

Bonus Episode 3 Transcript

Audio file

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Transcript

Speaker 2

Welcome to bonus episode #3 advocating for OER materials. We'll start this episode by noting we all work at different institutions and have varying levels of influence. So for each of us on this call, please describe your role at your institution and how you advocate for OER materials with your administrations.

Speaker 1

I am Chris Gilson. I'm an associate professor of history at Northwestern State University. I'm also the coordinator of the Bachelor of Arts in History program at an issue I've been teaching at an issue for about 8 years now, and I've been involved in OER in some capacity for the entirety of that period, having used OER for probably 3/4 of that time.

Speaker 3

My name is Chresancio Jackson. I am division chair of Liberal Arts, but also instructor of history here at Louisiana Delta Community College. I've been teaching our guests about 12 years. Throughout the state of Louisiana, mostly Grambling, but also here in Louisiana Delta and I became full time year instructor about eight years ago and a few years later Division chair. As I've said in earlier podcasts I have, I usually teach. First of all, the history offered here at Delta, Louisiana history. In history, Louisiana history, which I haven't mentioned, we're also offering African American history for the first time in the fall. So that is a great one. And then I am hoping to use an oar for that new course as well, and that has opened up this opportunity. What we've been doing with this as well to ensure that that new course that we've never offered here in Louisiana Delta College, we'll be using it who we are and hopefully they'll kind of set that standard for all new courses we do offer that it will start off. And hopefully stay with it. We are to the end. But you know in some ways, you know, you kind of have some varying influences even as a the vision chair. But in that capacity as an instructor, but also division chair. Many times we get so used to using the same resources over and over and it's hard to make change happen, and that's one of the things that I even as a division chair, have not been able to make happen as much as I wanted. It would be great that we would all be using only ours, especially throughout this whole school of liberal arts. That's not always the easiest thing, you know, especially a lot of the accreditation bodies are wanting everyone to use the same textbook. But and that kind of is giving us a nudge to ensure that maybe that isn't all we are and to push people away from older textbooks as well. But it's a hard push at some point. In the next few decades, we will be all using OER's, but it's not as easy as you may think it should be, but we're trying to see and hopefully we can make some changes that will happen in the future, especially with new courses like the African American history courses that you're teaching this first time for fall in 2-3.

Speaker 4

Well, my name is Lise Namikas and I am a professor at Baton Rouge Community College. I have taught in Louisiana for about 15 years, all around and then up at my home institution for this is my 8th year. So I've taught like you have taught a lot of different histories. Over the years, but right now my focus is world history, and I do. Love that that course the best I think. So in terms of advocating for OERs, you know, I think it's really important to. Sort of advocate. By using by becoming, you know, involved in creating and just demonstrating how effective they are, I think we're going to hear some numbers a little bit later on, but just, you know, in terms of showing what OER's can mean for the students, it's probably some of the most persuasive ways of going about it. You know, simply asking everybody to use the same textbook or you know to suggest, you know, really strongly that OER's are the only way this institution can go. It seems more like you're twisting arms rather than. You know, really getting people to buy onto the project and I think that is, you know from for me more important because the instructors are going to be more enthusiastic. You know if. There's if they can. Be showing the benefits and I think just highlighting the benefits is the best advocacy.

Speaker 5

My name is Amelia Brister, and I'm the director of lottery and learning resources at Louisiana Delta Community College, and I advocate for OER's through encouraging instructors to use them and finding quality resources for instructors when. They request them. And by signing on to projects like this and encouraging other instructors to join in creating OER materials just so that they have a say in what's taught in their classrooms, I think that's really valuable and important.

Speaker 2

So, Miss Brister, what are OER materials and why do you believe they are a good choice for study?

Speaker 5

Oh, your materials are freely and publicly available. Teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or repurposing by others. OER can include textbooks, course materials, full courses. Module streaming videos, test software, other materials or techniques that support access to knowledge, and I think that they are very good choice for students and others can chime in. Because it makes the material available to students on the very first day, the very first minute that the class is open to them.

Speaker 1

I think they're a great choice for students because they help us to the extent possible, at least in this case, and ensure a little bit more equal access to the class. And remove some barriers to students of of whether they're economic barriers or geographic barriers, whatever it may be those barriers that prevent them from getting a good start on the class and ultimately having a good finish in the class. And so I think they're a great choice for that reason. I think they're also a good choice because they give faculty more control over their class and it's not their class doesn't become just a 1 size fits. All production of a textbook company. It reflects the needs of their students. It reflects the interest and expertise of the faculty. It's flexible, it's editable, and in that way it encourages more diversity and learning.

Speaker 2

Professor Jackson, what advice would you give to instructors who want to use OER to help them in winning over their administration?

Speaker 3

That is a great question as we've kind of alluded to a few times, I am also division chair and I want the division chairs that likes to use oars, but I know that can be difficult in other schools on particular campuses. 1 great thing that we have Louisiana Delta Community College that are part of losing attention college. So is that our system President has made that an initiative that he really wanted us to all use when we ours as much as possible. So we don't always see in such a hard. Mail for administrators on our particular campus throughout the system, but I know for others that may be viewed as that could be because, you know, many institutions have agreements with their bookstores to purchase the amount of books, and they really don't want to use, always use when we ours. And so that can be a hard sell. But like I've said in earlier podcasts, you know that. Availability of having first day access. It's something that you just cannot really discount with students. You know, they don't have any barriers other than maybe connectivity problems on that first day. And most campuses do have some access to some Wi-Fi that at some point they could come and get. The PDF version of it, they may have to maybe venture off to the campus where they may be online only, but. Any instructor I believe should be able to speak with their Dean Division chair administrator to really offer the benefits, and that's one of the things that. Instructor Professor will need to do this really awfully. Benefits first day access. Being able to access the entire textbook on the first day. Being able to really use that textbook on multiple devices, being able to get phone, tablet, everything versus lugging around a big heavy textbook in your. Big bag all the time. So you just really have to show the benefits and how. Also the data has shown through us using OER's tend to do much better in particular classes and so. You may have some pushback because of the need to fulfill the contract with the bookstore on campus, but when you look at the data and our main goal is to educate students in, say, Louisiana, how can you say no? So hopefully that will be all that's needed, but they can't. You know, really be used to refute that. That's something bad. It has to be something good.

Speaker 2

You know, speaking of data, Professor Gilson, can you provide us with some data that shows the benefits that Professor Jackson's talking?

Speaker 1

Sure, I've been tracking this really my entire time at Northwestern since 2015, so I'm gonna go back a little bit to the beginning and then work my way to the present. I started using OER for early world history. My first semester at an issue in spring 2015, really on accident. And I like to tell people because the course did not have a textbook on order. When I took over. And so I had. Had to use the Internet and some creativity to make a course that lived up to my standards and the standards of the institution and that met the needs of the students and it worked and it ended up being my most popular course and the course that students gave me the highest evaluations on and performed the best in and that. Gave me a very early indication that OER was worth keeping and so I kept using it in that course from 2015 to 2019. This class was entirely OER based. By using OER as saved my students 628 students across 14 section. Approximately \$79,500 at the used textbook price point. That amount accounted for 24% of the textbook cost across all of my classes that I taught during that time. During those four years, my students, if they had actually purchased the textbooks, would have spent over \$330,000. On textbooks

just for my classes. That when you start to add up those numbers it become. As a faculty member, really unsettling. Horrifying, actually, when you look at those kind of totals over just a four year period, obviously many students did not or could not purchase a textbook. And so that has its own problems that it. Brings with it. After a series of changes at the university, I had to return to using a traditional textbook for a few semesters. It's not something I was particularly excited about, and that's one of the reasons I was so enthusiastic about joining this group. I've been using this OER textbook that we created for one year now in early world history. During this time, 175 students and five sections have saved \$13,869. That is 57% of the textbook cost across all of the classes that I have taught this year. That is a remarkable savings, one that this project, and especially my colleagues on this project and the one that preceded it, made possible. If you add up all the savings then that I've generated through or across all of my world history classes at an issue since I arrived at totals almost \$94,000 in an age of inflation and debt, and numerous economic challenges, I think, and I hope that that makes a big difference and I hope it gives everyone listening to this. Something to reflect on as they make plans for the future as well.

Speaker 5

Like it's hard to argue with numbers like that, Chris, like, and just for one instructor to be able to say that. That's really, really incredible. So, LOUIS, our library consortium in the state of Louisiana reports that. They have saved students. \$23.29 million from 2012 to 2022. For 310,000 students in our state. So I would say that if you start with the numbers and put it in a narrative to your administration, to those who are making decisions, it's really hard to argue with student savings such as these.

Speaker 2

Well, thank you, Professor Gilson and Miss Brister to wrap up. We have one last question and that's going to Professor Amicus. The question is what additional advice would you give instructors or students to be successful with OER materials?

Speaker 4

Well, first to be successful with OER materials, my advice would go to instructors. And so you know, if you're an instructor, you know, feel free to as well, especially reach out to your librarians because Louisiana Delta and you know, at all of the colleges here, our librarians. Are familiar with. OER's and they can really speed. Track you to in the. Direction. You know when I. First started looking for OR's. It there just didn't seem to be a. Place online where you could just go and. Open up and find them. You had to search and all these different. Scattered places, so you know. That was initially kind of. Frustrating. So you? Know if you're looking at all yours. Then you use. You use your neighbors. You know, down the hall if you know they use ORS. Or, you know, your your librarians, absolutely. And just figure out which we are. It works the best with you take some. Time to go through them. Look at what resources they come with. Maybe even check to see if they've been remixed, because sometimes the lists only include the original and then the remixing versions sort of appear housed in. Different places, maybe in the in the university website or whatever it is. I found some that way so, you know, see if they've been remixed and see if there's, you know, different alternatives that way. Look at the format. Is that you know, is it in a good format for your students and for your purpose? We might have different purposes when we're teaching a? Main a main term and starting in August through December or, you know, summer might have some special requirements you know other shortened versions. So just look at your options, but again get the one that fits best with your teaching and offers, you know, fresh, fresh material for you. As

far as students go, I think you know, just initially for students, be sure that you can access the textbook right on the first day because you know, as instructors, we're really enthusiastic that if the students can read the textbook on the first day, we need to encourage them to just be sure that they can. View and see you know all the different components of the textbook. And then just. As far as that goes, encourage the students to. Put that work that textbook, especially on multiple devices so you know, we might not know what device they're using their the class on, have it on all classes so that you know if you're stuck in the doctor's office waiting one day, you might just crack open the textbook like you know, you used to bring a book with you while you waited for the doctor, right. So you might be able to fit your work. Into spaces that you didn't think like a lot of our students, especially at the Community College, they're working. And so just to open up, you know, you open up New Times to fit some work into might be a way to keep up better because you know that's an option that we ours do offer for us too is that they're flexible. So for students, just use. That, OR in ways that fit your life, you know. Figure you know, figure out where you can use them and you know, be comfortable asking questions. You know, if you need to go. To the tech. Department or, you know, even to the librarian or to your instructor. You know, if are you looking at all of the resources that are available to you, do you have them? Do you understand? You know which. Resources. You need to be. Using, just explore, explore, explore. Just do this and tell them a. Lot of our students. Is, you know, this attendance here. The course is a lot of material right away to start with, and so to open up all of it. Is a lot, but just. To go back and explore more. And see what you can do. As part of learning and. You'll be picking up material along the way, so it's not a waste of time. Saves time in the long run, right? So use those OER's to save you time, save you money and enjoy the material anywhere and any time you want.

Speaker 5

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