Transcript:
Tennessee Open Education Presentation, “The Use of OER: A Pilot Study in the Basic Public Speaking Course”
March 9, 10:00 AM

Presenters: Katie Gruber, Natonya Listach, L’Oreal Stephens, and Natalie Hoskins

(Ryan Korstange)

All right, we're going to get started. Uh, my name is Ryan Korstange, I'm a director of academic affairs at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Uh, and first let me just say thanks for taking your time to be here. Uh I know it's a busy week. Uh, and actually that -- some of y'all are on spring break this week, and I appreciate you showing up, uh, and learning more about this OER course, or OER used in this course.

Uh so, OER week as you know is an annual celebration it's organized by OE Global and it provides an opportunity for sharing and learning about achievements in open education across the world. Uh, there are 10 events that THEC is facilitating this week that highlight open education and open educational resources that are used and developed in Tennessee. And so, our full schedule -- I'm going to drop a link in the chat with our full schedule and a link to OE Global's full schedule. And there's some other things in the chat as well and I'll just walk you through those in a second but please take advantage of all of these events. Recordings of our Tennessee OE week events will be made available next week, and I'll send those out to you as soon as I get them up on the website.

[There are] two ways of sort of staying connected with what's happening with textbook affordability and with open education in Tennessee. One is our textbook affordability listserv, you can join the listserv by emailing academic.programstn@gov, and we'll get you set up with the listserv. Uh, the listserv is just periodic reminders and updates about things that are happening with textbook affordability and open education across the state. Uh, you can also set up an account for the Tennessee open education hub. That's an OER commons hub. There's a link in the chat to a guide for how to set up an account and start joining the, the joining groups on the hub. The group that you need to join to keep track of open engine open education information in Tennessee is called Tennessee open education information -- right super creative name. Uh anyway uh, we're really excited about these events uh we understand at THEC that textbook that high-cost instructional materials pose an increasing barrier to students that they threaten access that they threaten completion and that they threaten our major goals of making sure that we have an educated workforce in Tennessee, uh, and so, uh, we are really thrilled to be featuring a lot of efforts, a lot of innovative efforts, uh, towards making courses more affordable uh more student-centered, uh, and - and just really really good instructional.

So, we're excited today to learn about uh the OER work that's been happening around COMM 2200 at MTSU, and so with that I'm going to turn things over to the -- Oh, one more thing. Sorry, I forgot. Uh, as you have questions, as this presentation goes please just write the questions in the chat. We will have several minutes for questions at the end. Uh, I'll be monitoring the chat with my colleague Julie at THEC, and we'll make sure that your questions sort of get, get to the presenters and we'll get all the questions answered. So, uh, with that let me turn things over to the presenters. Uh, and thank you all for being here.

(Katie Gruber)

Thank you, Ryan. Good morning y'all. I am Katie Gruber, and I'm joined by my colleagues Natalie Hoskins, Natonya Listach, and L'Oreal Stevens. We are faculty in the communication studies department at MTSU, and as Ryan said, we teach COMM 2200, the general education, fundamentals of communication course. And so, today we wanted to discuss our use of OER, a pilot study in the basic public speaking course. And to start let's see if my PowerPoint works here. So, u,m there's a grant that went out as many of y'all know the TBR OER grant in the spring of 21 -- 2021, rather. And we were really excited to apply for that and when we were awarded the grants, we piloted OER use in 11 sections of COMM 2200. and so, we want to walk you through our experience using it and so we'll talk about the adoption of OER for this pilot study in fall 2021, the survey that we created to assess our efforts, some student and faculty reactions that were both positive and negative, and some suggestions in our future use.

So, I feel like when we talk about the adoption of OER materials I should give you some -- a little bit of background about how I kind of came to this. And, it was a little bit by accident, actually. I was looking for stuff for my public speaking class and I'm always trying to find new things, you know, keep up to date, right. And, I stumbled upon Lumen learning, and I loved it -- thought it was amazing. And, then I found more workshops at MTSU that were talking about OER. And then, the call for the grant came out. And so, I got really excited about exploring the use of OER and got Natonya, and LOreal, and Natalie to join me. And so, when we were awarded this grant we started to collect and curate openly licensed content. And so, I wanted to talk a little bit about, um, how we implemented it and also how it was a time-consuming team effort.

So, a little bit about the courses that we use. Like I mentioned earlier, we did use Lumen Learning. And, as you see from the screenshot of the -- their front page, it's a lot of links. And this is a really thorough text. Another one that we used was the University of Minnesota's open textbook called "Stand Up, Speak Out." And, the other was a PressBook called, "Speak Out, Call In." I should say we also used nca.com -- or sorry nca.org -- the National Communication Association. And, this was a lot of material and you know a lot to sift through.

Now, I should preface also that we assessed our efforts to use OER, uh, because we received some pushback from faculty in our department. And so, from our use of this, we wanted to you know better understand how it would be used and the benefits, and we knew it would be a worthwhile endeavor to evaluate our efforts using OER. So, um, a little bit about those sources, as you can see, you may or may not be familiar with them, but um, there's a lot of public speaking OER out there already. And so we, as a team, the three of us, Natonya, L'Oreal, and myself, we worked collaboratively with a shared course shell in our LMS which is desire2learn -- or as we call it D2L. And we pulled together lots of sources and had this shared master shell. So, I like to tell my students, hey, what if I asked you to buy three textbooks? That would be ludicrous, right? I mean, that would be crazy and you'd probably drop my class. But, that is the beauty of OER, is that you get to pull from all these different sources and you get to use quality material that you think best fits your class. And so, as we were pulling all of these materials, we put them into uh some pre-established modules on D2L. And, this is just a portion of what our master shell looked like. We had 10 modules, like I said, that we predetermined. So, something like, um, an introduction to public speaking, would be the first one. The second module is ethics and listening, and so on. And so, we plugged in all of these different sources through Lumen Learning, through the University of Minnesota, the PressBook, and found out that we had quite a bit of information. So, we, the three of us, divided that work and started reviewing what we thought was the best and the most quality material. Narrowed that down, and finally came to you know what you see here, in each module. But, that meant that we also had a lot of, um, additional resources. And so, we didn't want to just throw that away right we wanted to make sure we kept up with that, so, we created a hidden section within our shell, so that if we wanted to come back to it we could, you know just to have it there as a resource. And then, finally, once we created that master shell and had narrowed it down and worked together on that, we shared that to our individual courses. So, each of us had our own, you know, courses. And so, you may see from this creating all this material -- well already established OER -- but, collecting it all in this LMS, sifting through, it dividing it, it is a time-consuming effort. But, thankfully we had this amazing team working together and we were able to share the load, as it were. So, we were able to share that and work together, and that was honestly just a huge part of why I enjoyed it so much.

But, while we were creating this shell on D2L and putting together our OER materials, Natalie was working on assessment and IRB submissions. So, I will turn it over to her to discuss assessment.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Thanks, Katie. So, as Katie said, the reason why we chose to assess our OER implementation is because we did get some pushback from faculty in our department. Something that she didn't mention is that COMM 2200 in the communication studies department at MTSU, has worked with a standardized textbook -- Stephen Lucas, The Art of Public Speaking -- for almost a decade now. And um, it was it was decided at departmental vote many years ago, to standardize the textbook so that every section of the, um, the course would use the same textbook. Um, we serve about 1200 students a semester, so it's a pretty big deal. Um, the pushback had a lot to do with, um, resistance for change. And Natonya and L'Oreal will talk about that in a few minutes, but we really wanted to make sure that as we were implementing OER, that we had the opportunity to make a clear case for the benefits of OER, um, you know -- if they emerged. To show our department that it was, um, the, the costs of changing were, um, lower than the risk of staying with the status quo and that the, the costs for faculty would be lower than the benefits for students. And, of course, OER is all about increasing equity, and improving student access, and retention, and success, and graduation. And so, our goal here was to present to our department our findings, so that we could make a strong persuasive case to, to have them consider OER, or options of supplementing with OER, to reduce the cost of students and increase their involvement, or access and engagement with reading materials. So as -- I designed a pre- and post-test survey, study, um, to assess the benefits. And so, we were interested in, um, student attitudes, their experiences and perceptions, and we had the fortune, right -- we have so many sections teaching public speaking every semester -- we had the great fortune of having other faculty members who were willing to support us. In fact, there were 11 of our OER sections taught by Katie, Natonya, and L'Oreal, but we had, um, 16 sections taught by -- I believe it was five other instructors, or yeah, I think it was five -- um, who were using the standard Lucas text. So, we were able not only to sample from the students in the OER sections, but we were also able to sample from students who were use.. -- who were required to purchase or rent the text that was standardized across sections. Um, and as Katie said, we did get IRB approval for the procedures used in this study, even though it's not required when you're doing a programmatic evaluation, we think that it's important not just for our department to review our textbook usage, but for other people who are engaged in teaching public speaking, as it is often not just a basic course for majors, but also a general education course across campus, which is the case here at MTSU, we serve every student in every major.

So, as you can see here, I have a little bit of the numbers. I do want to say that I'm not sharing all of the demographic information for the sake of time, so if anybody's interested in how the demographic groups are divided up in our sampling, because this was convenience sampling and we weren't able to get a representative -- like a fully representative, um, uh, random sample -- I'm more than happy to share that in the question and answer, or later if you want to email us and and get some more information. But, we did have, um, 300 students participate in the study who were enrolled in OER sections and then 140 students who were enrolled in the other textbook sections. As I said, this was a convenience sample in our first attempt to get students to participate was not so great. So, we had to make an amendment to the IRB protocol and ask if instructors would be willing to offer extra credit. So, students were offered a maximum of one percent of the total course grade extra credit to participate. And wouldn't you know, that just shot up participation, uh, exponentially. So, we were very grateful for that. Our first wave, or the pre-test, of the survey, was administered in August, right after the first week of classes. And 281 students participated in the pre-test. And then, again in November 2021, our post-test was administered. We had, of course, fewer participants because this is the week before finals, and as you know, it's very difficult to get students to participate, even when they're being offered extra credit.

Um so, we posed three research questions, in addition to three hypotheses. And, I'm going to address them, um, separately. And again, if you want more information about the, um, the specific measures, the questions and the items that we included in the survey, I'm more than happy to share, but for time's sake, I'm really boiling it down to the key information. Um so, first, let me talk about the research questions. We really wanted to - and kind of um - examine students feelings, right? So, we know that, um, textbook costs are a burden, right? We can assume there's like a financial constraint, but like how do they feel about it was really important to us. Are we doing a disservice to the students and making them unhappy, or are they happy with textbooks? Um, and then we wanted to know about those constraints more specifically. Are there other types? So, research question number one was about how students feel about being required to purchase and rent textbooks. And we were also inquiring about the difference between Gen Ed classes, such as COMM 2200, and their major courses. So, we did ask questions in the survey about how they - if they - saw a difference and what that difference was, between being required to purchase and rent textbooks for Gen Ed, and being required to purchase and rent textbooks for major courses. Then, the second research question addressed those constraints. What are the constraints? We're looking for - we're expecting to see financial constraints, but curious if there were others. And then, research question number three was that, um, uh, we were interested in how students perceive the benefits. Right, so, faculty members and, and other staff on campuses everywhere, we assume - right - we have libraries and bookstores, and we have course adoptions because we assume that reading materials are going to benefit students. We think, oh if you read this assigned reading that I gave to the class, then you're going to, "A" get some information that's going to supplement my lecture or lessons, and "B", you're going to have the ability to complete your assignments and perform better on course assessments. Right, we think there's a benefit. But, what is the perception of students - in terms of benefiting from their reading materials? So, that was our third research question.

And, the results that we got from, uh, our survey, both, um, pre- and post-test, were that, um, in regards to research question one about their feelings, students rarely had positive feelings about purchasing or renting textbooks, which is no surprise, right. We expected that. Um, but, but we really wanted to be able to show with their own voices and their lived experiences that, um, that that this is a uncomfortable and unhappy time for them, when they have to spend money or worry about spending money on textbooks. Um, so you can see here rarely they mention anything about loving their books or being happy about their books, there were a few outliers, there were. That the students that said that they preferred hard copies over online resources, they exist. But they are in the minority. The majority of students responded to our survey saying that they felt anxious, stressed, nervous, or overwhelmed. In fact, one student said, quote "I am hit with a wave of dread after I found all my assigned textbooks and placed them in an online shopping cart," end quote. And, another student said, quote "I'm overwhelmed because I may not have the funds for it right now." And so you can see, um, the constraints the financial constraints are being mentioned there, but it's not just, "Oh no, I don't have mone,y I guess I'll not get a textbook," but it's "I'm required to get this textbook, so I know I have to stretch my wallet and it makes me very uncomfortable." And so, these are the kinds of feelings we don't want students to have at the beginning of a semester when they're already stressed about managing other life responsibilities and their courses. And, we don't want to have to add to that type of stress.

So, in response to research question number two, uh, what constraints do students face? Certainly, there were constraints -- like the biggest constraint was financial, uh which I focused on here. But I did want to share that other constraints were listed as not having the time, seller difficulties, like booksellers, or shipment delays. Um, and so there were certainly other constraints that were involved. But we saw prevalent in the data that financial constraints were the number one problem. So, not only did they find that it was too costly but they thought that it was a waste of money. And this actually, kind of, elaborates on the questions that we asked regarding Gen Ed and major courses, which I'll talk about a little bit more in the next slide, but they -- the students overwhelmingly suggested that if it's a Gen Ed course, they shouldn't have to be paying for it, it should be provided by the university in some way. So, they made suggestions about how it should be provided by the professor or the instructor or that should be included in tuition or they should have they should have course texts that they distribute every semester and then collect at the end of the semester, so, it's just like kind of a recycling program.

One student said, quote "seems like the start of every semester it's just a further drain on money that I'm already spending to attend classes." And another student said, "it's an additional financial burden that makes the first few weeks of class more stressful because I have to be more strict with money" end quote. And so, again, there were several different types of constraints, not having to do with finances but that was the most predominant constraint that we found. And the third research question, how do students perceive the benefits? Um, well they didn't. Most of them found, I mean there were again outliers who saw that reading the course material helped them to learn the lessons, and in COMM 2200 with public speaking, I think that we're all very grateful when students say they're learning from the readings that we assign. Um, or, or that that, uh, public speaking you know, in and of itself, is a valuable pursuit because we, we did read some disparaging comments about our course, and uh that's not fun to do. Um, so Katie and I sifted through these, uh, responses and it was a little disheartening at times. But they did, they did make a differentiation between Gen Ed courses and major courses. Students overwhelmingly thought that major course textbooks were valuable, they saw them as important to the course, important to their major, so they saw them as references they could use from one course to the next, and they, they saw them as materials that they would keep after graduation because it would help them in their careers. And so, I would, we would, really be interested in finding out which careers um those are that they would be holding on to those textbooks for years to come and referring to them, which we think is wonderful. Um so, in courses like ours, the Gen Ed texts, students tended to see them as not useful. And so, there was a real issue with, um, and those of you who are in the library attending today,y or in the bookstore attending today, I'm sure you can appreciate this, many students complained that they weren't useful because they weren't used. So, the professor required them to purchase or rent the textbook and then never used them. So, so students tended to see Gen Ed texts as not being useful in the semester right, because Gen Ed is forced, it's not their choice and therefore they shouldn't have to use the book at all, but then they also found them to be not useful beyond the semester. That, uh, they would never use them again so it was a waste of money.

Okay, so um, uh, of I think a greater interest were the hypotheses that we proposed here. Uh, we were interested in not only measuring their perceptions and, and beliefs and attitudes, but we were also interested in comparing those two groups as we mentioned before. So, this is where we're we're taking those OER sections, of which there were 11, and the 16 textbook sections and comparing students on - on three hypotheses. So we predicted, because OER materials are available on the first day of classes, because students can readily access them, because there are you know in, in some ways easier to read and have a little bit more of an interactive component than flipping pages in your hard copy textbook. Um, we expected that students in the OER sections would complete assigned readings more often, would read course materials more closely, and would perceive a greater connection between the reading and their performance on course assignments, which translates to benefit, right. We expected that the OER students, when compared to the textbook students, would engage with these materials and benefit, or perceive the benefit we should say, more so than the textbook students. And so, um, included here is a little table on the next slide, um, and because those hypotheses are pretty long I, I um I reiterated the idea here with the questions we ask them, so just keep in mind that's not the hypothesis, that's the question we asked in the survey. But, the table shows our means, standard deviations, the test coefficients, and significance levels for the independent samples test T-test that we used to test these hypotheses.

And, you know we, we decided our, um our, uh - oh my gosh - our alpha level would be set at 0.05, which is pretty common to us to, um, assume a confidence level of 0.95 or 95 percent confidence. And so all of our hypothesis tests or T-tests were found to be significant. So it's important that we, that we, acknowledge that in each case, if you look at the mean scores, the students who had enrolled in courses with OER did read more often, read more closely, and perceived a greater benefit from their readings than the students who were enrolled in courses that required them to purchase or rent the textbook. So, you know, these are really encouraging results that show us that having OER in place of the textbook, especially in a general education course where you are serving a thousand or more students per semester, makes a huge impact on students and their engagement in the course.

(Natonya Listach)

So, overall faculty and student reactions. Thankfully, we had a lot of positives here. And the first positive that we want to note is the money aspect. Students don't like spending money, just like we don't like spending money, sometimes. Students said, "I was joyous when I read that we didn't need to buy any books for this class." "I like to save all the money I can." So, we were trying to help them out, and we were able to help them out with this OER content. They also tended to like the materials, which was interesting. They were saying it wasn't too long, it was easy to apply to their own situations. This quote says, "I personally think that the online materials we're using are perfect for the subject at hand," which is really encouraging. It was just convenient for them, it was available immediately, there was no need to order It, no need to wait for it, so they could start day one ready to go with the class and work on the class materials. We as faculty also had some positives that we noted. We had happy students, that's always great. Students really enjoyed having that free OER which helped them to utilize those materials in the class. We see students are getting more out of the material. We can see them using the terms that were actually discussed in the text in their own discussion boards, we could see them utilizing them in their own speeches, the way that we hope that they would do when we were using the textbook. They just seem to be using it more. We also noted that it was a great way for us as faculty members to refresh our own course. So, especially for some of us who've been teaching this for a long time, it can get a little stale, utilizing those OER materials helped us to refresh our brains, get a new look on the material, and we were able to pass that information on to our students. So overall, we had a lot of good positives but, of course, with every positive, we gotta have some negatives too.

(L'Oreal Stephens)

Yay, I get to do the negatives. Okay so, as mentioned before, a few students did state a preference for hard copy textbooks, that that did, you know, come out in the surveys. Also, there were a few people who experienced some tech issues with the links that we had provided. And so, Natonya, and Katie, and I would work together to fix any issues with those links, that happens every semester, in any course. And also, there were a few students who expressed that they didn't like to click on so many different links within the course. And so, Katie will address that in a few minutes. Also, as mentioned we had, you know, some faculty issues or some concerns, that we were implementing OER and giving it a shot last semester. And from what I've learned with corresponding with these faculty, I found a few reasons that they had concerns. And one was if students had a choice between OER sections and non-OER sections where they had to pay for a textbook, that they would choose not to, you know, have to purchase a textbook and they would choose an OER section, and that might mess up our enrollment for COMM 2200, somehow. And then, another concern was that using OER would break our ties with McGraw-Hill because as stated we've used the same textbook or the, you know, the newer edition, for actually more than a decade. In fact, the whole time that I've been at MTSU, which was um, beginning in 2010, so we've always had that connection. And, some expressed that we would lose that connection and that we would lose some funding that McGraw-Hill provides for our annual speech contest within the department, and that usually once a year McGraw-Hill will provide some type of breakfast or lunch when we have a faculty meeting. And they don't want to lose that tie. Also, MTSU is currently undergoing a general education redesign and so some faculty thought that the timing was bad to make any changes that seemed to be major, like implementing OER, and that maybe the timing was just off to do that. But really the bottom line with the faculty concerns is that, you know, Katie, and Natonya, and Natalie, and I did not come up with the idea to offer this. The provost's office offered these grants specifically to implement OER and really encourage faculty participation, so that is why we did it, you know, to begin with. And really, I know that I joined this effort to save students money, that was exactly why I wanted to take part in this. And I think that my colleagues feel the same way. Thank you.

(Katie Gruber)

So, now, I'd like to talk about some suggestions we might have for anyone that's interested in using OER, and our own future use. So, I will say first that, as L'Oreal stated, because of the backlash we faced, if you are interested in using OER and you have a department like ours that has this kind of standardized text, you may face the same kind of resistance. So, just prepare yourself for that. But also, because of some of the complaints that we receive from our students about the abundance of links, some of which even if we didn't have problems with them there were just too many, and they were not always clear about exactly what they had to read, because since we were pulling from many different sources, there would be the arrow to go to the next article within that book, or that source, but maybe we weren't utilizing that source. And, so there was a little bit of confusion about that. And like L'Oreal mentioned that was some of the negative feedback that we received. So, um, in spring of 2022, right now, we were granted a mini-grant for use of OER, and so we have been putting together a Pressbook. So, we have adapted what has already been used, what we have already used. Um, and we have put in some original work, as I have shown here. These are screenshots from the PressBook, and we're really excited about it. Um, we have put this together, we've reviewed it, and we're sort of in the editing process right now, but we're really excited and we get to present it to the faculty in our department in April. And this will help us determine sort of next steps and our future use. But um, we're, like I said, we're pretty excited. We love being able to use OER and help our students out. Um, you know, especially for the kind of course that they keep saying - students, they, uh, is forced upon them. So, oh I went, oh gosh, sorry about that that was supposed to be the last slide. Um, so I wanted to show you all our contact information if you wanted more information from us, we would be happy to speak with you, email you, chat with you, so we thank you for your time. Thanks, y'all.

(Ryan Korstange)

Okay, we have several minutes for some questions, so please, uh, feel free to drop questions in the chat as you have them. There's one already, uh, and it says was there any general age group who preferred a hardcopy book over an electronic book?

(Natalie Hoskins)

Um, so Nellie, that's a really great question. But, we, like I said, there were - there were - only a couple of students that gave that response, so we weren't - I mean, I could go back into the data and check their ages, but there's no way to, um, you know make us make a statistical calculation of an age group, so to compare a group we would need more data. Um yeah, so there, literally there were two people who said I prefer a hard copy.

(Katie Gruber)

Yeah, I can tell you Nellie anecdotally, those two were my students and one of them, she just flat out said I prefer hard copies, and she was a true freshman so 18 - 19 years old. And, the other, uh, said that she preferred hard copies and I told her, if you want to print it out you're more than happy to -- or you're more than welcome to, and so she actually printed it out. She told me in class. Um, and so she used it that way and liked it. But, that's just my own, you know, anecdotal kind of experience.

(Natalie Hoskins)

The next question, uh, from Sharon, hi Sharon. I wonder Natonya, Lori, Katie, I wonder at any point in time did you tell your students how much they were saving?

(Natonya Listach)

I did not. All of my classes though were online-only. They were asynchronous courses, so I never was in face-to-face contact with any of them. But, I didn't mention it in any of the materials that I had.

(L'Oreal Stephens)

I taught a hybrid section and two online sections, and -- or one online section, and I don't remember telling them how much they were saving. We did, but we did discuss it on-ground, that they, you know, would have would not have to purchase anything and they were very, you know, happy and complimentary about that, but we didn't discuss the price.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Uh, go ahead.

(Katie Gruber)

Oh, I was just gonna say, I know that I told them, "hey, this is free." And I, you know, explained all the resources that you would need for class, and I would tell them I want to save you as much money as possible, but I never said a specific number. They could ... now, I will say, I don't know if Natonya and, uh, L'Oeeal had this experience, I did have a couple students that, um, when they registered and this kind of goes to um Kris..., uh, Kristen's question, they - a couple of them registered for my class and bought the book because that's what was listed. And when you go to, you know, when you apply to your class it shows that book information and so they came to class on the first day with their book, and I'm like, well you can return it and get your money back, so they may have known up front that it cost them you know 50 bucks, 100 bucks, because that's typically what we have seen.

(Natalie Hoskins)

I think that a brand-new copy though, is 125 dollars, is that right? No?

(Natonya Listach)

Right now, on the website, it's showing that the Art of Public Speaking, 13th edition, is 70 dollars from McGraw-Hill.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Thank you.

(Natonya Listach)

Yeah, no problem.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Yeah, um, but more to that question about, um, knowing at registration. MTSU has been working vigilantly to make this system, like work together. So, our bookstore now has the capacity to mark sections as using OER for that very purpose. But, when we started, we didn't have the ability to designate the course sections with OER materials. I think they might have been changed midway through the year, so that we could have designated them in the spring, but our department only gave us the support to do a Pilot in the fall, and so we were not technically allowed to use OER for the spring semester. So, we had to opt out of being able to designate those classes, um, but there will be, there is a banner, um, a bookstore designation. Ah, thanks Suzanne, that's where I got the number from, the MTSU bookstore, has it at $125.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Ooh. Uh, so Jason, I'm going to try to answer your question, but I really don't, I don't think that I know the answer to this. So, the question is how OER authorship is acknowledged and valued in the promotion and tenure faculty evaluation. Um, if yeah, if, if we were to take the PressBook, um, and the D2L course shell alone as something that our team, and really it was Katie, Natonya, and Lori that put the resources together. I was assessment person. Um, but if we took those efforts, that labor by itself, into consideration I don't know that it would weigh very heavily in evaluation for, um, for tenure and promotion. However, these efforts this year are associated with the OER grant, and I do think that our department and our college and the university, um, values external funding. I don't, i don't think itn I know it, right. Um, so the, the fact that the labor was associated with an external grant, I think is something that is seen as valuable. So, you know, the intricacies of the, the rest of your question, I'm not sure I know about. But that's a great question.

(Natonya Listach)

So, Trish is asking if we looked at drop rates between students. And, I know we kind of casually mentioned it, but I don't think we really did any statistical analysis of it, right. Originally in my class, it seemed like -- like I said, mine were the asynchronous people, and they seemed to stick in the class a little bit longer, um, at the end it ended up averaging out though. It was pretty much the same ones that were going to drop originally when I had the textbook, did the same thing.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Katie and I were looking at the drop rates the other day for another grant, and, um, uh, it, you know, it didn't occur to me to look at that. So, thank you Trish. I'm gonna, um, we'll, we'll actually consider that as a useful comparison, um, now that we have the data from last semester. Um, so I appreciate that.

(Katie Gruber)

I would like to note, because it's a public speaking course, I don't have any basis of knowledge of how often other classes are dropped, but ours are dropped fairly regularly because of students' fear of public speaking. And so, we have to try really hard in those first few weeks to establish that environment of comfort, and environment of positivity, and acceptance. And it's -- I would say, just from my own experience, it's a little bit different than other classes where there's not that component of presentation and you being the center of attention because students are just not used to that, unfortunately.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Thanks, Katie. Uh so, Nellie's question -- I would encourage you Nellie to, um, join us again tomorrow at one o'clock, because, um, I'll be back with the James E Walker Library group, giving a presentation about our work here in the bigger picture. Uh yeah, please come back because um the cost for PressBooks is not something that is known for our team, but I know that Suzanne and others, we'll have the Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs at our presentation tomorrow at one o'clock. I'm pretty sure one of them will be able to answer that question, how much it costs for the library, for MTSU, to purchase, um, I guess it's a license or a ... I don't know, see I don't even know what to call it, a membership, or whatever. Um, and are you asking, uh, like how to find the book, the PressBook that we've made for our course, or are you asking how to find PressBooks for any course, book creation?

I'm not sure if we're going to get that. But um,

(Ryan Korstange)

Do you want us to unmute Nellie?

(Natalie Hoskins)

Oh, I want, I wonder if, if they would type their question again.

(Ryan Korstange)

We'll do that.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Yeah. Um, and then Katie, if you know, if ... how was it for you to use PressBooks to create your book? Okay, so do you want to speak about that?

(Katie Gruber)

Sure. So, I will say it was really easy. Um, I am a user of D2L, you know, I try to use as much as I can, all the bells and whistles of d2l, but ultimately Pressbooks is fairly intuitive. There are a couple issues it has, of course, because nothing is perfect. But, it was -- and Natalie can tell you and, and the rest of the team, because they're reviewing it -- but I literally just took what we had in already established OER that we were using, and plugged it in and gave, you know, those -- um, the rights and credit, right. But there's some original content that I created that's in there, based on just experience as an instructor, uh, for several years. And the, the application is really simple, but it's ... what I like too is that it allows you to incorporate H5P, so we're looking into creating more of that in there as well to help students. Um, I'm just, I'm impressed with what I have seen that's already there for public speaking, um texts. I haven't looked into many other areas, honestly. I was just mainly looking at public speaking for, you know, inspiration. But, it's, it's really impressive and pretty easy to use, yeah.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Um, Ryan -- Ryan gave some additional information, and it's called an institutional subscription, so I feel like I've learned something here today.

(Natonya Listach)

So, Ashlynn had a question. Hi Ashlynn, good to see you again. Um, about students mentioning the OR text being easier to read or less intimidating versus a textbook. Because there were such smaller blurbs of information, they did tend to say it was a bit easier. We did have some confusion because some of the texts that we used had buttons at the bottom that said next, and so some students tended to think that they had to keep scrolling through that information instead of just reading that one page. But, overall it did seem like they they thought it was a little bit easier and not quite as intimidating.

(Natalie Hoskins)

And, and that was feedback that Natonya got in the classroom from students one-on-one, or - or in group. No? How did - where'd that come from? Sorry, Natonya.

(Natonya Listach)

I think that was just all of us talking about it. I remember in one of our meetings we were talking about it.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Got it. But those reflections come from your personal experiences with the students, and I was going to comment, I wasn't so far off. I was going to comment on how Ashlynn, we we didn't really think to measure that in the survey, right. We could have included a question that's in the post-test for the OER sections, um, like how - like how, what was the, what was your experience with the OER -- it seems really, um, um, kind of like like a failure. But, but we could have asked that and we didn't. Bu,t we did have some students, um, like Katie, i think, mentioned or maybe it was um Natonya andL'Oreal talking about the benefits, uh, or reactions, saying that the online materials were perfect. Like, they just said, for this course, these materials are perfect. Now, we can't like flesh that out and know what about it was perfect, but I suspect that ease of use and cost were big parts of why they felt that way.

(Katie Gruber)

Ryan, it looks like you asked about the student perception about being required to buy a book for Gen Ed, am I reading that right? Um, so when Natalie and I looked at the data, Natalie, you know, feel free to chime in too, I got the sense that they do not like buying books for Gen Ed. For one, like Natalie mentioned it's a class that they feel is, quote "forced on them." Obviously, we know differently and it's a valuable class. But, they don't often see it that way and they just want to get straight to their major courses, and um like she said, they -there's this feeling that if it was provided, you know, either in tuition or a class set -- and I got the feeling a class set, that like you might have in high school, which of course, you know, they're coming from high school that's kind of what they're used to, so maybe that's where they got the idea. But, I certainly got the sense that they want something to be included in some way, whether it's just provided outright, or included in tuition. Um, Natalie, follow-up?

(Natalie Hoskins)

Yeah, I would, um, agree with that, and um say that in the analysis, because we did our -- we did a couple stages of coding and then got together and discussed our codes to try to refine them. We found a couple of patterns regarding autonomy, so student choice was a big issue when it came to general education and they tend to see Gen Ed courses as being forced upon them, only needed for graduation, and not important to their major degree. Which, I think Katie and I spent a little bit of time, kind of, lamenting the fact that students still don't understand the benefit of a general education and a liberal arts degree, where, where it's, um, it's really making you a better person, not just better in your job but, like also better every aspect of your life, and we could talk about that for hours, I'm sure. But um, they see their major as the reason they came to college and so they believe it's their choice, um, to take those classes and therefore they, they see the value in spending money on those classes. Um, like, like one student said, "major focus classes are different as these classes are what the student is electing to take in order to fulfill their future career." Um, one - another student said, "I'm significantly more okay with purchasing a textbook for my major because, for the most part, I decided to take that class but when I'm forced to take a Gen Ed class and then I'm required to buy a textbook for it, it's upsetting." And so, they really did say -- there was another theme that was a pattern that money is better spent on the major. So again and again they said things like, "I feel cheated when I have to purchase a textbook for Gen Ed." Or, "Textbooks for Gen Ed classes tend to be a waste of money." So, really strong, hurtful words, um, yeah so, that was throughout, you know, the students' responses.

(Katie Gruber)

Natalie, I don't know about dual enrollment, I mean we offer it, but I don't know if we, um, gave the survey to dual enrollment.

(Natalie Hoskins)

No, we didn't. We had a mix of on-ground and online sections, but none of ours were dual enrollment. And it, and it, was a requirement of our IRB protocol that all students, or participants, be students that were 18 and older. And so, we did not sample from our dual enrollment classes. And MTSU does offer dual enrollment, and public speaking or COMM 2200 is one of those dual enrollment courses, yes, and I'm sure it would have made a difference in the results, because, uh, you're working with a different set of beliefs or expectations about cost there.

Good question.

(Ryan Korstange)

Okay, we have about eight minutes left in the hour. Uh, but there's a pause in the questions. We certainly have time for more questions, uh, and put those in the chat if you have them. Um, let me just, say as maybe final questions are coming in if there are any, this has been just a fantastic conversation, uh, really appreciate your attention to detail with all of the assessment and stuff that you've done has been very illuminating. Uh and just have really enjoyed it. Um yeah, so if there are any more questions, please, uh, drop them into the chat. Otherwise, we really appreciate ... Go ahead Natalie.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Well, thanks. I was just gonna tag on since we're just, we're getting accolades in the chat, not questions. So, thank you, everybody. But, I did want to add from my personal experience with this grant and implementing OER, I have, especially going through the students' responses and reading some of these remarks, I have really questioned some of my assumptions about pedagogy and use of materials in a way that I think is really valuable. So, when I first spoke about the assessment, I - remember I said, we think there's a benefit in reading materials but students don't. Like, overwhelmingly they just don't see the connection, and, um, and we questioned whether sometimes the student's responses were maybe just like misinformed or confused because some students would say, I was required to buy the textbook but then we never used it. And we thought well, did you never use it? Or, are you just not aware of how it was used? And so, I think it's really useful to take away from this, not just like the fact that we could be saving students money and stress and heartache, if we implemented these materials in the class, but to have a more conscious and deliberate approach to talking to our students about student learning objectives and how the reading materials will help them achieve those objectives and how the reading materials connect to their assignments. Like, I found myself this semester being very careful when giving student assignment guidelines to say, this is how chapter three is going to work to support your efforts because you're going to need to apply this theory or you're going to need to like be in conversation with a textbook author or whatever, um, and so I just want to say that I'm grateful um not only for having the opportunity to work with these wonderful people but also to have the opportunity to kind of like question my assumptions, and, and be become a better teacher as a result.

Thank, you Suzanne.

(Ryan Korstange)

Yeah, that is -- that's awesome. Uh, I have a lot of thoughts that come from that, but I'll, I'm sure, talk to you after this session because that's just really interesting. But yeah, the connection between the materials we use and how we ch... how we -- cheat -- teach is just really important. But, thank you all this has been just really provocative and fantastic, so I really appreciate your time today. Thank you all for attending, and, uh, I see no other questions so, I think we can be done. Thank y'all.

(Natalie Hoskins)

Thank you.

(Ryan Korstange)

We appreciate it.

(Katie Gruber)

Thank you very much.