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An Approach for Estimating Open Education Resources Textbook Savings: A Case Study

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Abstract : Introduction: Textbooks play a sizable portion of the overall cost of higher education students. It is a board consent that open education resources (OER) reduce the te4xtbook costs and provide students a way to receive high-quality learning materials at little or no cost to them. However, there is less agreement over exactly how much. This study presents an approach for calculating OER savings by using SUNY Canton NON-OER courses (N=233) to estimate the potentially textbook savings for one semester – Fall 2022. The purpose in collecting data is to understand how much potentially saved from using OER materials and to have a record for future further studies. Literature Reviews: In the past years, researchers identified the rising cost of textbooks disproportionately harm students in higher education institutions and how much an average cost of a textbook. For example, Nyamweya (2018) found that on average students save $116.94 per course when OER adopted in place of traditional commercial textbooks by using a simple formula. Student PIRGs (2015) used reports of per-course savings when transforming a course from using a commercial textbook to OER to reach an estimate of $100 average cost savings per course. Allen and Wiley (2016) presented at the 2016 Open Education Conference on multiple cost-savings studies and concluded $100 was reasonable per-course savings estimates. Ruth (2018) calculated an average cost of a textbook was $79.37 per-course. Hilton, et al (2014) conducted a study with seven community colleges across the nation and found the average textbook cost to be $90.61. There is less agreement over exactly how much would be saved by adopting an OER course. This study used SUNY Canton as a case study to create an approach for estimating OER savings. Methodology: Step one: Identify NON-OER courses from UcanWeb Class Schedule. Step two: View textbook lists for the classes (Campus bookstore prices). Step three: Calculate the average textbook prices by averaging the new book and used book prices. Step four: Multiply the average textbook prices with the number of students in the course. Findings: The result of this calculation was straightforward. The average of a traditional textbooks is $132.45. Students potentially saved $1,091,879.94. Conclusion: (1) The result confirms what we have known: Adopting OER in place of traditional textbooks and materials achieves significant savings for students, as well as the parents and taxpayers who support them through grants and loans. (2) The average textbook savings for adopting an OER course is variable depending on the size of the college and as well as the number of enrollment students.

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