Affordable Learning Georgia Affordable Materials Grants
Research Grants Final Report

# General Information

**Date:** May 23, 2024

**RG Grant Number:** RG010

**Institution Name(s):** Georgia Southern University

**Project Lead:** Dawn (Nikki) Cannon-Rech: dcannonrech@georgiasouthern.edu

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

Autumn M. Johnson, Special Collections Librarian, University Libraries, autumnjohnson@georgiasouthern.edu

Virginia Etta Rolling, Assistant Professor, Human Ecology, vrolling@georgiasouthern.edu

\*Virginia Rolling left GS before the analysis and report was complete. An amended grant contract was established and will not show her name. However, she was still on the team when the data was collected from her courses.

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers if applicable:** FMAD -1110

**Semester Project Began:** Spring 2024

**Final Semester:** Summer 2024

# Narrative

The major goals and objectives of this project were to determine if an Open Pedagogical Assignment was as effective and easy to implement in a fully asynchronous course as it had been in a fully face-to-face course. Two librarians, one subject liaison and one concentrating in Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Access worked with a teaching faculty member to implement an Open Pedagogy Assignment in a lower-level Fashion Fundamentals course. This course is not a majors course, but it will satisfy one of the requirements for electives within the Common Core. As a result, a large number of students tend to take this course each semester, and most of these students are not fashion design majors.

The original assignment within this course was discussion questions on a specific designer with the goal of introducing the students to a variety of different designers and their work. The assignment was changed to work in small groups and produce a collage of a chosen designer’s work while also detailing the influence this designer had on the world of fashion. The students were specifically asked to focus on finding Open and/or freely available images, and they were also encouraged to license their own creative work with one of the Creative Common Licenses. The goal was to produce a body of work that could be utilized by anyone to discover these designers, samples of their work, and learn about their impact.

The two librarians offered special workshops teaching students what Open means, how to locate open images, how to properly attribute open images, the Creative Commons Suite of licenses, what each allows a user to do, and what publishing their own materials would mean.

This occurred in the Spring of 2023, and all three faculty participants were pleased with the overall outcome of the students' learning, their perceptions of the project, and the completed assignments. However, in the Spring of 2024, staffing issues forced this course from its original face -to-face format into a fully asynchronous online course. All three faculty members wondered if the results from the previous course could be duplicated in this format.

The research questions we aimed to address were as follows:

1. How does an Open Educational Classroom Project compare between a fully online course and a face-to-face course?
2. RQ2: How are students engaging with entirely digital/asynchronous instructional materials?
	1. Accessing the videos?
	2. Engaging with the LibGuide?
	3. Reaching out through Discussion to ask questions?
3. How do students rate their understanding of open resources and publishing open as compared to the actual results of their final products in an entirely online course?
4. How do these results compare to the results in the F2F course?

## Research Design and Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with select survey questions from Perceptions of Open Pedagogy: An Exploratory Study by Hilton et al, (2019) found at this website: <https://search.informit.org/doi/pdf/10.3316/informit.767535056418699>

The faculty member elected to not ask the first set of questions provided by Hilton et al, as they pertained to general OER perceptions and textbook usage. Instead, she only utilized the second half of the survey which focuses on perceptions of an Open Pedagogical Project. The multiple-choice questions receive no numerical weight/value and all responses are considered equal value. Percentile values showing the number of students choosing specific options were collected from Qualtrics. The open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic analysis including word count frequency and word cloud data visualization from Qualtrics AI tools. The multiple-choice questions asked of both classes are included in the Supplemental Materials section of this report.

Our methods also include comparing the usage (views) of the libguide prepared for this project. Overall usage, as well as detailed usage was run through the SpringShare Analytics function. This tool was also used to review the usage of specific assets created within the guide.

It should also be noted that the professor did not require students to complete the survey at the end of the assignment. She provided extra credit points to all students if a specific percentage of the class completed the survey. As a result, not all students’ perceptions were captured in either semester.

## Findings

### Spring 2023

For the Spring 2023 face-to-face course, 26 students completed the survey at the end of the assignment. 22 out of this 24 answered they had never completed an open pedagogy assignment like this in a prior class.

16/26, or approximately 62% of the students surveyed felt the value of participating in the FMAD open assignment provided a better educational value than a traditional assignment. Approximately 31% of the students surveyed rated the educational value the same as a traditional assignment. When asked what was the same or better for them students replies included, “ I feel like there was an actual purpose to this project and use what l learned in the future.”, and “I chose better because I learned a lot from this project more than I have in the past working on projects for different classes.”

When asked what type of learning outcomes students felt they experienced as a result of this assignment, their replies included, “I learned to cite a Creative Commons license and learn more about my designer.”, “Knowing how to find useable pictures and information to put towards other projects or activities.”, and “I think this assignment helped learn about creative common licenses, and how important visuals are.”

50% of students answered that this assignment helped them master more core academic content than a traditional assignment, while 42% answered it helped them master the same. 92% answered either more or the same that the assignment helped them become a more collaborative learner. 76% said it helped them learn to think critically more than a traditional assignment, and 86% said it helped them learn more effectively or at least the same as a traditional assignment.

Our libguide statistics for this spring course showed a total of 671 views during the three months this assignment was relevant. Finding images received 103 views and attributing them properly received 53 views.

### Spring 2024

For the spring2024, or online asynchronous, course 49 students completed the survey at the end of the assignment. 44 out of this 49 situated they had never completed an assignment like this in a prior class.

63% of the students felt the value of participating in the FMAD open assignment provided a better educational value than a traditional assignment. 20% rated the educational value as the same, and 16% rated the educational value as worse than a traditional assignment. This group’s comments on this questions included, “group project for a fully online class?.... WOMP WOMP horrible idea”, “There was little to no communication between group members. One group member pretty much did the entire assignment on her own without communicating with others. No one could decide on a time to meet up or video call to discuss the assignment. This was honestly a terrible experience. I honestly dislike online group assignments. It just does not make sense to me. I feel like a better outcome would have been individual assignments for this project.”, and “This assignment was better because it gave me an opportunity to meet my fellow classmates and work together to learn about the fashion industry and our particular designer.” This course had several complaints about a group project in an online class, but at least one felt it offered the opportunity to meet a few of their fellow classmates.

When asked what kind of learning outcomes they felt they experiences with this course, their answers were a little more in depth than the face-to-face group and included, “More critical thinking and analytical skills, managing to find sources that have to be carefully examined helps build those skills.”, “I learned how important it is to be able to talk and communicate with a group. Being assigned to a group with no knowledge of anyone makes it a little more difficult to complete a project. But once we communicated and got each other’s phone numbers, that made it a lot easier.”, and “Some learning outcomes I found doing this project was gathering different ideas and understanding the impact that these designers had contribute to the fashion industry. This project helps us to use our critical thinking skills to learn the fashion history and to be creative by showcasing our engagement with the project.”

90% of this group answered that this assignment helped them master more core content that a traditional assignment. Only around 70% of this group felt the assignment helped them become a more collaborative learner, which means approximately 30% felt this assignment was worse than a traditional assignment in helping them become a collaborative learner. While about 77% said it helped to think more critically than a traditional assignment, or at least the same.

Our libguide statistics for this course showed 2007 views during the three months this assignment was relevant. Finding images received 261 views and attributing them properly received 183 views.

This increase in libguide usage was expected for the following reasons. The first is that the online course had several more students enrolled than the face-to-face course. Second, when we create a libguide for a face-to-face course, that guide is meant to simply be a point of need help for the students. Traditionally, we have met and taught the skills sets to the students and the guide is meant to be a source to provide a reminder on specific information if they need it. During this face-to-face course, both the subject liaison and the OER liaison hosted additional workshops to teach the creative commons licenses, how to locate open images, and how to properly attribute open resources. Because the second course in this study was fully online and asynchronous, the guide became our teaching sessions. Instead of holding extra workshops, both librarians created videos that were embedded into the guide to help teach these skill sets. Because of this, we also looked at usage stats of these specific assets using SpringShare analytics.

A total of five videos were created and added to the libguide for the online course. These videos were viewed 11, 6, 32, and 23 times respectively. Both librarians were surprised that the low usage of the videos as these were the elements teaching some of the main concepts of the course. Anecdotally, both librarians noticed an increase in students reaching out for one-on-one consultations with either librarian. These sessions seemed to take the place of the workshops and not the vidoes as planned.

## Implications:

The slight differences in the answers to the survey questions were not significantly different between the face-to-face and the fully asynchronous online course. Students overall, answered that they enjoyed the assignment, felt it led to more collaborations, felt they mastered the learning objectives either better or the same, and that this assignment either increased or at least maintained the level of critical thinking they are accustomed to in a course project.

However, the written comments from the online group were more critical of this type of group assignment than the previous face-to-face group. Also, the final products from the face-to-face students overall showed stronger understanding of the assignment and the concepts of open resources, proper attribution, and selecting their own open license to make their work available.

Both librarians feel they learned a great deal in administering and teaching this same assignment to the two different course delivery methods. Their recommendations are listed in the Resulting Practice Recommendations section of this report.

# 2. Resulting Practice Recommendations

* Students did not watch our videos in high numbers. In future courses, we feel these videos might better be implemented in the LMS being used by the professor and assigned as part of the scaffolding of the project.
* Group open pedagogical projects are difficult to manage in a fully asynchronous online environment. Individual work may have worked better and also would have forced some students to choose lesser-known designers as no repeats were allowed during a semester.
* The students in the online course did not seem to grasp the basic concepts of open and creating open resources, or the implication that open may have on their future assignments or work. More effort should be included in providing a variety of learning materials on these concepts. Rubrics could also be created to help walk the students through the process of deciding how to license their projects.

# 3. Future Plans

At this time, the team lead and remaining team member have been accepted to the OpenEd24 Conference to present on this project. Our presentation, *Time to Shift: Exploring Learning Evolutions in an Open Pedagogical Assignment's Journey,* will be given as a 25-minute live presentation. In addition, these same team members will be presenting the following, "*Embracing Embedded Librarianship: Navigating Pitfalls and Building Collaborative Teaching Opportunities Together*" at the 2024 Georgia Libraries Conference. The first presentation will go into details about the research project, our findings, and possible outcomes from these findings. The Georgia Libraries Conference will focus more on what we learned as librarians navigating this type of Open Pedagogy Project with one of our faculty members.

We also hope to publish a manuscript on this project, our findings, but more importantly what we learned and how we would navigate a similar project in the future. In this way, we hope to provide some guidance to other librarians, as well as teaching faculty, on this level of collaboration and the perceived student participation, value, and learning outcomes of such a project.

# 4. Supplementary Files

*Give a description of any supplementary files provided to ALG, such as data sets or figures. Indicate whether these files can be shared with the public.*

1. Pdf of questions used in Survey given to both courses. Sharing with the public is allowed.
2. Png files of libguide statistics for both semesters. Sharing with the public is allowed.
3. Qualtrics Export from Spring 2023 Course. Sharing with the public is allowed.
4. Qualtrics Dashboard Export from Spring 2024 Course.Sharing with the public is allowed.