Open Educational Resources Sub-Committee Update

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by Jennifer Peters, OER Sub-Committee Chair

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Open educational resources have been developed and used for over twenty years. Their impact has been felt worldwide but never as much as in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic really brought to light how access to open educational resources in digital format can impact a course. Aside from day-one access for all students, the cost-saving benefits for all students, and the increased course materials flexibility for faculty, many students with disabilities will find accessing their text doesn't come with long wait lists for converting their material to an accessible format. Such processes can take weeks to months. Students have the added benefit of printing their texts or using it directly on their computers, tablets, or smartphones. For those with non-visible disabilities, this means they have less to carry around campus, taking weight off their backs for those with chronic pain issues.

At Seneca, we have invested time and resources into integrating open and no-additional-cost materials into courses across the college for years, and this year saw Seneca's open text adaptation initiative grow even further.

Grants for Adapted Open Texts 2020-2021
Two more rounds of grants were offered in 2020. These forthcoming text adaptations will be piloted in 2021:

- Project Management, currently being adapted by **Shelly Morris** for use in MAN400, PMP200, BAB905, and IBS603

- Nursing Leadership and Management will be adapted by **Siobhan Bell** for use in all NLM courses

- Technical Communication will be adapted by **Robin Potter** for use in TEC400

Related Open Text Projects
In addition to the open text adaptation grants, there are many faculty using open texts, adapting open materials, creating their own materials, or finding other novel ways to provide

their students with free, high-quality, customized course materials:

- Communication at Work was adapted by **Tom Bartsiokas** and **Robin Potter** for EAC594 – it was adapted and then further improved with the addition of H5P interactive activities. Also of note, **Anna Cappuccitti** from the Fashion Business program adapted the Communication at Work book for her fashion students. What a fabulous example of extending the great work already done at Seneca!

- Anatomy and Physiology was adopted in multiple courses in FAAHS, plus numerous other nursing courses are using either open texts or open materials to replace or supplement their core course content.

- **Sandra Wellman** adapted the OpenStax macroeconomics text for her students in BUS400.

- When the COM101 and COM111 courses were designed to replace EAC149 and EAC150, all textbooks were removed and replaced with a robust reading bank of free or library-subscribed materials. As well, a fully developed online course was created (with modules that can be used for hybrid and in person-delivery as well).

- LSO441 and LSO500, both taught by **Nancy La Monica**, are using open texts.

- Many programs in the School of Information Technology Administration & Security and the School of Software Design and Data Science have used open materials for many years. There are multiple examples listed on the Faculty Guide to Open Educational Resources: Seneca OER Examples. Many of these resources were written and built by Seneca faculty to ensure the course materials assigned to their students were customized specifically to this course experience.

- **Debi Tziatis** from Seneca Business was a trailblazer back in 2014 when she collaborated with the library to create a text replacement for PPS100. This text replacement uses free, publicly-accessible materials that are high quality and carefully curated for students.

- eTextbook research – as part of the Au Large project, **Laurel Schollen** is conducting research to examine the current state of texts and learning materials as we move forward into a more virtual Seneca.

User Experience Assessment

The Teaching & Learning Centre conducted a second user experience survey with students in winter and summer 2020 semesters about their perceptions of open texts in their class and while the response was generally positive, the response rate was extremely low. The winter response rate was especially low because of the COVID-19 pivot interrupting any possibility for data collection. Below are the results we were able to collect:
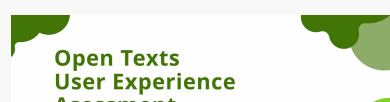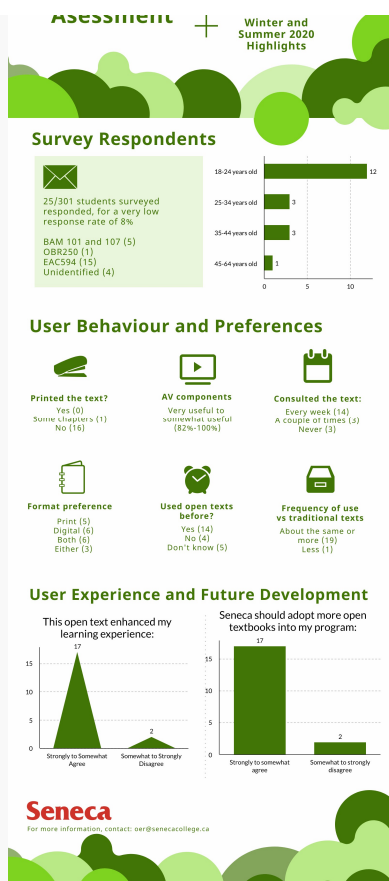
Open Texts Infographic for Winter and Summer 2020 Student Survey (.png)

Click for the full infographic or contact jennifer.peters@senecacollege.ca for a text version.

Open Text Adaptation Usage

From January 2020 to December 2020, these are the pageviews and unique pageviews* for adapted open texts from Google Analytics. While it's difficult to draw any concrete conclusions from usage statistics, it's clear the texts are being accessed multiple times online by the students in the courses.

Book	Primary Course	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews
Communications at Work	EAC594	88,715	63,730
Communication at Work – Fashion	RBC152	2,254	1,500
Operations Management – diploma	OPM400	68,952	52,267
Operations Management – degree	HST400	10,258	8,012
Organizational Behaviour	OBR250	6,022	5,071
Introduction to Business	BAM101	37,659	27,620
Introduction to Business with marketing	BAM107	4,920	3,658
Macroeconomics	BUS400	7,173	4,496

*Pageviews vs. Unique Pageviews

A *pageview* is defined as a view of a page on your site that is being tracked by the Analytics tracking code. If a user clicks reload after reaching the page, this is counted as an additional pageview. If a user navigates to a different page and then returns to the original page, a second pageview is recorded as well.

A *unique pageview* aggregates pageviews that are generated by the same user during the same session. A *unique pageview* represents the number of sessions during which that page was viewed one or more times.

Cost Savings

Below is a sampling of cost savings in various courses. It is very difficult to accurately estimate cost savings, as it is impossible to guess how many students would have purchased the text, how many would have purchased at a discount or at full price, and how many would have rented, borrowed from a library, or shared costs with another student.

One formula offered by BCcampus recommends estimating a high and low cost savings. We will use the cost of the previous text multiplied by half the number of students for the low estimate, and multiplied by three quarters for the high estimate.

Course	Previous Text	Fall 2019	Winter 2020	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Low Estimate	High Estimate
BAM101	$164	1,700	1,241	985	1,273	$426,318	$639,477
BAM107	$164	38	0	70	40	$12,136	$18,204
OBR250	$179	78	650	550	590	$167,186	$250,779
RBC152	$100	n/a	n/a	n/a	70	$3,500	$5,250
RBC155	$100	n/a	n/a	n/a	15	$750	$1,125
EAC594	$106	1,300	1,165	956	1,600	$266,113	$399,170
OPM400	$167	191	250	160	358	$80,077	$120,115
HST400	$167	n/a	70	0	115	$15,448	$23,171
COM101/111*	$60	8,258	4,429	1,470	7,136	$638,790	$958,185
PPS100	$40	499	477	336	452	$35,280	$52,920
Totals						$1,645,597	$2,468,396

*As there was not a standard text in the previous EAC149/150 courses that COM101/111 replaced, we used $60 as the cost of the previous text; this is the approximate mid-point between the reported range of $20-$112.

This results in a cost savings of between $1,645,597 and $2,468,396 for textbooks for students in these courses from September 2019 to December 2020.

Reflection and Future Directions

The past year has presented numerous challenges for the entire Seneca community. But the relief that was felt by the faculty who adapted or developed their open texts pre-COVID19 was evident. The nature of open materials allows for flexibility and seamless transition to the online environment. As Seneca moves forward into a post-COVID education environment, further expansion of open materials in high-enrollment courses seems like a valuable investment.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about any of the projects mentioned, please visit our online Faculty Guide to Open Educational Resources and Other Alternatives for Textbooks (Open Educational Resources) or contact us at oer@senecacollege.ca.

View the March 2021 issue of the Academic Newsletter.

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