Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants

Final Report

Date: 5/26/17

Grant Number: 196

Institution Name(s): Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC)

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

Todd Mueller, Assoc. Professor of Performing and Visual Arts- tmueller@ggc.edu

Irina Escalante-Chernova, Assist. Professor of Performing and Visual Arts- iescalan@ggc.edu

Marc Gilley, Assoc. Professor of Performing and Visual Arts- mgilley@ggc.edu

Catherine Kilroe-Smith, former faculty at GGC. Resigned during grant implementation- cathykilroesmith@gmail.com

Rachael Fischer, Assist. Professor of Performing and Visual Arts, rfischer@ggc.edu

Elizabeth Whittenberg Ozment, Assist. Prof. of Music and Assist. Dean, University of Virgina College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, ewo5n@virginia.edu, former faculty at GGC, wrote the initial grant application and organized the initial team but was not involved in implementation

Project Lead: Began as Dr. Ozment, finished with Dr. Todd Mueller

Course Name(s) and Course Numbers: Music Appreciation- MUSC 1100 International

Semester Project Began: Spring 2016

Semester(s) of Implementation: Fall 2016, Spring 2017

Average Number of Students Per Course Section:

Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation:

Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation:

1. Narrative

Implementation of this grant was not carried out specifically following the guidelines of the proposal. Regardless; the goals were met and the results included new expertise, utilization of several new resources, and creation of new open-source content.

Two professors who left the college shortly after winning the grant in Spring 2016 led our initial research team. The first action plan, guided by their leadership/expertise, was to begin by compiling existing open-source resources. In Summer 2016 the remaining grant team executed this task. The result of this work was a list of resources that was primarily made up of subscription based content made available through the GGC library. Most of this content was not open-source.

We learned in this stage was that there are several open-source "Music Appreciation" textbooks available.   The problem that we encountered is that these texts were all primarily based upon European art ("classical") music. In an effort to prepare our students for the globalized culture of the 21st century GGC has implemented a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that is focused on "Internationalization of the Curriculum". For GGC Music Appreciation courses this goal manifests in a focus on content that is not limited to music of European or "Western" traditions. Instead, we teach with an ethno-musicological focus on the music traditions of many varied world cultures. Our research revealed no open-source text with similar content. The open source text that we did find was either not scholarly or too dissimilar from the content focus that we teach.

Because Music Appreciation textbooks include audio files we were also focused on finding listening examples that we could use in the classroom. Our research led us to several open-source resources that we initially compiled and utilized. These resources included tracks made available on Smithsonian Folkways, the National Archives, and older recordings that have become public domain. In Fall-semester 2016 incorporating these examples presented many problems ranging from technological limitations of websites resulting in inconsistent playback to having them disappear during the semester. To combat these issues some team members composed their own musical examples with which to teach students the elements of music.

Our two main issues; 1: lack of appropriate open-source texts available and 2: lack of usable open-source audio files, led us to change our action plan. Instead of compiling existing open-source text we resolved to write our own text and use existing library subscription resources in combination with free online streaming services to provide the students with audio files.

During Fall Semester 2016 (edited Spring 2017) Todd Mueller wrote a new text for use in the classroom (http://hdl.handle.net/10675.3/610743). This text was written in five modules/chapters. For GGC courses the text was made available to all students using the D2L Brightspace course shell for each section. We created a parent template containing the five modules in D2L. Each teacher can access the template and import the structure and content when building their sections of the course. Team members could utilize the files as they existed, add to them, or use alternate texts. The text was written largely without reference to specific examples of music. Instead, it offers an overview of concepts and ideas that instructors can use to support their own musical examples. The final result was that the text offered basic

content for each section while teachers individually customized their classes. This approach offers both a foundation and flexibility that is optimal for GGC.

In late Summer through the Fall 2016 (revised in Spring 2017) we also compiled a listening example module that could be shared within our D2L course management system. This was time consuming. We wanted to make sure that we did not violate any copyright. Our first step was to learn more about copyright in the classroom. Two of our team members became more knowledgeable about copyright issues by taking online courses on the subject that were recommended on the ALG website. After doing this it was determined that we wanted to use a majority of listening examples that were not open-source. For our audio files we utilized two different sources. Our primary source was Alexander Street, a password protected subscription service made available to all of our students through the GGC library. In our playlist module we included the links to forty-one audio files along with annotations and links to open source information about the music.

In addition we created a Spotify playlist of the forty-one audio files. This allowed the students to interface with the music in a way that is free and common to their experience. What we learned is that we could use this process to include varied and more listening examples than traditional textbooks offer. We can also use newer music that is copyright protected. This has become essential in teaching students how to analyze the music that they listen to in their own cultures. It has also created a relevance in the students' minds that helps them to engage in the content.

The primary goals of this project proposal were to:

1. Decrease the financial burden on students enrolled in MUSC 1100.
2. Increase student retention and completion rates in MUSC 1100.
3. Provide a no-cost-to-students model that can be adopted by other MUSC 1100 faculty.

This grant enabled us to offer 26 sections of MUSC 1100 with no student expense for textbooks. We were able to do this with no perceptible drop in retention and completion rates (over the short period of study). Most importantly we now have a no-cost-to-students model that allows GGC professors to teach to their expertise while adhering to the guidelines set for Music Appreciation content. We estimate that this will have long lasting positive effects on student engagement and therefore retention.

Despite all of the challenges that resulted from the personnel changes during this grants implementation the final team considered this grant implementation to be successful. The primary change that we would make if given the opportunity to repeat this process would be in our data collection and analysis.

2. Quotes-

"By using Spotify to study instead of a CD with pre-selected pieces on it, I was able to branch out and listen to music that I was learning about in class. I wasn't limited to only listening to what I was being tested on."

"Brilliant Idea! Saved us money, and study guides were very user friendly."

"I am glad I didn't have to waste money for a textbook, because I learned so much through open sources about music."

-All student quotes came from the open-ended post survey.

3. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

3a. Overall Measurements

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: 899

- Positive: 87% of 175 number of respondents
- Neutral: 10 % of 175 number of respondents
- Negative: 3% of 175 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?

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:

16% of students, out of a total 308 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)
- ___ Neutral: This is the same percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
- X Negative: This is a higher percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)

3b. Narrative

Enrollment, drop, and failure data was gathered from the grade book for each section taught as part of the grant implementation. The same data was gathered from the semester previous to the first one in which each individual professor implemented the no-cost-to students model. The courses did not always occur in the same semester because of the change in personnel on the grant team. The compiled data is included in Appendix A. The data was analyzed by team members to see if there was any affective changes in student failure rates and average grades that could be linked to the changed content. While the data suggests an overall increase in failures from 12% to 16% the team concluded that this is negligible and probably the result of external factors. We do not deny that there were "growing pains" in the first semester of implementation. These could also have resulted in the higher fail rates.

Comparison of final grades averages gathered at the end of the study revealed no significant change in performance by the students who remained engaged. Two team members

recorded no change at all in the average GPA (see Appendix A) while two team-members recorded slight decreases in average GPA.

The team implemented Likert-type surveys to gauge student interest and to gather feedback. There were three versions of the survey. The first was given to students in classes taught using textbooks purchased by the students. The survey was implemented to gauge student satisfaction with the textbooks as well as interest in no-cost options (see Appendix p 4). The second survey was offered to all students who took the class during the grant implementation. It was given on paper and asked the same questions as the third survey that was given using Google forms (see Appendix p 5-). These surveys revealed the positive response of the students to the no-cost course content. We also included an open comment section in which students were able to write specific feedback.

Based on student written responses a vast majority of students appreciate avoiding the expense of textbooks. In music appreciation textbooks the listening examples tend to drive up cost. The average cost of the required textbooks used at GGC is $78.44. If we calculate that as a saved expense for the 899 students who took our class during this project than that means we have already saved GGC students over $70,500.   This is a substantial number that only looks to increase as we move teach future sections with the no-cost-to students materials. It is no wonder that the majority of student responses were supportive of this effort.

Other factors:

While there was a slightly higher percentage of student failures in the courses taught utilizing the no-cost-to student models there were many extraneous factors that could have led to the increase. Of note is that in the Fall 2016 semester several sections were part of block scheduling that grouped many students who were also enrolled in learning support classes. While this does not always equal lower classroom grades anecdotal observations show that sometimes sections tend to earn lower grades on average. Another factor to consider is that several sections were taught as overloads for the professors. GGC is a dynamic institution that is currently changing with each year. For this reason, it is hard to make definitive observations about general student performance without considering factors related to the growth.

Because we did not have a clear understanding/vision for how we would report the results of this study we were not thorough or consistent with data analysis and collection. This is the primary way in which we would improve this effort if given the opportunity to repeat. This has been a valuable learning experience for several team members.

4. Sustainability Plan

In the future, all resources will be available to GGC faculty teaching MUSC 1100 through our Brightspace template and through links provided on our Library Research Guides page.

http://libguides.ggc.edu/MUSIC1101-Mueller

These resources can be continually updated with the addition of supplemental literature and music.

The four professors who were involved in the implementation of the grant all plan to continue offering MUSC 1100 sections without textbooks. Moving forward we will train others and eventually we hope that all GGC Music Appreciation students will take the course without paying for the textbook.

The textbook written by Mueller is available on GGC's General Space. It is the hope of the author that it will be reviewed. Continual editing is possible and inevitable.

http://hdl.handle.net/10675.3/610743

The spotify playlist for the course can be accessed at this link:

https://open.spotify.com/user/1259544280/playlist/1XVmjoI8Z4aB9TOBLvwAcN

5. Future Plans

The world of a textbook with accompanying compact disc is going away. For this project our team has created a way to function in the new technological environment without sacrificing quality and at no cost to students. Through this process we have rebuilt our classes and have each learned to use new delivery methods. This has resulted in a system at GGC in which professors teaching music appreciation can teach to their strengths while conforming to the necessary content.

This new system can easily be utilized in future sections at GGC. We plan on offering the option to new faculty teaching our MUSC 1100 courses. Our hope is that each person will help us revise and expand the content. By creating the content we have learned new ways to connect with students. This will help us to engage a new generation of students who are used to accessing music for free.

We foresee that the methods we used will be transferrable to other similar courses taught at GGC.

6. Description of Photograph

Photograph- team members from left to right: Marc Gilley, Rachael Fischer, Irina Escalante-Chernova, Todd Mueller (project leader)