

Grants Collection

Georgia Southwestern State University



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
OF GEORGIA

Joseph Comeau, Judy Orton Grissett, Jamie MacLennan

Contemporary Social Problems



Grants Collection

Affordable Learning Georgia Grants Collections are intended to provide faculty with the frameworks to quickly implement or revise the same materials as a Textbook Transformation Grants team, along with the aims and lessons learned from project teams during the implementation process.

Each collection contains the following materials:

- Linked Syllabus
 - The syllabus should provide the framework for both direct implementation of the grant team's selected and created materials and the adaptation/transformation of these materials.
- Initial Proposal
 - The initial proposal describes the grant project's aims in detail.
- Final Report
 - The final report describes the outcomes of the project and any lessons learned.



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Initial Proposal

Application Title:

177

Submitter First Name:

Joseph

Submitter Last Name:

Comeau

Submitter Title:

Assistant Professor of Sociology

Submitter Email Address:

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Submitter Phone Number:

229-931-4646

Submitter Campus Role:

Proposal Investigator (Primary or additional)

Applicant First Name:

Joseph

Applicant Last Name:

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Applicant Email Address:

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229-931-4646

Primary Appointment Title:

Assistant Professor of Sociology

Institution Name(s):

Georgia Southwestern State University

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

Dr. Joseph Comeau, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Dept. of Psychology and Sociology,
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Dr. Judy Orton Grissett, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Dept. of Psychology and Sociology,
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Dr. Jamie MacLennan, Associate Professor of Sociology, Dept. of Psychology and Sociology,
jamie.maclennan@gsw.edu

Sponsor, (Name, Title, Department, Institution):

Charles Huffman, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Psychology and Sociology, Georgia Southwestern State University

Proposal Title:

177

Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered:

1. SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems, Spring 2016/Summer 2016/Fall 2016
2. SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research, Spring 2016
3. PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology, Spring 2016/Fall 2016

(Please note that the above numeration will be used throughout the proposal, when referring to information pertaining to each course.)

Final Semester of Instruction:

Fall 2016

Average Number of Students per Course Section:

1. 35; 2. 30; 3. 40

Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:

1. 3; 2. 1; 3. 2

Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:

215

List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, & cost for each item):

1. Lauer, Robert H. and Jeanette C. Lauer. (2014). Social Problems and the Quality of Life (13/e). McGraw Hill Publishers. New York. ISBN: 139780078026867. Required. \$172.00
2. Babbie, Earl. R. (2014). The Basics of Social Research (6/e). Wadsworth/Cengage. Belmont, CA. ISBN: 9781133594147. Required. \$186.95
3. Beins, Bernard. Research Methods: A Tool for Life (3/e). Pearson Publishers. Boston, MA. ISBN: 9780205899531. Required. \$205.20

Proposal Categories:

No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials

Requested Amount of Funding:

16,800

Original per Student Cost:

1. Lauer & Lauer: \$172.00; 2. Babbie: \$186.95; 3. Beins: \$205.20

Post-Proposal Projected Student Cost:

\$0.00

Projected Per Student Savings:

1. \$172.00; 2. \$186.95; 3. \$205.20

Plan for Hosting Materials:

D2L

Project Goals:

The main purpose of this project is to provide affordable learning materials to students across three departmental courses: SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems (one of the designated “Specific Top 50 Lower Division Courses”), SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research, and PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology. We will adopt three no-cost textbooks and collect student performance data, student feedback, and instructor feedback beginning Spring 2016. Our results will inform the adoption of no-cost texts in future course sections and possibly expand to other courses. We aim to better understand the benefits and challenges of adopting a no-cost textbook in a lower-division core and upper-division courses for majors. Finally, we intend to use this as an opportunity to share our experiences and promote the use of no-cost materials for classroom use at Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) and other institutions. More broadly, we plan to share our experiences and findings at regional or national conferences and through ALG information sessions, newsletter, and website.

Statement of Transformation:

- **Description of the transformation:** Conversion of purchased textbooks to free texts in all sections of SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems, SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research, and PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology taught during spring, summer, and fall of 2016 at GSW, and anticipated continued use of these texts thereafter.
- **Stakeholders affected by the transformation:** Students, parents, faculty, and GSW.
- **The impact of this transformation on stakeholders and course success:** Rising textbook costs is a problem for college students. According to the not-for-profit organization, College Board, the average student spends \$1200 on textbooks and supplies each year (2014). A recent Wall Street Journal article states this cost is only increasing, as textbook publishers have increased their prices 6% per year over the last ten years (Mitchell, 2014). As a result, students may not purchase textbooks for their classes, causing students to receive lower grades or to withdraw

from a course, ultimately affecting the student and the university. As stakeholders affected by these problems, students, faculty, and university administrators at GSW may benefit from this project. Students, who may not purchase a textbook due to cost, or those who carry the financial burden of purchasing pricey textbooks, may find relief of financial stress, increased retention in courses, and improved grades due to having increased access to affordable learning materials. Faculty and administrators, who are impacted by students' retention and DFW rates (e.g., funding that depends on retention rates), may see improved retention and perhaps enrollment rates if affordable learning options are available to students.

- **Description of the transformative impact on the course, program, department, institutions, access institution, and/or multiple courses:** Our department has actively embraced the movement toward Open Educational Resources, as demonstrated by our department-wide adoption of OpenStax texts in our Introduction to Psychology and Introduction to Sociology courses. The current proposal is a continuation of our department-wide commitment to offer our students high quality texts, at no cost. Overall, we believe that these efforts will continue to enhance student perceptions of our department, by demonstrating to our students that we are committed to taking proactive steps toward making college affordable. Additionally, our previous and ongoing involvement with ALG's Textbook Transformation Grants has helped to bring awareness of OERs to other departments on campus. We believe that the current proposal will contribute to this awareness at our own campus. Moreover, we intend to present the results of our project at regional and national conferences, thereby contributing to the awareness of OERs beyond our own campus.

Transformation Action Plan:

- **The identification, review, selection, and adoption/adaptation/creation of the new course materials:** The following texts will be adopted:
 1. SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems: Social Problems: Continuity and Change, <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=141>
 2. SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research: Principles of Sociological Inquiry: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods, <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=139>
 3. PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology: Research Methods in Psychology, <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=75>

In addition to the above texts, each course may include some combination of articles, videos, content from websites, and content authored or developed by the instructors. These supplemental materials will all be made available at no additional cost to the student.

- **The course and syllabus instructional design/redesign necessary for the transformation:** The transformation associated with this plan will involve:
 1. Revising classroom learning activities to align with the new texts (lectures, PowerPoints, small group discussions, etc.).
 2. Revising course assignments to align with the new texts (written assignments, projects, etc.)

3. Revising assessment materials to align with new texts (quizzes, exams, etc.)
 4. Revising syllabi to reflect the changes to assigned text, assignments, and any other changes associated with the transformation to OERs.
- **The activities expected from each team member and their role(s):** Each team member will serve as a subject matter expert, course designer, and instructor for one of the courses included in the project. As such, each team member will be responsible for the redesign of all course materials associated with their assigned course including syllabi, lectures, classroom learning activities, PowerPoints, assignments, exams, and any other relevant course materials. The course assignments are as follows:
 1. SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems: Dr. Comeau
 2. SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research: Dr. MacLennan
 3. PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology: Dr. Orton Grissett
 - **The plan for providing open access to the new materials:** All course materials will be made available through the Desire2Learn Learning Management System, the GSW library, department website, or some other method that is at no added cost to students.

Quantitative & Qualitative Measures:

The impact on student performance and experience will be evaluated with the following measures:

Student Performance

- We will collect DFW delta rates, retention rates, mid-term and final grades to measure student performance. Grades will be compared to previous semesters.

Student Perceptions

- To measure student willingness to use the textbook and their perceptions of no-cost textbooks, we will ask students:
 - “How satisfied are you with the textbook you used in this course?”
 - “How would you rate the ease of using the textbook in this course?”
 - “How engaging/interesting is the writing of the textbook?”
 - “How understandable is the writing of the textbook?”
 - “Overall, how would you rate the visual appeal of the textbook (e.g., layout, colors, cover)?”
 - “Rate the overall level of quality of the textbook you used in this course.”
 - “How frequently do you use the textbook in this course?”
 - “If given a choice between traditional paper textbook and a no-cost online textbook, which type of text do you prefer?”

Timeline:

September-November 2015:

- Attain IRB approval for Spring 2016 data collection
- Plan Spring 2016 course schedule
- Prepare Spring 2016 course materials (syllabus, assignments, PowerPoint presentations, materials, assessments)

December 2015

- Submit first status report
- Collect DFW reports for Spring 2016 comparison

January 2016

- Begin implementation of no-cost textbooks in SOCI 1160, SOCI 4440, PSYC 4431

March 2016

- Collect mid-term grades

May-June 2016

- Collect final grades
- Collect DFW reports
- Write and submit final report

Budget:

Joseph Comeau, subject matter expert, course designer, and instructor, Contemporary Social Problems (\$5000)

Jamie MacLennan, subject matter expert, course designer, and instructor, Methods of Social Research (\$5000)

Judy Orton Grissett, subject matter expert, course designer, and instructor, Experimental Psychology (\$5000)

Travel expenses for ALG "Kick-Off" meeting (\$800)

Travel expenses for academic conference presentations (\$1000)

Total = \$16,800

Sustainability Plan:

Beyond the timeline of this grant, we will continue to implement no-cost textbooks in these three departmental courses. Based on our estimates, this will result in an average savings of approximately \$186 per student, and a total savings of approximately \$40,000 per year. In order to sustain this implementation of no-cost texts, we will continually assess the fit of the material and consider adopting additional supplemental materials or other no-cost textbooks as we see fit. Further, Dr. Orton Grissett serves as GSW's Campus Champion for USG's Affordable Learning Georgia initiative, and it is her responsibility to provide resources and up-to-date information about open-source materials to GSW faculty. By continuing to utilize no-cost texts in our classrooms, Dr. Orton Grissett and colleagues will provide a model experience for other faculty on campus.

Syllabus

Course Outline: SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems
(online/asynchronous)

Text Information:

Barkan, Steven. (2012). *Social Problems Continuity and Change*. Saylor Academy. ISBN 13: 978-1-4533472-0-1.
Creative Commons conditions of use: CC BY-NC-SA.

Full Text PDF: <https://www.saylor.org/site/textbooks/Social%20Problems%20-%20Continuity%20and%20Change.pdf>

Test bank for quizzes available at <http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/catalog/editions/barkansoc-social-problems-continuity-and-change-1-0> (note: free instructor account required to access test bank).

Week	Assignments
1	Barkan Chapter 1: Understanding Social Problems (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s04-understanding-social-problems.html) Chapter 1 Quiz Discussion Question 1
2	Barkan Chapter 2: Poverty (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s05-poverty.html) Chapter 2 Quiz Video: <i>Poor Kids</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/poor-kids/) Discussion Question 2
3	Barkan Chapter 3: Racial and Ethnic Inequality (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s06-racial-and-ethnic-inequality.html) Chapter 3 Quiz Article: <i>10 ways white people are more racist than they realize</i> (http://www.salon.com/2015/03/04/10_ways_white_people_are_more_racist_than_they_realize_partner/) Discussion Question 3
4	Barkan Chapter 4: Gender Inequality (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s07-gender-inequality.html) Chapter 4 Quiz Video: <i>Violence against women—it's a men's issue</i> (https://www.ted.com/talks/jackson_katz_violence_against_women_it_s_a_men_s_issue) Discussion Question 4
5	Barkan Chapter 5: Sexual Orientation and Inequality (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s08-sexual-orientation-and-inequal.html) Chapter 5 Quiz Video: <i>A Hidden Life</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/hiddenlife/view/) Video: <i>Growing Up Trans</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/growing-up-trans/) Discussion Question 5
6	Barkan Chapter 6: Aging and Ageism (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s09-aging-and-ageism.html) Chapter 6 Quiz Video: <i>Living Old</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/livingold/) Discussion Question 6

Week	Assignments
7	<p>Barkan Chapter 7: Alcohol and Other Drugs (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s10-alcohol-and-other-drugs.html)</p> <p>Chapter 7 Quiz</p> <p>Video: <i>Chasing Heroin</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/chasing-heroin/)</p> <p>Video: <i>The Meth Epidemic</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/meth/)</p> <p>Discussion Question 7</p>
8	<p>Barkan Chapter 8: Crime and Criminal Justice (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s11-crime-and-criminal-justice.html)</p> <p>Chapter 8 Quiz</p> <p>Report: <i>Crime in the United States by Volume and Rate per 100,000 Inhabitants, 1994–2013</i> (https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/crime-in-the-u.s.-2013/tables/1tabledatadeoverviewpdf/table_1_crime_in_the_united_states_by_volume_and_rate_per_100000_inhabitants_1994-2013.xls/output.xls)</p> <p>Video: <i>Prison State</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/prison-state/)</p> <p>Discussion Question 8</p>
9	<p>Barkan Chapter 9: Sexual Behavior (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s12-sexual-behavior.html)</p> <p>Chapter 9 Quiz</p> <p>Report: <i>NCHS Data on Teenage Pregnancy</i> (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/factsheets/factsheet_teenage_pregnancy.pdf)</p> <p>Report: <i>Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing of Teenagers Aged 15–19 in the United States</i> (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db209.pdf)</p> <p>Discussion Question 9</p>
10	<p>Barkan Chapter 10: The Changing Family (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s13-the-changing-family.html)</p> <p>Chapter 10 Quiz</p> <p>Video: <i>Two American Families</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/two-american-families/)</p> <p>Discussion Question 10</p>
11	<p>Barkan Chapter 11: Schools and Education (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s14-schools-and-education.html)</p> <p>Chapter 11 Quiz</p> <p>Video: <i>Dropout Nation</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/dropout-nation/)</p> <p>Discussion Question 11</p>
12	<p>Barkan Chapter 12: Work and the Economy (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s15-work-and-the-economy.html)</p> <p>Chapter 12 Quiz</p> <p>Video: <i>Robert Reich Interview</i> (http://billmoyers.com/episode/full-show-inequality-for-all/)</p> <p>Discussion Question 12</p>
13	<p>Barkan Chapter 13: Health and Health Care (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s16-health-and-health-care.html)</p> <p>Chapter 13 Quiz</p> <p>Video: <i>Ebola Outbreak</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/ebola-outbreak/)</p> <p>Video: <i>Sick Around America</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/sickaroundamerica/view/)</p> <p>Discussion Question 13</p>

Week	Assignments
14	<p>Barkan Chapter 14: Urban and Rural Problems (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s17-urban-and-rural-problems.html)</p> <p>Chapter 14 Quiz</p> <p>Report: <i>Strengthening the Rural Economy - The Current State of Rural America</i> (https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cea/factsheets-reports/strengthening-the-rural-economy/the-current-state-of-rural-america)</p> <p>Discussion Question 14</p>
15	<p>Barkan Chapter 15: Population and the Environment (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s18-population-and-the-environment.html)</p> <p>Chapter 15 Quiz</p> <p>Video: <i>Heat</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/heat/view/)</p> <p>Discussion Question 15</p>
16	<p>Barkan Chapter 16: War and Terrorism (https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_social-problems-continuity-and-change/s19-war-and-terrorism.html)</p> <p>Chapter 16 Quiz</p> <p>Article: <i>What ISIS Really Wants</i> (http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/what-isis-really-wants/384980/?fb_ref=Default)</p> <p>Video: <i>The Secret History of ISIS</i> (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/the-secret-history-of-isis/)</p> <p>Discussion Question 16</p>

Final Report

Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants Final Report

Date: 12/22/2016

Grant Number: Proposal 177

Institution Name(s): Georgia Southwestern State University

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

- Dr. Joseph Comeau, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Dept. of Psychology and Sociology, joseph.comeau@gsw.edu
- Dr. Judy Orton Grissett, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Dept. of Psychology and Sociology, judy.grissett@gsw.edu
- Dr. Jamie MacLennan, Associate Professor of Sociology, Dept. of Psychology and Sociology, jamie.maclennan@gsw.edu
-

Project Lead: Dr. Joseph Comeau

Course Name(s) and Course Numbers:

- SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems
- SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research
- PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology

Semester Project Began: Fall 2015

Semester(s) of Implementation: Fall 2016

Average Number of Students Per Course Section: 24.2

Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation: 5

Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation: 121

1. Narrative

A. 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

SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems

Prior to adopting the Barkan OER as part of this grant, I had used a number of other social problems texts. I had not been particularly pleased with most of them, however I do like the Lauer and Lauer text that I had used immediately prior to the adoption of the Barkan OER. Unfortunately, the Lauer and Lauer text, like most other texts, was quite expensive. I began work on adopting the Barkan text and found the text to have both advantages and challenges, compared to my previous text.

One of the challenges associated with the text is that it does not come with a full slate of standard instructor resources – in particular, there was no test bank. I typically teach SOCI 1160 online with weekly quizzes over the reading, so I find test banks to be quite helpful in developing these quizzes. At the recommendation of one of my co-investigators I looked to Flatworldknowledge (<http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/>) for supplemental resources, and I was able to find a test bank for the Barkan OER. A second challenge is the comparative quality of the text. The Barkan text was generally adequate, though it lacks some of the elements that drew me to my previous text. Most notably, I feel that the first chapter of the Lauer and Lauer text does an exceptional job of framing how we look at social problems (this was one of the reasons I adopted the text). The Barkan text, like any social problems text, does devote time to framing how we look at social problems, but it is not as effective as the Lauer and Lauer text. In addition to these issues, there was some feedback from students regarding what they perceived to be a biased nature of the text content. This feedback can be seen reflected in one of the three quotes we have included in this final report. This is a tricky topic, since all humans are biased to some degree or other, and bias itself is a rather subjective concept. This feedback must be noted and considered, nonetheless.

One of the advantages of the Barkan OER is that its web-based version is particularly convenient for embedding chapters into course modules. I was able to use a direct web link to embed each individual chapter of text into the appropriate weekly course module. Thus in addition to accessing a single PDF containing the entire text, students could also click on a link to the chapter and it would open a web-based version of the chapter directly in D2L. As noted in our data analysis, the grade outcomes were improved after adopting the OER. It is hard to know if this is directly attributable to the adoption of the OER or other intervening variables. One key difference I can note, however, is that in the past it was common to have some students who would wait until after the course began to order their textbook. Often these students would perform poorly in the first few weeks of the course, as they attempted to get by without a copy of the text. Having the OER embedded into the course eliminates this issue.

SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research

For this transformation, I went from using Earl Babbie's widely used textbook, *The Basics of Social Research*, to Amy Blackstone's OER *The Principles of Sociological Inquiry*. Because of the technical nature of this course, the text is often used during classroom instruction. With this in mind, the main challenge was the fact that not all students had a smartphone, tablet, or laptop with which they could access the text during class. Reading the book on a smartphone was particularly difficult because of the tiny text size. Also, ensuring that students were reading along during class was more difficult because I could not tell at a glance

that they were following along, as you can with a traditional textbook. I do not believe there were any specific pedagogical advantages to using this OER. In fact, the OER textbook was clearly inferior to the Babbie textbook that I previously used; which was a challenge in itself. This is not surprising, as the Babbie textbook is in its 7th edition, while the Blackstone OER is only in its 1st edition. The main accomplishment was saving my students money and ensuring that all students had the text at the beginning of the course.

PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology

For PSYC 4431 I replaced Bernard Beins' *Research Methods: A Tool for Life* with Paul Price's *Research Methods in Psychology*. I enjoyed using Beins' text for several semesters, but I wanted to transform the course to use an open textbook in order to save students money and to allow more flexibility in my teaching. The transformation was largely positive but was not without its challenges. For example, Price's chapters were very brief (although chapters in the Beins' text were brief, as well), and I found myself needing to draw upon multiple supplemental resources, such as websites and handouts, to clarify some concepts only briefly discussed in the textbook. Also, there were no ancillary materials available, which is a drawback of many open textbooks. Finally, switching to the open text was time-intensive, as I had to revise lectures in order to accommodate the new text.

Despite these drawbacks, I was happy with the open text for several reasons. First, students saved money because they did not have to purchase a textbook. Second, I felt that my teaching methods improved because I was more inclined to use materials outside of the text, which forced me to think of the material in different ways. When using traditional materials, I was compelled to use the text as much as possible because the students have paid (sometimes exorbitant prices) for a text, and it would not be fair to the students to not use something they have paid for. Another reason I use more resources outside of the text is because the chapters are short, and I need to draw upon other resources to sometimes better illustrate a concept. Finally, students performed better when using an open text. Specifically, there were significantly fewer DFW's, higher course completion rates, and a higher average GPA in the semesters that open materials were used compared to the semesters that traditional texts were used. It is not conclusive why students performed better, but it is assuring to know that an open text did not impede their learning.

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

SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems

Based on what I have learned through implementing this OER, I will attempt supplement the text in some of the areas where it appears to have room for development. In particular, I will bring additional content regarding the framing of social problems.

SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research

If I were to use this OER again, I would project the section of the book that I was reading from onto the video screen more frequently. That way, students without smart devices could follow along. I only started doing that after the first few weeks.

PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology

I plan to incorporate additional supplemental activities and materials, many of which I will need to develop myself in order to fit with the text that I am using. I will also draw upon other developed materials, such as videos, to better illustrate concepts in the course. I will also create additional test questions that are in line with the text and other materials used.

2. Quotes

- Provide three quotes from students evaluating their experience with the no-cost learning materials.
 - “I liked that it was accessible online and that it was free.”
 - “It's free and you can read at night without having to turn on a light.”
 - “The fact that it is free and online is great, however it seems to present information with a bias.”

3. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

3a. Overall Measurements

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: 121

- Positive: 95.0% of 60 respondents
- Neutral: 3.3% of 60 respondents
- Negative: 1.7% 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?

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?

Drop/Fail/Withdraw Rate:

7.4% of students, out of a total 121 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)

3b. Narrative*SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems*

At our institution SOCI 1160 has been taught both face-to-face and online, though recent history has been that it is more often taught online. The course was taught face-to-face during the Spring 2016 and online during the Fall 2016 semester. During the Spring 2016 semester, the instructor made a significant change to the course assignments that might result in it being viewed as an outlier. More specifically, the instructor experimented with having students complete a final group project, and did not employ weekly chapter quizzes. The lack of quizzes was largely due to the fact that the instructor had not yet located a test bank. As noted in the previous narrative, the instructor was able to locate a test bank through Flatworldknowledge, which facilitated the use of chapter quizzes during the Fall 2016 semester. Overall, the lack of quizzes and the inclusion of final group projects resulted in what the instructor believes were significantly inflated grades, as the average course GPA was 3.79. In short, the instructor attempted something that did not work well from a rigor perspective. For this reason, we felt it was appropriate to provide two sets of analysis – one that includes the possible outlier and one that does not. Table 1 includes data for both semesters of SOCI 1160, while Table 2 has omitted the possible outlier. For the purposes of this report, we are using Table 1 and including all of the data. However, Table 2 is provided so that readers can see what the results are with the possible outlier omitted.

Thus far, a total of sixty-two students have utilized the Barkan OER text for SOCI 1160 during the Spring 2016 and Fall 2016 semesters as part of this project. Overall, all measures of student outcomes suggest that students performed better during the semesters utilizing the OER, compared to a previous course in which students used a commercial text. DFW rates declined from 16.7% to 8.1%, while course completion rates increased from 94.4% to 98.4%. Mean course grade point average increased from 2.72 to 3.32, on a four-point scale. The positive trends are also observed in Table 2, where the possible outlier has been omitted, though the changes are less pronounced (DFW from 16.7% to 12.1%; completion rates from 94.4% to 100%; GPA from 2.72 to 2.91).

SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research

A total of eleven students used the OER text for SOCI 4440 during the Spring 2016 semester. There was a small, but positive, difference between student outcomes in the course using the OER compared to the Spring 2015 semester when a traditional textbook was used. Specifically, the DFW rate declined from 20% of students to 0 (zero) students. The course completion rate went from 90% to 100%. Also, the average course grade went from 2.2 (on a four-point scale) to 2.64.

PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology

Fifty-two students used commercial texts in PSYC 4431 during the Spring 2015 and Fall 2015 semesters, and 48 students used an open text (Paul Price's Research Methods in Psychology) in Spring 2016 and Fall 2016. There was a significant increase in student performance across these semesters, with students using the open text earning a higher course GPA (2.48 vs. 2.71, respectively). The semester that an open text was used also had a lower DFW rate (15.4% vs. 8.3%) and a higher course completion rate (92.3% vs. 97.9%). Together, these numbers suggest that using an open text was associated with higher course performance in all areas. One other possible factor that could have led to this increase is that the instructor may have had additional experience that led her lectures to be more effective; however, this is unlikely to have resulted in such a significant improvement in course performance in such a short timespan. Another possibility is that the exams were not equal across the two years, and students may have performed differently simply because the exams were easier. It is impossible to tell if that is the case with such a limited data set, but examining grades from future semesters when exam questions have been changed may reveal a trend (or not).

Overall (all courses combined)

Across the board, student outcomes appear to be improved during the semesters in which OERs were adopted, compared to previous semesters in which commercial texts were adopted. A total of 121 students were enrolled in the five course sections that adopted OERs as a part of this project. The combined DFW rate for these sections was 7.4%, compared to 16.3% for the previous sections used for comparison, while course completion rates increased from 92.9% to 98.3%. Mean course GPA improved from 2.54 to 3.02 on a four-point scale. Even when omitting the possible outlier, student outcomes were positive across the board (DFW from 16.3% to 8.7%; completion rates from 92.9% to 98.9%; GPA from 2.54 to 2.77). Finally, survey responses indicate that students were overall satisfied with the OER textbooks. Specifically, the 60 students surveyed rated their overall quality of the OER textbooks as 6.38 out of 7 (with 7 being most positive). 95% of students surveyed had a positive overall assessment of the text. 91.7% of students indicated that they preferred the OER to a commercial textbook.

4. Sustainability Plan

SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems

At present, I have adopted the Barkan OER text for the section of SOCI 1160 that I will be teaching in the upcoming Spring 2017 semester. I intend to use this text for the foreseeable

future when teaching SOCI 1160 online, though I am not as certain that I will retain the text when teaching face-to-face (more on this in the “Future Plans” section of this report).

SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research

I do not plan to use this particular OER the next time I teach this course. I plan to go back to using a traditional textbook, specifically Babbie’s *The Basics of Social Research*. However, I will monitor the Blackstone OER to see if a 2nd edition is released. It is possible I will use it again if it is sufficiently improved.

PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology

I will continue to use this text throughout the foreseeable future. As already noted, I will need to use additional materials and activities in future semesters in order to bolster the text. I liked the text and want to build upon it, particularly in those areas that do not offer a lot of detail. Students appear to like the text, as well. Materials will eventually be placed in a libguide through our institution, so that students and people at other institutions can access all course material beyond the course platform (GeorgiaVIEW). In the event that a new edition of the text is adopted, I will adopt the newer version.

5. Future Plans

SOCI 1160 Contemporary Social Problems

In weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the Barkan OER, I find that it has more advantages for online instruction than it does for face-to-face delivery (e.g., the chapters are easily embedded into the online course modules, and assuring students have the text on the first day of class is more important in online delivery, because online coursework begins the first few days of class). When teaching face-to-face, these advantages become less pronounced, and the content advantages of the Lauer and Lauer text become more appealing as an instructor. At this point, I intend to continue using the Barkan OER for online sections of SOCI 1160, and continue to monitor for any new OER texts that might become available for this course. However, I may go back to the Lauer and Lauer text when teaching the course face-to-face (though this is not yet a certainty). With the overall movement toward OERs in higher education, I am hopeful that the range and quality of options will improve. Should that happen, I will be inclined to favor OERs whenever one of comparable quality is available.

SOCI 4440 Methods of Social Research

Based on my experience with this particular OER, I am open to using them in the future as long as they are of high quality. Even if I plan to use a traditional textbook, I may supplement it with some readings from OERs. I do not plan to do any formal research or professional activities based on my work on this project.

PSYC 4431 Experimental Psychology

At this point, I have officially adopted open materials for all of my courses. This is in large part due to the success I’ve had using open materials in my introductory psychology course. Students enjoy not having to purchase a text, and I want to continue to ensure that

students are not burdened by purchasing a text. I am also more conscious of my teaching style and materials, since I am not relying on a commercial text and ancillary materials. I have to develop more of my own test questions, as well as supplemental materials and activities, like worksheets, handouts, and homework problems. Although time-consuming, doing this helps me better understand the material myself, which has improved my teaching.

I presented data at the 2016 Teaching and Learning Conference and plan to write up the data in a report to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.

6. Description of Photograph

(Left to right) Dr. Jamie MacLennan, instructor of record for SOCI 4440; Dr. Joseph Comeau, team lead and instructor of record for SOCI 1160; Hayden Childress, student; Dr. Judy Orton Grissett instructor of record for PSYC 4431.



Tables

Table 1 Measures of student performance with possible outlier course included

Measures	Pre-transformation	Post-transformation	Change
<i>SOCI 1160</i>			
Semester	FA15	SP16 & FA16	
N	36	62	
DFW rate	16.7%	8.1%	- 8.6
Course completion rate	94.4%	98.4%	+ 4.0
Average course GPA	2.72	3.32	+ 0.60
<i>PSYC 4431</i>			
Semester	SP15 & FA15	SP16 & FA16	
N	52	48	
DFW rate	15.4%	8.3%	- 7.1
Course completion rate	92.3%	97.9%	+ 5.6
Average course GPA	2.48	2.71	+ 0.23
<i>SOCI 4440</i>			
Semester	SP15	SP16	
N	10	11	
DFW rate	20.0%	0.0%	- 20.0
Course completion rate	90.0%	100.0%	+ 10.0
Average course GPA	2.20	2.64	+ 0.44
<i>All Courses</i>			
N	98	121	
DFW rate	16.3%	7.4%	- 8.9
Course completion rate	92.9%	98.3%	+ 5.4
Average course GPA	2.54	3.02	+ 0.48

Notes:

Course completion rate is defined as the percent of students who did not withdraw from the course, regardless of final course grade.

SOCI 1160 was taught using OERs in SP16 and FA16, however during SP16 the instructor employed significantly different instructional methods. The resultant learning outcomes led the instructor to believe that the course might be considered an outlier. The data from the possible outlier course are included in this table, however a second table has been prepared with the possible outlier omitted. See the narrative for SOCI 1160 for more details.

Table 2 Measures of student performance with possible outlier course omitted

Measures	Pre-transformation	Post-transformation	Change
<i>SOCI 1160</i>			
Semester	FA15	FA16	
N	36	33	
DFW rate	16.7%	12.1%	- 4.6
Course completion rate	94.4%	100.0%	+ 5.6
Average course GPA	2.72	2.91	+ 0.19
<i>PSYC 4431</i>			
Semester	SP15 & FA15	SP16 & FA16	
N	52	48	
DFW rate	15.4%	8.3%	- 7.1
Course completion rate	92.3%	97.9%	+ 5.6
Average course GPA	2.48	2.71	+ 0.23
<i>SOCI 4440</i>			
Semester	SP15	SP16	
N	10	11	
DFW rate	20.0%	0.0%	- 20.0
Course completion rate	90.0%	100.0%	+ 10.0
Average course GPA	2.20	2.64	+ 0.44
<i>All Courses</i>			
N	98	92	
DFW rate	16.3%	8.7%	- 7.6
Course completion rate	92.9%	98.9%	+ 6.0
Average course GPA	2.54	2.77	+ 0.23

Notes:

Course completion rate is defined as the percent of students who did not withdraw from the course, regardless of final course grade.

SOCI 1160 was taught using OERs in SP16 and FA16, however during SP16 the instructor employed significantly different instructional methods. The resultant learning outcomes led the instructor to believe that the course might be considered an outlier. Data from this possible outlier are omitted in this table. See the narrative for SOCI 1160 for more details.

Student Survey

The following questions are about the textbook we used for this course. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

1. How would you rate the ease of using the textbook in this course?
 - ☐ Very easy
 - ☐ Somewhat easy
 - ☐ Slightly easy
 - ☐ Neither difficult nor easy
 - ☐ Slightly difficult
 - ☐ Somewhat difficult
 - ☐ Very difficult
2. How engaging/interesting is the writing of the textbook?
 - ☐ Very interesting
 - ☐ Somewhat interesting
 - ☐ Slightly interesting
 - ☐ Neither interesting nor uninteresting
 - ☐ Slightly uninteresting
 - ☐ Somewhat uninteresting
 - ☐ Very uninteresting
3. How understandable is the writing of the textbook?
 - ☐ Very clear
 - ☐ Somewhat clear
 - ☐ Slightly clear
 - ☐ Neither clear nor unclear
 - ☐ Slightly unclear
 - ☐ Somewhat unclear
 - ☐ Very unclear
4. Overall, how would you rate the visual appeal of the textbook (e.g., layout, colors, cover)?
 - ☐ Very appealing
 - ☐ Somewhat appealing
 - ☐ Slightly appealing
 - ☐ Neither appealing nor unappealing
 - ☐ Slightly unappealing
 - ☐ Somewhat unappealing
 - ☐ Very unappealing

5. How frequently do you use the textbook in this course?
- ☐ More than three times a week
 - ☐ Two to three times a week
 - ☐ Once a week
 - ☐ Once every two weeks
 - ☐ Once a month
 - ☐ Once a semester
 - ☐ Never
6. Rate the overall level of quality of the textbook you used in this course.
- ☐ Very good quality
 - ☐ Somewhat good quality
 - ☐ Slightly good quality
 - ☐ Neither good nor poor quality
 - ☐ Slightly poor quality
 - ☐ Somewhat poor quality
 - ☐ Very poor quality
7. If given a choice between traditional paper textbook and a no-cost online textbook, which type of text do you prefer? (circle one)

Traditional paper textbook

No-cost online textbook