

Affordable Learning Georgia Affordable Materials Grants Transformation Grants Final Report

(or Textbook Transformation Grants, if R17 or earlier)

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General Information

Date: August 12, 2024

Grant Round: 23

Grant Number: 658

Institution Name(s): Georgia Southern University

Project Lead: Mary Estelle Bester

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

Helen Taggart, Professor, School of Nursing, Georgia Southern University * (Prof. Taggart retired in 2023)

Course Name(s) and Course Numbers: NURS 4113 Research

Semester Project Began: Summer 2023

Final Semester of Implementation: Summer 2024

Total Number of Students Affected During Project: 563

1. Narrative

A. *Include:*

- *Summary of your transformation experience, including challenges and accomplishments*
- *Transformative impacts on your instruction*
- *Transformative impacts on your students and their performance*

B. *Describe lessons learned, including any things you would do differently next time.*

C. *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](#)—for most materials,*

this will be an Attribution 4.0 License (CC BY) as required in the Grants Request for Proposals.

Every nursing course offered by the School of Nursing at Georgia Southern University requires students to buy one or more textbooks. Additionally, students doing face-to-face courses are required to pay for interactive educational software to complete course activities. Students are told to “read the textbook”. However, most instructors will admit very few students every read or use their textbook, and/or textbooks are not optimally used during class and/or as part of studying. Previous surveys showed nursing students at Georgia Southern University highlighting the high cost of books as being problematic.

Using textbooks in online courses as the only source of information is costly for the students, and does not enhance learning, due to the lack of interactivity. NURS 4113 (Research) is a 3-credit course, part of the major requirements offered by the School of Nursing at Georgia Southern University. Before consolidation in 2017/2018, the course was offered as a face-to-face class. After consolidation, it was changed to mainly an online format, with a selective in-person offering.

Most of the students (92.07%) took the course during the Summer Semester in 2023 and 2024. However, many students use the summer semester to work full-time to help fund their studies. The Summer Semester course starts about one week after the final exam of the Spring Semester. These factors do impact on students’ engagement with the course and course material. A typical lesson consisted of pre-requisite readings, quizzes, reviewing the textbook associated PowerPoints, and an occasional videorecording. Students submitted a draft of an article critique, and then a finalized article critique.

Based on my previous experience and interest in Research and Evidence-Based Practice, I started teaching in the course during 2018. In discussing students’ performance, I became aware of how many students did not have access to the textbook. Reasons included *I did not have money, had to choose between gas for my car, food and I could not see we using the book. We don’t use the books we buy in Nursing School.* Students enrolled in an Honors course perceived the course valuable, while others indicated *“it is a must do course I will never use the knowledge*

An opportunity presented in 2021 to allow me working closely with the assigned course lead at the time, Professor Helen Taggart, to extensively revamp the course. This process included reviewing the required textbook and resource materials. At the time, the use of Open-Education Resources in Nursing Courses was unheard of. In searching for a suitable “textbook” and suitable materials, I became aware of the OER-initiative at Georgia Southern University, and the vast amount of OER sources available in the field of Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice. While there are numerous OER resources available, the idea of not having a *required textbook* was not acceptable to most of the instructors teaching in the course.

The first step was to find an OER which could be presented to instructors as *a replacement for the textbook*. Any resource/textbook selected had to be Nursing-Specific, have some knowledge on the research process, and focus on Evidence-Based Practice (EBP). This was also in line with the changes occurring in Nursing Curricula as determined by the AACN (American Association of Colleges of Nursing) and their accreditation arm, CCNE (College Commission for Nursing Education)

In Fall 2021, approval was given to replace the commercial textbook with an OER in developing the Summer 2022 course as a *pilot* project (all new textbooks, removal of textbooks must be approved within the School of Nursing *Curriculum Committee – BSN Faculty Committee and General Faculty Committee*. The open access textbook was approved <https://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=773401949>. While the grades at the end of Summer 2022 were not different compared to previous semesters, some students did comment on the benefit of not *buying a textbook*.

Project Goals

While replacing the commercial textbook with an Open-Text was a major development, we realized the need to revamp and revise the course material as being offered in the Learning Management System (D2L), integrating the Open-Text, but adding additional materials, aligning student learning outcomes with learning activities and assessment activities. This was a major renovation of an existing course and time intensive, which would not have been possible without the generous grant from *Affordable Learning Georgia (ALG)*. The project was divided into three (phases).

- Selection of OER to meet the student learning outcomes.
- Developing a robust course in D2L.
- Developing a *LibGuide* to share as a Creative Commons 4.0 Learning Resource.

Challenges

One of the major challenges was finding instructors who were enthusiastic about the project. Most instructors don't consider the costs of learning resources, are often not aware of the costs or don't see it as a responsibility of Faculty. There are also no guidelines/protocols for the selection of learning resources. Resources are often selected based on what was historically used, and/or what they are used to. It was an enormous task for one team member to search for material, critically appraise the resources, develop the course material in the Learning Management System, and develop it as an open-source, standalone course (using LibGuides as advised by Georgia Southern University.).

2. Quotes

As per students:

"The book was easy to follow; being able to do a quiz, and it counts towards my grade, was helpful".

“It was different than the exams I am used to – I felt I actually learned by reading the content. I knew I had to read to get 90% for the quiz”.

“The examples and videos in the textbook made it so much more interesting than just having to read page after page”.

3. Quantitative Measures

A. Uniform Measurements Questions

Student Opinion of Materials

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

Total number of students affected in this project: 563. Sampling of students: (n=60)

- Positive: 93.3 % of 60 of respondents
- Neutral: 6.7 % of 60 respondents
- Negative: 0 % of 60 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:

- 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.

1.1 % of students, out of a total 269 students affected, dropped/failed/withdrew from the course in the final semester of implementation.

Choose One:

- 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)

B. Measures Narrative

The major measurable impact of this project is the cost saving for the students, without compromising quality of the course, or negative impact on drop/failure or withdraw/failure rates. The cost-saving for the students during the project was \$67,560.

4. Sustainability Plan

At the time of submission of the grant, the Chair of the School of Nursing, Dr. Melissa Garno supported continuing with using Open Education Resources in the course and having me as course lead for the course. Since then, Dr. Garno stepped down and an interim Chair, Dr. Katrina Embrey has been appointed from 1 July 2024. While ongoing deliberations will be

held, it is not possible to predict if the change in Chair may/may not impact on the program. However, as long as I am a course instructor in the course, I will promote use of OER, and continuously will review the relevance of existing resources, and revision of current content in the Learning Management System, while keeping the *LibGuide* updated.

5. Future Affordable Materials Plans

I am continuously working on providing information to other course instructors on the availability of high-quality Open Education Resources applicable to various courses. Some faculty have started showing interest in the use of OER. All information received from our *Georgia Southern University* OER-Champions are shared across the School of Nursing. The School has a traditional relationship with a commercial publisher. As similar resources must be used across the 2 campuses where the nursing program is offered, it is an ongoing challenge in convincing instructors to switch to using an OER. Part of the hesitancy may be a concern of how using different resources may affect our NCLEX success, and thus accreditation. As part of the *Faculty Affairs* committee, we are responsible for providing continuing education. The use of more affordable learning materials will be tabled at one of the upcoming meetings.

6. 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 completed the MERLOT training, and acted as a MERLOT reviewer. As a follow up of this project, a manuscript is in preparation on: *Challenges in implementing open resources in a nursing program*. I have attended various seminars, online workshops on the use of OER and continuing to do so. I do hope to get the opportunity to present the project and lessons learned at conferences during 2025.