Challenges and opportunities: Open Educational Resources (OERs) at McGill University

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April 28, 2017

This report was sponsored by the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU) as a part of the SSMU Library Improvement Fund.

Contents

Executive Summary

Background:
Open Educational Resources (OERs) are teaching and learning resources that are freely available and are often released under an open license so that they may be further adapted. OERs have largely grown out of enthusiasm about the potential of technology to increase the accessibility of education and offer new modes of pedagogy for educators. Interest in Open Education has grown across North America recently, especially from students who feel they no longer can afford the cost of course materials. For example, over the last decade textbook prices have increased by 88%, which is four times the inflation rate, and markedly higher than the 63% increase in tuition.[1]

OERs are seeing an ever-growing investment by governments and educational and private institutions who seek to create, maintain, and disseminate OERs. In Canada, governmental support for OERs has been found in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. BC's Open Textbook Project has successfully saved students an estimated 3.6 - 4.2 million dollars across 32 different participating institutions since 2012.[2] The success of the project has arguably sparked greater interest in neighbouring provinces.

Purpose:
Sponsored by the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU), the report "Challenges and Opportunities: Open Educational Resources (OERs) at McGill University," provides a comprehensive review of the benefits and concerns regarding OERs, existing OER initiatives in North America, and their potential application at McGill. The report argues that the two primary reasons McGill should invest in the development and implementation of OERs on campus are that they improve access to education and offer a new, flexible pedagogical tool.

Findings:
By incorporating evidence from other university case studies, academic papers, and a survey conducted with over 130 McGill students, the report found the following:

1. Students spend an average of $580/year on course material (notably lower than the $1000 McGill suggests they budget).[3] This discrepancy is not because textbooks cost less than expected but rather that students are seeking alternatives to purchasing textbooks new.
    a. Science students will often pay nearly double than their counterparts in the Arts.
2. Due to their high costs, students will frequently go without (required) course material.
3. Students are willing to use both legal and illegal methods to obtain cheaper/free course material.

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[1] Senack, Ethan. "Fixing the Broken Textbook Market: How Students Respond to High Textbooks Costs and Demand Alternatives," The Student PIRGs, January 2014. P. 7. http://www.studentpirgs.org/reports/sp/fixing-broken-textbook-market
[2] "Open Textbook Stats." BCcampus/OpenEd. Web. https://open.bccampus.ca/open-textbook-stats/ Accessed: April 27th, 2017.
[3] "Calculate your costs." Scholarships and Student Aid McGill. Web. http://www.mcgill.ca/studentaid/finances/cost Accessed: April 27th, 2017.

4. Students are worried about the effects of inconsistent access to course material on their university success.
5. Students are interested in seeing OERs in more classes not only because of their affordability but also the flexibility they provide by having both digital and low-cost print formats available.

On the flipside, educators expressed a variety of reasons why they have ***not*** used OERs in their classrooms. These have included:

1. Not knowing what they are.
2. Confusion over ownership and licensing (e.g. "What is an Open License?").
3. The time burden of finding and implementing OERs in their classrooms.
4. Lack of recognition by the institution for efforts to improve course material accessibility.

However, in acknowledging the aforementioned concerns, the report highlights how educators may overcome these issues with adequate support, either by their host institution or in collaboration with government programs. Moreover, the report argues that there are in fact many benefits for educators (and not just students!). These include:

1. The ability to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs.
2. Keeping course materials update-to-date with the most recent and relative information.
3. Higher engagement by students.
4. Reducing waste by going digital.

"Challenges and Opportunities: Open Educational Resources (OERs) at McGill University," ***recommends***:

1. The SSMU and McGill University should engage in further data collection and information on OERs and affordable course content at McGill.
    a. This should be done in order to better understand where OERs may have the most impact for students and educators (e.g. what faculty or specific courses could be initial OER candidates)
2. The SSMU and other student associations on-campus should engage in greater student advocacy efforts towards OERs. This would include educating the McGill community on the concerns of course material accessibility, what OERs are and how they can be utilized on campus.
3. Increase the amount of institutional support for OERs on-campus through:
    a. Partnerships with the Library and Teaching & Learning Services
    b. Adoption of OER policies by the University and/or individual departments/faculties
    c. Increasing on-campus incentives to adopt/create OERs, including but not limited to financial incentives, recognition awards, and/or time-off for faculty interested in employing/developing OERs

These recommendations encourage collaboration between different campus units and communities in order to achieve these goals and illustrates a holistic approach to greater OER adoption and use at McGill.

Conclusion:

In sum, the report argues that McGill University should become a more active participant in the Open Education movement. Encouraging OERs on campus reduces the course material cost burden for students and fosters new teaching and learning technologies and skills for educators. While suggesting *preliminary* action to achieve greater OER participation, the report demonstrates how campus-wide support for OERs can achieve long-term objectives of accessible education and more innovative and open teaching.

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Introduction and Definition

Open Education Resources (OERs) are defined as "teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their **free use** and **re-purposing** by others*"* (William and Flora Hewlett Foundation). *OERs are a sister* concept to Open Access Publishing, which refers making scholarly research publications freely available (Butcher 5). OERs can include: "...full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge" (Atkins 8). Additionally, all such material hold an "open license" such as a Creative Commons License. Open licensing generally has three aims: retaining acknowledgement of the author, enabling sharing possibilities, while simultaneously restricting commercial activity and adaption (if needed) (Butcher 8). Therefore, while material is made accessible to other educators, students and the public, the creator still has rights over its (re)use. Butcher sums OERs as, "an educational resource that incorporates a licence that facilitates reuse, and potentially adaptation, without first requesting permission from the copyright holder," (5).

History

One of the first recognized uses of an Open Education Resource program was created by Dr. Baraniuk from Rice University in 1999. OpenStax (then called Connexions) was designed to keep educators up-to-date on new material, collaborate, and explore work by other users, while doing so freely via the web (Johnson 16). According to OpenStax's website, today they serve millions of users *per month* while maintaining a free space through philanthropic donations and

Rice University's continued support. In addition to OpenStax, MIT's OpenCourseWare (OCW) program, which was announced in 2001, has been one of the leading models for the development of OERs (Atkins 8; Johnson 15). MIT's basic premise was to make all course material available free-of-charge online (MIT OpenCourseWare - About), thereby sharing knowledge production while reducing overlap in teaching (Johnson 15) and improving consistency and quality of learning materials (Atkins 9-10). Shortly after the launch of both programs, UNESCO began promoting OCW across developing regions in hopes of improving access to education. According to Johnson, it was during one of UNESCO's forums in 2002 that the term "OER" was brought into public discourse (16), igniting the discussion and development of future OERs. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has been at the forefront in these discussions and development, having hosted their own forums concerning OERs (Johnson 15), providing significant grants for the creation of more programs, and following up with reports of the OER movement to date (see Atkins).

Today there is an abundance of OERs, some of which can be found individually published by their author, but more often they are found within OER databases and websites, tied into a network of other OERs. OpenStax and MIT's OCW still remain active, with new course materials added every year.

Motivation

The movement towards OERs is multifaceted. For some investors like, the Hewlett Foundation, the interest is in making education more accessible, for others, like MIT and Rice University, it is to reduce redundancy, enable educators and researchers to share more effectively, and improve the quality of educational materials. Furthermore, there is a trend in linking OERs to more affordable (and thus, more accessible) education, especially at the

postsecondary level. In British Columbia, the Open Textbook Project was launched in 2012, as a way to directly reduce textbook costs for students (BCcampus OpenEd). Following their initiative, the OER movement is slowly making its way across Canada with Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario governments all investing in Open Educational Resources to various degrees (for information on these programs see page 36-39).

Open Educational Resources are proving to be way to better connect researchers, educators, and students in efficiently creating and using material. These materials can be continuously improved and updated, while concurrently providing more educational opportunities for students to actively engage with learning materials through its increased accessibility. In illustrating the potential for OERs in our own educational environment, **this report will examine feedback and experiences from both students and educators at McGill University while situating these experience within the greater North American context.**

The report is divided into four main sections: *Student Experience*, *Faculty Information*, *Current OER Initiatives and Incentive Programs*, and *Recommendations*. *Student Experience* will examine student issues pertaining to textbook affordability as well as common strategies to deal with rising textbook costs; it will additionally discuss the results of a McGill student survey on OERs administered in Fall 2016. *Faculty Information* will discuss common barriers, as well as the benefits, to OER adoption on-campuses. *Current OER Initiatives and Incentives* outlines approaches to encourage OER adoption and use at North American post-secondary institutions. Finally, the report will conclude with a set of recommendations for the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU), and the McGill administration, with regards to the potential implementation of OERs at McGill University.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Introduction: Rising Textbook Costs

Although estimates vary by institution the average cost students can expect to spend on 'books and supplies' in an average year ranges between $1000-1500 (Financial Consumer Agency of Canada; "Tuition and Fees"; "Textbook FAQs"; "WHAT DOES A YEAR COST?"; "Typical Costs."). Over the course of the average four-year degree, that would result in expenditures in the range of $4000-6000. Since 1975, textbooks costs have increased by 812% adding additional pressure to student debt in Canada (Jhangiani qtd. in Yano). In the United States, students are faring no better, with the September 2016 report of the Student Public Interest Research Group noting that in the last decade textbook prices have increased by 88% (this is four times the inflation rate, and markedly higher than the 63% increase in tuition (Senack et al., 7)).

The increasing costs of textbooks across Canada and the United States is becoming a concern beyond financial matters. As students begin to opt-out of buying textbooks (especially required material) due to cost they are risking *consistent* access to course material which is needed for required readings, participation in class, studying for midterms, practice problems, and/or referencing for term papers. Thus, the price of textbooks is not only affecting a student's financial situation, but potentially hindering their ability to fully succeed in their course. Furthermore, as Jhangiani notes (qtd. In Yano) some students will simply opt-out of registering for a course, or take fewer courses altogether because of the cost. Students are also continuing to resist these costs by partaking in a diverse range of activities (both legal and illegal), which include: reselling textbooks, bootlegging and downloading material online, and trading and sharing notes and course material.

To better understand some of these issues a student survey was undertaken at McGill University in the Fall 2016 semester. Over 130 students, primarily enrolled in undergraduate Arts and/or Science degrees, responded to the McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey which asked questions related to textbook accessibility. Financial accessibility was the primary concern, although the survey also probed how students access and find their course material (e.g. online, through the library, in print editions, etc.). Results from the survey have been incorporated into the following section "Student responses to textbook affordability" (see also *Box 1* for an overview). For the full survey questionnaire see the Appendix.

At McGill, students are also employing many of the same strategies as students at other institutions to cope with unaffordable course material costs. Through the Student Textbook Experience Survey distributed to students in the McGill community, students provided feedback on where, and how, they accessed their course materials, as well as provided suggestions for making course material more accessible. To keep in mind privacy and the diversity of experiences, most questions were made optional but were targeted at understanding:

1. the cost of course material on-campus,
2. how students access their course material, and
3. whether students have had any experience with OERs at McGill.

The survey received feedback from:

- 134 students,
    - 129 of whom are current undergraduates,
- 11 different faculties (primarily Arts and/or Science).

Box 1: *Overview of the McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey*

Student Responses to Textbook Affordability

There are five primary ways students are coping with rising textbook costs:

1. Seeking alternative editions
2. Textbook rentals
3. Pirating and copy-sharing

4. Alternatives to buying course material
5. Advocacy

The section below will provide further information on each of these strategies.

1. Alternative Editions

One common strategy students employ is to seek alternative editions to the prescribed course material. Two prominent examples of this would be seeking older editions, which may be bought second hand and/or cheaper than the latest version; or purchasing e-versions of the course material which can also be significantly cheaper than the print edition. For example, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Canada, offers 90% of their textbooks in digital format (Bascaramurty). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate where McGill students get their textbooks from as well as their preferred strategies for seeking alternatives.

Both strategies have pitfalls though. Firstly, older editions or alternative editions (e.g. international vs. domestic) may not include all the material the instructor wishes to use, whether because the alternative is out-of-date, or the formatting differs from the original. Secondly, electronic versions often come with an expiry date (normally 180 days after purchase) which limits the time which the material is usable. Furthermore, there is the issue of access-codes which are not also available when buying second hand or in alternative editions (access-codes are passwords to additional online content for the textbook; this often includes required

exercises, readings, and/or practice exams; thus, depending on how this material is utilized in a course, not having the access code can cause significant issues for students).

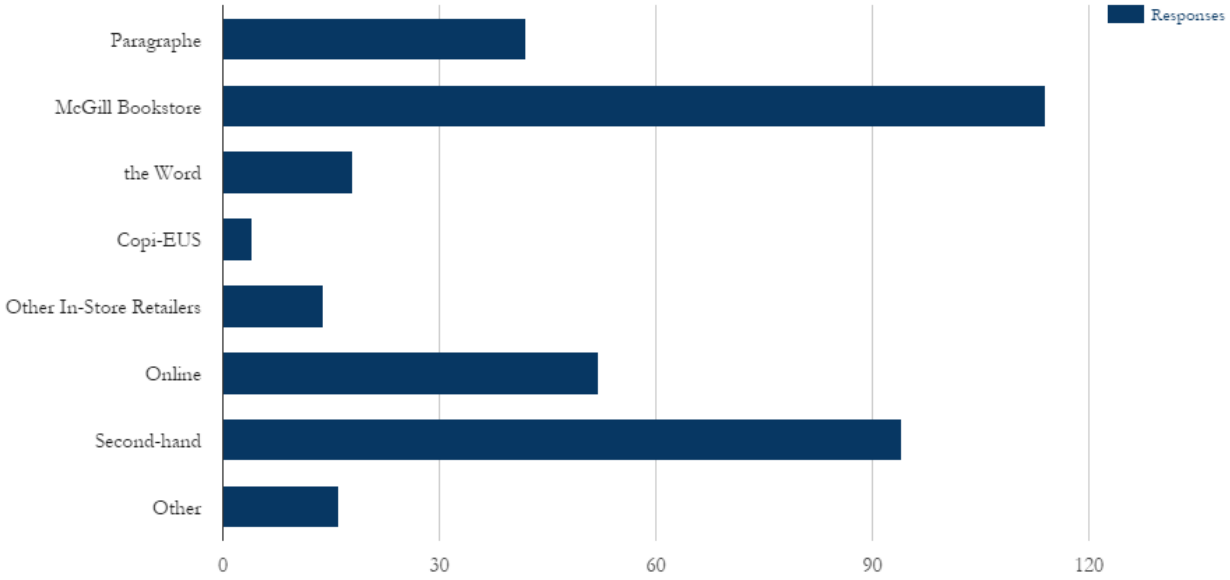


Figure 1: In the McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey, when students were asked **where** they obtain their course material from, the two most popular methods/locations were overwhelming the McGill Bookstore (85%) and second-hand sources (70%). Other options, such as online retailers, and other bookstores also were popular but notably used by less than 40% in any of these categories.

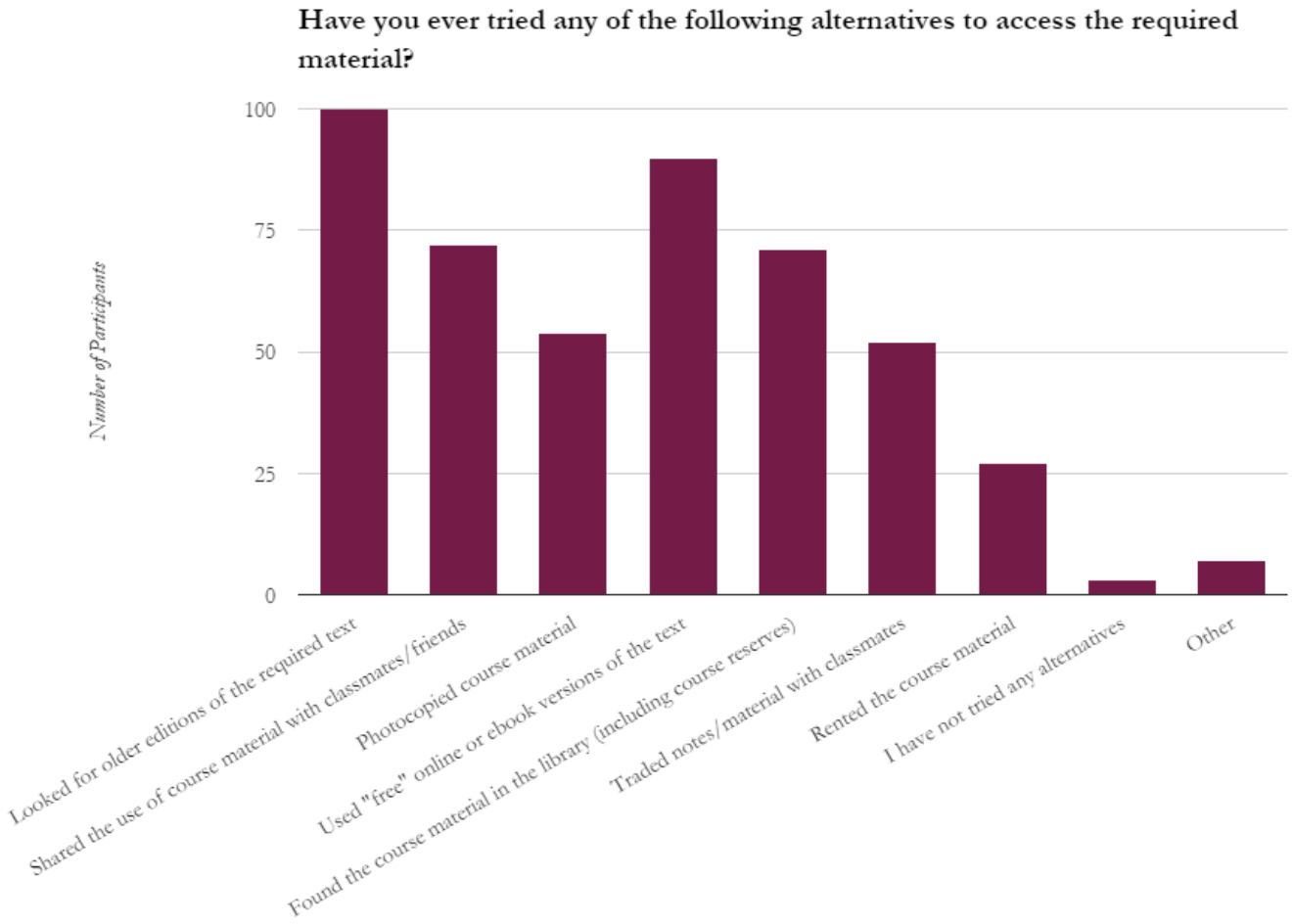


Figure 2: In the McGill Student Textbook Experiences Survey respondents were asked whether they have used any method(s), other than buying their course material from the prescribed retailer (e.g. the McGill Bookstore, or online). Of the 134 responses over 76 % said they had looked for older editions*. Another paid-alternative was through course material rentals, although like students at other campuses, this was a relatively small percentage (only about 20% of participants selected this response).

*This is consistent with the previous number of 70% located in Figure 1 that said they bought second-hand resources (presumably not everyone who searches from second-hand option, ends up buying one).

2. Textbook rentals

Short-term access via textbook rental programs is another common alternative for students. Many university bookstores offer this as an option to students, as well as companies like Amazon.com. Much like the UBC Book Exchange, savvy students have set up their own networks of textbook rentals. Back in 2011, *the Globe and Mail* (Bascaramurty) listed a few textbook rental programs, like BigMama.ca in Vancouver and textbookrental.ca based in the GTA (note: both have since shut down). Textbook rentals are appealing as a quick solution, but many students and commentators have noted that rentals may often be more money than buying an used edition of the same textbook.

3. Pirating and Copy-Sharing

Pirating, torrenting and copy-sharing are also methods which students use to avoid the burden of textbook costs. In 2011, the Montreal police seized 2,700 counterfeit textbooks which were part of a growing trend of black market textbook deals on the raise in North America (Bascaramurty). The illegal textbook sharing market has since continued to be the focus of numerous groups. A *Maclean's* article from 2013 cited examples from students across Canada who participate in illegally downloading their textbooks. The Book Industry Study Group also released statistics in 2010 noting the increase in, "students accessing textbooks from 'unauthorized websites,'" (Lepore). This is consistent with students' own observation in campus newspapers (e.g. *The Peak* - "The End of Textbooks". *The Ryersonian*, "F**k Resellers: Ryerson's illegal ebook ring seeks to skirt textbook costs," *The Marlet*, "TextbookBroke campaign pushes for lower textbook costs"). At Ryerson University, a website created by students, called, 'f**kreseller.ca,' became a popular tool to access textbooks online, free-of-

charge. However as noted in *The Ryersonian*, the website's activity was illegal. It appears the exposure and backlash in regard to its legality caused the creators to shut it down. However, through informal networks and word-of-mouth, students are compiling lists of websites from which to download textbooks and books. One article by *The Washington Post* cited a Tumblr blog as an example of how students organize and share information for pirating, which listed numerous pirating sites, and encouraged readers to further share the post. Beyond news headlines, one can quickly Google "textbook downloading sites" and come up with blogs, social media posts and entire sites giving access to free PDFs of normally expensive textbooks. While the sharing of textbooks in this manner is illegal, it is evident that students are using this as a means to enable their education.

McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey: Alternatives

What was the most telling indicator of how problematic course-material cost can be for students, was the popularity and openness in seeking free alternatives and ones which may be potentially legally ambiguous. Below are a few examples of how McGill students look outside conventional routes to access their course materials:

- 55% shared the use of course material with friends/classmates
- 41% photocopied course material
- 68.9% used "free" online or ebook versions of the text
- 54% found the course material in the library (including course reserves)
- 39.7% traded notes/material with classmates
- 7 participants wrote under "Other":
    - Buy notes
    - Internet downloads
    - Downloaded illegal PDFs and scanned chapters in the library
    - Torrenting, downloading illegally etc
    - Torrented book
    - Screenshotted trial versions of entire online textbooks lol
    - Bought a secondhand textbook

4. Alternatives to Buying Course Material

As the previous paragraph demonstrates, students are at times, simply opting-out of buying their textbooks as a means of coping. In some cases, this is by finding "free" editions of the course material which may mean illegal access through downloading copyrighted works. However, in many cases students are utilizing other resources, such as university library databases, course reserves or Open Educational Resources. In these situations students are able to gain the benefits of the course material legally while helping themselves save on additional costs.

Unfortunately, though, there are many students who simply go without the course material risking potential poor class performance in exchange for being able to afford the course. In 2014, Students PIRGs released a report citing that, "65% of students said that they had decided against buying a textbook because it was too expensive. The survey also found that 94% of students who had foregone purchasing a textbook were concerned that doing so would hurt their grade in a course. More than half of the students felt significant concern for their grade," (Senack, 4). Thus, while students may celebrate avoiding paying for their textbooks, there is an

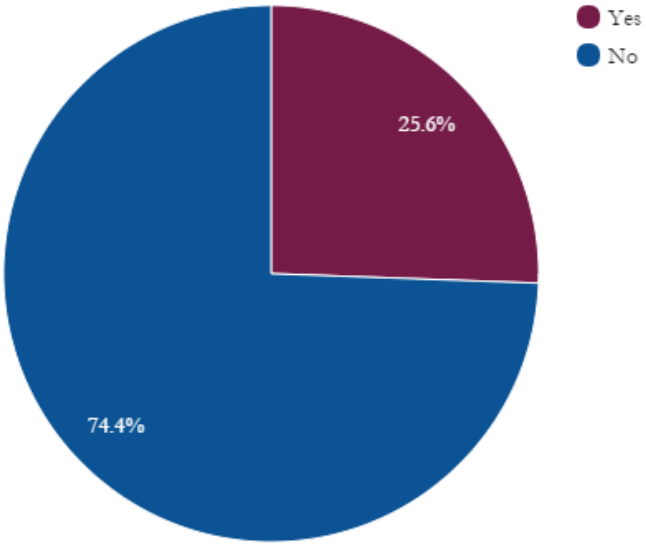


Figure 3: McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey. Have you ever dropped a course / not signed up for a course because of the cost of its course material?

underlying concern that without consistent access, students will not be able to keep up with the course content and succeed academically.

Figures 3-6 are responses from the McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey that demonstrate how McGill students have reacted to these issues.

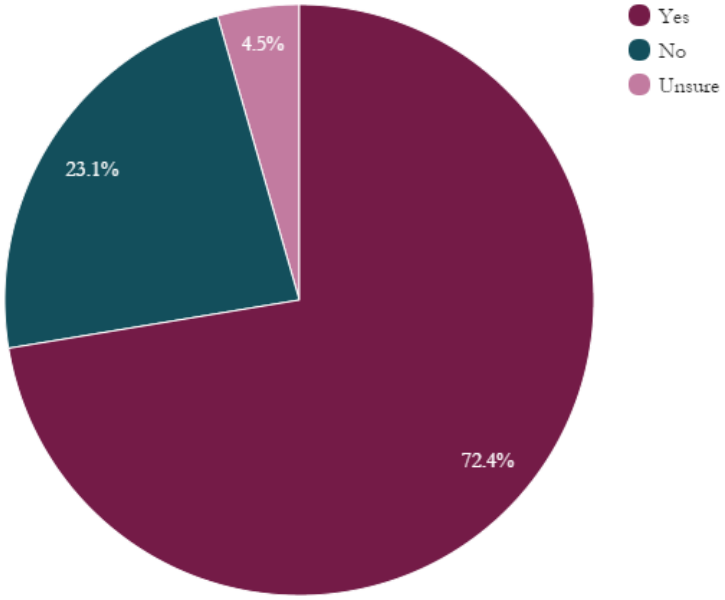


Figure 4: McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey. Have you ever opted-out of buying course material because of its cost?

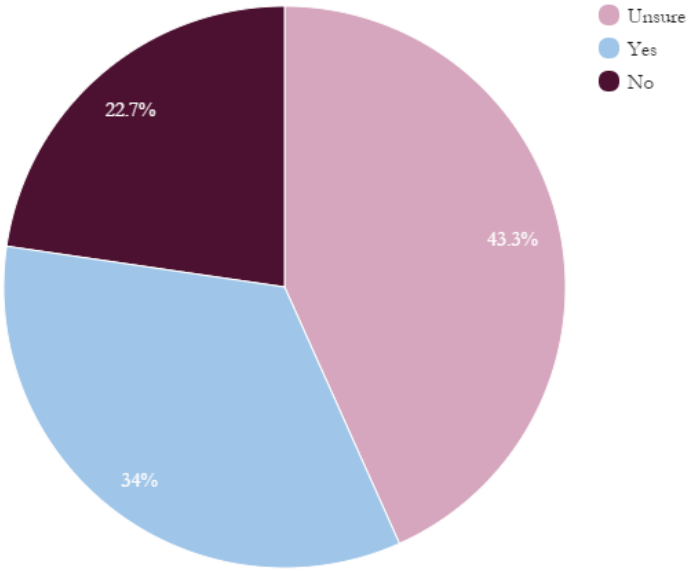


Figure 5: McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey. Did the lack of course material impact your final grade or learning experience?

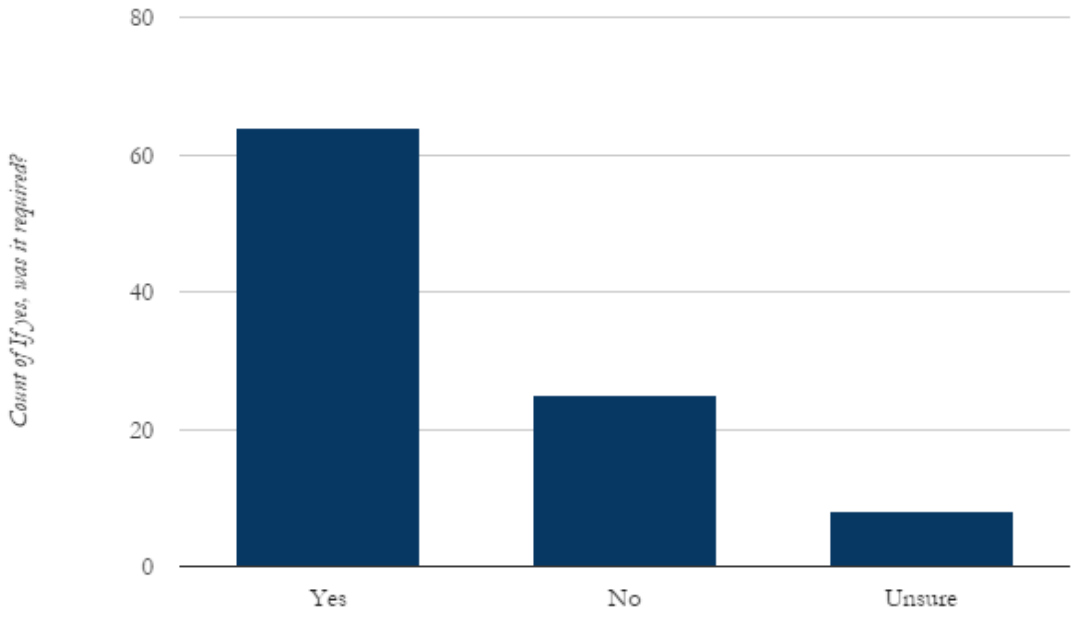


Figure 6: McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey. If you opted out of buying course material, was the material required?

McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey: Saving strategies

Students were asked the open-ended question: "What is the most effective way to save on course material?" Responses included:

"copying a friend's text,"
"don't buy them,"
"...hope for the best."

These strategies are perhaps not the most optimistic methods, but demonstrate further that students do not always buy their course material. However, multiple participants suggested reselling their course material once the class was finished. While this practice is actually a cost-recovery strategy, many students identified this strategy as a mode to save on course material. While reselling course-material is perhaps more practical than going without or "hoping for the best," it would require students to purchase their textbooks in the first place.

While these aforementioned questions addressed *where* and *how* students obtained their course material, the Student Textbook Experience Survey also gathered information on the deeper impacts of expensive course material. It is evident that students are spending time searching for alternatives; none of the above options happen instantaneously. The high cost of course material has demonstrated that students are willing to sacrifice their time by researching where to access material, whether this be through the library, arranging to meet-up with sellers, waiting for shipping times, printing and organizing material etc., all in order to subvert paying more for their recommended course materials.

5. Advocacy

Whether, as a result or in-spite of these diverse approaches to coping with the financial inaccessibility of course material, students have had a long history of advocating for lower course material costs and OER access.

One of the prominent platforms that students from all institutions are using to advocate are student newspapers. Students have written on everything from the unmanageable costs of textbooks, the lack of competition / options to buy course materials from, the advantages of digital books, recommendations and tips on how to access course material, the mishaps of illegal sharing, and the call for more OERs. It is evident that the direct impact of dealing with textbook costs has inspired students to write and share their experiences for some time.

With the ever-expanding tools of social media, vocalizing these concerns have moved beyond formal writing to witty, quick campaigns online. For example, in 2015, the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) launched the campaign #textbookbroke to highlight the unaffordability of textbooks. In 2016, University of Victoria students followed suit, and took it to Twitter to call for lower-cost textbooks and the adoption of OERs in more UVic courses. Scanning the hashtag for the both "textbookbroke" and "OERs" on social media platforms like Twitter generate an array of students, educators, and policymakers alike discussing the benefits and desire in the adoption and creation of more OERs. Academic communities across North America are participating in this online campaign to bring awareness to the high costs of textbooks, while using it as an opportunity to discuss OERs. For example, from one coast to the other, Florida State University has also participated in the #textbookbroke campaign (FSU - Libraries, Student Government Resource Center). Additionally, many student-governed groups are advocating via the #textbookbroke campaign: The Student Public Interest

Research Groups (PIRGs) in the United States, University of Victoria Student Union, University of British Columbia Student Union, and OOO Canada Research Network are a few to name. These groups are both conducting research into OERs and accessible education as well as providing platforms to discuss the issues of textbook affordability, accordingly they instrumental in organizing campaigns to highlight these issues to the university community and public.

McGill media and advocacy

Similar to students from other universities, McGill students also use student media to discuss to cost of course material, how to cope, and potential solutions. The most recent article appeared in a September 2015 issue of *The McGill Daily*: "Textbook prices are too damn high," by U0 student Geneva Gleason. Gleason points out not only how textbooks enlarge a student's budget, but some of the pitfalls in assuming there are ways for students to use alternative sources. One example is Gleason's comment regarding library course reserves: "... if everyone relied on that service, there would have to be at least 500 copies of every book for every course taught in Leacock 132." In same September as Gleason's article, *the McGill Tribune* (Olivia Kurajian) released a piece titled, "McGill 101: A guide to buying and selling textbooks." Kurajian outlines many of the same strategies cost-saving strategies discussed previously in this report such as using: various bookstores, online retailers, textbooks exchanges, older editions, e-versions, and the library to save on textbook costs. Additionally, the *McGill Tribune* published earlier articles on the topic such as: "Commentary: For cheaper textbooks, an open source approach," (Vanderperre), "Stocking your bookshelf, saving your money," (Galbraith), "Bookstores not to blame for high textbook price," (Logan). It is evident that the cost of course material is not going unnoticed in the McGill student community. In 2014, student Julie Vanderperre wrote about OERs as an alternative for professors and students in *The McGill Tribune*. Vanderperre's argument cited the success of OERs at other institutions and the possibility of saving students' money.

What are Alternatives to Expensive Cost Material?

As students employ the methods listed above to save on the costs of textbooks, it is clear students are in need of alternatives from traditional textbooks, or at the very least, support in bearing the cost burden. While the above options exist to reduce costs, there are multiple pitfalls in employing these methods; anytime a student wishes to reduce the cost of textbooks they have to juggle a multitude of options, weighing the pros and cons of each path. In the worst-case scenario, students will go without the course material or download the material illegally. In the best-case scenario, a student will expend an inordinate amount of time trying to procure or borrow a copy of the book. In any event, in none of the above scenarios do students "win"; either there is no (legal) alternative, or the alternative is not worth the time and money to access it in the first place.

OERs as an alternative?

Open Education Resources (OERs) may be a potential solution to the aforementioned problem of high-cost course material. OERs offer a legal, free and flexible alternative to conventional material that has high-impact results. OER hold licenses which ensure free and consistent access to the course material, shedding doubt in regards to legality that instructors may have in assigning the material while students benefit in not having to pay for the content's access. The flexibility allows for instructors to pick and choose what they need from the material without incurring additional costs of assigning partial or multiple works for a course (this was one commonly-cited frustrations from the Student Textbook Experience Survey (Hocevar)). Moreover, the ability to choose whether to access OERs via their (free) digital or (low-cost) print medium adds to the flexibility that appeals to students and instructors who prefer print access.

Open Educational Resources also may have high-impact results when used in high-enrollment courses and disciplines. For example, in the Unites States alone there are 1.2 - 1.6 million psychology students annually who collectively spend $160-200 million on textbooks (Landrum 17). Replacing conventional textbooks with OERs in popular disciplines like psychology could offer millions of students free-to-low cost alternatives. While introductory courses with the highest enrollment will generate the largest savings, OERs can be made applicable to any class, thereby making education more accessible to all students. OpenStax, from Rice University, estimates in this academic year (2016-2017) their platform will save students $70 million with over 811,000 students using an OER textbook in the fall semester alone (Boyd). Programs such as OpenStax and the BC Open Textbook projects are demonstrating that courses can be outfitted with quality educational material, free-of-charge to students, without putting students in an uncomfortable position of illegal, difficult, and/or inconsistent access.

Figures 7-9 demonstrate McGill student response to the quality and preference in using of open or 'free' materials.

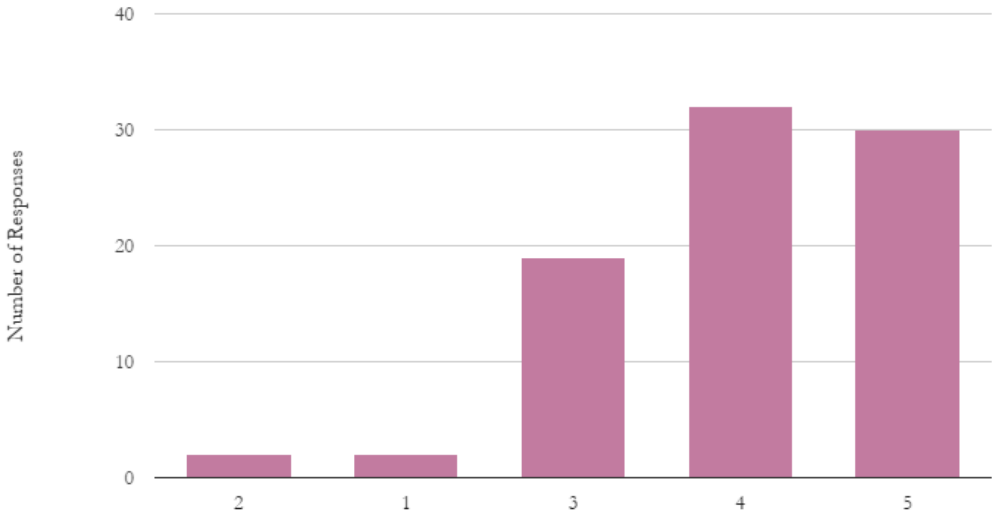


Figure 7: McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey: On a scale of 1-5 (1 = quite poor, 5 = excellent) how did you find the quality of any OERs / "free" material used in your classes?

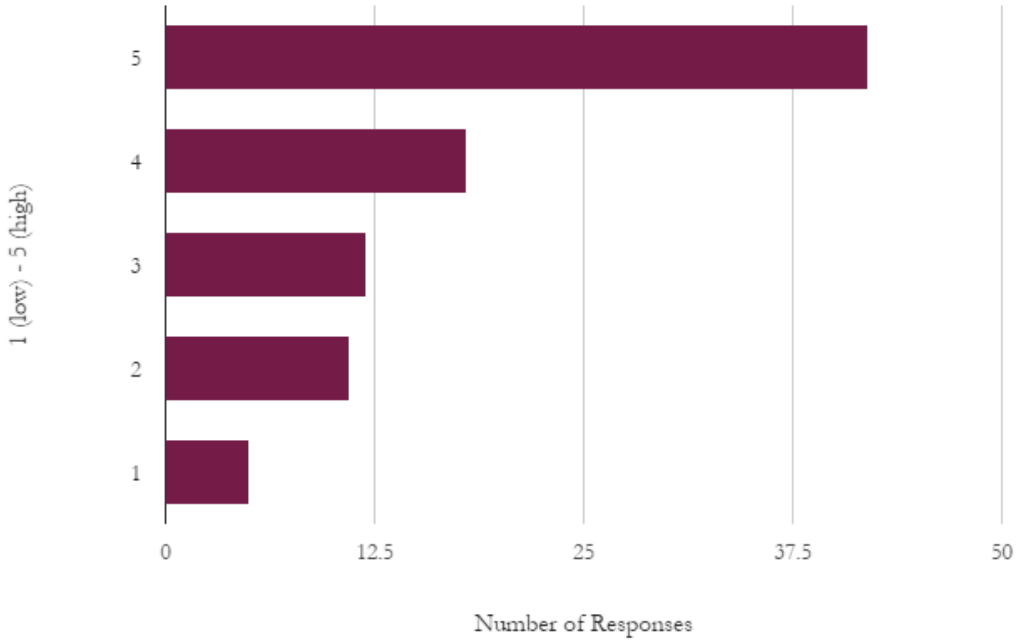


Figure 8: McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey: On a scale of 1-5 (1 = not at all, 5 = very much), did you prefer using OERs or 'free' materials in comparison to traditional textbooks?

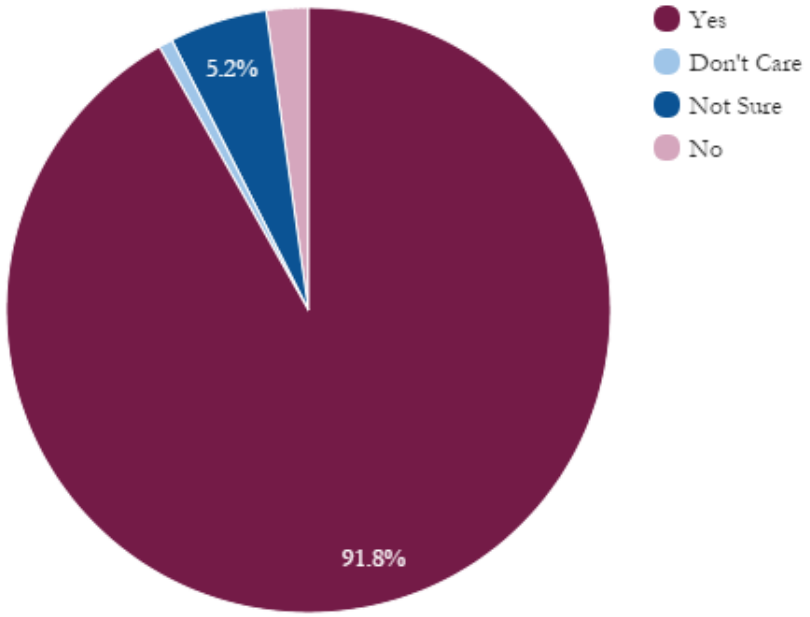


Figure 9: McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey: Additionally, when asked, "Given the option, would you be interested in seeing more 'free' course material, such as OERs, implemented in the classroom?" 91.8% of students answered, "Yes."

Key Takeaways

Textbook costs having risen to unaffordable levels in the past two decades. As such, students have begun seeking a myriad of alternatives (both legal and illegal) to cope. OERs provide one potential strategy to mitigate some of these costs and improve access to education.

McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey: Familiarity with OERs

Despite the conversation around textbook costs, most survey participants had not heard about OERs (64.9 %). Yet 55.2% of students had responded that at some point they had either used a free or openly-sourced educational resources while studying (note: this question included resources which were "free" via library subscriptions or made available on MyCourses).

FACULTY EXPERIENCE: OER BARRIERS AND BENEFITS

Introduction

The previous section focused on an issue pertinent to students: affordable and accessible course materials. While the student perspective highlights a critical issue, ultimately it will be faculty members who will need to make the choice to adopt more affordable course materials. This section will outline what are some of the common faculty concerns regarding OERs as well benefits for faculty that choose to adopt them.

Research on use of OERs by educators in post-secondary institutions remains fairly new, however with reports from the Florida Virtual Campus (Donaldson et. al), Jhangiani et al. (2016), Allen and Seaman and with anecdotal information through various OER initiatives, areas of faculty concern and success can be identified. Overall, educators using OERs enjoy their flexibility, quality and the ability to enable greater student participation with the material. However, an instructor's lack of experience with OERs, time, and institutional support, such as support staff, training, or recognition, were common barriers for those who hadn't used OERs previously. These concerns point to a greater need for institutional support in implementing and promoting OERs. The following section will discuss in more detail the barriers facing faculty members related to OER adoption, the potential benefits to using OERs as well as outline some of the several North American initiatives which have been undertaken to encourage OER adoption.

In December 2016 and January 2017, I interviewed four instructors at McGill from diverse departments (political science, computer science, math and economics, and management). Each have chosen to remain anonymous, but have granted me permission to use our conversations to provide insightful anecdotes about instructors' experiences with OERs at McGill. The following text boxes in this section are drawn on these conversations. - Casarina Hocevar

Faculty Barriers in Using OERs

Faculty barriers to using OERs tend to fall in three categories:

1. Unfamiliarity with:
    i. OERs as an educational tool
    ii. Locating and utilizing OERs
2. Lack of institutional Support
    i. Incentives
3. Ownership and access
    i. Copyright

(Donaldson et al.; Jhangiani et al. 2016; Allen and Seaman).

Unfamiliarity with OERs

Likely, instructor unfamiliarity with OERs lies in the general under-discussion of OERs in educational settings, as well as a misunderstanding of what open educational resources constitute. Allen and Seaman, note that as a clear definition became available, educators reported a higher usage of OERs in their instruction, and conversely when instructors did not understand OERs they do not report having used them (19). Thus, because of the lack of clarity of what OERs are, educators are less likely to know how to actively identify or find them, even if they

have used them previously. By providing institutional resources and support, educators may find themselves better equipped to locate and integrate OERs into their teaching.

During my discussion with the instructors each admitted this was their first-time hearing about the term "OER" despite having used them in classes previously.

Lack of Institutional Support

Another issue frequently raised by educators is the lack of support for OERs as a job-value and academic-value incentive, meaning, the work for OERs often does not lead to promotion, tenure, or hold a monetary incentive. While, it would be optimal if educators could contribute and create their own OERs as they like, it is fair to presume that faculty priorities will align with projects pertaining to their job title and the advancement of their career. For example, instructors surveyed by the Florida Virtual Campus (Donaldson et al.), reported that incentives (both financial and/or scholarly recognition were important in a job that is already very time-consuming and busy (2)). This is coherent with Jhangiani's findings, that if instructors did not already know where or how to locate OERs, they were less likely to spend the time to discover OERs without an incentive (19-20).

Ownership, Access and Quality

Another common barrier to the adoption of OERs by faculty is concerns over ownership and access, particularly if the faculty members has created their own OERs. The concern is twofold: firstly, concerns over ownership and respect for intellectual property, and secondly, that the material will be highly scrutinized. For the former issue, this is largely problematic because those interested in creating OERs may not have the expertise in licensing (and know what open

licences may entail). Thus, for many faculty members the concern is whether authors of OERs will be able to retain the integrity of their work and/or track where and when it is being utilized. However, issues regarding unwanted altering or use of published OERs can generally be resolved through choosing the appropriate license for the content which the author can determine upon the outset. Open licenses are flexible in allowing what can be done in terms of use, editing and remixing of the material (Butcher 8, 47-52). This avoids another common concern professors have in publishing their course material online for students: students will take advantage and share the work (e.g. PowerPoints etc.) without consent. OERs can simultaneously protects ownership while *encouraging* sharing and editing opportunities by students or other faculty members through their associated license. These concerns need to be acknowledged and addressed by those promoting and supporting OER-creation on campus; it will be necessary to provide faculty with adequate information and resources about copyright and licensing in order to overcome this particular barrier.

> ***Conflict of Interest***
>
> Adoption of OERs in the classroom reduces the likelihood of instructors violating conflict-of-interest policies, as OERs do not require students to purchase course materials which benefit their instructors financially (Butcher 44).

The latter issue of being scrutinized, however, is more personal: *will my work be judged? Who will see my work and am I comfortable sharing this work? What if someone else alters my work in a manner that doesn't reflect me?* Yet, as Butcher notes (10), OERs have the potential to be of *greater quality* than conventional resources. As more feedback, critical editing, and continuous updates are made there is an ongoing editing process even after its initial publication.

Authors should be encouraged to have peers review and edit each other's work, and take feedback in good faith.

Three out of the four McGill instructors interviewed commented they would need to learn how licensing works before agreeing to publish their work as OERs. While none of them rejected the possibility completely, they seemed hesitant. It was evident that our instructors take pride in their work and wish to ensure it is properly respected in its use.

Issues of ownership, access, and quality will need to be addressed in order for faculty members to feel comfortable creating and adopting OERs. However. these issues are not insurmountable if faculty are provided with the appropriate information and resources to help in navigating these issues.

The next part of this section will examine existing supportive resources for OERs such as training workshops, support staff (e.g. from the library), and OERs repositories for specific disciplines to illustrate how to combat some of the common barriers noted above.

Benefits of OERs

The few existing studies and anecdotal information of faculty members using OERs, suggests there are benefits in OER investment/usage by educators. Educators have reported reasons for enjoying and using OERs, including:

1. Teaching and learning flexibility
2. Integrating diverse material as supplementary tools
3. Accommodating different learning and teaching styles
4. Cutting-edge material
5. Utilizing the latest research and information
6. Environmental impact

7. Student success
8. Financial accessibility
9. Using OERs as an alternative pedagogical tool

(Jhangiani et. al. 2016, 5, 14; Levine; Krystam; Hilton and Wiley; Hocevar).

The following section will discuss each of these benefits in more detail.

Teaching and Learning Flexibility

For one instructor, the use of OERs have provided him with, "true academic freedom," as he learned to tailor the material to his class, rather than adjusting the course to a required textbook (Sasagawa). The flexibility of OERs is one appealing aspect for faculty members: they no-longer must work within a set framework provided by their principle textbook as they can design the required texts to suit the needs of the course. In Jhangiani et. al.'s survey, one instructor also noted that OERs allow: "Customization to the lesson you are teaching and is more relevant and up to date," (17).

Furthermore, instructors are reporting success in areas such as accommodating "diverse learners' needs," as well as increasing both the "satisfaction with the learning experience," and, "engagement with the lesson's content," (Jhangiani et. al. 24; also see the Student section on *OERs as an alternative*). Sometimes OERs are used as supplementary material, as opposed to the primary text, as way to present the material in diverse forms (e.g. audio vs. visual, mixed media, etc.) and/or as a tool to familiarize students with other research or study methodology, or simply as a more accessible resource for the class (Jhangiani et. al. 25). This is in line with Butcher's observation that OERs are, "[b]reaking down the traditional notion that a talking teacher is the most effective strategy for communicating curriculum," (28). Incorporating new resources into the classroom and teaching can provide additional communication techniques for transmitting

information to students (hence, creating a positive feedback on student performance, as noted earlier). Thus, in the classroom, OERs can enhance-the learning experience, as it helps instructors to pick-and-choose which resources are useful, current, or supplemental to the primary texts. OERs reduce the worry of financial accessibility issues, while also providing alternative learning strategies and creating more freedom in designing course content.

In all four cases, the McGill instructors noted the usefulness of OERs as a flexible medium. One instructor remarked that since much of the work students do takes place online and outside of conventional textbooks, OERs seem a "natural" tool. In her classes, student utilize not only an open textbook, but also tutorial sites and software.

In another Faculty, students often are partaking in formal presentations, video analysis, and creating their own creative content, so when creating assignments and lecture slides this professor noted he attempts to find OERs that have a visual element and modifying tools. He finds that OERs provide students with hands-on experience, through their ability to edit, remix and contribute to the material. Which he noted many students find more engaging than solely working from readings or exercises in a print textbook.

Cutting-edge material

Not only are OERs customizable and provide the flexibility to add relevant or customizable material, but they can also provide the flexibility to integrate the latest research and information. As one student at McGill mentioned in their survey participation: "I think this is a really good pedagogical decision, particularly in disciplines that are constantly changing. [OERs] teach students the most up-to-date, "cutting edge" research and gets us used to reading scientific articles (which is often much more practical than textbooks in academia)" (Hocevar). Traditional textbooks and course material do not allow for adjustment once selected because they are set in print. While newer editions of textbooks may be released this still often requires time to produce

Changing Textbooks

For example, many political sciences courses would benefit from this flexibility. At McGill, POLI 227 (Developing Areas/Introduction) has been known to use one textbook (with additional supplementary material). In the Winter 2014 semester, the required textbook *The Challenge of Third World Development* was on its 7th edition and instructors did not recommend using older textbooks. The events stemming from the 2011 Arab Spring had dramatically changed the relevancy of the text's content. In fact, even the current edition of the textbook proved to be "out of date" as the course progressed and new developments unfolded in real-time.

and moreover would not be practical to ask professors or students to buy another edition of the same book within one semester.

Environmental benefits

Instructors have also commented that OERs are significantly less wasteful; instead of hundreds of print textbooks going out of date and requiring new prints, OERs can be edited and updated digitally as new material emerges or changes, thereby reducing the need for continuously printing more copies that would likely expire (Krystam). From that perspective, OERs are not only offering pedagogical and financial alternatives but a "greener" alternative to traditional course material. University of Toronto has used this angle in promoting the use of digital access, by listing which Zero-To-Low Cost Courses (ZTLCC) are also "green courses." With course material available entirely online: "... [An] advantage of UTL electronic resources is that we reduce the use of paper. In fact, the ZTLCC project has reduced paper usage by a total of approximately 1.7 million pages so far!" (U of T Libraries 2016). OERs in turn are using existing technologies to aid institutions in achieving sustainability goals while at the same time reaching pedagogical and financial aid goals.

Student Success

1. Financial Accessibility

Beyond benefits for instructors there are additional student benefits from these various initiatives. At the beginning of this report, an overview of an ongoing student crisis was presented: the unaffordable and inaccessible costs of course material for students in postsecondary education. As a result, students have responded to this crisis in a multitude of ways and only recently has a response occurred at the institutional-level. The benefit of Open Educational Resources and openly accessed publications are real financial savings for students. These monetary savings allow students to participate in their education by ensuring it stays affordable. While for some students the savings may mean little, for many others the costs of their textbooks and course material is comparable to semester's tuition, a month's rent, and many other important basic necessities. The obvious answer to how OER programs are beneficial is in how they make education financially attainable for students.

When asked about his motivation to use OERs (and/or post readings to MyCourses), one McGill professor admitted it was in response to one student's inability to afford five texts per term (this professor uses both conventional textbooks as well as literature). Despite preferring to use physical, traditional texts, he understood that for many students this is not financially practical. Today, he balances his readings; approximately half are online while two to three are physical books. Laughing, he also admitted, "Sometimes you forget students are taking courses other than your own!" Meaning, that if every professor were to assign five books per term, the cost would easily add up!

2. Pedagogical Benefits

However, the benefits extend beyond the matters of students' financial burden. Research regarding the pedagogical implications of OERs is relatively limited yet there is some evidence

that OERs contribute to increased academic performance by students and high retention rates for courses. For example, Hilton and Wiley released a study taken at the Houston Community College which compared the findings between psychology classes which used traditional textbooks and those that implemented a custom open textbook. Overall, there was an increase performance in grade-point-average and final examinations (though, the increase varied among instructors); and a consistently higher retention rate for the class which used the open textbook. In addition to these findings, Hilton and Wiley also surveyed students on their experience with the open textbook noting: "Eighty-four per cent of students surveyed agreed with the statement that 'Having a free online book helps me go to college,'" (269). Hilton and Wiley's case study is one of the few currently available yet it provides important and clear indications on how OERs may benefit students in real-life. Whereas, students in the first section of this report were concerned the lack of consistent access to course material may hinder their grade, Hilton and Wiley's study demonstrates that consistent and free access may improve a student's performance, even if marginally. The correlation should be fairly straightforward: students who have consistent access to course material are more likely to perform well because of the opportunity to study and participate on a more regular basis; whereas, students who cannot, or struggle to afford their course material may (or may not) suffer academically, as they do not have the resources to fully succeed. Therefore, OERs presents an opportunity to solve this dilemma, by providing free and consistent access to course material.

Beyond the benefits of consistent access, OERs provide another pedagogical opportunity. As Robin Derosa, professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Plymouth State University noted instructors may also use OERs as a creative way to engage students by creating term-projects in which students themselves partake in creating or editing a chapter or section of an open textbook. These types of projects can be an opportunity for instructors to encourage student publication while illustrating the process of active peer-editing, offering one pedagogical incentive to engage students with OERs.

In probing whether providing free, online access to readings may have hindered or helped students, the interviewed instructors seemed uncertain. On one hand, they suggested that by having access online (and freely), students did not have an "excuse" not to read the material. And, in fact, likely did read it more frequently than if they had to buy a textbook.

One instructor, pointed to the wall where older editions of the textbooks were: they were thickly bound, unattractive, and heavy texts- definitely not the most convenient to carry around! In all the interviews, we mused over the fact that students are not inclined to lug heavy material with them (should they buy it at all). Moreover, as this same instructor noted, many students - especially those commuting - use their phones, tablets, and laptops to read on the go, and for those who prefer printed texts, OERs allows for students to access low-cost printing.

On the other hand, the instructors were uncertain whether students thoroughly comprehended materials that they read online, versus in print. One professor was skeptical, and asked *me* what I thought and whether students have indicated reading in digital or printed format is better.*

**In the Student Textbook Experience Survey many students indicated they like reading in print but first prefer to have the option of online access. In this way, they can decide individually what is best for their learning and access needs.*

Key Takeaways

There are many barriers to faculty using OERs such as lack of time, financial resources, and recognition, in addition to concerns over copyright, access, and use. However, OERs can provide many benefits to faculty as well: increased flexibility in choosing and designing course materials, greater student success and engagement, as well as reduced environmental impact. Highlighting these beneficial areas will

be important in discussing how OERs can be utilized on campus and in considering how OER initiatives can be supported.

CURRENT OER INITIATIVES AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS IN NORTH AMERICA

Introduction

McGreal et al. published in 2015 an overview of current Canadian governmental and university policies aimed at supporting Open Access and OERs in the country. Despite the growing number of policies and initiatives being created across Canada at the provincial and institutional level, McGreal et al. noted that there is currently no federal strategy (162). This is likely as a result of education planning being part of provincial and territorial mandates, as opposed to being the responsibility of Canadian federal government. Thus, strategies stemming from both post-secondary institutions and/or with the support from provincial mandates are likely to be the *primary* model in Canada. The following section will give an overview of both postsecondary institutional programs and provincial mandates, in addition to other common initiatives used to encourage or facilitate OERs and free-content in the classroom:

1. Canadian provincial government support

The Higher Education Opportunity Act

In the United States a mixed-model approach has emerged: in addition to state-funding and individual institutional practice, the U.S. federal government has been opening the dialogue to implement regulations that would increase access to education nationwide. For example, the U.S. Congress passed the Higher Education Opportunity Act which shapes policies around textbook costs and enables better access to affordable textbooks course materials (OPPAGA 2010, 1-2)

2. Institutional incentives
3. On-campus outreach and awareness
4. Alternatives to “free” access

Canadian Provincial Government Support

Provincial governmental support has taken several forms in Canada and has varied by province. British Columbia’s Open Textbook Project has kick-started a significant conversation around the affordability of postsecondary education in Canada and the ability to tackle it with concrete solutions. The BC Open Textbook Project was launched in 2012 with the announcement that funding would be made available to create Open Educational Resources, specifically textbooks, for the province’s most popular enrolled higher-education programs. The initial focus of the BC Open Textbook Project was to create affordable content for subjects in the topics of the province’s top-40 enrolled programs (e.g. first year Psychology), thus covering a considerable amount of the student population. The textbooks, which are openly licensed and accessed electronically, ensure a no-cost benefit to students. The Open Textbook Project also enabled low-cost printing option, for those who wish, or need, the physical copy. After its initial success, the program expanded its aim in 2014, to include other post-secondary programs such as trades, technology and skills training. Furthermore, recently both the Hewlett Foundation and the BC Ministry for Advanced Education (AVED), approved grants for 19 new programs designed to create OERs for other BC post-secondary institutions.

UBC Student Savings

> "UBC students are collectively saving $90,000 this year in a physics course where instructors have adopted an open textbook.
>
> Students ... previously used a commercial textbook as well as four other services or tools to support learning in the course. Beginning in September they are using College Physics, an open textbook published through Rice University's OpenStax service ... Instructors have integrated the free, openly available textbook into their course website..."
>
> Heather McCabe - October 1st, 2015
> via UBC Flexible Learning

The success of the program is seen through increasing demand for more projects, the adoption of these textbooks worldwide, and the call from students, within BC and abroad, for more OERs in their universities. Existing textbooks made by the BC Open Textbook Project continue to be adapted in many institutions, including those in New Zealand, Tanzania, Egypt, the United States, and Canada. In BC alone, thirty-one institutions, with some 17,500 students are using the Open Textbook Project with estimated student savings between $1.8 - 2.2 million (see quote: "UBC Student Savings").

In addition to the BC Open Textbook Project, other provincial governments in Canada have slowly joined British Columbia in implementing a project aimed at increasing OERs and Open Access. On March 13, 2014, the provincial governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with British Columbia to work on developing OERs. The MOU was signed for a three-year period with the possibility of renewal. This agreement aimed to create dialogue and encouragement for the "best practices" in OERs amongst educational institutions in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. With British Columbia taking the lead, it appears that OERs being supported by provincial governments are

slowly shifting Eastern-ward in Canada. In September of 2015, the Government of Manitoba announced the Manitoba Open Textbook Initiative in collaboration with Campus BC (which runs the BC Open Textbook Project). In the same year, Ontario created eCampus Ontario a portal for online courses. While eCampus Ontario aims to facilitate one type of accessibility (i.e. educational attainment through online learning) the project is not the same as Campus BC or Manitoba whose aim is *open access* and *open textbooks.* Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, as well as the three territories have yet to see any development or plan to implement and support Open Educational Resources.

Institutional Initiatives

Besides the expanding government policies and programs, there has been increasing amount of support and incentives at the individual institutional-level. In 2016, Walz et al., released their survey findings that looked at ACC (Affordable Course Content) and OERs across various American and Canadian institutions, noting:

> Anecdotal evidence suggested that faculty incentive programs have been an important and widely used early strategy for many libraries and institutions and the ACC/OER survey confirmed this conclusion. Three quarters of the responding libraries with activity in this area indicated their campuses provide an incentive program for faculty to adopt, adapt, or create affordable course content/open educational resources. A majority of the incentives offered (25 or 80%) were financial incentives (grants, stipends, etc.) or instructional design support (17 or 55%). (4)

Some universities have created holistic approaches to implementing OERs as well as Open Access, through multiple incentive and structural support programs. Athabasca University and University of Ottawa are two examples of a multifaceted approach:

Athabasca University:

- Known as Canada's first university to use OERs (McGreal et. al., 163), AU has implemented OER-oriented projects since 2005. These initiatives include:
    - Launching an online repository AUSpace, which can host OERs and Open Access scholarly publications
    - joining of the OpenCourseware Consortium;
    - Creating "the first open access university press in Canada," which like other Open Access material is free in PDF format, and at a low-cost in print (Quirk et al., 7-8).

University of Ottawa:

- Adopted a policy in 2009 (McGreal et. al., 163) that include initiatives such as (UofO - Scholarly Communications 2016):
    - the creation of an online repository, *uO Research*, that has both permanent and open access of scholarly publications from uOttawa, which in turn may act as a host for OERs developed by students and faculty members at the university.
    - financial aid and education in publishing with open access licensing (both independently or through open access journals);
    - most recently, the creation of an Open Scholarship Award to recognize the various support for, and practicing of, open access in the U of O community (i.e. open data, OERs, use of CC licenses, open research practice, etc.).

3. **Incentives**

Incentives for faculty members can manifest in a multitude of strategies, according to the capacity of the institution to offer such programs. Existing incentive programs generally fall under the following:

1. Financial Incentives
2. Awards/recognition
3. Instructional Design Support
    a. Support Staff
    b. Time Off

Two of the McGill professors interviewed said they have considered publishing a textbook. For one professor, he said he would certainly be inclined to make the work an open-textbook if there was an incentive provided through McGill, given that writing and publishing takes a lot of time and one's own resources. The other professor would like to publish their textbook online as open access, but notes it will require some extra help in learning how to proceed, and even suggested a librarian staff-member to be incorporated into such projects.

Financial Incentives

Financial incentives are likely helpful in the early stages of implementing OERs as many educators do not necessarily have additional time within their paid-work to take on another project. Financial incentives help educators and institutions alike in the creation of OERs, and/or the conversion process from traditional textbooks to OERs as this requires valuable skills, time and energy deserving of recognition. This is key to earlier cited concerns in which educators did not believe their institutions and/or colleagues appreciated OER development in the realms of academia (Donaldson, Jhangiani 2016).

For example, the University of Alberta offers one such program where faculty may be rewarded up to $500.00 for peer-reviewing an OER which replaces a traditional source (Walz et al., 102). The University of Connecticut offers a similar incentive for peer review ($250) in addition to $1000 grants to instructors who transition to OERs from traditional materials.

Awards/recognition

Incentives in the form of recognition or prestige awards have also been mobilized to encourage OER use and development on campuses. At the Texas A&M University, the Student Government Association and the University's Libraries have partnered together to establish two recognition awards for faculty members utilizing OERs/encouraging open access practices. Additionally, some universities have begun incorporating recognition for using OERs into their promotion and tenure guidelines. The University of British Columbia recognizes contributions to Open Education repositories and to OERs by candidates as a mode of demonstration in educational leadership (Redish and Mathieson).

Instructional Design Support

Another incentive program that has been utilized has been instructional design support, which can be created in conjunction with the above incentive programs or deployed independently. Instructional design support is often crucial for instructors new to OERs, as it may be the initial grounds for learning to locate or create OERs. Support often is in two forms:

1. **Support Staff** - support staff may mean additional faculty members who may assist instructors on developing OERs, through providing advice or instruction on open licenses, technology or locating and implementing OERs in the classroom. Many

university libraries embody the role of instructional design support, either by providing independent workshops, or as a support staff for faculty engaged in OER implementation and/or development. For example, at Brooklyn Community College, librarians are available to assist in locating OER resources and review copyright for third-party materials. There is additional campus support for technical issues (Deutch).

2. **Time Off** - As noted previously, instructors may hesitate to use OERs either because they do not have the expertise in finding and utilizing new material like OERs, or they simply do not have the time-capacity to learn and search for said materials. Giving instructors additional time within their job to develop new skills and reorganize their course material to be OERs, is one way to solve these barriers while offering a time incentive to instructors. At the Virginia Commonwealth University, for example, faculty who receive one of the Faculty Affordable Course Content Awards may use some, or all of those funds, for course release purposes.

Outreach and Awareness

Outside of ongoing projects and programs aimed to encourage OERs, often campuses host short-term events/campaigns to increase awareness about OERs and Open Access. One popular event held by many universities, including McGill, is Open Access Week (held October 24th - 30th in 2016). This week-long end is held worldwide, with the objective of putting open access into practice. This year McGill participated by holding events such as “Copyright and Licensing: what to know for your creative and academic work,” that discussed the roles of different licensing and copyright in creative-field research. Such events provide opportunities to engage with open access concepts and ignite interest. Walz writes, “[e]ffective faculty engagement strategies focus primarily on training and outreach opportunities. Respondents

indicated that training on ACC/OER has been provided as part of stand-alone training and programming and integrated into existing programming, notably copyright training and liaison services. Many respondents indicated that Open Education Week and Open Access Week have provided good opportunities for programming," (6). Information sessions and workshops provide a space for those unfamiliar to explore open access and OER concepts, which may otherwise be difficult and time-consuming to navigate alone. For example in 2016, Ryerson University Library and the Ryerson's Learning and Technology Office offered a two-hour workshop for faculty entitled "Open Your Textbook: Adopting, Adapting or Creating Your Own Open Textbook." This workshop's objective was to provide faculty with the skills needed to adopt, adapt, and create open textbooks using Ryerson's Pressbooks platform. More intensive multiple-day workshop series have been provided by universities like Emory and CityTech (CUNY) which provide recipients of OER fellowships and awards with extensive training in creating and adopting OERs (see Emory's Immersion Training program and CityTech's Seminar Series).

Within the McGill Textbook Experience Student Survey, students often did not distinguish *how* their course material was made freely available. While some students may have had instructors who did use OERs in the classroom, the majority likely had "free" access by their instructors' use of *MyCourses* or material found via the Library. Despite not being true OER content, these modes of access are vital to broader goals of achieving accessible course content for students.

Alternatives and Other 'Free' Content

In addition to incentives and programs aimed directly at OERs, there are many programs used to facilitate more accessible content generally. Some universities have initiatives which aim to maximize student/instructor's use of *existing access* to material (whether through established copyright agreements or open access). Such initiatives offer an alternative to

conventional resources - such as textbooks or newly printed course packs - without necessarily being OERs, or having instructors or the university to buy new material for their students.

For example, at the University of Toronto, the library commenced the Zero-to-Low Cost Course Project in 2014 through their Scholarly Communications and Copyright Office. This project sourced the required readings for professors through three methods: the university's existing subscriptions; open access material; or "obtained through the fair-dealing provision of the Copyright Act," (Levine). While this program does not necessarily *create* new OERs, or even use them necessarily, the idea is to educate instructors on the existing services provided by the university, as well as understand how access works with different licenses. In practice, educators are able to provide course material to students at a zero-to-low cost (hence the name). To date, U of T Libraries estimate they have saved $406,038 collectively for 4960 students in 42 participating courses, which averages to $81.86 saved per student (U of T Libraries). This project demonstrates that connecting educators with other resources on campus, such as a library's copyright office, may provide the required support to facilitate educators' use of OERs or other affordable course content in the classroom. In addition to the knowledge regarding copyrights and licensing, U of T's faculty is supported by having the workload shared among colleagues (i.e. the copyright office takes on a portion of the responsibility in searching for alternative sources (U of T Libraries)). While one of the vital inhibitors in using OERs has been the lack of knowledge of OERs and their licensing, another is the time available to search for (or create) OERs. Thus, the University of Toronto's service was able to tackle two key problems by utilizing an existing service on campus: the copyright office had the knowledge to help educators locate material while additionally lessening the time-burden for individual educators, by sharing the work.

Key Takeaways

There are many incentive programs which currently exist in North America. These programs take several forms including financial incentives, time-off, and support staff. In addition to institutional incentives, several provinces in Canada (notably BC, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario) have provincial programs designed to encourage OER adoption and use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section serves to highlight strategies McGill University can adopt to further OER use and development on campus. The recommendations will focus on three primary areas which are specific to implementing more OERs in classrooms at McGill. These include:

1. Data collection and information
    i. Possible research questions
    ii. Feedback method
2. Student advocacy
3. Institutional support
    i. Library
    ii. Teaching and learning services
    iii. Policy
    iv. Incentive programs

Recommendation #1: Have the SSMU and McGill University engage in further data collection and information on OERs and affordable course content at McGill.

Information and data collection is one of the foremost concerns in shaping a strategy to implement OERs. Finding an effective OER strategy would be a guessing game without knowing in which departments and/or courses OERs would be most beneficial; what professors are willing to use them; why or why not students and instructors may be inclined to use specific modes of learning; or what departments at McGill would best be accessible for disseminating information on OERs. Thus, the most pertinent task would be to investigate these questions (and

more!) across the university as a whole. The following will provide a list of target questions / concerns McGill ought to pursue, as well as the suggested methods to do so.

While this report has provided an overview of OERs,it also attempted to contextualize the potential for OERs at McGill. By creating the McGill Student Textbook Experience Survey and interviewing select instructors, and researching OER initiatives in North America, it demonstrates how McGill *can* fit into a broader OER (and Open Access) movement happening globally. However due to the limited time and capacity of this project, the interviews and survey cover a limited group of McGill students and faculty. It would be valuable to probe these experiences and issues more broadly across campus.

Possible Research Questions…

1. **Are there departments or faculties disproportionately affected by the cost of course material?**
    - If so, what are some faculty/department wide strategies to help reduce costs?
        i. For students less affected by the high-cost of course material, do OERs still have a role in their teaching and learning?
2. **What is the primary (and most expensive) course material used within each department?**
    - Can this be replaced with an OER?
    - e.g. if a Chemistry textbook is expensive it likely can replaced with an Open Textbook; however, students in Music may have additional course material costs that don't have an OER equivalent - so can these course-material costs still be mitigated?
3. **Are students already utilizing strategies to avoid the costs associated with course material? (e.g. are they pirating texts, copy-sharing, reselling textbooks, finding them in or through the libraries? etc.)**

- If so, can McGill as an institution also utilize some of those same methods? For example, instead of students pirating a copy of their required material, can the resource be found through the library? If so, instructors should and can encourage utilizing the existing available resources.

4. **Do students and professors have a preference between digital and print mediums?**
    - If print mediums are preferred, does McGill have accessible printing available?
        i. e.g. The McGill student-run print shop Copi EUS may be a resource to collaborate in having OERs printed.
5. **What departments or services are best equipped with providing information and training on OERs?**
    - Do they have existing resources or will they need further staff and support?
        i. e.g. Teaching and Learning Services, the Library, student associations' committees (Library Improvement Fund, etc.)
6. **What are the barriers for instructors to learn about and incorporate OERs in the classroom at McGill?**
    - Can these be resolved through financial or prestige awards; or with the aid of workshop and/or support staff?
7. **What are some accessibility issues related to OERs?**
    - Do all students have access to digital-web formats via a computer, phone, tablet, etc.?
        i. If not, how does the University / instructors ensure students have access to such resources on campus or alternatively in print format?

ii. Conversely, can OERs provide help for students with alternative learning needs and styles?

Feedback method

One mode to gather feedback on these issues would be to create another survey, similar to the one used for this report but promote it widely across the university in a systematic fashion. This could be achieved in two ways:

1. Incorporate questions and concerns related to OERs and course material affordability into a survey similar to "The Student Satisfaction Survey" which the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU) ran two years ago (Sobat).
2. Use Departmental Cyclical Review Sessions to gather more specific feedback from each department.

Once precise information is gathered student associations and the University will be better equipped for strategic planning to advocate and implement OERs at a more effective pace.

Recommendation #2: Have the SSMU and other student associations on-campus engage in greater student advocacy efforts towards OERs.

Earlier sections of this report discussed social media campaigns and student media articles which address the issue of high-cost course material, both at McGill and other universities. While there is a history of students taking an interest, and expressing their disconnect vis-à-vis student media platforms the SSMU and other student associations can organize an expanded advocacy campaign. McGill University is not unfamiliar with student organizing and social activist campaigns, and with the ample frustration regarding course

material, mobilizing students' supporting for alternative initiatives such as OERs would be straightforward.

Student associations on campus can design and adopt their own OER policies. These policies may either be symbolic in nature, and/or written with more concrete actionable items. At multiple universities in Western Canada for example, student societies have created advocacy programs which have clear activities for students to partake in (e.g. #textbookbroke campaign at UVic or SFU). Although these are more informal mandates that SFU Student Society and UVic Student Society have taken on, student associations can also create a formal policy. For example, one policy or amendment could be made to the portfolio to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs in the Arts Undergraduate Society who may be given a mandate to organize OER education / implementation between professors and students. This mandate may be embodied in various ways such as the VP Academic will:

- Initiate information collection as described previously.
- Connect individually with professors to encourage or share relevant tools for transitioning into OERs.
- Find professors willing to speak to the importance of OERs / Open Access amongst other faculty members and during meetings.
- Oversee committees designed to create resource guides or workshops.
    - e.g. In the AUS, relevant committees may be AUS-Library Partnership or Academic Affairs Committee.
- Engage in student awareness campaigns about OERs; this could include coordinating tabling around campus etc.

This type of advocacy is narrowly directed, as opposed to the broad community, and includes actionable planning to move forward. While it would vary faculty to faculty depending on the student society's constitutions and mandates, SSMU may also encourage, and help co-organize such programs to happen simultaneously. These actions could be coordinated so as to create a collective awareness across the university within the same time period (for example, over a specific semester).

Recommendation #3: Increase the amount of institutional support for OERs on-campus through:

- Partnerships with the Library and Teaching & Learning Services
- Adoption of OER policies by the University and/or individual departments/faculties
- Increasing on-campus incentives to adopt/create OERs, including but limited to financial incentives, recognition awards, and/or time-off

The previous recommendations are meant to lay the foundation for creating sustainable institutional support for OER usage and development at McGill. Creating new incentive programs and/or OER services will be better supported if the necessary steps to gather the right data and preliminary advocacy are taken. These initials steps of data collection and early advocacy can provide a *stronger* foundation in creating broader, university-wide support for new programs focused on OERs. As a result, there are many forms institutional support can take depending on the information which arises from data collection and the responses acquired through advocating colleagues.

Partnering with McGill Library & Archives

One of the most common departments across North American universities which oversee managing resources and incentives for OERs usage are libraries. According to a recent survey of academic libraries, OER initiatives have been initiated by the library in over 60% of campuses (Walz, Salem & Jensen 2016, p.10). Libraries have been a fertile ground for OER development as they provide services across all faculties and traditionally have mission statements and goals directed towards improving student learning and providing access to materials for teaching and learning. For example, McGill Library's own mission statement include relevant statement such as:

- Facilitates excellence in teaching, learning and research
- Creates an appropriate environment to support teaching, learning and research
- Anticipates and responds to student and faculty needs
- Provides the information resource infrastructure necessary for leading edge teaching, learning and research activity. (McGill Library and Archives)

This mission statement grounds McGill's Library's commitment to support access to teaching and learning material, responding to changing course needs, and facilitating knowledge dissemination regarding teaching and learning materials; all relevant and pertinent topics that fit well within the context of OERs.

Three common strategies libraries adopt to support OERs are:

4. **Librarian support for locating and using OER content**

While instructors may be interested in using OERs, many simply do not have the experience or capacity to locate and implement them into their courses. Having librarians who facilitate

searching and locating OERs according to discipline may alleviate the burden of transitioning to OERs for instructors. This could be through a simple request services for OER material, and/or librarians available for consultation and training for professors interested in learning more about how to use and find OERs.

5. **OER training and repositories**

As suggested in the previous point, librarians could offer training to instructors in searching for and using OERs. Moreover though, it may be beneficial to have librarians integrate OERs into student-oriented workshops as well. Many upper-level seminar courses require library orientations for research purposes. Such workshops and orientations would be an opportunity to introduce OERs to both instructors and students. This may be especially valuable for students in disciplines that require creating projects or lesson plans using open content and/or OERs (e.g. students in Music, or Education may need to find lesson plans to remix and build-off of for in-class projects). Moreover, libraries may compile their own repositories according to discipline and/or include them in online subject guides.

6. **Incentives and awards**

Many university libraries have created their own funds for making financial awards available for instructors utilizing OERs. Such incentive or rewards could be entirely funded by the library, or with support/cooperation by other departments on campus. Recommendations on the shape of incentives and awards can take is discussed further on page 60-62 under “Financial Incentives.”

Partnering with McGill's Teaching and Learning Services

McGill's Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) may also be a potential avenue for institutional support for OERs. TLS has many guiding principles which suggest OERs would be a relevant area of investment in their department. These include (Mission and Principals - Teaching and Learning Services):

- **Fostering long-lasting student learning** - "...All decisions that have direct or indirect impact on teaching and learning at McGill must be guided by a student-centered focus."
- **Evidence-based practice** - "Evidence from the literature guides our practice, data from practice provide evidence of the impact and effectiveness of our work, this evidence then furthers practice."
- **Teaching is a scholarly act** - "The scholarship of teaching means that we invest in our teaching the intellectual knowledge, rigour and skill we practice in our research. Teaching, like other forms of scholarly work, is problem based, intentionally designed, theoretically grounded, replicable, and peer evaluated. As with other forms of scholarship, teaching must be public, subject to critical evaluation, and usable by others in both the scholarly and the general community. If teaching remains a largely private act, limited to the teacher and students, then those who engage in innovative acts of teaching cannot build upon the work of others, nor can others build upon theirs."

These principles centre on more effective student success strategies; the core of which is learning and encouraging critical engagement with scholarship practices. TLS could also be a site for encouraging innovation teaching practices for those professors who may choose to create their own OERs. While research in OERs continues to grow, much of the initial benefits of OERs that is noted elsewhere in the report align with TLS' principles.

TLS additionally provides a wide range of services and information for instructors, including workshops on teaching tools and online links and guides for learning technologies. TLS could include their own workshops on OERs, or integrate such knowledge into existing information on teaching technologies available (this could fall under "Teaching Resources" or be incorporated into workshops on "Course Design" etc.). Furthermore, given that TLS is a familiar site for instructors to contact for help for advice and consultation with teaching, TLS could use this space to educate instructors on accessible teaching and learning, including issues like financial accessibility associated with expensive course materials

Policy Adoption at the Institutional Level

In a previous recommendation, it was suggested that student associations can create their own policies to advocate for OERs. However, this can be extended beyond student associations and implemented at university level. Many universities have formal Open Access Policies or policies on OERs. For example, Glasgow Caledonian University in Scotland adopted their own specific policy on OERs in 2015 (the most updated version can be found here). This policy not only encourages the use of OERs, but covers best-practices in licensing and allows for authors to retain their individual name on their work developed in collaboration with the university (Pitt 2016).

At the February 15th, 2017 Senate meeting, there was an open discussion on the 2017-2022 Strategic Academic Plan. While the discussion itself did not generate any discussion on OERs, the draft Strategic Academic plan included three points which would be relevant to OERs (Manfredi 2017):

- **Be Open to the World** - "... We will also make a commitment to providing undergraduate and graduate students with a 21st century education by increasing the number of enriched educational opportunities …."
- **Lead Innovation** - "...The University is also committed to exploring and implementing new modes of organizing intellectual activity, including alternatives to traditional single-discipline departments and investment in new information technologies...."
- **Connect Across Disciplines and Sectors** - "... In support of interdisciplinary efforts, the University will invest resources (human and financial) in large interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral projects..."

Additionally, the draft of the plan also considers McGill's role as a "21st-Century Global University": "McGill will invest in building and maintaining a *smart campus* organized around data and a robust physical and *digital infrastructure to facilitate collaboration, creativity, knowledge dissemination and innovation* for the full spectrum of University activity, from foundational research to applied technologies," (McGill Senate Documents; emphasis added). Open Educational Resources have been centred on facilitating knowledge and collaboration through creative and digital means; it appears that their role on campus would be welcomed under the formal plans McGill is drafting. Such frameworks in turn could serve as a foundation for future OER policy development at McGill.

Creating Incentive Programs at McGill University

As mentioned earlier, a popular strategy across universities to implement OERs has been to use incentive programs. Incentive programs generally fall under:

1. Financial incentives

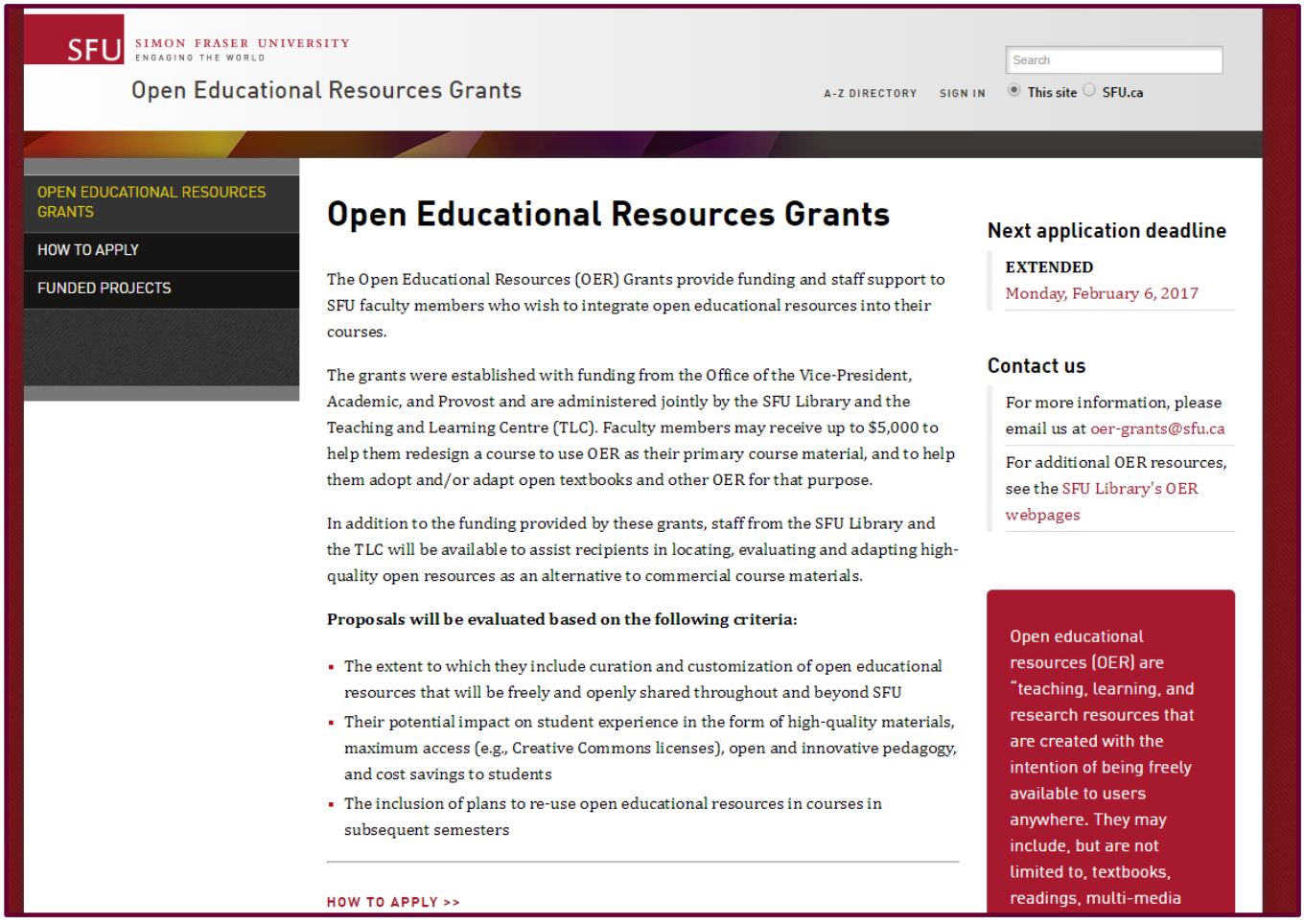
2. Recognition Awards
3. Support and Time-Off

Incentive programs are flexible as the maintenance of their programs can happen within different groups and departments or more broadly across campus. For example, as noted above under the "Library" section, incentive and awards could be hosted under the university's library. However, student societies may also choose to create their own awards for which students can nominate their instructors for recognition. Given that the style (monetary, support, recognition, etc) of the incentive can be designed specific to the host's capacity, almost any department can choose to create their own.

1. Financial Incentives

Monetary incentives are best suited to groups which have funds to produce and sustain these type of programs. However, there is no single benchmark amount which is appropriate, so groups should not hesitate merely if their budget is small. In fact, existing financial incentive programs have quite a range of monetary value.

For example, faculty members at Simon Fraser University (SFU), “may receive up to $5,000 to help them redesign a course to use OER as their primary course material, and to help them adopt and/or adapt open textbooks and other OER for that purpose,” (Simon Fraser University). Whereas, some universities have smaller grant programs: Ohio State University has a grant program worth $1000, for both individuals or teams that, “[(re)search the] adoption of low- or no-cost course materials for classes at Ohio State.” (Ohio State University).



2. Recognition Awards

Recognition awards are likely best suited for student societies that have little budgetary room or in collaboration of existing teaching and academic recognition programs the university may already have (e.g. for utilizing new material/technology). Currently at McGill, there are annual teaching awards given at the university-wide level as well as specific departments and faculties, which follow a criteria and are selected by a committee. Moreover, student societies, such as the Arts Undergraduate Student Society, have their own annual teaching awards which are nominated and reviewed by students. These periodical nominations may include an award designated to OER use, with a clearly defined criteria that demonstrates how the instructor's OER use creates a positive impact upon their teaching/students. While it is possible to include a monetary value associated with the award it may also remain simply as a form of recognition.

3. Support and Time-Off

Should the university adopt an OER policy or incentive, it may include provisions which allow instructors to request time-off or support staff (e.g. tech staff for designing the OER format or a copyright librarian to assist with licensing) to complete the project. By ensuring that instructors interested in creating or implementing OERs in the classroom have the resources, whether in time or material, to complete the project should alleviate some of the commonly cited deterrents in using OERs. In the aforementioned SFU program, recipients of the OER grants are also provided with access to library and/or TLC staff for assistance (Simon Fraser University), in addition to their monetary grant.

Key Takeaways

In short, the aforementioned recommendations encourage both McGill's student societies (e.g. SSMU) and the administration to:

- Collect data to gage which departments, instructors or student groups would be interested in future OERs development on campus, and to understand the barriers that are prevents OER use currently. This information is vital for shaping future strategies in implementing more OERs at McGill.
- Engage in student advocacy, that aims to educate both faculty and students members on OERs as a potential tool for more accessible education. Moreover, students can use their own platforms, like the SSMU, as an avenue to pressure the administration or departments to encourage OER development, or to create their own policies and incentive programs that they can administer independent of the University.
- Develop and encourage stronger institutional support by utilizing existing campus resources and departments, such as the Library and Teaching and Learning Services; solidifying support through policy and incentive programs that aim to lessen financial burdens, recognize scholarly contributions of OER development and provide the tools and training for instructors to implement or design OERs.

CONCLUSION

For over nearly two decades, Open Educational Resources have sought to increase the accessibility of education through providing free digital and low-cost printed material to students. As technology develops and educators investigate new pedagogical tools, the world of OERs continues to expand. This is evidenced by how OERs are increasingly being supported by governments and educational institutions for further development and implementation in the classroom.

McGill University's students, like many other students across North America, are affected by the unaffordability of textbooks and other course materials. Each semester students must decide whether to pay for new textbooks, attempt to locate cheaper alternatives, or go without. While the impact of textbook affordability will vary by student, for many students textbooks could cost the equivalent of a month's rent or even Quebec's tuition rate; as such this has serious effects on the accessibility of higher education. If McGill wishes to continue providing cutting-edge, accessible educational opportunities, OERs are a worthwhile investment.

This report has provided an overview of the history and development of OERs, including the ongoing advocacy efforts by students, educators, and administrators. Moreover, a list of recommendations and possible avenues for future policy changes and incentives have been included as a way to illustrate how McGill University may join the Open Education movement.

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APPENDIX

Student Textbook Experience Survey

This survey aims to gather information about the cost of course materials (i.e. textbooks, course packs, etc.) and the use of Open Educational Resources at McGill. The information will be used to provide an overview of students' experiences and thoughts on textbook costs and OERs at McGill, which will be presented in a report to SSMU later this academic year.

If you're interested in knowing more about the project, feel free to contact me at: [email redacted]

Lastly, thank you for your feedback!
*=required

1) **Name**
2) **What type of student are you?***
   a) Undergrad
   b) Grad
   c) Other
3) **Year* (i.e. first year)**
4) **Faculty***
5) **Program**
6) **Estimate how much you spent on course materials this semester.***
   Course material refers to textbooks, course packs, and any other literature used in digital or print format. This can also include reference material (i.e. dictionaries) and literary texts (i.e. Shakespeare) used in your course.
7) **Estimate the cost of your course material for the year**.*
8) **Where do you get your course material from (check all that apply)?**
   a) Paragraphe
   b) McGill Bookstore
   c) the Word
   d) Copi-EUS
   e) Other in-store retailers (i.e. Indigo)
   f) Online retailers (i.e. Amazon etc.)
   g) Second-hand (i.e. Craigslist, student exchanges, friend etc.)
   h) Other
9) **Have you ever had to pay for an Online Access Code for your textbook, or other associated textbook costs, i.e. online portals, quizzes, or "bonus material"?***
   a) Yes
   b) No
10) **How much did it cost?**
   Provide an estimate on the average cost if required for more than one course.

11) **Have you ever dropped a course / not signed up for a course because of the cost of its course materials?**
    a) Yes
    b) No
12) **Have you ever opted-out of buying course material because of its cost**?*
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Unsure
13) **If yes, was it required?***
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Unsure
14) **Have you ever had to pay for an Online Access Code for your textbook, or other associated textbook costs, i.e. online portals, quizzes, or "bonus material"?**
15) **Did the lack-of course material impact your final grade or learning experience?***
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Unsure
16) **Estimate the cost of your most expensive course material.***
17) **Name of course:**
18) **Name of course material (i.e. "Introduction to Psychology")**
19) **What type of course material was it?***
    a) Print
    b) Electronic
    c) Coursepack
    d) Mixmedia (i.e. both print and online formats)
20) **Was it required?** *
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Unsure
21) **If you purchased this course material, did you resell it?**
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Not applicable
22) **If you purchased this textbook, did you resell it?**
23) **How much were you able to resell the course material for (estimate)?**

    Open Education Resources (OERs) are any educational material used for teaching (course slides, articles, modules, textbooks, etc), which hold an "open license," such as a Creative Commons License. The material is made accessible to other educators, students and the public, while the creator still has rights over its (re)use. Users are not required to request permission before use.
24) **Prior to this, had you heard about OERs?***
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Not sure / I forget

25) **Are there any courses which have used openly-sourced or free material (i.e. you did not pay for the course material)**? *
    a) Yes
    b) No
26) **Please list any courses or professors which use OERs (if applicable).**
27) **How was this course material made freely available?**
    a) MyCourses
    b) Course reserves / Library (including online databases)
    c) Class handouts
    d) Online (e.g. website, Google etc.)
28) **Did you prefer using these resources in comparison to traditional textbooks?**
    a) Scale 1-5 (1 = not at all; 5 = very much)
29) **How do you find the quality of these resources (generally)?**
    a) Scale 1-5 (1 = quite poor; 5 = excellent)
30) **Given the option, would you be interested in seeing more free course material, such as OERs, implemented in the classroom?***
    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Not sure
    d) Don't care
31) **Due to the cost of course material, have you ever tried any of the following alternatives to access the required material?**
    a) Looked for older editions of the required text
    b) Shared the use of course material with classmates/friends
    c) Photocopied course material
    d) Used "free" online or ebook versions of the text
    e) Found the course material in the library (including course reserves)
    f) Traded notes/material with classmates
    g) Rented the course material
    h) I have not tried any alternatives
    i) Other
32) **In your experience, what has been one of the most effective ways to save costs on course materials?**
33) **Have professors been willing to share alternatives to required texts listed on the syllabus?**
    Such as providing books on course reserves, listing other appropriate editions, or directing students to e-versions of the required text, etc.
    a) Yes
    b) No
34) **Are you willing to be contacted if we have further questions?***
    This project is looking for lots of student feedback. Are you interested in discussing these issues further?
    a) Yes
    b) No, thank you
35) **Contact Info (email or phone number)**

36) Is anything else regarding textbooks, course material, their cost or quality, which you think is relevant to this survey? It can be relevant to a specific McGill context, or from another university.

37) Feel free to leave additional comments below.