Creating a Free Digital Textbook for English 102

Oxnard College Sabbatical Proposal for Spring 2021

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Sabbatical Proposal

1. Sabbatical Purpose

The purpose of this sabbatical is to address a recent California state initiative on Zero Textbook Costs (ZTC) and to build an English 102 course shell in Canvas with free electronic course materials. Not all Open Educational Resources (OER) are excellent resources. This sabbatical would allow me the time to search OER, to evaluate OER, and to create original material so that Oxnard College English 102 students would have quality free materials. The purpose of this sabbatical project is not to build a common online English 102 course; rather, the purpose is to build a course shell with all the materials that would traditionally be contained in a textbook. This would include rhetorical strategies and literature. In essence, what I am proposing is to research existing OER resources for English 102 materials, to evaluate the OER materials I discover, to compile appropriate OER materials for English 102, to create original materials for English 102, and to build a digital textbook with digital works of literature which will be available for the Oxnard College English department members to use.

Presently, the English department has a lending library which allows students in English 97 and 101 use a common textbook for free. English 97 is a developmental English class, which is one-level below the college-level. English 101 is a college-level composition course. Presently, English 102 is the one common course without a free textbook option.

English 102, Critical Thinking through Composition and Literature, is a four-unit course. "This course provides study of literature combined with instruction in critical thinking and composition. The course emphasizes understanding and writing about

literature using principles of logical analysis, criticism, advocacy of ideas, and inductive and deductive reasoning. Students will examine assumptions upon which conclusions are based and recognize common logical errors of language and thought. Instruction is offered in advanced elements of style and organization. Application of critical thinking skills and logical methodology to the various literary genres will achieve a disciplined understanding of the material" (Oxnard College Catalog). This course fulfils a CSU and UC transfer requirement.

English 102 typically requires two books: a textbook with a focus on rhetorical skills and literature and one full-length work of fiction. In my English 102 course, I use *Literature and the Writing Process* which costs $139.73. Some of my colleagues use books such as *Portable Literature,* which costs $100, *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, which costs $86.65, and Pearson's *Literature*, which costs $146.65. People use a variety of works of full-length fiction and most novels cost $15-$17.

In the fall of 2018, there were 12 section of English 102 offered and 325 students enrolled. In the spring of 2018, there were 17 sections and 429 students enrolled. In 2019, English 102 had 19 sections in both the fall and spring terms. In the spring of 2019, there were 476 students enrolled, and in the fall of 2019, there were 211 students enrolled. Please see graph 1 for the data. A contributing factor for the decrease in enrollment in English 102 for the fall of 2019 may be the lack of a zero-cost textbook. If students have taken English 97 and English 101 and had access to free textbooks, having to purchase a textbook for English 102 may be a barrier for their education.

Graph 1
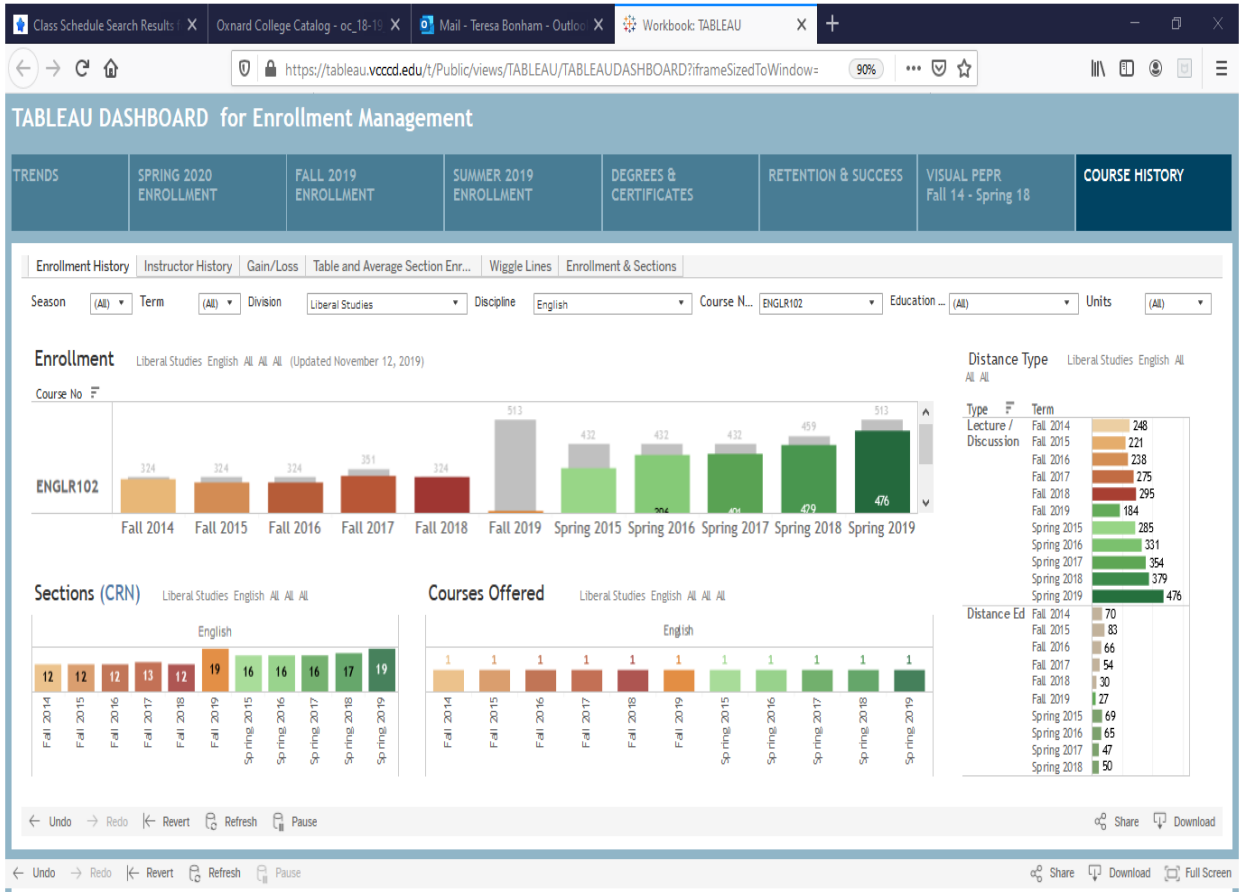
2. Rationale

a. Professional Development

Currently, the California Community Colleges' Online Educational Initiative has created thirty OER Canvas course shells for many different disciplines, but English is not one of the available disciplines. This sabbatical would allow me the time to search for OER that I could include in the Canvas shell. I will explore what free resources exist that can be used in English 102, and I will evaluate and assess the free resources. This sabbatical will also allow me the time to search the electronic sources housed in the Oxnard College library which I could use as course readings. In addition, this sabbatical will allow me the time to write my own original content that can be used in an English

102 class. Furthermore, I plan on finding free digital novels which can also be used in the course.

b. Value to Department or Discipline

This sabbatical project will benefit the English department because I will share the entire content of the ZTC English 102 shell with the department. My colleagues will be able to use everything that I gather and create if they too, would like to have a ZTC English 102. The benefit of this project is that my colleagues can take all the materials that I gather and that I create, and they can customize all of it in their own Canvas course shell. In other words, I will do all the difficult work of compiling and composing a course textbook that is appropriate for English 102 and English faculty can simply copy the content they want to use into their Canvas course shell. Perhaps the greatest benefit of my proposed sabbatical project is that OER adoption can improve teaching effectiveness and efficiency because the materials can be built on desired learning outcomes (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2016). I would be building the digital textbook using the course outline of record for English 102, which specifies the course content and outcomes and using the student learning outcomes for English 102. This means the digital textbook would include all the necessary materials for teaching English 102.

c. Value to College and/or District

This sabbatical project is a value to both the college and district. Our mission is to best serve our students and our community. Creating a ZTC English 102 class can

help the students at Oxnard College because some educators argue that the high costs of college textbooks are barriers for students. In addition, data from community colleges who have implemented ZTC shows a direct relationship between ZTC and student success. "Grades achieved in ZTC courses were 3 percent higher than those achieved in traditional courses. Grades of F were 11 percent less prevalent in ZTC courses, while grades of A were 7 percent more prevalent. Pell Grant recipients did markedly better in ZTC classes, with their grades in those classes 7.6 percent higher than their grades in other classes" (Burke, 2019). Besides being beneficial to the college and the student, increasing student success is also beneficial to the district. Students who might otherwise be precluded from enrolling in classes or continuing enrollment due to the high costs of textbooks would be more likely to enroll or continue their education when they don't have to spend money on textbooks, allowing the district to maintain and potentially increase enrollment numbers.

d. Value to Students

This research project is of value to students because they can take English 102, which is a required course for transfer, and they do not have to purchase a textbook. This potentially may help students to take English 102 because the barrier to purchase expensive course materials will be removed. "Based on data from bookstores at all types of higher education institutions, the National Association of College Stores recently reported average 2014–15 textbook spending of $563 across all students and $1,019 (nearly twice the overall average) for first–year students. The amounts are higher for first–generation students, who spend about 10 percent more than other students even as they acquire fewer textbooks" (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2016).

Many students at Oxnard College are first-generation students. This project would be a great benefit for them.

e. Value to Community

This project is of value to the community because it can eliminate one barrier for education for the most vulnerable students. This may help people in the community become more educated, allowing them greater potential for their future success.

3. Implementation

a. Implementation Procedure

Beginning in January 2021, I will begin searching for OER sources on rhetorical modes relating to composition, such as thesis development, logic, and argumentation. After I search for OER, I will assess the sources that I find, and I will make a list of the sources I deem acceptable. In February 2021, I will begin searching for OER sources on free literature in the genres of poetry, short fiction, and plays. I will find at least fifty poems, twenty short stories, and four plays and I will create a list of the works I find. In April 2021, I will begin searching for OER complete works of fiction.   I will create a list of at least four works of fiction I find. In May, I will begin to build the Canvas English 102 OER/ZTC shell. I will assess what original content I may need to create, and I will incorporate it into the digital textbook shell.

b. Projected Results

The projected results of this research project will be a Canvas course shell that contains enough resources that English faculty at Oxnard College can teach a section of English 102 and not require students to purchase a textbook. In other words, the

projected results would be the creation of a digital textbook for English 102 with a selection of free digital works of full-length fiction.

c. **Dissemination Plan: Benefit to Colleagues/Students/College**

When I return from sabbatical, I will share my research project with my department. I will make the Canvas shell available to my colleagues so they can use whatever sources I have gathered and created.

d. **Project Timeline**

- January: Discover OER rhetorical sources. According to the report, "The 2016-17 Budget: Assessing the Governor's Zero-Textbook-Cost Proposal," "Finding and selecting OER can be time consuming." This is a time-consuming task as there are a multitude of OER sources. After I discover the various sources, I will need to read them all and assess them. OER sources need to be evaluated to verify that the sources are quality materials and representative of the kind of materials appropriate for the college-level course. This means I have to evaluate the OER sources and verify that they are appropriate for English 102.

- February-March: Continue to evaluate OER Rhetorical sources and begin to discover OER literature

  - I will find at least fifty poems, twenty short stories, and four plays and I will create a list of the works I find. This will be time-consuming because I have to find the appropriate works of literature for English 102. I will also study the textbooks that my

colleagues have chosen for English 102 so I can search for OER

sources that will appeal to a majority of my colleagues.

- April: Continue to Evaluate OER rhetorical sources, continue to discover

  OER literature, and begin to discover OER novels

  - I will find at least four works of fiction and I will create a list of what

    I find. I will also study the full-length works of fiction my colleagues

    use in their 102 courses, so I can try to find free versions of works

    that they like to use.

- May: Begin building the Canvas OER shell. I will need to research the

  OER shells for other disciplines and I will learn how those digital

  textbooks are organized. I will add the materials I have discovered and

  evaluated as appropriate for English 102 into the Canvas course shell in

  a logical way so faculty and students can understand the organization of

  the digital textbook.

  - Add the rhetorical sources

  - Add the literature (poems, short stories, and plays)

  - Add a list of the novels

  - Create original materials for the course as needed

- August: The OER shell will be completed and shared with the English

  department. Faculty will be able to use the ZTC in the fall.

4. Past Contributions to the District

a. **Scholarship**

I have published an academic article in *i.e (Inside English)* on best practices for online teaching. I have also published a young adult novel called, *SPI: The Case of the Dark Shadow.*   I am currently a PhD student in Education, with a focus on Learning, Instruction, and Innovation. I have completed a course on teaching innovations as part of my PhD, where I learned about OER. I have joined three honor societies based on academic achievement. I will graduate in the fall of 2021.

b. Service

1)Department/Discipline

I am an active participant in my department. I attend department meetings regularly. I help my colleagues when I can. I participate in faculty evaluations. I also currently serve on three tenure committees, two from within my department.

2)College

I have served on several college committees. I am a past Curriculum Committee Chair, founder and past chair of Distance Education Committee, past member of Technology Committee, Curriculum Committee, and Professional Development Committee. I am an Academic Senate Senator. I have contributed to the STEM grant by implementing student strategies for success. I also have been an ALAS faculty fellow twice, an ALAS faculty lead, and I oversee the ALAS Local HIP Faculty Fellows. I serve on a team to organize the ALAS conference for the fall of

2018 at Oxnard College. I also collaborate with Professor Christine Morla

to produce the literary and art chapbook, *The Soaring Condor.*

3)District

I have served on several district committees. I served on the district's

technology committee. I helped select CMSs for the district twice. I

served on the District Curriculum Committee. I also served on the District

Goals Implementation Committee.

4)Community

I am active in the community. I am a member of CERT, which is

community emergency response team. I am a former foster parent (I

adopted my daughter last year). I am also an adult member of Girl Scouts

(thanks to my child).

5.Length of Service & Past Sabbaticals Awarded

I was hired in August of 2006. My first sabbatical was in the spring of 2013.

During that time, I researched online support and services available for community

college students. I submitted my sabbatical report in August of 2013, upon returning

from sabbatical. I presented bound copies of the report to the President of Oxnard

College and the Chancellor of Ventura Community College District. I also turned in a

digital copy to the Academic Senate President and the point person at the district office.

References

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