**Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants**

**Final Report**

*To submit your Final Report, go to the Final Report submission page on the ALG website:* [*http://affordablelearninggeorgia.org/site/final\_report\_submission*](http://affordablelearninggeorgia.org/site/final_report_submission)

*Final report submission requires four files:*

* *This completed narrative document*
* *Syllabus or syllabi* 
  + *(if multiple files, compress into one .zip folder)*
* *Qualitative/Quantitative Measures data files* 
  + *(if multiple files, compress into one .zip folder)*
* *Photo of your team or a class of your students w/ at least one team member, minimum resolution 800x600px* 
  + *(nearly all smartphones take photos larger than this size by default)*

*Follow the instructions on the webpage for uploading your documents. Based on receipt of this report, ALG will process the final payment for your grant. ALG will follow up in the future with post-project grantee surveys and may also request your participation in a publication, presentation, or other event.*

# General Information

**Date: 12/21/2018**

**Grant Round: 10**

**Grant Number: 339**

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

**Project Lead:**

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

Benjamin Wadsworth

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

Aural Skills I, MUSI 1111, Fall Semester Only

Aural Skills II, MUSI 1112, Spring Semester Only

Aural Skills III, MUSI 2111, Fall Semester Only

Aural Skills IV, MUSI 2112, Spring Semester Only

**Semester Project Began:**

Fall 2017

**Final Semester of Implementation:**

Fall 2018

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

120

# 1. Narrative

Key Outcomes

The primary objective of this project was to create an online textbook that provided the same content as our previous textbook for free. As our later quantitative and qualitative measures show, students maintained the similar overall scores, exam scores, and DFW rates as they did with the previous textbook, but had a much higher rating of the new online textbook in terms of its perceived quality and value.

The greatest accomplishment was being able to save over a hundred students the price of an expensive textbook that we could—with some effort—replicate. In addition, we were able to make the homework experience easier for our students because they could access the materials from the beginning of the course and from anywhere with a WIFI signal. Accordingly, over 68% of students took advantage of the fact they could access the website from both a laptop/tablet and cell phone.

The biggest challenge was being able to create recordings that had a high degree of clarity for the highest and lowest voices (which are required in the students’ homework), but still featured a high fidelity for the interior voices (which are required for chord analysis). In the beginning, we used a piano midi file that replicated the instrument we use on in-class exams. However, the lack of timbre difference made the isolation of outer voices difficult. In later edits, we changed the recordings to string and woodwind quartets, which feature a greater distinction in timbre and allows us to individually adjust the volume of the highest and lowest instruments. After this change, students still complained about hearing the bass voice, but this was largely due to them listening off laptop and/or cell phone speakers, which lack the subwoofers to hear the bass notes properly.

There were numerous benefits to my instruction and facilitation of the course. In terms of instruction, I could create recordings that perfectly aligned with my pedagogical goals. More specifically, the previous textbook tended to intermingle previous concepts in a way that overwhelmed the students and did not accurately represent normal music construction. In terms of course facilitation, I was able to assign homework from the beginning of the course, instead of having to wait until students received their textbooks. In addition, I could fix any issues/errors with the website with ease (normally in a matter of minutes).

The value of the instructional videos is harder to gauge. The main benefit of the instructional videos was to give guidance to non-university students or high-school teachers/students who were attempting to learn/teach aural skills for the first time. The benefit was hard to gauge because only one high school teacher reached out about using the materials. The secondary benefit of the videos was to reinforce the pedagogical concepts being taught in class. However, no student listed the videos as a beneficial feature in the student surveys.

Lessons Learned

Since we did not encounter that many issues in the creation or use of the website, we did not learn that many valuable lessons. That being said, this confirmed the value of creating free materials for students because it proved we were capable of generating pedagogical materials equivalent to textbooks, which ultimately saved the students money without diminishing their education.

# 2. Quotes

* Quotes from students:

1. “I liked the website version of the textbook because of the convenience of being able to use it wherever I am.”
2. “It was easy to use and was much more efficient than a textbook would have been.”
3. “The website was a great source for study as well as an inexpensive way to do homework.”

# 3. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

## 3a. Uniform Measurements Questions

*The following are uniform questions asked to all grant teams. Please answer these to the best of your knowledge.*

**Student Opinion of Materials**

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

Total number of students affected in this project: 120

* Positive: 92.86% % of 56 number of respondents
* Neutral: 7.14 % of 56 number of respondents
* Negative: 0% % of 56 number of respondents

*Notes:*

1. *A more detailed view of the student response is given in the “Summary of Student Surveys: Fall 2018”* (please compare to “Summary of Students Surveys: Fall 2017”)
2. *Our number of respondents is roughly half of the 120 students affected because our survey only involved one (of two) courses taught in Fall 2018 (Aural Skills III; not Aural Skills I). This is because we wanted to compare the students in this course to the last students who used the textbook, which was the Aural Skills III course in Fall 2017.*

**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?**

*Student outcomes should be described in detail in Section 3b.*

Choose One:

* \_\_\_ Positive: Higher performance outcomes measured over previous semester(s)
* X Neutral: Same performance outcomes over previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Negative: Lower performance outcomes over previous semester(s)

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

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

**Drop/Fail/Withdraw Rate:***Depending on what you and your institution can measure, this may also be known as a drop/failure rate or a withdraw/failure rate.*

0% of students, out of a total 38 students affected, dropped/failed/withdrew from the course in the final semester of implementation.

Choose One:

* \_\_\_ Positive: This is a lower percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
* \_X\_ Neutral: This is the same percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
* \_\_\_ Negative: This is a higher percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)

*Note:*

*This was not listed as a metric in our initial statement of qualitative and qualitative measures. However, I was able to compare the sections I have taught in the last two years.*

## 3b. Measures Narrative

*In this section, summarize the supporting impact data that you are submitting, including all quantitative and qualitative measures of impact on student success and experience. Include all measures as described in your proposal, along with any measures developed after the proposal submission.*

Quantitative Measures

The first quantitative measure we looked at were DFW rates, in which we compared two sections taught by the same professor in Fall 2017 and Fall 2018. As the grade summaries show, all students passed in both Fall 2017 and Fall 2018, which means the DFW rates are exactly the same. In addition, it shows that the overall scores for the classes were highly similar (within 1%) with Fall 2017 being slightly higher than Fall 2018. This score reflected the data found in our second quantitative measure, which compared dictation exam scores. Accordingly, these courses featured the same differences in scores with Fall 2017 being a fraction higher than Fall 2018.

Accordingly, we believe our online textbook was just as successful as our previous textbook in terms of teaching the material, but required less money from the students. We believe the slightly better scores in Fall 2017 can be attributed to the smaller classes sizes, which were roughly seven less students per class in Fall 2017 than Fall 2018.

Qualitative Measure

Our qualitative measure involved a comparison of student satisfaction surveys between Fall 2017 and Fall 2018, in which the surveys were constructed with the same questions. As our summaries show, students rated the online materials significantly higher than the textbook materials. That is, students graded on a 4.0 GPA system and the online materials were roughly a point (or an entire grade level) higher.

Accordingly, we believe our online textbook was more successful than the previous textbook in terms of student satisfaction. Not only did the students appreciate the low cost, they consistently rated the visual layout, the pedagogical materials, and the recordings better than the previous textbook.

# 4. Sustainability Plan

* We plan on continuing the use of the website in the future. My department will support the yearly upkeep for the website, which is roughly $100/year.
* We plan on updating the material for the harmonic dictation in Aural Skills II by generating the midi files with string quartet samples, instead of piano samples, to make the excerpts easier to hear.
* We have created multiple versions of the assignment materials, which means we can swap assignments in and out to dissuade students from cheating.

# 5. Future Plans

* This project has changed my perspective on selecting workbooks in the future. As an instructor, I do not like having to use workbook materials created by textbooks manufacturers because they are not perfectly aligned with the concepts I wish to teach. As a result, I often generate my own materials. This project has opened my eyes to the fact that I can simply formalize and polish my existing self-composed material and easily package it to my students for little or no cost. Accordingly, I am exploring getting a mini-grant for creating workbooks for my other courses in the future.
* Once I finish with a few pending articles in my specific discipline, I plan on promoting my textbook at OER conferences and music theory conferences that have specific pedagogical sessions.

# 6. Description of Photograph

* (Left) Dr. Jeff Yunek, Assistant Professor of Music Theory, Project Lead
* (Right) Dr. Benjamin Wadsworth, Associate Professor of Music Theory, Team Member