Transcript:   
Tennessee Open Education Presentation, “Student Perceptions of an OER Supported Composition 2 Course”   
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Presenter: Judy Westley

(Ryan Korstange)

All right, uh, well, first of all, let me thank you all for coming today. I just apprecia-- appreciate this a lot. I know that it's a busy time in the semester and appreciate the time that you're taking to join us. Uh, my name is Ryan Korstange. I'm a Director of Academic Affairs at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Uh, and it's -- you know it's my pleasure to welcome you to this event. Uh, Open Education Week is a, um, annual celebration it's organized by OE Global, and it provides an opportunity for sharing and learning about the latest achievements in open education worldwide. So, we're connecting with a larger set of events, I'll post a link in the chat in just a second, um, that is to OE Week's, uh, big page and there's a full schedule of lots of events there. You can attend any of those that you want. At THEC, we're facilitating a set of ten events this week. Um, we're sort of midway through the week right now. We have webinars at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. all week and you can feel free to, uh, join any of those that you wish. I'll post the link to the chat, or into the chat, with our schedule of those events there. What we know is, um, student success is important and that textbook costs -- high-cost instructional materials, uh, pose a barrier to students and so we're really excited to learn about all kinds of innovative, uh, and exciting things that faculty and staff throughout Tennessee are doing, uh, to uh, put -- put students at the center of education and to remove barriers for their success. Um, just one other sort of note, uh, this is uh, functioning as a webinar and we'd love to take questions and the best way to do that is to just put your questions right into the chat. I'll be monitoring the chat throughout this session, and we'll have some time at the end of the session where we can talk about your questions. So, feel free as we're going to just drop questions into the chat. And with all of that said, I'm going to pass things over to Judy who's going to lead us through the presentation today. Thank y'all.

(Judy Westley)

Um, hi. Good afternoon, my name is Judy Westley, and I am an associate professor of English at Columbia State Community College and today I am presenting an analysis of a pilot version of an OER supported English course that my colleagues and I taught in fall 202. So, this slide shows a little bit of my relevant background. I was the recipient and team lead for a cycle one OER grant and my wonderful colleagues who helped me develop the course, uh, were Daniel Kelley, Nina Adel, and Graham Harkness and I really couldn't have asked for a better team. We had so much fun, uh, while we worked together.

We chose to develop an OER version of our composition II course, which is numbered ENGL 1020 in our catalog, and this is a literature-based composition course. I'm also a doctoral student in English pedagogy at Murray State University in Kentucky. And as part of my doctoral capstone project, I designed an IRB approved research study of students who were enrolled in the OER pilot sections in fall. And so, the analysis that I'm presenting today is based on my doctoral research. Part of my data collection involved interviewing students and listening to their experiences. So, before we get into all the nitty-gritty, and look at all the data and the charts and break all that down, I want to share a couple of things that came up during my interview with the students so that we can be grounded in the student perspective before we proceed.

So, this is a comment from an interview with a student that I'm calling Max, all of the student informants had pseudonyms. And Max says a semester lasts so long, and you can get a book and other materials and the first thing that pops into your head is not, "what am I going to get from this"? It is, "how much is this going to cost me"? Because the majority of the time, you have to pay out of pocket. You can - you ask yourself, "can I get through this class without buying that"?

And uh, I learned a lot from talking to Max. You know, and in the past when I'd had students who didn't buy course materials, I just assumed, uh, it was irrational -- it was due to some irrational belief. But you can see in this quote that Max is very logical. He is doing a cost-benefit analysis with respect to his decision. And he makes a choice to buy, or not to buy, based on his needs and his values.

Now, this slide is a comment from, uh, my interview with a student, uh, that I'm calling Lilly. Uh, and sh-- and I asked her, uh, to talk about past experiences buying textbooks for courses. Uh, and she says, it was a nightmare. I remember having to go from, like, friend to friend or family member to, you know, just asking, like, "please I have tuition. Everything's fine there. I just don't have money for my books." And so, yeah, I was having to, you know, borrow money from friends and family. Uh, the thing that struck me about this comment was how much labor Lilly has to ex-- had to expend in the past, to get her books. Uh and so, if a student like her doesn't end up buying them it's not because they didn't try or because they didn't understand they needed them. But the time and effort -- in addition to the cost -- was a barrier for them. Okay, now, um uh, before I move on and get into all the data, I want to lay out how I'm going to structure the remainder of the presentation. So, first I'm going to be talking about various aspects of the pilot: how we structured the class, you know, some of the thinking that went into the way we designed it. Uh, and then, uh, I'm going to analyze the results of the pilot using the COUP framework, which was developed by the open education group as a method for evaluating OERs. And that framework -- some of you may be familiar with it -- but that framework looks at four strands, uh, or aspects of a project. Uh, cost, outcomes, usage, and perceptions. Uh, and the analysis is going to focus on the factors that primarily impact students. Um, and then at the end, I'm gonna offer some conclusions and some recommendations.

Okay, uh so uh, this slide shows, uh, the course description of ENGL 1020 that is currently in our catalog. That's right here, and along with an image of the textbook that we have been using, which is the 11th edition of Literature for Composition, published by Pearson. We did not change anything about the course, other than developing OER materials to support it.

Everybody on the team was motivated to undertake the project because of experiences we had during spring of 2020. When the pandemic forced all of us to convert our classes to remote instruction. And, as we implemented that emergency transition and dealt with its aftermath, um uh, we uh, experienced in ways we hadn't previously, uh, how burdensome acquiring materials, uh, was for students. Uh, you know sometimes I kind of felt like this curtain was being ripped open and I could see into an experience that had always been there. But I just didn't realize it. For example, I had a student in my COMP 2 class who relied on the free loaner copy of the book that was available at the Lewisburg campus where I teach. But because campus access was so restricted in the early days of the pandemic, that student had a lot of difficulty completing the reading because the student couldn't get to campus very easily. And so, there were myriad other ways in which the pandemic impacted students and all of us involved in the project believed that developing an OER course would address some of the difficulties that students were experiencing.

And so, that belief, uh, it's reflected in the focal question of my doctoral research, which you can see here on this slide, how do the affordances of the OER supported ENGL1020 impact student engagement and student learning, particularly in light of the teaching environment of the pandemic?

Now, when I implemented this study, I collected data in two ways.

First, I designed an end of semester survey that was sent to all students in the 1020 pilot sections, and the survey was was largely Likert scale type questions that asked students about their experiences of the course materials, and how they perceived the materials and so on. There was also an open-ended question, that asked students to reflect on their experiences of the course. And then, lastly students were offered the option of volunteering for a one-on-one interview, which went more in depth into, uh, their experiences. And, uh, later in the presentation, I'll show you more of their comments from the interviews. Okay.

All right, so, this image is a screenshot of the main content page of the course that my colleagues and I created. While we were working on the project we thought of a number of possibilities for the course. Initially, we imagined that we were going to create all new materials from scratch, and we were going to organize them into a textbook format, but ultimately -- mainly because of time constraints -- we ended up developing a course in our learning management system and we ended up with something that was a real OER mashup. We had some newly created materials, we had some that we adapted from existing materials to suit our needs, and then some that we adopted without any editing, and we also had a lot of public domain materials that we used for the readings. And you can see here that the course is organized into modules, uh, by genre. Uh, that was the predominant organizational method that instructors were using in the existing course, so that's why we decided to do it that way. And everything the students needed --the reading, the quizzes, the assessment rubrics -- they were all in the course space. And we also put a lot of effort into making the course accessible to students and because you know the, the open in OER is about creating a learning environment that's open to students of all abilities. So, we use the Blackboard Ally feature in our learning management system to rate the accessibility of each page that we created and to help us make the materials accessible to students in different formats. And if you look inside that little red oval that just appeared on the screen you can see this bright green half-circle, and that indicates that this page is fully accessible.

Uh, and the "A" with the little arrow, that students can download that page in different formats. And the formats include an audio version, a braille version, an epub version, and so on.

Now, we also added some accessibility features for one of the plays that we taught, which is Shakespeare's *Othello*. And on this slide, you can see a screenshot of the first scene of the play as it appears in the course space. And these underlined blue words, here, are clickable. And when students click on that it opens up a new screen, which you can see a sample of, here.

And you can see how each, uh, each line is numbered along this column here and, uh, the speaker for each line is identified. Uh, and the idea here was to make a Shakespeare play accessible to students with cognitive impairments, so that they would be able to follow the verse along more easily. And this setup was suggested by our college's wonderful instructional designer Glenna Winters.

I - I didn't come up with this. Uh, you know, she suggested it and then we worked together to implement it. The page also includes an embedded audio version of, uh, the, uh, play. Uh, you know, which we downloaded from LibriVox. Uh, so that visually impaired students could hear the play read in a more dramatic fashion fashion and they would hear with the screen reader. And so, if the student clicks on these words, um, uh, here audio version then the - the sound file downloads and then they can listen to it on their, um, on their computer.

Okay.

There we go. Okay, um, now, another important goal we had when we were designing the course was to align the OER version of COMP 2 with the college's ongoing Achieve the Dream project. So, while my team was working on the OER course, another group of instructors undertook, uh, an Achieve the Dream project to develop pedagogical resources related to the transparency in teaching and learning framework, which is known as TILT.

And, uh, you know to really do justice to TILT, uh, that would - uh - I'd have to do a presentation - uh, uh, just on that. Um, so I'm gonna give a very -- uh, a um, simplified -- overly simplified summary of what it is. But it's a way of chunking down learning activities so that students know why they're doing certain things. And, uh -- I was, uh -- I'm going to show you an example of an assignment in the TILT framework and then I'll go back to the PowerPoint.

There we go -- yeah, it's this okay. There. Um -- so, um -- so, here you can see how a tilted assignment would look. Uh, and uh, you know everything is explicitly stated. You know, the the tasks are aligned with specific outcomes and students are told the specific skills, uh, that they need, uh, to use to complete this assignment. And then, the - the steps that they, uh, need to go through to complete the assignment are also listed in the order in which they have to complete them. So, to me, uh, TILT is another form of openness, and it seemed natural to incorporate it into the OER course. All Right, so, let me go back to the PowerPoint now.

All right, there we go.

Okay, um, so now, I just want to briefly describe on the next two slides, the, uh, the pilot phase of the course. And this slide gives a rundown of the pilot sections that we ran in the fall.

And this is by teaching modality, uh, instructor and the total number of students. Uh, and then, this slide, it has the same information and a little bit more detail added and in the, um, column on the left, you can see the information about the OER-supported pilot course. Again, the number of sections, the teaching modality, the instructors, and you can also see we have some demographic data for the students who are in the pilot. And then on the right, we have the same information for the textbook-supported course: teaching modality, types of instructors, uh, and then the demographic breakdown of the, um, the students in the textbook-supported course. Uh, and so, uh, you know, the idea here is just to show you that the students who were in the two versions of the course were similar, and the instructors were similar, and both courses were taught in the same modalities.

All right, um, now I want to uh turn to the COUP analysis part of the presentation. Uh, and first, I'm going to look at the cost strand and how that impacts students. So, so this table on the left shows how much students would be charged by various providers if they bought the book. And you know, in a way I feel silly saying this now, but one of the things I learned while doing the study that I - I didn't really understand before, was that students don't always buy their books from the bookstore. And so, the purveyors listed here in addition to the bookstore, which are Chegg, eBay, and Amazon, were the most common sellers that students mentioned as places where they would go to buy, uh, buy their books. And the top, uh, part of the chart gives infor... cost information about the textbook, uh, the bottom part of the chart, here, gives information about the novel that was required for the course, which is Brave New World. Now, the novel was one thing that we could not incorporate into the course space, uh, because it's still under copyright in the United States. Um, so as a workaround, we offered students the option of buying the novel, uh, or they could use an ebook version that they could get for free through our college's library database. So, the students in the pilot section did not have to spend anything on course materials if they didn't want to. The course could be 100 percent free to them. Uh, now on the right, um, this -- these figures in the ovals are an estimation of the range of total savings by students in the pilot. So, the lower amount of seven thousand five hundred and fifty-eight dollars is a projection based on the assumption that all of the students, if they had been required to purchase materials, would have purchased the cheapest option. Uh, and then, uh, the higher number of 25,000 and change, is a projection assuming that all of the students would have purchased the most expensive options. So, you can see that collectively, this is a lot of money for just one course. Between seven thousand and twenty-five hundred [thousand] dollars that the students saved. Um, and this figure in the octagon is an estimation of the average savings per student. And I determined this, uh, by averaging the prices at the highest and lowest options. And I came up with 97 dollars and 49 cents, per student that they saved.

Okay, uh now, to give some context about how important these savings are for students, I want to share, uh, another comment from an interview.

Uh, and this is something, uh -- that uh -- the student I'm calling Eva said, uh, during her interview. I asked her how she used the money that she saved, and she said, "I am a single mom who doesn't get child support. I've used it for food. I've used it for my bills." Uh, in another part of the interview she also talked about using, um, uh, some of the money for, uh, like band camp fees or something -- something like that, for one of her kids. Um, so uh you know. what I've learned from this is that when we talk about saving students money, we are talking about things that touch upon very intimate aspects of their lives. And sometimes, we instructors like to tell ourselves that all of that stuff exists outside the classroom. But it really doesn't. It does not exist outside the classroom. Those things impact what happens to students inside our classroom. And so, saving money for students isn't just about abstract numbers. you know. It's - it's about how the students live their lives, and uh you know, are -- uh you know -- able to relate to people in their family. Um, and uh, you know be comfortable with, um, with their day-to-day lives.

All right -- um, uh now - now, the chart on this slide, um, this, uh, also provides some context related to textbook costs. Um, this is data from the end of the semester survey that I conducted as part of my doctoral research. And um, students -- this was a, you know, check all that apply, uh questions -- students were asked to indicate what they had done with respect to purchasing textbooks in the past. And unsurprisingly, the largest portion of students said that they had purchased used materials as a way to manage costs.

It does surprise -- this one does surprise me here -- you can see that almost 70 percent of the students indicated that they had purchased a required textbook but never used it. I mean, that's a really high number. Uh, and I think that would be an interesting topic to study on its own. You know, like, uh, how does that happen? You know, when they buy a textbook and they don't use it.

What are the reasons why they don't end up using it? And uh, in my interview with Max who I quoted from at the very beginning of the presentation, uh, not using something that you are required to purchase for a course is something he thinks about every single time he has to buy materials. He mentioned that, uh, several times in - in the interview. Uh, that he feels resentful when he has to buy a book and he doesn't use it or he doesn't use very much of it. So, that's part of that cost-benefit analysis that he conducts. Uh, you can also see here, that, uh, about 20 percent of students, um uh, indicated that they, uh, had to go without something like food or rent in order to buy textbooks. So, you know, this is, uh, another demonstration of - of how intimately the matters of cost impact students and their quality of life.

Okay. Okay now, let's move on to the outcomes strand of the COUP analysis.

And uh, this chart, um, it shows some banner data. Uh, and um, uh you know, various figures related to student success. And so, uh the uh, the column, uh, on the left here, uh, is a breakdown of outcomes for students in the OER pilot sections. Uh, we have the ABC rate, uh, the ABCD rate, which is the minimum passing rate, uh, milestone achievement, drop rate, completion rate, and then persistence rate. Uh, and then uh, in this column here, uh, this  -- that middle right column we have the tradition -- the same data for the traditional textbook sections. And then, this skinny column over here on the right, are the difference between the two figures. Now, um, I'm -- I'm not like, uh -- I mean, I know I've been presenting a lot of numbers -- I'm not a statistician. I'm an English instructor. Uh and I did ask a colleague of mine, who teaches statistics, to look at these numbers and, uh, tell me whether, uh, these differences between the two courses are statistically significant. And, uh, he said they're -- they're not.

So, these are not considered statistically significant differences. Uh, but nevertheless, I think we can learn from these numbers. And so, I'm going to offer some thoughts on how we can explain the difference between the students in the pilot and the students in the sections supported by a textbook. You can see that the students in the pilot section did better. They completed the class at a higher rate than the students in the textbook section. Uh and, uh, they also accumulated more credits that semester. Uh, and that stands to reason because if more of them are completing the class, more of them are going to, uh, accumulate credits. Uh, and then the - the drop rates, uh, and so on, uh, the persistence rates, those are pretty comparable between the two sections. Uh uh, these outcomes are consistent with other research comparing OER supported classes to the same course supported by textbook. You know, students are generally showed to perform at least as well as their counterparts in the textbook-supported classes. But they accumulate credits faster.

So, it's possible that the relief of stress associated with acquiring textbooks freed up time and energy for these students to spend on their coursework. And so, that's why we're seeing them perform better. It's also possible that our emphasis on accessibility and the use of the TILT framework in the OER course helps students to be more successful. Uh, the -- uh, as far as I know, uh, the instructors in the textbook sections didn't, uh, didn't emphasize those things.

Okay, now, um, the difference in the outcomes, uh, between the - the two versions of the course becomes even more interesting when we compare it to a pre-pandemic benchmark. And so, in this column on the left, you can see the ABC and ABCD

rates for, uh, fall 2018 as a benchmark. And I'm -- I picked fall 2018 because when we had our division meeting in January, this was the semester that our Dean chose to use as a benchmark. And that makes sense, because the students in 2018 would have completed their education prior to the pandemic. Nobody knew anything about COVID. We didn't have any idea that there would be some infectious disease that would completely transform anything.

Whereas students in fall 2021 have undertaken their education, uh, entirely during the pandemic. So, the pandemic condition is -- has always been present. Now, you can see how, uh, the students pre-pandemic completed -- did better academically, and they completed the course at a higher rate. So, what we're seeing now with these students that have been learning in the pandemic environment continually, is there's a long-term impact on their learning. And there -- and there are learning losses. But the the good news is that, uh, the OER courses appear to compensate for some of those losses and they appear to help students regain some of that learning. So, this is another reason why OER is good for students in the current environment. Okay.

Okay, now I want to move on to, uh, the usage aspect, uh, with respect to the pilot. Uh and, for this dimension of the analysis, I'm going to use the student's own words to describe how they used, uh, the materials. And so, all the comments on the next few slides are drawn either from the one-on-one interviews that I conducted with the students, or from the open-ended questions on the survey. And I'm - I'm going to present a longer quote for context, but I've highlighted some things that I think are especially important.

So uh, this is uh, a comment from my interview with the student I uh, uh I'm calling Eva. Uh and, uh, Eva says, "I had a better time with those than I would have with a textbook in all honesty. Because the way I learn, I have to do a lot of, like, highlighting and, like, having things in front of me continuously to refer back to, and that was a lot easier to do because I could print things out and have them be -- like, when I was doing the essays where we had to analyze the writers and stuff -- it was a lot easier to just have that, instead of a whole book but to just have those papers, and then I could kind of go back and forth, and make my notes for the essay." So uh, in this comment we can see Eva explaining how she customizes the OER materials. And she actually prefers the OER materials to a traditional textbook because of how she can manipulate them in very specific ways. You know, she can print it out, she can chunk it down and focus just on the material that she needs, and she can write all over it if she wants to. Um, and those are things, uh, that she might not be able to do with a traditional textbook.

The slide is not moving forward now.

There we go. Okay, I don't know why that wasn't moving forward. Um, so uh, so, this is a comment from an interview with this student, uh, I'm calling sunny. And Sunny says, "I learn very well audibly. So, I use those, the transcriptions, the audio transcription. It's not like a typical audiobook. There's not a lot of inflection, right. But it is very useful in like, I listen to that as I read along and it's very helpful in my absorption of materials. I have two modes of accessing it. So, that's part of why I did so well in the course."

And so, here Sunny is explaining how she made use of the availability of the downloadable audio versions of the course. Now, she's not somebody who needed the audio versions as an accommodation. Um, but uh, she believes that having them, nevertheless, helped her to be successful.

Uh, and uh, during our interview Sunny also told me, uh, that she typically spends weeks finding cheap sources for her course materials. And she says, in the past, uh, that process cost her to get behind in her work, because she wouldn't she wouldn't have certain materials, uh um, when she needed to complete certain assignments. But she didn't have to worry about that in - in the OER course.

Now, uh uh, this is a quotation from, uh, the informant I'm calling Lily. Um, and she says, "it's not, you know, read all of this, and then, you know, take a test on it. It's kind of, you know, broken down and that makes it, like you know, interactive. Just the types of fonts even, like, you know having a title, and then you know that's super important. Because, I'll tell you, with my textbooks right now, I don't even know how to take notes on it. But with the English course, it would have, you know, different size fonts, bold, you know, different words. Like, it would help you interact with it and know exactly what was important."

Uh, and so, um, in this, uh, quotation, Lily is talking about the TILT layout of the course, with all the bolded headings, uh, and the way that the assignments were broken down into um you know the learning outcomes and the skills and the tasks. And - and um, she specifies how -- specifically how -- that layout helped her engage with the material. You know, she uses this word, "interactive" twice. So uh, it helped her to, um uh, um, um uh, feel more connected to the course and to the material, and guide her through the assignments.

Okay, and this is a comment, uh, from the open-ended survey question. It's an anonymous comment. Uh, and this student writes, "using the provided course materials really helped me concentrate on the text. Online books can be difficult to read and I don't enjoy using paperback books, due to the fact that I can never find what I'm looking for. My organizational skills, as far as notes go, completely rely on technology. Also, most textbooks don't allow you to copy-paste material. Being able to do this, I would copy and paste a paragraph into my OneNote, and then reformat the text to personalize and organize it, in a way that is helpful to me."

So, this respondent is also describing how they manipulated the course material in specific ways. Um, and so, whereas -- uh the, the uh, uh -- Eva, who -- my, uh -- whose comment I presented previously, she opted to print sections out physically. This student uses an app to annotate the material and to take notes. So, what I learned from this, is that the setup of the course doesn't compel students to use materials in a particular format. They get to choose the format that is most useful for them when they are doing their work for the course. And that's not really something I thought about when we were designing the course, but this element of being able to choose could be another reason why students in the pilot sections did better than the students in the textbook-supported sections.

Okay.

Now uh, this slide -- this is another anonymous response from the open-ended survey questions. Uh and, this respondent identifies as disabled. Uh, and so, the - the respondent writes, "I found that free low-cost materials were far more accessible for me. I have multiple disabilities that affect my executive functioning. In the past with course materials I have to purchase, I would either forget to purchase them, or it would make me extremely anxious and I would forego purchasing them. Having the course materials made available to me right in the class portal was the most effective way I can think of to make the course accessible for me and support my academic success. I especially like the option to download an audio version of the material, as this allows the material to be accessible to even more disabled students."

So, this comment, uh, illustrates the importance of first-day access for students. And what it makes clear, um, is that the act of, uh, having to purchase something extra for the class, uh, apart from how much it costs -- because you notice this student isn't talking about affordability, the student is talking about availability and accessibility. But just the fact of having to do something extra, uh, can be a barrier for students. And so, uh, making the material available on the - the first day of class is, um, you know, is important to students like this respondent.

Having to move my little, um, screen around. Okay, so now I want to turn to, uh, an analysis of the student perceptions of the materials. So, these are some pie charts that capture answers to some of the questions on the survey.

These two show how students rated the material with respect to importance to success and engagement. And the - the dark blue here is the strongly agree and then this sort of peach color is agree. And so, you can see when you add those two together that the responses were overall positive. You know, students felt the course was engaging. They felt it helped them to be successful. I would have liked the dark blue slice to be bigger. Uh, I think this shows that, uh, we have more work to do on this course and we are continuing to work on it . Um, so uh, this is important feedback for us -- for the team that developed the class.

Now, these responses rate student -- students rated helpfulness and quality. And, you can see it's similar to the previous pie charts, they were overall positive. You know, the students thought that the material was - was good. Um, and uh, that it was helpful. But again, there's room for improvement. Um, so we know we're on the right track, but we can do better.

Now, this chart illustrates how students rated themselves with respect to several statements about having materials available on the first day of class.

And uh, you know, this one I thought was interesting, "reduced my stress" -- uh, only about 50 percent of the students felt that stress reduction really described their experience of first-day access. I would have expected that to be higher, but you know, this was only one class where students had free first-day access. They still had to deal with all of their other classes, so, uh, it's possible that the experience of stress reduction would have been greater if they had more OER-supported classes. Um, you know, this this one made me feel good, you know, that a large, uh, percentage of students felt that it, uh -- the course made it easy easier to participate. And, the question of focus and belongingness .... Um, not as high as I would have liked, um, so again, that shows that we - we still have work to do on this course.

Okay, so um.

Now, I just want to recap some recurrent themes that came up in the survey and in the interviews. So, one of the overwhelming themes that was mentioned numerous times was how stressful purchasing textbooks are for students. It is financially stressful, and it is emotionally stressful for students. Another theme that came up, uh, with several students was time expenditure. They have to spend -- some of them spend --an enormous amount of time acquiring materials in a way that they can afford and if they're not spending time acquiring materials, they are expen... expending time doing that cost-benefit analysis, as we saw with Max. Another thing that is very important for students is materials that are easy to use and that they can use in a format that works best for them.

Another thing that came up repeatedly was a quality that I'm calling "unified availability," there may be a better term for this. A number of the students, uh, in the open-ended survey responses said, "I liked having everything all in one place." Uh, that - that phrase, "one place" came up repeatedly and when I first saw those responses coming in on the survey, I didn't really understand what that meant. When I did the interviews and I talked to some of these students who are going to all of these different places, you know, different online purveyors, trying to get materials that they can afford. I realized that for many students acquiring materials is a very fragmented experience. And so, I think bringing everything together in one place takes the stress of that fragmentation away. So, that unified availability in one platform is really important to students.

Another thing that came up, uh, was students encouraging widespread OER adoption. Without prompting, a number of students in the open-ended survey questions said they think all their classes should be like the ENGL 1020 pilot was.

All right, and so um, some conclusions that I can draw from this study. Um, the OER adoption for ENGL 1020 helped students. Uh, it saved money, but it also reduced their mental load, uh, so that they could focus on their studies and that's one reason why they might have been more successful in that course. I think it's also important to consider incorporating other kinds of pedagogies, such as transparency and accessibility alongside OER. And then, along those lines, I think that we need to really broaden our concept of openness. It's, um, about more than just affordability for students. And some recommendations -- I'm just going to quickly go through this because I want to make sure I have time for questions. A system-wide study or a college-wide study would be helpful. Developing an OER degree pathway specifically for the university parallel major would be a great thing because it would impact a large number of students. And then, the final takeaway is that as individual instructors it's important that we listen to our students and take into account their experiences of course materials when we are designing our classes. Okay, so I thank everybody for listening and um, I'm ready for questions if there are any.

(Ryan Korstange)

Well, while people are writing questions into the chat I'll just start with one. I wonder if you can -- like big picture -- I know that adopting OER, uh, and getting all this set up it's a bunch of work, um, what -- what are, sort of, the benefits that you found -- I mean you talked about student perception a lo,t but I think, you know, you thinking about your teaching your experience -- what - what are the benefits? Like, why is this worth the work to to do?

(Judy Westley)

Oh, that's a really good question. Uh, well um, uh, I definitely feel that it increased the bonds with my colleagues because we all worked on this project together and we supported each other. Um, I also think that, uh, we can customize the teaching materials so that that we can choose how we want to present something. Uh, one of the things that I did at the very beginning of the OER project, when we first got the grant money, was my colleagues and I we conducted a bunch of, um uh, focus groups with English faculty. Uh, and uh, one thing many people said was that there were a lot of things in the textbook they didn't use, right and actually students know that, right, You know there are things in the textbook that they don't use. So, there are things, uh, faculty are creating materials anyway, you know, uh, and so um, taking that next step to OER really isn't a big leap because we're doing a lot of that work anyway creating our own teaching materials. So, I think converting a class to OER acknowledges and formalizes and encourages that natural practice that we all have.

(Ryan Korstange)

Yeah, and so, uh, you -- you've talked about the pilot study, what's next? What happens after the pilot study? Where does this go? What are the next steps for y'all with this curriculum?

(Judy Westley)

Okay well, um, we're doing, uh, Pilot 2.0 this semester. Uh, uh you know, we've made a few changes and we have some different faculty members that are teaching it. We did have a -- kind of a big pow-wow where we talked about, uh, what - what went well and what didn't. Um, we are also, uh, applying for, uh, another OER grant. Uh, you know the, um, the most recent RFP has the, uh, the different tiers, and so, we're doing the, uh, the tier 2 B, where we can work on incorporating open pedagogy -- open pedagogical practices -- into the class.

You know, uh, one of their responses, uh, students talked about wanting the class to be more engaging and so we think if we become intentional about incorporating open pedagogical practices into the class, that's one way of making the class more engaging for students.

(Ryan Korstange)

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. Tomorrow we have a webinar, uh, that Robert Denn and some other folks are going to lead, that talk about the cycle 3 grant a little bit, and some of the open educational practices that -- the theory of those that lie behind that grant. So, just putting that out there as a PSA, I guess. Yeah, uh, the one other question that - that I wanted to ask is um you had a lot of faculty teaching in this pilot program -- or many, multiple faculty members.

(Judy Westley)

Yes, yes.

(Ryan Korstange)

with the pilot materials, uh, but it seemed like you had a team that was smaller of people who created the pilot?

(Judy Westley)

Correct, yes.

(Ryan Korstange)

So, how did you handle training or, um, sort of onboarding those folks to be -- that taught with these materials to be able to do that well, and understand sort of the different approach you were taking with with - with this OER curriculum?

(Judy Westley)

Uh, well I contacted each person individually, and I explained to them what the project was, and I asked them if they wanted to participate in it. And then, most of them said, yes. And then, a couple weeks before the semester, they got, um the um, the populated course shell and they could go through, uh and um, look it over. And I kept emailing people and asking them, do you have any questions? Is this clear? And most people didn't have questions, um, you know, uh uh, one - one of the pilot people who was not on the team said, oh this is so easy, it's set up so easily. So, I guess we did that part right. We also, in our department meetings we talked about it a lot. So, I think people were aware of what the course was. Um yeah, I guess another thing -- some of the assignments in the OER class were similar to, uh, assignments that faculty were already using. So um, you know, that -- so we didn't we didn't put anything in there that was really super different from what they were already doing.

(Ryan Korstange)

Yeah, that makes sense. Well, that's great. Judy, this has been fantastic. I appreciate you taking the time to share your pilot with us and, uh, the results, um. Uh, okay, in the chat Marla says that there's a dedicated faculty professional, uh, to development and training for OER to support the efforts.

(Judy Westley)

Yeah, and I'm also available to help faculty at Columbia State, uh and anywhere really, if you have questions about OER development. Um, you know, my contact information is there. So um, you know I - I'd be happy to, uh, answer any questions.

(Ryan Korstange)

Yeah. Well, I appreciate that, and I appreciate learning about what you've done in this class and - and really seeing how much you've centered the student voice and understanding why this works and why it's important to do. So, we appreciate you taking the time today to share with us. And yeah, thank you all for being here, uh, really appreciate it. This is great. Thank you.