above, you will also need to provide the separate file (or .zip with multiple files) of supporting data on the impact of your Textbook Transformation, such as surveys, analyzed data collected, etc.]*

* *Include measures such as:*
  + *Drop, fail, withdraw (DFW) delta rates*
  + *Course retention and completion rates*
  + *Average GPA*
  + *Pre-and post-transformation DFW comparison*
  + *Student success in learning objectives*
  + *Surveys, interviews, and other qualitative measures*
* *Indicate any co-factors that might have influenced the outcomes.*

Students were administered a survey to assess their perceptions of the course materials. Of 40 students, only 14 (35%) completed the survey. The results are as follows:

Quantitative Results

1. Textbook Cost as a Burden

* 64% of students agreed or strongly agreed that textbook costs are a significant burden.
* 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 14% were neutral.

2. Appreciation for No-Cost Materials

* 100% of students strongly agreed they appreciate having no-cost course materials.

3. Quality Compared to Traditional Textbooks

* 50% agreed or strongly agreed that the no-cost materials are comparable in quality to traditional textbooks.
* 43% were neutral, and 7% strongly disagreed.

4. Ease of Access and Use

* 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the digital materials were easy to access and use.

5. Engagement with Digital Materials

* 93% agreed or strongly agreed that they were more engaged with the course content when using digital materials.
* 7% were neutral.

6. Format Preference

* 100% of students preferred the digital textbook over a traditional textbook.

Qualitative Results

What Students Liked:

* Universal praise for easy and convenient access to materials.
* Students appreciated being able to study anywhere without carrying a physical book.
* Features such as annotations, the ability to see and interact with peers’ comments, and having all resources in one place were highlighted as positive.
* Students valued the integration of reminders and tools that supported their learning.

Challenges Noted:

* Some students found the annotation requirements challenging or felt grading was inconsistent.
* Occasional technical issues, such as internet connectivity or assignment scores not syncing with the LMS, were mentioned.
* A few students noted a learning curve with digital tools or a preference for more visual content (e.g., videos).
* Most students reported little to no difficulty adapting to digital materials.

Suggestions for Improvement:

* Requests for more visual content and automatic saving of assignments.
* Some students wished for the ability to copy text for further study.
* Minor technical fixes (e.g., assignment score syncing) were suggested.

Key Takeaways

* The transition to no-cost, digital materials was overwhelmingly positive, with universal appreciation for affordability and ease of access.
* Students were generally satisfied with the quality of the materials, though a portion remained neutral, indicating room for further enhancement.
* Engagement increased with digital materials, and all students preferred them over traditional textbooks.
* Technical and grading-related challenges were minor and mostly related to platform features rather than the content itself.
* Student feedback suggests ongoing improvements should focus on adding visual content, refining annotation/grading practices, and addressing minor technical issues.

As for DFW rates, 15% of the class had a D or F. This is slightly over the preferred number at our institution, but very low comparatively.

# Sustainability Plan

*Describe how your project team or department will offer the materials in the course(s) in the future, including the maintenance and updating of course materials.*

To ensure the long-term success and relevance of the open access reader in FOSC 1101, I will sustain the project by annually assessing the materials within the reader and making updates as deemed necessary or seen fit. This ongoing review process will allow the course content to remain current with developments in forensic science and responsive to student and instructor feedback. By committing to regular evaluation and revision, we will maintain the quality and effectiveness of the course materials for future offerings.

# Future Affordable Materials Plans

*Describe any impacts or influences this project has had on your thinking about or selection of learning materials in this and other courses that you will teach in the future.*

This project has influenced me to continue my work in creating open, no cost courses. On the immediate horizon are the creation of two no cost courses to support the Minor in Forensics program at Clayton State University, which include Bloodstain Pattern Analysis and Gravesite Forensics.

# Future Scholarship Plans

*Describe any planned or actual papers, presentations, publications, or other professional activities that you expect to produce that reflect your work on this project.*

I am planning to attend an open educational conference in October, where I will present on my work in open education and specifically discuss the transformation of FOSC 1101 as part of that presentation. This will provide an opportunity to share our approach, outcomes, and lessons learned with colleagues in the broader open education community, and to engage in dialogue about best practices for implementing affordable and accessible materials in forensic science education.

# Description of Photograph (optional)

*This is where a team can list the names of the people shown in this separately uploaded photograph, along with their roles, if applicable.*