Affordable Learning Georgia Affordable Materials Grants  
Transformation Grants Final Report

*(or Textbook Transformation Grants, if R17 or earlier)*

# General Information

**Date:** 1/20/2021

**Grant Round:** 15

**Grant Number:** 478

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

**Project Lead:** Scott Jacques

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

**Scott Jacques, Associate Professor, Criminal Justice and Criminology, sjacques1@gsu.edu**

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Marie Ouellet, Assistant Professor, **Criminal Justice and Criminology, mouellet@gsu.edu**

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers:**

Policing in America (CRJU 2110)

Social Science & the American Crime Problem (CRJU 2200)

Ethical Issues in Criminal Justice (CRJU 3060)

Statistical Analysis in Criminal Justice (CRJU 3610)

**Semester Project Began:** Spring 2020

**Final Semester of Implementation:** Fall 2020

**Total Number of Students Affected During Project:** 597

# Narrative

The pandemic presented unique challenges, to the say the least, to our transformations and instructional activities more broadly. Because of the pandemic, and as explained in section 3.B, we think it is ill-advised to engage in the normal interpretations found in ALG Transformation Final Reports. However, there are some things that are certain; i.e., facts, not perceptions. The major, undeniable outcome is that we successfully transformed four required courses to no-cost. In doing so, we saved our recent students, and future ones, a sum in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. A few years from now, that sum will exceed a million dollars. The major lesson learned is that even during a worldwide pandemic, our faculty has “what it takes” to transform the courses to no-cost. Once life goes back to normal, we will compare our redesigned courses’ outcomes to those from before the pandemic and transformation.

# Quotes

* The books being free was extremely helpful, and even more helpful with the tough times that the pandemic has brought.
* Having free books is good because I cannot—and most other students cannot afford—to pay $100 on top of tuition, student fees, and living costs. It’s not right that better-off people end up being better-off simply because they can afford a book so they got a good grade, while others cannot afford so they have to fail. [Edited for readability.]
* I enjoyed taking your class and reading the books. I especially enjoyed that the books were free. I didn't have to worry about fees, and it made it easier for everyone in the class to read, especially when there is always some people in groups that don't want to purchase the books. This made it easier for everyone to be on the right track in the class. [Edited for readability.]

# Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

## Uniform Measurements Questions

**Student Opinion of Materials**

**Was the overall student opinion about the materials used in the course positive, neutral, or negative?** Positive

Total number of students affected in this project: 597

* Positive: 84% of 148 number of respondents
* Neutral: 9% of 148 number of respondents
* Negative: 5% of 148 number of respondents

**Student Learning Outcomes and Grades**

**Was the overall comparative impact on student performance in terms of learning outcomes and grades in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?**

* Positive: Higher performance outcomes measured over previous semester(s)

**Student Drop/Fail/Withdraw (DFW) Rates**

**Was the overall comparative impact on Drop/Fail/Withdraw (DFW) rates in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?**

17% of students, out of a total 597 students affected, dropped/failed/withdrew from the course in the final semester of implementation.

* Neutral: This is the same percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s).

## Measures Narrative

The pandemic began while we were transforming our courses to no-cost. As we write this report, things have still not gone back to normal. Obviously, the pandemic had a dramatic impact on our courses. In our opinion, the effect is so massive that it is best not to interpret the outcomes of our transformations. Scientifically speaking, it is impossible – with the data available to us – to determine whether, how, and why our transformations, versus “pandemic life,” affected student outcomes. Below is a summary table of the major outcomes. Additional information is found in the zip file that we included with this final report.

**Table 1.** Summary of Major Outcomes

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pre-Transformation** | | | **Post-Transformation** | | |
|  | DWF | GPA | W | DWF | GPA | W |
| 2110 | 6.7% | 2.88 | 2% | 5.1% | 3.54 | 2% |
| 2200 | 16.8% | 3.10 | 7% | 37.9% | 3.07 | 25% |
| 3060 | 29.7% | 2.11 | 0% | 20.8% | 2.96 | 13% |
| 3610 | 26.5% | 2.30 | 3% | 31.0% | 3.00 | 24% |
| Unweighted average | 19.925% | 2.59 | 3% | 23.7% | 3.14 | 4% |

# Sustainability Plan

To explain our sustainability plan, we should address how the pandemic altered the plan in our application. Pre-pandemic, the transformation would have resulted in all of our department’s required courses being no-cost. By “all,” we mean every section. Now, there is a no-cost section of each required course (which is great!), but not all sections are no-cost. The pandemic stopped a general rollout of the no-cost versions for several reasons, including an unexpected rise in emergency work (e.g., moving seated courses to online) and preventing our team members from meeting with other instructors (e.g., PhD students, adjuncts) to familiarize them with the new materials.

Once the university goes back to pre-pandemic life, we will initiate the general rollout of the courses’ no-cost versions. This will be part of our department’s standardizations efforts, not mentioned in this document until here. It consists of a “blueprint” for each course that (1) shows when its no-cost version was, or will be, most recently created and delivered; (2) schedules, within two years, at least one faculty member and PhD student to update and otherwise improve the course; and, (3) schedules, within the next year, the updated version to be delivered. The process then repeats every three years. This sustainability plan ensures the maintenance and updating of our course materials.

# Future Affordable Materials Plans

This was a great experience for the team. ALG’s financial support, as you know, is crucial to motivating “faculty on the fence” to give transformations a try. All team members, with the exception of Scott Jacques, were new to the process. All of the transformations were successful; i.e., not only were the courses made no-cost, but the course goals and objectives were met too. All of us, therefore, are now certain that we are able to make our courses no-cost. All of us, moreover, are committed to making future preps no-cost. Beyond us, this learning experience has a tangible effect on our department colleagues. There is a vicarious effect. Now, about half of our faculty have personal experience in ALG-funded projects. Others of us have unilaterally made their courses no-cost. Soon, we believe, the entire faculty will have done so. And thus, eventually, the entire curriculum will be no-cost. (See prior section for further details.)

# Future Scholarship Plans

The team, frankly, is still in “crisis mode” with the pandemic ongoing. When things settle down, we will do a college- or university-level “Town Hall” in which we describe our perceptions and ideas going into the transformation; during it; and after. The purpose of this Town Hall will be to spur transformations by our colleagues. Please note that due to the pandemic, Scott Jacques cannot do as promised in the application: at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Criminal Justice Sciences, present the why, how, and effect of the department’s transformation. The meeting was cancelled.

# Description of Photograph (optional)

Because of the pandemic, we have not provided a group photo.