Affordable Learning Georgia Affordable Materials Grants  
Transformation Grants Final Report

# General Information

**Date: May 8, 2024**

**Grant Round:**

**Grant Number: 666**

**Institution Name(s): Kennesaw State University**

**Project Lead: Tamara Powell**

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

**Team member 1 Tamara Powell Tpowel25@kennsaw.edu**

**Team member 2 Ruth McIntyre Rmcinty1@kennesaw.edu**

**Team member 3 Melanie Sumner Msumner4@kennesaw.edu**

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**Team member 7 Karisma Singh** [**ksingh@students.kennesaw.edu**](mailto:ksingh@students.kennesaw.edu)

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers: ENGL 2110 World Literature**

**Semester Project Began: Summer 2023**

**Final Semester of Implementation: Spring 2024**

**Total Number of Students Affected During Project: 35**

# Narrative

* 1. *Describe the key outcomes, whether positive, negative, or interesting, of your project. Include:*
* *Summary of your transformation experience, including challenges and accomplishments*

This project, which we call the ENGL 2110: OER Template Course, started out successfully in April 2023. The faculty designers divided up the course into time periods and selected the works that we would create Articulate interactive lessons for. The student participants chose two works to create “promo videos” for. And they create a promo video for the class itself to help get students motivated.

However, we hit a snag as we searched for fresh and engaging contemporary works to add to the project. Team member Dr. Sumner is a published and celebrated author in her own right, so she decided to donate two of her short stories to the project, “The Monster” and “The Guide,” and to put them in the public domain so that we could include them in the course.

In late summer, our instructional designer got Covid, and we were delayed by a few weeks so we were unable to pilot the course in fall 2023. We also realized that we were not going to use Shutterstock because it was not appropriate to use in a course with OERs. So we used some of the money instead to hire Dr. Julie Newell to use her expertise create an interactive module on Frankenstein and Artificial Intelligence. I really think that module is a great addition to the course and will be very appealing to students in this new age of AI.

We completed the course design and creation in October 2023 and submitted it to our KSU course quality review process. It passed and was ready to pilot in spring 2024.

The English Department at KSU has a resources page in D2L that houses all template courses available for faculty to use. This course was added to a D2L shell along with directions for faculty adopting it regarding using D2L and choices to make as they taught the course. We had hoped that around ten faculty would adopt it to use in spring 2024, but unfortunately only one faculty member piloted the course. For that reason, although we had excellent outcomes with the course, we have a small sample size, and the results and outcomes may be different from if we had had a larger sample.

We have two sections of the template course that will be taught in the fall, and we hope more faculty will adopt it. We will continue to collect feedback from both students and faculty as we maintain, update, and improve the course.

In order to increase adoption in the future, we have included the course along with a syllabus available on the resources page for faculty to have a quick look. We hope that will entice more faculty to adopt it.

The key outcomes are 1) we created a world literature course build completely on OERs 2) the course is fully online and fully accessible and able to be adopted by any faculty at KSU 3) we also created a version of the course available on the world wide web for anyone to use 3) the course contains videos by students explaining to fellow students the value of the course itself and “promos” of various modules to help students get excited about learning 4) the course includes interactive and engaging learning materials 5) after the pilot, we added additional instructor preparation materials to better support adoption of the course.

* *Transformative impacts on your instruction*

The main impact on our instruction as we created ENGL 2110: OER Template Course was the increased awareness of copyright and creative commons licensing. As we strove to create and use teaching and course materials for this project, we became hyperaware of making sure materials were OERs and the images and any activities we included had Creative Commons licenses. We also enjoyed learning from our student assistants what they valued in the course when they took it and how they promoted the course overall and their favorite readings to the students.

Dr. Ruth McIntyre, the faculty member who piloted the course this spring semester, had some feedback regarding her experience with the course:

The course lessons and activities prepared students for successful performance in the assignments. The amount and length of reading assignments felt like they were sufficient and not overly burdensome. Also, the short essay assignments went really well. Students did a fine job with analysis in these short writing assignments. I was able to comment on and measure their ability to analyze and synthesize ideas and pieces of literature.

Also, the mid-term exam was excellent! Students followed the directions, and I was able to comment on their ability to work with the literature they had read over the first seven weeks. They clearly had learned how to appreciate and understand themes, terminology, and genres, as they wrote about the literature in a critical essay and identified multiple aspects of multiple pieces of literature in this exam.

In addition, the assignments were easy to grade and felt rewarding.

And on a random note, my weekly video check-ins worked well to have me connected to students and the modules.

* *Transformative impacts on your students and their performance*

In addition to the standard course evaluations, we also surveyed students specifically about their ability to successfully complete the course. Out of 35 students in the course, 20 answered the survey.

Our first concern with the course was, were students able to easily navigate the course. We didn’t want create an entire course with free materials ready to go and find out that there was something else prohibiting students from successfully completing the course.

In our survey, we asked, “This question is about the organization of the course. Did you find the course organization easy to navigate?”

Of the 20 who took the survey, all twenty answered “Yes. I was able to start the course easily and find course materials quickly.”

We also asked students, “Did you have any trouble finding the course materials?” As you can see from the chart below, most respondents (18/20) said “No, the course materials in D2L were easy to find.” One student had trouble finding information on the readings such as lectures and activities each week. And one student had trouble finding out where to turn things in.

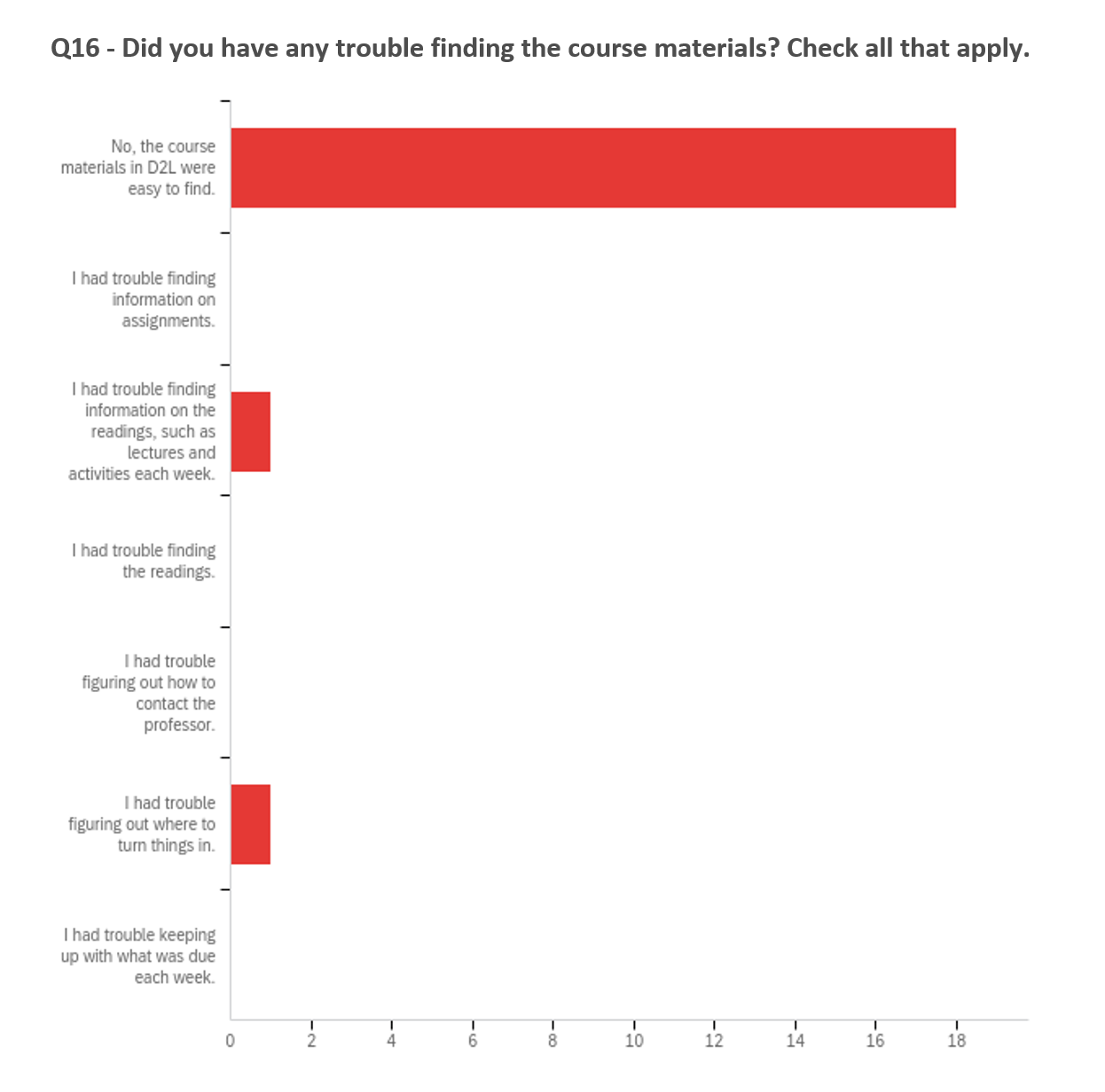
Dr. McIntyre noted some areas for improvement after piloting the course:

1. Revise all quizzes to have three attempts and to keep the highest grade (some quizzes in modules 8-14 need attention)

2. The short essays need to have consistent grading. Some have letter grade options, some are pass/fail. ALSO, let’s put a video for the instructors in the “Start here” module that shows them how to change the grading system to accommodate instructors who want a percentage grade, letter grade, pass/fail.

These areas have been corrected in the revised version available to faculty in summer. Videos to assist faculty in changing the grading system and videos to assist faculty in keeping the links stable after copying a course (a glitch in the D2L system) have been added to the template.

Image from student survey on course materials.



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

Regarding the project management, as the project manager, I would communicate more clearly and set clear and firm deadlines for the project. Because this team has worked together well on previously occasions, I believe I took for granted that we were all on the same page throughout the project. I should have communicated expectations and deadlines more frequently to keep us all on track.

The faculty member who piloted the course shared a few observations and suggestions for improvement regarding the course.

The course lessons and activities prepared students for successful performance in the assignments. The amount and length of reading assignments felt like they were sufficient and not overly burdensome. Also, the short essay assignments went really well. Students did a fine job with analysis in these short writing assignments. I was able to comment on and measure their ability to analyze and synthesize ideas and pieces of literature.

Also, the mid-term exam was excellent! Students followed the directions and I was able to comment on their ability to work with the literature they had read over the first seven weeks. They clearly had learned how to appreciate and understand themes, terminology, and genres, as they wrote about the literature in a critical essay and identified multiple aspects of multiple pieces of literature in this exam.

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And on a random note, my weekly video check-ins worked well to have me connected to students and the modules.

* 1. *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.*

We created fifteen course modules including links to OER readings and a reading schedule. The modules included course materials such as videos, activities, discussion prompts, and ungraded self-assessments.

The course materials are currently housed at <https://kennesaw.softchalkcloud.com/lesson/serve/d94qRBl8QVGrku/html>

The Attribution 4.0 license is CC-BY-NC

# Quotes

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

I think the layout and structure of the modules are helpful to the course because it makes it easier to access the course material.

The sections of videos and ungraded quizzes were really beneficial with confirming what was really understood and it also helped me understand certain sections better by figuring out the answer to the questions.

What I found beneficial for me was the ungraded quizzes that we were able to submit and see what was right or wrong and it truly helped my understanding of the reading.

## 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: \_\_\_\_35\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Positive: \_\_\_95\_\_\_\_ % of \_20\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ number of respondents
* Neutral: \_\_\_0\_\_\_\_ % of \_\_20\_\_\_\_\_\_ number of respondents
* Negative: \_\_\_\_5\_\_\_ % of \_\_\_20\_\_\_\_\_ 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.*

\_\_\_\_\_\_3\_% of students, out of a total \_35\_\_\_\_\_\_ 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.*

* *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.*

Our faculty member piloting the ENGL 2110: OER Template course, Dr. Ruth McIntyre, is an experienced literature professor who has been on two teams who have developed world literature courses with OERs. In fall 2023, she taught her own version of ENGL 2110: World Literature. In spring 2024, she agreed to pilot the ALG course we developed for this grant project, the ENGL 2110: OER Template Course. The spring 2024 course had more As and fewer Fs, but the fall 2023 course had fewer Ws.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Semester | A | B | C | D | F | W | Class GPA |
| Fall 2023 | 20 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3.26 |
| Spring 2024 (pilot) | 32 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3.91 |

As you can see, the fall semester had no Ws, but the overall grade for the course rose by .65 with the ENGL 2110: OER Template Course.

One reason for the increase in class GPA could be related to the very intentional TILTing of this course. TILT, or Transparency in Learning and Teaching, is a strategy developed and outlined by Mary-Ann Winkelmes. According to the Center for University Teaching and Learning at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, in a TILTed assignment, one of the questions a professor might work through with a student is, “What is the specific task I’m being asked to do? What steps should I follow?” One of the TILT strategies employed in our ALG course was a comprehensive review before each exam. I know Dr. McIntyre always teaches a successful and effective course. And she was one of the designers of the ENGL 2110: OER Template Course this project created. She was the architect of the midterm exam practice module that was included in this course. This midterm exam practice module was to serve as a review module to support student success in the course exams. I believe this comprehensive review experience was one reason student success in the course increased. James Eustace found in his 2019 research that allowing students to take practice exams before taking the final, cumulative exam improved the grades. In addition, students retained the information longer than students who were not allowed access to the practice quizzes during the course. Eustace refers to this strategy as PTLF, or Practice Testing Learning Framework.

Another example of TILTed strategies is formative assessments. This course also included short lectures (video or text) with ungraded self assessment activities interspersed. These activities could be practice quizzes, crossword puzzles, flash cards, or other activities to help students stop and review the learning materials. These formative assessments supported students in taking responsibility for assessing their own learning before they were asked to take on larger point assignments. Students really appreciated the opportunities to self-assess. Two students commented on them in the survey:

|  |
| --- |
| The sections of videos and ungraded quizzes were really beneficial with confirming what was really understood and it also helped me understand certain sections better by figuring out the answer to the questions. |
| What I found beneficial for me was the ungraded quizzes that we were able to submit and see what was right or wrong and it truly helped my understand of reading. |

And when asked what they would like more of in the course, while 68% said nothing, 16% said more ungraded quizzes.

It’s hard to draw conclusions with such a small sample size. We will continue to review data from professors adopting the ENGL 2110 OER Template to learn more and use that information to update the template each year. Also, Dr. McIntyre’s results may not transfer across instructors, as she is well-known for giving effective feedback on discussion and writing assignments, as students noted several times in the survey. Zhao et al found that instructors who engage in their online courses have more successful outcomes.

Students in the ENGL 2110 OER Template noted of Dr. McIntyre:

|  |
| --- |
| She gives the best feedback and gives us plenty of material to study from. |
| The feedback really helped and encourage me to want to do the other assignments. |

Overall, we feel that the results of this very limited pilot are promising, and we hope to have more information from the two guaranteed fall adoptions as well as (hopefully) additional fall adoptions.

Works Cited

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Transparent. “Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT).” Accessed May 11, 2024. https://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/diversity-inclusion/tilt/index.html

Eustace, James and P. Pathak. “Retrieval Practice, Enhancing Learning in Electrical Science,”

Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Computer Supported Education (CSEDU 2019), vol. 1, pp. 262-270, May 2019, doi:10.5220/0007674102620270. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332858972\_Retriev al\_Practice\_Enhancing\_Learning\_in\_Electrical\_Science 2021.06.10](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332858972_Retriev%20al_Practice_Enhancing_Learning_in_Electrical_Science%202021.06.10).

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Effectiveness of Distance Education.” *Teachers College Record*, vol. 107, no. 8, Aug. 2005, pp. 1836–84. EBSCOhost, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2005.00544.x.

# 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.*

As mentioned above, the course is housed in a D2L resources section in the English Department at Kennesaw State University. Any English faculty member assigned to teach world literature can load the ready-to-go course (minus a little updating of the syllabus dates and instructor name) into their own D2L section and adopt it. The course is also available globally on the internet: <https://kennesaw.softchalkcloud.com/lesson/serve/d94qRBl8QVGrku/html>.

This course will be reviewed each year for updates in response to the student and faculty surveys that are embedded in the course.

# 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.*

I believe everyone who worked on the course has gained a new appreciation of the value of OERs and the importance of Creative Commons licensing.

From Dr. Allison Davis:

This project helped me to investigate the use of Open Education Resources for General Education Literature courses. I contacted faculty in our department and began expanding resources they could use for teaching with OER texts by forming an OER repository for department use. I also attended a professional development session through my campus library about how to incorporate copyright-free images and texts into course materials and student assignments. The template course’s use of SoftChalk helped me to rethink the visual impact of my own online course, and I will be re-designing my ENGL 2110 online course in the future using more updated and interactive software.

From Dr. Melanie Sumner:

The project influenced my thinking about creating online courses by demonstrating the importance of including many low-stakes interactive assignments for students to keep them engaged in an online learning environment.

# 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.*

Ruth McIntyre gave a presentation on the ENGL 2110: OER Template to the General Education Literature faculty committee. She plans to write and present a conference paper on designing a World Lit. OER literature course.

Lessons learned in the pilot will be part of the research Tamara Powell will include in a presentation on student success in a post Covid world for Online Educa Berlin (if accepted).

From Dr. Allison Davis:

I plan to change the format of my teaching materials for my ENGL 2110 course because of this project. It helped me to see how my own classes could benefit from more interactive lectures that have more visual appeal, which will lead to better student engagement and success in the course. I will talk about this transition in the future through mentoring other faculty in my department, and I may lead a presentation about this shift in my pedagogy in a future committee meeting or workshop.