Economic Justice for Students: One Way Educators Can Address Textbook Costs

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School of Social Work
Textbook costs are an economic injustice due to the issues of access and accessibility.
Estimated Undergraduate Budgets 2017-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tuition &amp; Fees</th>
<th>Room &amp; Board</th>
<th>Books &amp; Supplies</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tr>
<td>2-year</td>
<td>$3,570</td>
<td>$8,400</td>
<td>$2,410</td>
<td>$1,420</td>
<td>$1,780</td>
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<td>$17,580</td>
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<td>4-year</td>
<td>$9,970</td>
<td>$10,800</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>$1,170</td>
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<td>$25,290</td>
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Slide provided by William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation
CPI: Educational Books and Supplies vs. Home Prices vs. CPI: All Items
1978 to 2010

Indexes = 100 in 1978

Sources: BLS and Census

mjperry.blogspot.com

Slide provided by William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation
Consequences…

• 65% of college students have decided against buying textbook.
• 48% factored textbook costs into deciding which/how many classes to take.
• 30% are using financial aid to pay for textbooks.

U.S. Public Interest Research Group
https://uspirg.org/reports/usp/fixing-broken-textbook-market
https://studentpirgs.org/reports/sp/covering-cost
In Maryland…

• Students pay over $223 million annually on textbooks.
• Per course average roughly $120-150 (large range).
• Community college tuition and fees per credit hour is $142 or $426 per 3-credit course.
• 33.3% of students receive Pell Grants.

MHEC 2017 Data Book
Within the SU School of Social Work…
Cost of Textbooks

BASW Program
• $1438.20

MSW Program
• Traditional Program- $2,824.85
• Advance Standing- $1,666.40
(Electives courses add $145-180)
Professors have little ability to control the course tuition or room and board costs; however, they do have control over the required readings assigned in their courses (Martin, et al., 2017).
Free teaching, learning and research materials

Reside in the public domain under an open license

Alternative (OAER) = there is a charge (much lower than traditional textbook costs)
Non-Traditional Textbook Option
• Course specific and focused material
• Supplemented by videos and assignments located in the course LMS

Createspace.com as Tool
• Utilizing a web-based software program, Createspace, we were able to develop our own workbook and have it self-published.
• Global distribution
• Inexpensive and not dependent on bookstore
The Study

The focus
• Evaluating the impact of a non-traditional text option on the learning experience of students enrolled in an undergraduate social work course

Methods
• Participants completed an online survey over the course of two academic years (2016 and 2017)
  • Both multiple choice and open ended questions
• N=36 (2016)
• N=46 (2017)
• Total of 82 participants
# Who Participated

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Fall 2016 n=36 Total</th>
<th>Fall 2017 n=46 Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1 (2.8%)</td>
<td>2 (4.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35 (97.2%)</td>
<td>44 (95.7%)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Fall 2016 n=36 Total</th>
<th>Fall 2017 n=46 Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>14 (38.9%)</td>
<td>20 (43.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>14 (38.9%)</td>
<td>10 (21.7%)</td>
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<td>31-40</td>
<td>5 (13.9%)</td>
<td>8 (17.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>41 and over</td>
<td>3 (8.3%)</td>
<td>8 (17.4%)</td>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Fall 2016 n=36 Total</th>
<th>Fall 2017 n=46 Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury Campus</td>
<td>30 (83.3%)</td>
<td>32 (69.6%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satellite</td>
<td>5 (13.9%)</td>
<td>11 (23.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMUC</td>
<td>1 (2.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>
Initial Findings: Year One and Year Two

What specific components were the most beneficial to your learning experience in this course?

- **60% (p=.000)** of participants indicated that they felt the workbook was beneficial to their learning in the course.

- In addition, **42% (p=.000)** of participants felt that both the workbook activities coupled with in-class activities and the supplemental videos were beneficial to their learning in the course.
Initial Findings

The cost of textbooks is often the major reason why I do not purchase them for my classes.

Over 40% ($p=.000$) of participants strongly agreed and agreed that the price of their textbooks is a major factor when considering whether or not to buy books for classes.
Initial Findings

Compared to other courses that utilize traditional textbooks, I am more likely to read a workbook like the Basic Skills workbook.

Over 70% ($p=.000$) of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they were more likely to read and use a workbook like the one we created for our course.
Initial Findings

I found the language and organization of the Basic Skills workbook easier for me to understand and use than what is in some of my traditional textbooks.

Over 70% ($p=0.000$) of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the non-traditional text option was easier to use and understand compared to their traditional textbooks.
Overview of the Findings

• Students liked the workbook more than a traditional textbook
• Students found the workbook to be convenient and affordable
• Students liked that the workbook was straight to the point and short, but wanted more in depth information about the subjects covered
  – Add more information but keep the workbook smaller and more concise than a traditional textbook
  – Add vocab words and definitions
• Students liked having examples and supplementary material
  – Add more examples in the book and try to improve the existing ones
  – Put links in the book for videos
**Continue:**

• Utilizing workbook
• Surveying students
• Adapting workbook based on feedback every summer

**Next Steps**

**Moving Forward:**

• Create updated videos (funding is needed!)
• Potential for OER
Open Educational Resources

What is currently available for social work professors?
OER Examples

SOWK Classes at SU

SOWK Research Textbook

SOWK310 workbook

OER
Resources

- Open Social Work Education
- OER Commons
- SU Library Guide
- MERLOT
- Prof2prof
- M.O.S.T Initiative
- Creative Commons
Creative Commons Licensing

- Creative Commons Video

- Freely Available and widely utilized!

What does the license on this Presentation mean?
Creative Commons Licenses explained, at a glance.

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*Disclaimer: This document by its nature cannot be comprehensive and is provided to assist clients to clarify and identify legal issues on which they should seek legal advice. Please consult professional legal staff for advice specific to your situation.
Course Discussion when considering OER

- How could OER be used in this course?
- Does something already exist for this content?
- What could we implement in this course?
- How could we implement it in this course?
  - What resources do we need?
  - What is the timeline?
Questions? Comments?
Questions?

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To view these slides, please follow this link:
References


