Promotion and Integration of OER: A Case Study of the Community College
Librarian's Role

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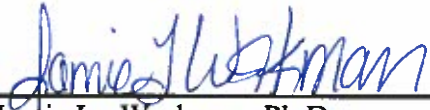
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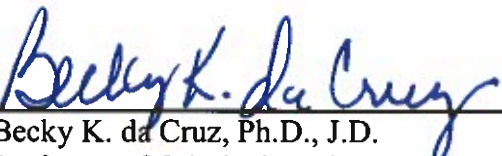Taralynn Hartsell, Ph.D.
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ABSTRACT

Open educational resources (OER) provide college students with course materials on the first day of class, ensuring an equitable learning experience for all. The concept of OER has been around for almost 20 years, yet many faculty and librarians are just now becoming aware as more and more statewide initiatives are introduced. The adoption of OER has been a slow and gradual movement. Faculty are the driving force behind OER but need more support to understand, locate, and evaluate resources. Librarians across the country are skilled and capable of filling this gap. Faculty and librarian collaboration can bridge together ideas and resources to benefit students.

A qualitative case study was used to understand how faculty and librarians collaborated at a community college to adopt OER. Librarians and faculty were interviewed to understand their experiences of working together to promote and adopt OER at their campus. Uncovering the practices and strategies at this college could enhance the knowledge of faculty and librarians at other community colleges that are beginning campus OER initiatives. The study was guided by the following overarching research question: What strategies and practices are faculty and librarians at a community college in Alabama using to enhance collaboration to move OER initiatives forward?

Data collected and analyzed from the participants revealed seven primary themes. The themes centered on communication, student benefits, faculty hesitancies, departmental and administrative decisions, librarian partnerships, and campus repository building. Findings showed collaborative efforts of librarians and faculty helped move OER initiatives further at this college. Statewide collaborations of like-disciplined faculty and librarians could further advance OER initiatives across the state.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Librarians have strived to acquire and fight for resources that provide access and equity among all classes. If you could help provide free or low-cost course materials to your students, would you? Open educational resources (OER) can specifically meet this need when incorporated into the classroom to provide students equal access to course materials. Incorporating OER into the curriculum can be both beneficial and challenging for faculty. Collaborative efforts between librarians and faculty can move OER initiatives forward more effectively and neutralize some of the faculty's shared challenges.

Libraries and librarians have evolved over the years, incorporating more digital resources into the collection and offering information literacy sessions as a primary means for teaching faculty, staff, and students about locating, evaluating, and using information effectively. Even with librarians' changing and evolving roles, faculty still see librarians in stereotypical roles. Librarians were once the keepers of books in a time when resources were limited. Today's technology has opened doors to a vast amount of information, and librarians have identified new ways to organize and teach others how to filter and assess the resources. Promoting OER aims to provide an additional avenue for librarians to collaborate with faculty. Most college students live on a decreased income while in school and rely heavily on loans and federal aid. The additional supplies and daily living expenses are often overwhelming, causing students to choose between necessary living expenses and school

expenses. OER is a way to eliminate one of the financial challenges facing students, but librarians must work with faculty to bridge the gap between knowledge and resources.

Communication is crucial in moving the OER initiatives forward. Communication is the root of Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DoI) and is a driving force behind change. OER is easily classified as an educational innovation and will be used to discuss how to move information forward to achieve a broader audience of faculty using OER in the curriculum. DoI will be used to identify common issues, barriers, and successes discussed by those interviewed to guide others further to accelerate the adoption of OER across the state.

Learning more about carrying out an OER initiative on campus is very important in moving forward. Understanding *what* is working and *how* to make the startup process easier for others looking to do the same thing is critical. The researcher strives to better understand the practices and strategies used by librarians and faculty to advance the knowledge and integration of OER on community college campuses.

Background

Fischer, Hilton, Robinson, and Wiley (2015) stated that most college faculty saw textbooks as a traditional and necessary means of teaching students. Instructors assign textbooks, and students are expected to purchase the texts to prepare for class (Fischer et al., 2015). Hilton (2016) stated that although there was an "underlying assumption that textbooks enrich academic experiences and demonstrate improved class performance" (p. 573), textbooks were not the reason students achieve success. The origins of open educational resources can be traced back to 2001, when the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) launched its Open Courseware initiative and opened its full curriculum to everyone (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). The term open educational resources (OER) was first used

during a 2002 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) forum to describe the open format of freely available course materials in many forms to provide global learning (UNESCO, 2019). The idea of OER has brought about local and national repositories, conferences, research, and local, regional, and national initiatives to increase resources and adoption (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019).

Over the past 15 years, many educational institutions, states, and organizations have created repositories that offer high-quality OER materials (Bliss, Hilton, Wiley, & Thanos, 2013). OER Commons, OpenStax, Teaching Commons, MERLOT, OpenWashington, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities Affordable Learning are a few examples of large searchable repositories. To date, there is no one central repository to locate OER, which creates barriers for faculty (Bliss et al., 2013). Creative Commons was established in 2001 as a way for content creators to license their work. The primary goal of Creative Commons is to provide a way for creators to share their work in different ways and still receive credit. There are over 1.6 billion works with creative commons licensing, including photos, videos, audio, open education, and scientific research (Creative Commons, 2020).

Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) stated that only about 16% of faculty had adopted OER into their courses across the United States. OER has still not hit the "tipping point" with the early majority of adopters based on the diffusion of innovation. Studies on faculty and student perceptions, as well as OER efficacy, continue to dominate OER research. Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) noted that librarians have long been a driving force behind OER, but ultimately, faculty who select course materials are in control.

Over the past 15 years, extensive efforts have brought about hope and the idea of having more accessible resources available to students, potentially saving them hundreds and

thousands of dollars over their college career (Bliss et al., 2013). Community colleges have long been at the forefront of educating lower-income, first-generation, and disadvantaged college students. Community colleges have an open-door admittance policy, are more affordable, offer more support for those less academically prepared, and are more convenient and accessible to students (Everett, 2015). To close the gap, librarians and faculty must work together to bring about inclusion, access, and equality to students' educational resources. Collaboration between faculty and librarians will create a better understanding of OER to meet all the students' needs (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

The rising cost of textbooks places students who cannot afford them at a disadvantage and affects their ability to succeed in a course. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), textbooks' costs increased 88% from January 2006 to July 2016. Sixty-six percent of college students reported not buying or renting course materials for class due to the price even though they knew they were necessary to complete course assignments (Nagle & Vitez, 2020). Studies conducted by Bliss et al. (2013) and Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) showed that textbook costs directly affected student achievement. Community colleges serve higher populations of first-time and financially disadvantaged students, so affordability must be addressed (Bliss et al., 2013; Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). The cost of textbooks often impacts most students outside of the classroom and places unnecessary stress on students (Nagle & Vitez, 2020). Allen (2014) reported evidence showing better grades and higher completion rates for students using open textbooks. Open textbooks are available online and free for students to download to phones or tablets, providing the course textbook to everyone and not just those who can afford the required book (Allen, 2014).

OER provides students with an affordable alternative to expensive textbooks. OER are learning and research materials available in any medium with an open license permit and are freely available in the public domain for remixing, adapting, adding to, and redistributing (UNESCO, 2019). Faculty have been resistant to selecting and adopting OER, citing knowledge, time, and efficacy as primary reasons (Anderson, Gaines, Leachman, & Williamson, 2017). Librarians at many colleges are becoming advocates and campus leaders driving OER initiatives (Okamoto, 2013).

Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) stated that faculty were the driving force behind the adoption of OER. They recommended combining librarians' skillset with those of the faculty to create a dynamic team working to bring quality low or no-cost course materials to students. Their research is a crucial component of my questions: What are faculty and librarians doing to collaborate and move OER initiatives further in the community college system? What strategies and practices are used to expand others' knowledge on campus and aid in OER implementation?

Faculty and student perceptions were discussed throughout the literature (Anderson et al., 2017; Bliss et al., 2013; Jaggers, Folk, & Mullins, 2018). Roles that librarians can play to assist faculty were also investigated by a few researchers (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Mwinyimbegu, 2018; Young, 2016). Little research had been reported on the strategies and practices put in place by faculty and librarians to improve collaboration efforts and disseminate knowledge across the community college campus. Many community colleges' libraries operate on limited library budgets and staffing. Through this study, the researcher can provide ideas and direction for successful practices to other community college librarians and faculty who face similar challenges.

The Motivation for the Study

My Experiential Knowledge

In October of 2000, I began my undergraduate studies. I was 18, living on my own, and ineligible for any type of federal grant. I was a nontraditional college student working full time and attending classes at night. I was limited to buying textbooks at the local college bookstore, the used textbook bookstore, or from other students. I saved money while working to make sure I could pay for my textbooks out of pocket each summer. As online bookstore options became available for used books, I was able to find cheaper textbook options. The problem with these options was that it would take a week to two weeks to receive books by mail. The delay required me to make copies of other texts or go without the text for the first few weeks of the semester. Over 15 years, I finished my undergraduate degree and two graduate degrees. Each semester I tried to get the list of books as early as possible to stay ahead and have my materials to start classes. I often tried to find the cheapest option possible by comparing multiple websites and sellers. An instructor often implemented a new edition, or university editions were created, forcing students to pay much more.

As a librarian, the idea of open and equal access to materials is at the heart of what I do. The roles that librarians play on college campuses have evolved over the years. We are innovative, technology-driven, and focused on providing and educating students on information and access to the best resources. Working at the local community college has provided me with a firsthand account of working with a population of underserved, underprivileged students who want to better themselves. When the opportunity came about two years ago to attend a statewide OER meeting, I was excited and eager to learn more. The initial meeting, followed by two more sessions, involved faculty and librarians from around

the state who wanted to increase their awareness of OER. Last summer, I put together

professional development workshops for faculty on my campus and received very little

participation or interest. This past February, my instructional dean asked that I attend the

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) OER Summit in South Carolina with a

biology faculty member. I then realized how dire the need was for colleges to provide equal

opportunities and access to resources for courses. The summit provided opportunities for

grants to HBCUs for librarians and faculty to collaborate and implement OER in at least one

general education course by Spring of 2021. As more institutions support and encourage

OER initiatives, sharing knowledge and experiences with others around us is essential.

The Need for OER at Community Colleges

Community colleges serve higher populations of first-time and financially

disadvantaged students, and affordability is a concern (Bliss et al., 2013; Braddlee &

VanScoy, 2019). On average, community college students spend approximately $1460 a year

on textbooks and supplies (College Board, 2019). Hess, Nann, and Riddle

(2016) indicated that textbooks' rising costs directly affected student enrollment and college

course completion. According to the Alabama Community College System (ACCS), 48.83

percent of students who attended from 2016 to 2019 were Pell-eligible (Birchfield, 2020).

Pell eligibility increased to 60.14 percent for students who enrolled in the community college

system with the intent to transfer to a 4-year institution. Sixty-five percent of the students

who self-identified as first-generation were Pell-eligible. Among those who self-identified as

first-generation students intending to transfer, 72 percent were Pell-eligible (Birchfield, 2020).

The numbers indicate many students in Alabama's community colleges are both first-

generation and low-income. To help students counter indirect student expenses, the Alabama

Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) began a statewide OER initiative in 2017. ACHE

and the ACCS created new positions to coordinate special projects and initiatives. At this

time, ACHE and ACCS worked together to develop a strategy for creating and presenting

workshops across the state. In 2018, three workshops were held across the state to increase

faculty and staff knowledge of OER. Sixty thousand dollars in grant money was awarded to

interested individuals and teams across the state who selected and implemented OER in the

spring of 2019 (Leonard & Wren, 2019). The program provided a baseline to get Alabama

introduced to OER. Academic librarians were not considered essential for helping faculty

teams in the initial phases. Since then, librarians have been called upon more frequently to

assist faculty with resources, but many do not know where to start the journey. Looking into

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DoI) theory provided a foundation for the study and

essential elements for further moving OER initiatives.

<div align="center">*Conceptual Framework*</div>

This study's guiding framework is a theory developed by Everett M. Rogers known as

the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DoI). Rogers (2003) defined innovations as "an idea,

practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (p. 12).

OER can be categorized as an educational innovation based on Rogers's definition. Rogers

(2003) stated that adopting new ideas was difficult, even when a design shows excellent

advantages. It can often take many years for innovations to become widely accepted. DoI

examines the communication of new ideas throughout a social system and is adopted over

time from a small scale to a larger scale practice (Rogers, 2003). Diffusion refers to the

communication of innovation over time through related social systems. Communication is

how individuals exchange, create, and share information. Social change occurs when new

ideas are "invented, diffused, and adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences" (Rogers, 2003, p. 6). Rogers looked directly at how knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation play a role in taking an idea and turning it into widespread common practice.

DoI is broken up into four main elements: innovation, communication channels, time, and a social system. Rogers (2003) described the first element, innovation, as how individuals learned about new innovations, processed the information received, and decided to either adopt or reject the innovation. This was addressed by determining what information about OER was disseminated at the college. Faculty and librarians must understand the ins and outs of OER to make an informed decision about adoption and the benefits and barriers of pushing the initiative forward. Rogers (2003) described the second element, communication channels, as how the information was exchanged between one person or several people. The researcher was interested in determining how information was shared between librarians and faculty on campus to create awareness. Awareness of how information is shared is a significant step in disseminating knowledge to others and advancing campus OER initiatives. The third element, time, is the point from which knowledge is acquired about an innovation to when a decision is made to adopt or reject an innovation. This part of the process includes the five steps involved in the innovation-decision process: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (Rogers, 2003). Questions from the librarian and faculty interview guides (see Appendix A and B) provided an inside look into how the participants first learned about OER, their attitudes toward OER, and their decision to adopt or reject OER in their course. Rogers (2003) described the fourth and final element, a social system, as individuals, groups, or organizations collaborating to problem solve and reach a common

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goal. Throughout the study, the practices and strategies were analyzed to determine how faculty and librarians collaborated to implement OER. The four elements can all come together to provide a roadmap for change at a system level beyond just one college.

The innovation-decision process is "the process through which an individual (or other decision-making unit) passes from gaining critical knowledge of an innovation, to forming an attitude toward the innovation, to making a decision" (Rogers, 2003, p. 168). Evaluating a new idea is not quickly done, but a process that happens over time. The uncertainty of deciding on a new concept that may replace something existing requires knowledge and evaluation through a series of actions (Rogers, 2003). There are five sequential stages to the innovation-decision process: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. The decision to reject an innovation can happen during any of the five stages of the process. During the knowledge stage, the individual learns about the innovation, how it works, and why it works. The persuasion stage is when the individual develops a "favorable or unfavorable attitude" based on how the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the innovation will impact the person's situation (Rogers, 2003, p. 175). The decision stage is when the innovation is either adopted or rejected. A demonstration or trial can speed up the decision phase. Putting the innovation to use by an individual or organization moves it into the implementation phase. Once an innovation has been implemented and becomes standard operation, it is no longer considered a new idea. The final stage of confirmation "seeks reinforcement for the innovation-decision already made and may reverse the decision if exposed to conflicting messages about the innovation" (Rogers, 2003, p. 189). This stage ends the process that would either confirm or negate the adoption of an innovation.

DoI is widely visible throughout many studies that show why OER is a slowly accepted and adopted idea across the United States (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Fulgencio, 2018; Miller, 2019; Wright, 2018). This study examined the importance of how librarians worked hand in hand with faculty to grow knowledge and understanding of OER to continue moving the initiative forward. Understanding the diffusion of innovation within one community college can lead to continued communication within the community college system to encourage widespread change across the state. Continued research surrounding OER initiatives may help librarians provide new practices and strategies to promote OER with faculty effectively.

Faculty perceptions and librarians' roles are critical components of why and how OER are adopted at community colleges. Investigating previous literature about each topic area will provide a basis for the importance of pushing the OER movement forward. Noted in previous studies are the ideas for future studies needed in OER. The research cited highlighted the critical roles librarians play in collaborating with faculty to make OER more prevalent on community college campuses.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to examine the strategies and practices used by librarians and faculty at a community college, who collaborated to communicate about and assist in the implementation of OER to avail students with low or no-cost resources for courses. Exploring the strategies and practices that have contributed to the adoption of OER at one community college can provide ideas and examples to others who are trying to promote OER on their campus. Library advocacy increases OER awareness, support, and navigation, which can equip faculty with the skills necessary to provide students with an equal

opportunity for success in courses (Mwinyimbegu, 2018). Essential is to study community

colleges to learn how librarians connect and work with faculty while operating with a

limited staff, resources, and budget. Rogers' DoI theory helped identify the critical

communication components needed and used to collaborate and implement resources

effectively. The study focused on community college librarians and faculty who have worked

together to learn, identify, and select OER for courses. The participants had knowledge of

OER and had previously worked with a campus librarian or faculty colleague to identify

resources. An investigation into how collaborative relationships began, what librarians and

faculty were doing to spread the word about OER, the most beneficial aspects of working as a

team on resources, the challenges faced through the process, reflection on the overall

experience of the process, and the perceived best strategies and practices can benefit others in

the beginning phases of implementing OER initiatives at their colleges.

Research Questions

The central research question guiding this research is: What strategies and practices

are faculty and librarians at a community college in Alabama using to enhance collaboration

to move OER initiatives forward?

The sub-questions exploring this topic are:

1. How were individual faculty and librarians at the college first introduced to OER?

2. What were the individual faculty and librarians' attitudes toward OER?

3. What individual and collaborative activities and decisions lead faculty and librarians

    to implement OER on campus?

4. What strategies and practices have been implemented by faculty and librarians to

    sustain the long-term use of OER at the college?

The sub-questions used to answer the central research question were written to understand Rogers' stages of the innovation-decision process. The first sub-question addresses the knowledge stage by understanding how participants first learned about OER. The second sub-question addresses the persuasion stage by understanding the initial attitudes of participants after they first learned about OER. The third sub-question addresses the decision and implementation stages by learning about the processes and decisions that led faculty to adopt an OER for their course. The final stage, confirmation, is addressed in the last sub-question by identifying ways to sustain current OER use and continue moving initiatives forward at the college.

Significance of Study

This case study provided a firsthand experience of both librarians and faculty who have worked together to understand, identify, create, and adopt OER for courses at their college. The experiences, strategies, and practices investigated throughout the research process may apply to other librarians and faculty in a community college setting. Lowering the cost of course resources provide a more equitable learning environment for all students and can increase retention and completion rates.

Increased librarian knowledge of how to best facilitate faculty's OER needs can increase faculty familiarity and understanding of accessing and implementing OER. Faculty members who learn about and adopt OER become equipped to champion OER themselves and contribute to change. Collaboration between librarians and faculty increases information literacy and showcases the combined skills and talents of both to benefit students. The increased use of OERs on community college campuses would provide a financial benefit to students and equitable access to resources for all students beginning the first day of class.

Increased access to low or no-cost resources takes the financial burden off students. Taking away or decreasing students' financial barriers provides more students opportunities to earn a quality education at an affordable price.

Courses that offer open textbooks can provide students equal access to resources from the first day of classes. Access to course materials allows students an equal opportunity for success in a course. The study can provide other librarians and faculty with evidence about the experiences, strategies, and practices implemented. Implementing an open textbook program may prove what was learned throughout the process and its impact on student achievement. This study gives an inside look into what is being done at one community college in Alabama to increase OER adoption amongst faculty. Current OER research is primarily quantitative. Surveys have been published regarding the roles of librarians and faculty related to OER, the efficacy of resources, and faculty and student perceptions of OER (Anderson et al., 2017; Bliss et al., 2013; Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Jaggers et al., 2018; Mwinymbegu, 2018; Waltz, 2017). Still, very few studies focus on collaboration between faculty and librarians to support OER initiatives. This study delves into the collaborative efforts of faculty and librarians leading the way to help make course materials accessible at their colleges.

Delimitations and Researcher Assumptions

This study was delimited to only librarians and faculty who have directly collaborated on OER. All participants came from one community college in Alabama due to the lack of librarians in the Alabama Community College System who had collaborated with faculty on OER. The researcher's role as a librarian in the Community College System may introduce bias or prevent participants from being sincere. The research is not generalizable to the larger

population but helpful to faculty and librarians in higher education.

The study also included researcher assumptions about the participants and research problem. The researcher assumes that participants in the study represent the target population, participants would know about OER, participants are willing to share their OER journey, participants are willing to adopt OER, and participants will be open, honest, and sincere in answering questions

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of definitions used throughout the study. The definitions offer readers an idea of what different terms mean in the context of this study. The definitions are taken from the sources provided.

Adoption is defined as "a decision to make full use of an innovation as the best course of action available" (Rogers, 2003, p. 21).

Diffusion is defined as "the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (Rogers, 2003, p. 5).

Communication is "a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding" (Rogers, 2003, p. 5).

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Innovation is defined as "an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (Rogers, 2003, p. 12).

Innovation-decision process is "the process through which an individual (or other decision-making unit) passes from gaining critical knowledge of an innovation, to forming an attitude toward the innovation, to making a decision" (Rogers, 2003, p. 20).

Open Educational Resources (OER) are "teaching, learning or research materials that are in the public domain or released with intellectual property licenses that facilitate the free use, adaptation and distribution of resources" (UNESCO, 2019, para. 1).

Public domain is where works are housed that are not under copyright protection and are freely available to be accessed and used by anyone (Creative Commons, 2020).

Social change is defined as " the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of the social system" (Rogers, 2003, p. 6).

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rising cost of indirect student expenses often causes financial hardships for students. OER are low-cost or free resources that can be embedded in course content. They also serve as an avenue to ease college students' financial burden and provide an equitable education to everyone. OER initiatives date back to 1994, and despite the proven benefits to students, adoption of resources by faculty remains low (Bliss & Smith, 2017; Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). Individual state and college initiatives have provided incentives for faculty adoption of OER, but usage remains minimal (Katz, 2019). Librarians have become the voice at colleges for driving and sustaining OER (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). The literature provides an overview of OER, community colleges, student impacts, faculty and student perceptions, librarians' current and future roles, and the effects of the recent COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown.

A Brief History of Open Educational Resources

OER were in their infancy from 1994 to 2004 (Bliss & Smith, 2017). The idea was formed from a 1994 grant from the National Science Foundation, which led to the creation of MERLOT, a collection of free learning materials for higher education by California State University in 1997 (MERLOT, 2020). James Spohrer, who led the grant, worked to find and provide access to higher education resources that were predominantly free. In 1998, Assistant Professor David Wiley came up with the idea of licensing free and open content differently from the standard full copyright. While these events were happening in the United States, a

worldwide open-access campaign known as the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) launched in Hungary in 2002. The combination of work in the early years provided a platform for what OER has evolved into today (Bliss & Smith, 2017).

The early 2000s were a clash of big-name universities trying to sell for-profit academic content. Others like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Rice University worked to facilitate and freely share resources worldwide (Bliss & Smith, 2017). Rice University's work led to creating the web-based platform Connexions, now known as OpenStax, which has saved college students more than 40 million dollars. With the help of multimillion-dollar grants from the Mellon and Hewlett foundations, MIT made over two thousand online courses available and developed the first fifty OpenCourseWare (OCW) courses by 2002. The idea and movement of OER led to the creation of Creative Commons in 2001 by Lawrence Lessig, Hal Abelson, and Eric Eldred, who built it off the ideas formerly conceived by Wiley (Bliss & Smith, 2017).

The Hewlett Foundation provided grant funding to stimulate OER's work for almost 20 years (Hewlett Foundation, 2021). Since 2002, the foundation has awarded more than 14 million dollars in grants to strengthen students' learning experiences worldwide. Bliss and Smith (2017) added that to stimulate the idea of OER across institutions and the country, they had to squash the cliché 'you get what you pay for.' The promotion of OER was made possible through additional grants to major universities to create and open content to the public. The Institute for Study of Knowledge Management and Education (ISKME) developed the OER Commons using these grants (Bliss & Smith, 2017). The term "Open Educational Resources" was adopted during a forum held by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2002 while discussing the impact of courseware

used in developing countries (Hilton, 2016). The Hewlett Foundation continues to support OER by educating teachers on the availability and flexibility of resources, collaborating with school systems to discuss the best methods for implementation and sustaining OER, and continuing to grow momentum worldwide for OER content, practices, and resources (Hewlett Foundation, 2021).

The work accomplished with OER between 1994 and 2004 established a foundation for promoting free resources. Between 2004 and 2010, Hewlett provided a more structured approach to support the overall development of OER in both the developed and developing worlds (Bliss & Smith, 2017). Between 2011 and 2015, Hewlett decided to mainstream their strategy and focus primarily on K-12 and higher education in the United States. The focus was on getting federal governments involved with OER to support and facilitate OER development (Bliss & Smith, 2017). Since 2015, the Hewlett Foundation has continued to support the OER movement with a newly defined three-goal approach: "strengthen infrastructure, using OER to help solve social and educational problems, and improving educational materials" (Bliss & Smith, 2017, p. 19). OER continues to gain attention and bring equity to underserved populations. Continuing efforts to develop course materials, sustain OER developers and providers, create higher education partnerships, share best practices, and promote awareness are necessary to advancing the OER initiative further (Open Education Strategy, 2020).

<p align="center">What are Open Educational Resources?</p>

The concept of OER is simple: "freedom of access to content, freedom from cost, and freedom to use in any way" (Bliss & Smith, 2017, p. 20). OER does not have a universal definition and may encompass different materials depending on the organization or college.

The most common and accepted definitions all consider using freely available educational materials as OER. The Hewlett Foundation uses the term "open education" to encompass the myriad of learning resources, teaching practices, and academic policies that use the flexibility of OER to provide learners with high-quality educational experiences (Hewlett Foundation, 2021, para. 4). Creative Commons (2020) defined OER as "teaching, learning, and research materials that are either (a) in the public domain or (b) licensed in a manner that provides everyone with free and perpetual permission to engage in the 5R activities" (para. 2). UNESCO (2019) defined OER as "teaching, learning or research materials that are in the public domain or released with intellectual property licenses that facilitate the free use, adaptation and distribution of resources" (para. 1). It is not uncommon for colleges and universities to use their definition of OER materials. Colleges often consider low-cost resources and the use of content paid for by libraries as OER. The explanation difference is that OER has little or no cost (Reed & Jahre, 2019). Licensed library resources are paid for by the college. Though these materials would be considered "free" and helpful to faculty and students, they do not align with the term's more widely accepted definitions.

The primary licensing options for OER follow the 5R activities: Retain, Reuse, Revise, Remix, and Redistribute (Creative Commons, 2020). Retain means giving users the right to download, duplicate, store, or manage content for personal use and reference. Reuse means allowing users the right to use content in many ways in its unaltered original format. Revise means enabling users to modify or edit content to meet their specific needs. Remix means allowing users to create new content by combining the original or revised copy with something new. Redistribute means enabling users to share original or revised content with anyone (Creative Commons, 2020). Creative Commons (CC) licensing standards provide

content creators and users with the essential tools and understanding for adopting, adapting, and creating OER that meets the needs of course objectives (Reed & Jahre, 2019).

OER are tagged with one of six CC licensing options (Creative Commons, 2020). A combination of symbols or abbreviations is used to express licensing types. All license types give credit to the creator. The creator assigns any additional restrictions to the works. The license types are explained in order from most permissive to least permissive. The first type of license, and most permissive, By Attribution, fully opens up the use of the resource and ensures the original creator is given credit. By Attribution and Share Alike, the second type of license indicates that credit must be given to the original author. Any changes made to the resource must be shared under the same terms. By Attribution and Non-Commercial, the third license type indicates credit must be given to the original author, and the work is only permitted for noncommercial use. The fourth license type, By Attribution, Non-Commercial, and Share Alike, indicates credit must be given to the original author. The work is only permitted for noncommercial use. Any changes to the resource must be shared under the same terms. By Attribution and No Derivatives, the fifth license type indicates credit must be given to the original author. The resource can only be copied or distributed; no changes or adaptations are allowed. By Attribution, Non-Commercial, and No Derivatives indicate the sixth and final license type and most restrictive. Credit must be given to the original author, the work is only permitted for noncommercial use, and it can only be copied or distributed; no changes or adaptations are allowed (Creative Commons, 2020).

OER aggregates multiple resources to create new and updated textbooks or courses for many subject areas (Fischer et al., 2015). The resources are then freely accessible to students to download, or a small fee can be paid to obtain a print copy. Since the inception of OER,

many instructors have created and revised resources for their courses, including journal articles, textbooks, entire courses, ancillary materials, and videos. Many of the resources are freely available online, many licensed through Creative Commons for reuse or revision to meet faculty and student needs (Hilton, 2016). Fischer et al. (2015) stated there are still varying qualities of OER materials, but most have been through arduous editing to ensure accuracy.

Awareness and Impacts

Lin (2019) reported that open technology is still unknown territory for most instructors. Seaman and Seaman (2020) published a report on faculty awareness, specifically focusing a section on licensing awareness. Understanding OER went beyond understanding OER's context and the legal permissions of works used and created. Ninety percent of faculty indicated they were "Very Aware" or "Aware" of both copyright of classroom materials and public licensing for classroom resources. When asked more specifically about Creative Commons, less than half of the faculty indicated that they were "Very Aware" or "Aware" (p. 27). Faculty with a complete understanding of Creative Commons and OER was critical to increasing overall growth and success. Seaman and Seaman (2020) showed a steady increase in combined awareness from 2014 to 2019. Increasing awareness of both OER and licensing of OER is a slow process. Many more years before a majority of faculty can claim that they are either "Very Aware" or "Aware" of both would likely occur (p. 29).

The indirect expenses associated with attending college are rarely considered and often underestimated (Coles, Keane, & Williams, 2020). Indirect student costs include expenses incurred outside of tuition and fees. These costs can include room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and personal expenses (Coles et al., 2020). The rising cost of

attending college has led students further into debt with federal aid, only covering about 60 percent of their expenses (Heinrich, 2017). In a survey of students completed by Coles et al. (2020), 51 percent of students indicated that they struggled to manage the indirect costs of college. Low-income students and their families are affected the most by rising tuition and textbook costs than any other socioeconomic group (Colvard, Watson, & Park, 2018). Though the full impact of OER is still being measured and will be for years to come, students' most apparent effect is the financial benefits and potential to decrease debt (Colvard et al., 2018). Additional impacts documented throughout the literature are student completion rates, resource quality rated equal or above that of traditional resources, similar or above average student learning, higher enrollment in courses that implemented OER, improved student performance, and lower withdrawal rates (Bliss et al., 2013; Colvard et al., 2018; Fischer et al., 2015).

The Community College

Community colleges provide access to higher education for almost half of the college students in the United States (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). Low tuition rates and open-door admission policies allow for an equal opportunity to obtain a degree (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). All the additional college costs are often not always considered, posing an overwhelming barrier to students. These additional costs can include books and supplies for classes or basic living expenses (Ocean, 2015). Community colleges serve high populations of first-time and financially disadvantaged students, so affordability must be addressed (Bliss et al., 2013; Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). The American Association of Community Colleges Fast Facts (2020) demographic data indicated that 55% of the enrolled students were considered minorities, and 45% were white. Twenty-nine percent of those are first-generation

college students, 15% are single parents, 9% are non-U.S. citizens, 5% are veterans, and 20% are disabled. Fifty-seven percent were women, with 43% as men. In 2017-2018, 92% of students relied on federal financial aid to attend college. Low-income community college students are often described as overwhelmed with a delicate "tipping point" (Ocean, 2015, p. 190). Ocean (2015) explained how Pell grants made college more affordable but did not always cover all costs. Okamoto (2013) discussed the affordability crisis and how affordable textbook initiatives were being created to eliminate the costly barrier of textbooks and provide an equitable learning environment for all students on the first day of class.

College Affordability and Textbook Costs

Statistics and research provide a clear picture of the impact of increased textbook costs on college students. Textbook costs increased 88% between 2006 and 2016, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). The College Board (2019) estimated the average annual cost of books and supplies for a full-time student at a public two-year institution was $1460 in 2019. Hilton, Gaudet, Clark, Robinson, and Wiley (2013) emphasized that first-generation and low-income students who do not have the required resources for class on the first day of school are disadvantaged. The significant increase in college textbooks has forced students to choose between a text they may or may not use and other needs (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Crozier, 2018; Hilton et al., 2013). Textbook cost is a significant barrier that affects students enrolling and completing college (Hess et al., 2016; Knaggs, Sondergeld, & Schardt, 2014). Students search for ways to save money; some do not purchase the text, some wait to see if the instructor will use the book, and others rent books or share with other students (Okamoto, 2013). Due to textbook costs, 64.2% of students surveyed at Florida University chose not to purchase the text at all, 42.8% took fewer courses, 40.5% did not register for a specific

class, 35.6% reported earning a low grade, and 22.9 % dropped a class (Florida Virtual Campus, 2018). A similar study at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), by Borchard and Magnuson (2017) revealed that 77% of students did not purchase the required textbook due to cost. The results from both surveys showed similar student textbook purchasing behaviors. Students' primary complaints remained with textbook costs, but many did see the materials' value (Borchard & Magnuson, 2017; Florida Virtual Campus, (2018).

Though the price of textbooks has exponentially spiked over the past twenty years, the problem began long before now. Many changes started happening back in the mid-1980s with how often new editions were published and by who (Okamoto, 2013). In the 1980s, a new textbook would come out every three to four years, but now new editions come out almost every two years from some publishers at a much higher price (Collins, Mitchell, & Nojeim, 2020). Del Valle (2019) added that the lack of competition in the textbook market has led to publishers like Pearson, Cengage, Wiley, and McGraw-Hill making up over 80 percent of the market and driving up costs. Collins et al. (2020) agreed that big publishers had gained the edge on the market by adding ancillary materials such as test banks, presentations, lecture materials, and course resources that have all driven up the cost for students who may not receive the direct benefit.

Textbook affordability has created a crisis for many students (Okamoto, 2013). Okamoto (2013) described the way bookstores and financial aid offices used to come together to help students purchase books for classes before student loans and grant monies were released. With the transition from small in-house bookstores to large chains, students have been left to figure out how to pay for textbooks at the beginning of the course. The importance of federal funds and how they level the playing field for low-income students was

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discussed in an article published in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (2009). It is not shocking to learn that higher education's cost creates a barrier between enrollment and race. Approximately 90% of Pell grant recipients come from families with an income below $40,000. Two-thirds or more of the students who attend HBCUs receive Pell grants (Special Report, 2009).

The government has enacted several textbook laws, some local and others at a national level (Okamoto, 2013). In 2008, the president signed the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) into law (Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008). The law was designed to create transparency and provide equitable access to higher education. This law included three specific provisions for textbooks:

1. Publisher must provide information to faculty on all substantial revisions made between publications and a price list of all available formats.

2. Publishers that sell bundled materials must also offer the materials unbundled at a separate price.

3. Colleges are required to provide students with the ISBN and prices of all required and recommended textbooks for courses at the time of registration.

The U.S. Department of Education (2016) announced 14 states and 40 districts committed to #GoOpen initiatives. The #GoOpen initiatives were created to provide a support system to help schools and educators transition from traditional learning resources to quality, open-licensed resources. States committing to #GoOpen are creating statewide strategies to encourage creating and sharing resources. A statewide website and repository are being developed to house resources and documents to share progress. Sparc (2020) tracks state legislation on OER policies. Based on current data, 28 states have enacted laws to lower

the cost of course materials or use OER in higher education settings. Many states now require institutions to include specific textbook information, such as textbook prices, and if an OER will be used in the course schedule. States provide funding and grants to conduct feasibility studies, expand local OER policy creation, train on OER, and identify creative ways to reduce students' cost of resources. Burke (2019) expanded upon California's efforts to create zero-textbook-cost degrees at community colleges across the state. In 2016, legislation passed providing funding to 23 community colleges to transition all course materials to OER. As of 2019, 23 associate-degree pathways and 14 certificate pathways had been implemented throughout the state. Over three years, the projected cost savings to students were estimated at almost 43 million dollars (Burke, 2019).

Student Perceptions

Lin (2019) surveyed 46 students from a large public university. Twenty-nine of those participated in focus groups to provide feedback about the use of OER in their course. Eighty-four percent of those who responded to the survey and 88% of those participating in the focus groups expressed overwhelming satisfaction with using OER. Students commented that technology is the way of the future and textbooks become outdated too quickly. Most were excited about not buying a textbook when not needed for the class. Others commented that it was nice not having to carry extra books around. Resources required for the course were easily accessible online for most, but others stated that internet accessibility was a problem. Many felt that OER made the course more interesting and was just as good, if not better, than having a textbook. Students also mentioned that they understood evaluating resources for their courses after using OER (Lin, 2019).

Lin (2019) also wrote about the challenges faced by some students. Seventeen percent of those surveyed and 24.1% of those in focus groups said they missed having a tangible textbook but felt OER worked as a great supplement. Several students noted that they preferred print resources when preparing for quizzes and exams. Sixty-seven percent of students who lived off-campus had lacked high-speed internet, causing frustration when completing assignments. Due to internet problems at home, many students had to complete tasks on campus to have reliable internet. Other students reported that the number of resources for the course was overwhelming and too broad, causing them to ask for additional help and instructions for use. Students also found it challenging to stay focused, stating it was too easy to stray away from online resources and surf the internet for things unrelated to their schoolwork (Lin, 2019).

Mathew and Kashyap (2019) conducted a case study at Regis College to assess the impact of OER on the quality of instruction to improve access to higher education. The case study focused on an introductory Astronomy course taught with an OER eBook and taken predominately by non-science major students as a core course. Mathew and Kashyap (2019) compared two courses, one taught during the Fall of 2017 and the other in the Spring of 2018. The same instructor taught the courses and used the same syllabus, assignments, and student learning outcomes (SLOs). The fall semester students used the traditional text, while the spring semester students used the OER. Students' academic performance was compared from both semesters. The textbook cost the fall semester students $200, and the spring semester students paid nothing to use OER. The students' grades in the course showed no significant difference between semesters when compared. Students reported the same overall satisfaction level with the textbook and the OER. A primary complaint by students was that the standard

text was hard to understand and comprehend. Those who used the OER stated that it was easy to understand, was well organized, and easily accessible online. Students who used the OER in the course said they gained more from it than previously purchased textbooks for other classes. Many students commented that the instructor-created resources and the OER text were easier to understand than the textbook. Instructors stated that OER usage initially required an extra hour of planning each week. They felt the resources were more flexible and easier to customize for student use. Students overall thought that the materials saved them money and did not compromise their performance (Mathew & Kashyap, 2019).

Choi and Carpenter (2017) evaluated the impact of OER in a Human Factors and Ergonomics course at Georgia Tech. The researchers assessed student feedback on the effect of course materials identified by instructors. Materials considered were used in the course from the Spring of 2015 through the Spring of 2016. The researchers indicated that OER materials were difficult to find for the course. The instructors used various articles and book chapters found through the library resources to create materials that covered all components and topics taught throughout the course. Overall, students were satisfied with the resources and appreciated the cost savings. They found the resources helpful throughout the course and said they provided more perspectives than the traditional textbook. Many students indicated they liked the flexibility of accessing the resources from anywhere, anytime. Although many students found the resources compelling, others found them challenging to read and too long. Many preferred reviewing the class notes and slides (Choi & Carpenter, 2017).

Hilton, Wiley, Chaffee, Darrow, Guilmett, Harper, and Hilton (2019) explored the learning experiences of 173 students at The University of New Hampshire (USNH) during the 2017-2018 school year. Ninety-two percent of students felt that they had equal or greater

learning outcomes using open pedagogy than traditional activities—eight percent of those deemed traditional activities better because of a lack of structure. Fifty-two percent of students stated they would choose a course with open pedagogy in the future over one with traditional activities. Twenty-eight percent had no preference, and 19% preferred traditional learning activities. Two major themes emerged from students who preferred conventional learning activities instead of open: conventional learning activities were more familiar and beneficial (Hilton et al., 2019).

Ocean, Thompson, Allen, and Lyman (2019) evaluated results from a 10-item survey of students' perceptions and experiences with OER at a community college. A team of three individuals comprised of a librarian, a tutoring center manager, and a recent graduate who also served as an online learning specialist, individually read through student responses to identify preliminary themes and code responses to decrease bias. The group then met to discuss their initial perspectives and themes. Reactions from students were primarily positive and centered around three major themes: relevant, economically accessible, and user friendly. Fifty-nine percent of students stated that the OER were practical, current, and prepared them well for various tests. Forty-four percent of respondents mentioned that the no-cost resources were a tremendous financial benefit for them. The third reason students viewed OER favorably was that OER were easy to read and access. Overall, most students surveyed preferred using an OER over the traditional course textbook (Ocean et al., 2019). Despite the mostly positive feedback, some students shared more negative experiences using OER. The primary reason for the negative perceptions was that there was a learning curve to using different resources. Others did not like the electronic format, and some felt that the "traditional text offers a more concise tool" (Ocean et al., 2019, p. 243). Three percent of

students surveyed felt strongly that they would not recommend using an OER in a future class. This study was limited to student perceptions of only one course offered at a Community College. Despite a few negative perceptions, the OER used in this study encouraged learning and provided resources to the students they could reference in their professional careers (Ocean et al., 2019).

Jaggers et al. (2018) surveyed students to better understand student satisfaction with OER. An end-of-semester survey was distributed to 2,368 students enrolled in 12 courses that integrated OER into the curriculum. A Likert-scale survey measured student responses to 21 items related to quality, integration, and experience with OER. Student responses on both quality and experience were positive, with a mean rating of 3.5 to 4.0 on most questions. Sixty-three percent of students felt that the materials were more relevant, 66% thought materials were easier to access, and 66% of students indicated they would prefer OER in future courses over the traditional texts (Jaggers et al., 2018). In comparison, 5% felt the resources were less relevant, 8% found them more challenging to access, and 12% of students indicated they would prefer using traditional printed texts. The survey uncovered several areas and flagged them as needing improvement: the quality of study aids, students' ability to shut out other distractions while studying, and difficulty taking notes with an electronic resource. About half of the students thought they needed to review the materials to understand the in-class content. At the same time, 14% disagreed and rarely had to read the materials to understand in-class content. Although 12% of the participants preferred using traditional texts and 12% were indifferent, they rated the OER used in the course as equal to or higher in quality and experience than traditional textbooks used in other courses (Jaggers et al., 2018).

Most students find OER has helped offset some college costs and are just as good or better than traditional textbooks for learning (Hilton et al., 2019; Lin, 2019; Mathew & Kashyap, 2019). There are challenges when using OER, and all situations and subject areas are unique. The flexibility of how course materials are presented and accessed is essential (Jaggers et al., 2018; Lin, 2019; Ocean et al., 2019). Although many students prefer OER, others prefer traditional texts or lack an understanding of how to access OER in their courses, leading to negative perceptions (Lin, 2019; Ocean et al., 2019). When choosing and implementing OER in courses, instructors should consider collaborating with students to understand concerns or challenges and provide alternative options (Lin, 2019).

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Faculty Perceptions

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Several researchers have studied faculty perceptions to determine why they are not using OER. Hess et al. (2016) indicated that faculty are the driving force behind OER adoption and implementation. Faculty knowledge and understanding of OER impact overall perception (Anderson et al., 2017). Anderson et al. (2017), Hess et al. (2016), and Hilton et al. (2013) concluded that faculty knowledge of OER, time, and efficacy of resources presented challenges with selection and adoption. Anderson et al.'s (2017) survey results indicated that 59% of respondents had little or no familiarity with OER. Forty-three percent stated that they had never used or examined OERs. Waltz (2017) indicated several concerns that faculty expressed regarding OER. The first is that faculty are skeptical of free resources that are also considered high quality. A second concern is the change and perceptions other colleagues may have of them for venturing into the unknown world of OER. A third common issue is the time investment in exploring new resources, integrating them into the curriculum, and authoring or creating new resources.

Hess et al. (2016) acknowledged the challenges and benefits of OER, including cost, accessibility, efficacy, licensing, preservation, and time. A survey of 573 faculties at Brigham Young University, conducted by Martin, Belikov, Hilton, Wiley, and Fischer (2017), revealed that 74.15% want to save students money, 25.63% expressed interest if OER was of equal quality to what they were currently using, and 13.13% wanted to provide students with more accessible resources. Data collected indicated faculty were willing to adopt OER, but they needed more training, direction, and support from institutions (Martin et al., 2017). Mitchell and Chu (2014) surveyed 107 faculty asking if they were interested in utilizing free or low-cost course materials; 70% indicated they were interested, 26% stated they were unsure, and 4% said they had no interest. Hess et al. (2016) surveyed faculty about their thoughts on OER, presented a workshop about the basics of OER, and created focus groups to understand faculty challenges. A project was created for librarians to work hand in hand with faculty to ease the challenges and provide guidance on locating resources and clarifying copyright. Martin et al. (2017) acknowledged that educating faculty on OER was the first step to changing faculty perceptions. Still, the quality of OER materials is also a concern of faculty that must be addressed. As OER use increases, more and more studies are being conducted to evaluate the use of OER and the effect it has on student learning (Bliss et al., 2013; Fisher et al., 2015; Hilton, 2016; Hilton et al., 2013).

Textbooks have been used by faculty in the United States to educate students for decades (Fischer et al., 2015). Martin et al. (2017) reported continued debates over how textbook quality is measured. Faculty must identify and evaluate resources to determine if the content meets their curriculum needs (Bliss et al., 2013). Several studies have been conducted to assess the efficacy of OER used within a variety of courses at community colleges and

universities in the United States (Anderson et al., 2017; Bliss et al., 2013; Fischer et al., 2015; Hilton, 2016; Hilton et al., 2013; Jaggers et al., 2018). Bliss et al. (2013) found that both faculty and students agreed the quality of OER used in the courses was the same or better than traditional texts. Fischer et al. (2015) found when OER were used in classes, the completion rates were higher and withdrawal rates lower. Students also performed as well or better in the class as those who used traditional texts. Jaggers et al. (2018) reported positive student responses to the quality of OER, but faculty were more critical about the quality and integration. Thus, defining quality OERs is still an issue.

Bliss et al. (2013) surveyed faculty and students currently using OER to determine their satisfaction with the resources' quality in their courses. Eleven instructors were surveyed, representing 11 subject areas, from seven community colleges that were all part of Project Kaleidoscope (PK). PK was a project that included community colleges from New York, California, and Nebraska that primarily served at-risk students. Less than half of the instructors returned completed surveys, but those who did all stated that they would be very likely to use OER in the future. Instructors' responses revealed that 90% of students were either equally prepared or more prepared than those taught the semester prior. Only one instructor felt that students were less prepared. One hundred and thirty-two students also completed the survey. When asked about the quality of PK resources, 56% of students felt the quality was about the same and 41% indicated the quality was better. Students provided positive reviews based on presentation, economics, and online accessibility. Students reported the OER was easier to understand, organized, aligned with classroom content, interactive, appealing, and engaging.

Hilton et al. (2013) examined the retention and student success patterns of 966 students enrolled in five different math courses in the fall of 2012 compared to the previous two fall semesters. Results indicated no change in four of the math courses observed. One class, Math 09x, showed negative changes in both student success and retention. Unclear was if the negative changes were solely related to the use of OER or if they resulted from a new curriculum and course placement changes that had been implemented. Even with little or no impact observed in this study regarding success or retention, worth noting that students benefited from using free resources.

Fischer et al. (2015) examined student outcomes between post-secondary students who used OER in the classroom and those who did not. A treatment group of 4909 students utilized OER in courses, and a control group of 11,818 students used traditional textbooks in a wide range of core classes. Results indicated higher rates of course completion and lower withdrawal rates. Student success was measured by completing the course, overall course grade, and C- or higher grades. Final data indicated students using OER performed as well or better than the students using traditional textbooks.

Hilton (2016) evaluated nine studies that focused on the effect of OER on student learning outcomes. Eight of the nine studies showed positive learning outcomes. The study that did not show as many positive outcomes did not have significant differences. The overall results from the studies indicated that OER use did not negatively impact student learning.

Anderson et al. (2017) explored student and faculty perceptions of resources located by librarians in engineering to understand OER's specific curriculum needs better. Anderson et al. (2017) surveyed 37 engineering faculty and instructors at Washington State University and the University of Idaho to determine their knowledge of OER and provide feedback on

student perceptions of quality and suitability. Students appreciated having more than one viewpoint on a topic. Many felt the quality was "marginal" or "subpar quality," while others saw the materials as high or good quality (p. 266). Faculty and instructors indicated that relevant resources were difficult to find in the engineering discipline. Faculty and instructors provided positive feedback about the benefits OER provided for their students. These benefits included students having the learning materials on the first day of class, access to materials, and the use of alternative resources outside of a textbook. The benefits provide equal access to materials on the first day of class, increasing students' chances for success.

Jaggers et al. (2018) examined student and faculty satisfaction with OERs to understand better the impact of the resources used within their courses. The Ohio State University students and faculty were surveyed to determine student perceptions of OER quality, integration, and experience. OER was integrated into 12 different courses comprised of open textbooks, library materials, software applications, instructor-created materials, and other open resources needed to support the transition. At the end of the semester, 2,368 students enrolled in the courses were sent a 21 Likert-scale item survey. Six hundred and eleven students signed consent to participate and responded to most items. When asked about the OER's quality compared to the traditional printed text and the integration of the course materials, responses averaged 3.5 to 4.0, indicating that students found the quality and integration somewhat better than in previous courses. Data showed positive student experiences and perceptions of resource quality. Faculty responded to the same survey as students. Faculty rated the OER quality and integration questions very similar to the students rating most items between 3.0 and 4.0. Overall, faculty were more critical and less satisfied with the quality and integration of OER into the courses than students.

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Studies where OER have been used to determine the impact of student learning outcomes, have helped uncover the efficacy of resources. Many of the studies utilized different methods and specific courses to evaluate. There is still a need for more research on efficacy. Hilton (2016) urged researchers to create more in-depth studies that randomize participants to eliminate bias. Students' perceptions of OER continue to be positive, with the driving forces being access and cost. OER quality needs to be "blindly evaluated" to provide a non-biased look at the accuracy of resources (p. 588).

Librarian Roles

Mwinyimbegu (2018) discussed the library's and librarians' critical role in identifying high-quality OER materials, managing OER, and raising awareness of OER among faculty and students. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Research Planning and Review Committee (2018) identified textbook affordability and OER as top trends in 2018. Librarians see barriers identified by faculty as an opportunity to create partnerships (Borchard & Magnuson, 2017). Research conducted by Colson, Scott, and Donaldson (2017) found that faculty find the process of locating OER, evaluating its appropriateness for a course, and adapting the materials to meet their current course needs challenging and time-consuming. Selecting and creating the ancillary materials is a growing concern, as is the need for institutional repositories. Faculty recognize the benefits of OER and have indicated a strong interest in lowering the cost of course materials (Colson et al., 2017; Hilton, 2016; Martin et al., 2017). For decades, librarians have advocated for free and open resources (Young, 2016). Librarians are equipped with unique skillsets to support and help faculty transition to free or low-cost resources; however, librarians are often left out of discussions regarding curriculum and resources. Library advocacy, workshops, faculty liaisons skills, and

focus groups are highlighted throughout the literature to bring about awareness and assistance to faculty (Anderson et al., 2017; Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Colson et al., 2017; Hess et al., 2016; Mitchell & Chu 2014; Mwinyimbegu, 2018; Young, 2016).

Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) and Mwinyimbegu (2018) agreed on the importance of librarians' roles in supporting faculty adoption of OER and promoting and curating resources. Librarians work hand in hand with faculty to identify gaps and help faculty locate quality OER (Borchard & Magnuson, 2017). Librarians have specific roles that aid faculty and the institutions when developing plans and raising awareness for the development, use, and preservation of resources (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). Identifying the curriculum's needs is the first step for libraries to build sustainable OER collections (ACRL, 2018). Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) provided detailed examples of roles that librarians filled with supporting faculty, which included: adoption, advocacy, curation, preservation, repositories, content development, description, cataloging, metadata, discovery, funding, information literacy, licensing and copyright assistance, policy development, professional development, publishing, recognition, and team members. Mwinyimbegu (2018) surveyed faculty to understand their perceptions of librarians' roles in OER; 70% of respondents identified promotion and 47% integration. The respondents' additional roles included identifying resources, guiding users, disseminating information, evaluation, collection creation, and collection management.

Anderson et al. (2017) developed a survey to understand the faculty's perceptions about OER. After collecting and analyzing the data, librarians created and implemented discipline-specific best practices and implementation plans. Librarians understood and identified specific issues and worked individually with interested faculty to fill the gaps and provide support. Crozier (2018) worked with the Educational Technology department at Ohio

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Northern University to increase OER awareness and encourage faculty use of OER. Meetings

and workshops helped the Department of Nursing disclose OER and Open Access publishing

information. Resources had been gathered ahead of time by librarians and placed in Moodle

for easy access by faculty. Crozier emphasized the importance of librarians building

relationships with the different departments on campus and sharing with faculty quality and

relevant resources pertaining to their instruction area. Encouraging faculty and students who

have OER experience to advocate and promote adoption is critical (Martin et al., 2017).

Anderson et al. (2017), Mitchell and Chu (2014), and Mwinyimbegu (2018) concluded

that academic libraries should promote and raise awareness of OER and work closely with

faculty to better understand and support their curriculum needs through OER. The librarians'

role is changing because of OER and providing opportunities to bring back value to the

library (Mitchell & Chu, 2014). OER opens opportunities for institutions to align goals that

decrease students' spending and increase student completion rates (Katz, 2019). Librarians

have been called upon to support and champion OER by advocating and promoting faculty

resources (Anderson et al., 2017; Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Colson et al., 2017; Crozier,

2018; Hess et al., 2016; Mitchell & Chu, 2014). Libraries already have many resources

available to faculty, including subscription content, eBooks, institutional archives, and special

collections (Mitchell & Chu, 2014). Young (2016) assessed the faculties' perceptions of free

educational resources and found that the library needed to market current resources better,

communicate strategies for locating resources, and provide discovery services. Mwinyimbegu

(2018) identified several ways for libraries to promote OER access and usage, including

information literacy training, the university website, face-to-face sessions, an institutional

repository, an OER portal, or a learning management system. Anderson et al. (2017) also

referenced the librarian and student organizations working together to advocate and promote OER. Working together increases student awareness of the benefits of OER while also increasing information literacy skills (Research Planning, 2018).

COVID-19 Impacts

In March 2020, college campuses everywhere shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Gumb, 2020). Huang et al. (2020) reported that more than 1.5 billion students who had been attending school or college were no longer attending on April 4, 2020. Closures on college campuses happened when many students were on spring break (Gumb, 2020). These students were asked not to return to campus, while others left campus immediately and returned home. Closures across college campuses meant students were losing access to much-needed resources offered on campus (Gumb, 2020). Courses were interrupted, and students and faculty transitioned to an online learning environment. Most students were laid off from jobs, left out of government stimulus benefits, and trying to figure out how to pay their bills and afford basic living expenses (DeRosa, 2020). Students faced financial hardships they had never been faced with before. Access to textbooks they used from the library or shared with another student went away. Transitions to online courses were unsuccessful, and many students had to retake classes. Due to circumstances beyond their control, students had to re-purchase the same resources again since most rentals and e-content from publishers were only available for one semester. What all seemed to ebb and flow one day was instantly gone the next, bringing back much-needed attention to OER (DeRosa, 2020; Gumb, 2020).

The transition to a fully online learning environment invoked fear in students and faculty. The unknown of how students would adapt and respond to courses taught via Zoom or other online conferencing tools was at the forefront of every educator's mind (DeRosa,

2020). It did not take long to realize that college doors could potentially be closed for

months, and long-term adjustments were necessary (Piedra & Yudintseva, 2020). The shift to

online learning meant removing barriers for students by building courses and providing

resources to engage and enhance learning in an environment where students could thrive

(Gumb, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Piedra & Yudintseva, 2020). COVID-19 reiterated the

importance of taking advantage of curricula and content already developed and learning

different and innovative ways to teach (Beile et al., 2020; McGreal, 2020). McGreal (2020)

stated that instructors should see OER as an investment into higher quality resources that

could quickly be adapted or updated to meet their curricula' needs. OER usage by teachers,

learners, and course designers helps eliminate unnecessary duplication of efforts and saves

time. Piedra and Yudintseva (2020) suggested using OER to enhance the learner's experience

by offering multiple resources and ways of presenting the information.

Beile et al. (2020) shared faculty members' experiences in the General Education

Program (GEP) courses at the University of Central Florida (UCF) on how they collaborated

to transition courses to OER during the pandemic. Before COVID-19 changed the course of

all events, instructional designers and librarians worked together for years to collaborate with

subject experts and promote OER on campus. Faculty development workshops had been

scheduled before COVID-19 and transitioned to a virtual environment, where a team of 34

faculty collaborated to discuss, select, and create OER. Huang et al. (2020) expressed many

challenges met by faculty selecting and using OER: the challenge of copyright and assuring

the use of legal content, locating high-quality resources, and providing support for those who

lacked the technical skills to develop their own OER. Beile et al. (2020) expressed how the

impact of COVID-19 forced many instructors to experiment, embrace new teaching methods,

and work together to compile resources and links that faculty could use across courses. COVID-19 was problematic but presented growth opportunities. Many students and adjunct instructors were left without a hard copy of their textbooks when campuses closed. After selecting and vetting resources for the various courses, the GEP group created a repository of OER materials to meet the needs of both the instructors and students. The success of the GEP group has led to developing new policies, support, and funding to enhance OER efforts across campus. Additional workshops were designed to reach other faculty and potentially impact thousands of students (Beile et al., 2020). COVID-19 has disrupted learning across all facets of education and shed light on the use and need for OER (Beile et al., 2020; DeRosa, 2020; Gumb, 2020; Huang et al., 2020). Huang et al. (2020) stated, "We need to come together not only to address the immediate educational consequences of this unprecedented crisis but to build up the longer-term resilience of education systems" (p. 11).

Filling in the Gap

This literature review provides a background of the rising cost of textbooks and their impact on students. The literature also provides guidance based on previous research justifying that additional research is needed to support the faculty's curriculum needs. The primary concern is creating an equal and accessible educational environment for all students (Okamoto, 2013). The cost of textbooks has increased astronomically over the past 12 years (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). With 92% of community college students relying on some form of financial assistance, costs must be lowered to help students achieve success (American Association of Community Colleges Fast Facts, 2020). OER provides low-income and disadvantaged students a way to have the same learning opportunities beginning on the first day of class (Okamoto, 2013). More research regarding the effects of student learning

outcomes using OER is needed (Bliss et al., 2013). Preliminary research conducted by Anderson et al. (2017), Bliss et al. (2013), Fischer et al. (2015), Hilton (2016), Hilton et al. (2013), and Jaggers et al. (2018) suggested that learning had not been negatively affected by their use. Faculty knowledge and understanding are essential to moving the OER initiative forward (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019). Katz (2019) added that librarians needed to garner administration support and educate faculty about the benefits and resources available. Librarians must work with the administration to create policies and initiatives to encourage faculty adoption of free or low-cost resources (Katz, 2019). Recent literature related to COVID-19 highlighted the struggles and realities of both faculty and students to obtain resources during the pandemic, echoing the importance of integrating OER into courses (Beile et al., 2020; Gumb, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Piedra & Yudintseva, 2020).

The following study provides insight into how librarians and faculty collaborate at a community college to incorporate OER into their course curriculum. The OER movement has approached the 20-year mark (Bliss & Smith, 2017). OER has proven to lower and eliminate textbook costs to students and influence legislation to provide equitable access to higher education (Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008; Lin, 2019; Mathew & Kashyap, 2019). The literature showed that most students found OER accessible, cost-effective, up-to-date, and user-friendly (Choi & Carpenter, 2017; Jaggers et al., 2018; Lin, 2019; Ocean et al., 2019). Faculty perceptions varied. Most agreed that OER was a great cost saver and benefit for students (Hess et al., 2016; Martin et al., 2017; Mitchell & Chu, 2014). The primary drawbacks affecting faculty adoption are knowledge, time, and resource efficacy (Anderson et al., 2017; Hess et al., 2016; Hilton et al., 2013). Literature supports the need for more communication at colleges and increased collaboration between faculty and librarians to

increase knowledge, locate and evaluate resources, and promote OER usage on a broader

scale (Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Borchard & Magnuson, 2017; Colson et al., 2017;

Mwinyimbegu, 2018). Faculty are the driving force behind adoption, and librarians help

promote and support the transition. Research data included in much of the literature review is

primarily survey-driven and answers *what* works and *what* is needed. This qualitative study

opens a dialog with faculty and librarians to understand the inner workings of *how* and *why*

OER were adopted at a community college in Alabama.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The literature reviewed on OER provided many quantitative research studies about student impacts, faculty perceptions, and roles libraries and librarians could play in moving OER initiatives forward. The researcher focused on the strategies and practices used by librarians and faculty to promote and implement OER on their campus. Understanding the successful collaboration of others provided the researcher with information so others could implement change at their colleges. The case study approach was most appropriate because it gave a deeper understanding of faculty and librarians' collaborative efforts and the strategies and practices to drive an OER initiative forward. The researcher collected data through faculty and librarian interviews, documents used or exchanged between the two groups, and materials published on the college website. The researcher analyzed the data and shared the results to enlighten others on how they can promote and integrate OER into courses.

Design and Rationale

The researcher used a qualitative, single-case case study design for the study. Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, and Walker (2019) defined qualitative research as non-numeric data gathered to study a phenomenon. Merriam (2002) characterized qualitative research as "the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, and inductive investigative strategy, and a richly descriptive end product" (p. 6). Merriam (2002) defined a case study as "an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon of a social unit such as an individual, group, institution, or community" (p. 8). The case study allowed the researcher to study the inner workings of how one community

college's librarians and faculty collaborated to promote and adopt OER. The researcher chose a single site after talking to many other librarians around the state and realized most of them had very little knowledge or practice working with faculty on OER initiatives. Many of the librarians indicated they were just beginning the journey of working with faculty to incorporate OER into the curriculum. Conversations with other librarians led to numerous questions about suggestions and ideas for getting OER started. After multiple discussions with librarians, more guidance and information were needed to help others around the state become successful advocates for OER on their campuses.

The researcher identified a librarian at a community college in Alabama, eager to talk about what she and others at her college were doing to collaborate on OER. The librarian at the college was the only one who had actively worked with faculty to implement OER; thus, researching this community college provided insight into the best methods for librarians to approach and introduce faculty to the OER process. Many Alabama Community College System (ACCS) libraries work with minimal staff and resources. This community college was no different, having just one full-time librarian on each campus. New initiatives do not result in hiring but a reallocation of roles and responsibilities. Working with a college in the ACCS provided insight into how to best work with limited resources and move state and local OER initiatives forward for other community colleges in Alabama.

The research questions were designed to understand the librarians' strategies and approaches to assist faculty in locating, evaluating, editing, and adopting no cost or low-cost resources to replace expensive textbooks. Faculty who worked with a librarian or other colleague to adopt OER were interviewed to understand their experiences throughout the process and the librarians' roles to best assist the faculty. Understanding what strategies and practices worked among librarians and faculty to promote, identify, and implement OER

provides a blueprint for other librarians navigating the process on their campuses. The researcher examined the strategies and practices used by librarians when executing the program, determining what methods and procedures could be shared with other librarians looking to implement an open textbook program. Using interviews, documentation, and website resources provided a balanced interpretation of data.

Interviews allowed the researcher to understand the experiences of librarians and faculties that led to collaboration, promotion, and adoption of OER. Documents submitted by the librarians and faculty provided insight into the planning process, ideas and strategies considered, and implementation practices. These documents gave the participants perspectives and allowed the researcher to understand the meaning to support the practices (Maxwell, 2013). Website resources added meaning and interpretation to the interviews. All data were analyzed using common themes and subject areas found throughout the interview transcripts, submitted documents, and website resources. Understanding how and what librarians and faculty were doing to move a campus OER initiative forward was key to helping other librarians and faculty work towards similar initiatives. The combination of data contributed to knowing best practices for collaborating, promoting, and adopting OER on community college campuses.

Research Questions

The central research question guiding this research is: What strategies and practices are faculty and librarians at a community college in Alabama using to enhance collaboration to move OER initiatives forward?

The sub-questions exploring this topic are:

1. How were individual faculty and librarians at the college first introduced to OER?

2. What were the individual faculty and librarians' attitudes toward OER?

3. What individual and collaborative activities and decisions lead faculty and librarians to implement OER on campus?

4. What strategies and practices have been implemented by faculty and librarians to sustain the long-term use of OER at the college?

Methods

Setting and Participants

The participant population for this study came from one community college in Alabama. The college was chosen because it was the only community college in Alabama where librarians and faculty collaborated on OER implementation. Other librarians throughout the ACCS were working to promote and implement OER but lacked the knowledge or staffing to begin. According to the college's Fast Facts (2020), the community college was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). The college served approximately 15,000 students per year and offered over 120 university transfer programs and 33 career programs. It had four locations and offered ample online learning opportunities to learn from anywhere. The campus population consisted of 61% women and 39% men. The average age of students was 24.3. The college ethnicity comprised 69.3% White, 20.6% African American, 4.5% Hispanic, and 5.6% identified as Other. The estimated cost to complete an Associate Degree is under $10,000 (Fast Facts, 2020).

The researcher used purposeful sampling and snowball sampling techniques to identify participants. Purposeful sampling is selecting participants who will best fulfill the researcher's goals and answer the specific research questions of the study (Maxwell, 2013). Snowball sampling is the strategy used to identify additional participants known to others who can fulfill the researcher's goals and provide specific information related to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Maxwell (2013) recommended having a good representation of participants

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being studied. This study interviewed one librarian, three full-time faculty, and an adjunct instructor who served in a dual role at the college as a librarian. Librarian participants were selected based on their knowledge and work with faculty on OER. The college had four full-time librarians across four campuses. Faculty participants were chosen based on their collaborative work with librarians or faculty colleagues to promote, locate, and implement OER. Six faculty members identified had collaborated with a librarian to adopt OER. The librarians and faculties that chose to participate worked on one of the college's four campuses. The researcher's goal for using purposeful and snowball sampling was to get a good representation of those faculty and librarians who built relationships through collaboration and pushed OER initiatives forward at the college (Maxwell, 2013).

The first point of contact for information was the Director of Libraries. The Director was instrumental in the study and provided information about another librarian at the college who had worked closely with faculty to discover and implement OER. Only two of the four librarians had actively worked with faculty to adopt OER, limiting the number of librarian participants for the study. To qualify as a participant, the librarian must have worked directly with a faculty member to identify and locate OERs. The Director of Libraries was chosen because of her direct role in working with faculty and creating content for OER. The researcher reached out to the second librarian suggested. He stated that he collaborated with faculty on OER, but preferred interviewing as an adjunct faculty member who had adopted OER for his course. The dual role of the second librarian provided a unique opportunity for the researcher to dig into the role he played as a librarian who worked with faculty and a faculty member who adopted OER.

The librarians selected suggested potential faculty to interview for the study. The Director of Libraries sent out emails to six faculty members whom she had worked with

directly on OER and forwarded the information of those interested in participating in the study to the researcher. Two faculty stated they were interested in learning more and possibly participating. The researcher sent an email to the two faculty members providing a more in-depth description of the research and interview process. One of them responded, and an interview was set up and conducted. The second librarian, who also taught as an adjunct instructor, provided information for two additional faculty he had reached out to about the study. The researcher then reached out to those participants. One agreed to be interviewed, and the other stated she was too busy. The researcher then identified and reached out to two additional faculty from the college after seeing them present at an OER workshop. Both faculty had collaborated with other faculty on OER but had limited collaboration with the librarians. The researcher decided to reach out to both of them, and one responded and agreed to be interviewed. Although her collaboration with a librarian was limited, she provided valuable insight into her collaborations with other faculty and how she felt librarians would be most beneficial in the process. Because of COVID restrictions at the college and many faculty still working remotely, interviews were conducted via telephone and audio recorded.

Interviewing participants was the primary instrument for gathering data. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview process allowed the participant to be open and tell their stories while structured enough to identify critical information (Merriam, 1998). Stake (1995) stated that all interviewees would have unique experiences and stories to tell. Questions were formulated in advance to gain insight into participants' experiences and stories and stay on track to gather information to answer the research questions of interest (Stake, 1995). All participants participated in a 60- to 90-minute interview. The researcher created several questions to stimulate responses that provided meaning and perspective into the interviewee's experiences (Merriam, 1998). Interview

protocols were developed to guide the interviews (see Appendix A and B). The interviews and supporting documentation provided the necessary information to address the study's research questions. The researcher asked additional questions not included in the guides to gain a more precise and in-depth understanding of the participant's response. After reviewing the initial interviews and transcripts, the researcher felt enough information was collected to answer the research questions adequately, and no additional discussions were needed.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai for analysis. Documentation collected came from the librarians. The librarians shared course syllabi sent by instructors and links to the OER course documents created for students and faculty. Resources found on the library's web page deemed relevant to the study were also analyzed. Participants in the study were not identified by name but a pseudonym.

Data Collection

The researcher used a combination of interviews, documents, and website information to gather data for this study. Interview data was the researcher's primary method of data collection to understand how librarians and faculty collaborated throughout the OER process. Interview protocols were created to guide the interviews. A *Librarian Interview Guide* (see Appendix A) and a *Faculty Interview Guide* (see Appendix B) were used to collect specific data related to the research questions. The interview guides were created to gather more specific information from both the faculty and librarians to understand their early knowledge and attitudes of OER, their role in adopting OER, and the impacts OER has had on campus. The interview guide questions provided the information necessary to answer the primary research questions the study sought to understand that directly related to the five phases of Rogers' innovation-decision process. The researcher used a basic semi-structured interview approach. This interview approach provided structure and flexibility while trying to

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understand and dig deep into the processes (Merriam, 1998). The interview included various questions to determine personal and career experiences, strategies, and practices related to textbook and OER use. This interview process allowed participants to be open and tell their stories while structured enough to stay balanced. Probes were used to gain more details or clarification (Merriam, 1998). The interviews were conducted by telephone, between July 2021 and December 2021, due to COVID restrictions and availability. Within a few hours of the interview, the researcher wrote up initial thoughts and any key ideas captured from the interview (Stake, 1995). The researcher took notes during the interviews and used Otter.ai transcription software to transcribe all recordings. After the researcher reviewed and corrected each transcript, a copy was sent to the participant. Participants were asked to review the transcripts for accuracy and notify the researcher of any changes.

Documents collected included syllabi and course links created for students and faculty. The researcher analyzed OER documents on the college's website to understand the process better. Stake (1995) suggested using documents to understand the processes that cannot be observed since everything the researcher learned had already occurred. As the documents were reviewed, the researcher kept an open mind for unexpected clues. The researcher organized the documents, determining which items were helpful to the study and analyzed for reoccurrence or unforeseen clues (Stake, 1995).

Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher used categorical aggregation and direct interpretation to analyze the case study data (Stake, 1995). The data included interviews with five participants, one being a librarian at the college, three full-time faculty, and one serving a dual role as both a librarian and adjunct faculty member. Data analysis began immediately after the first interview (Maxwell, 2013; Seidman, 2019), as data is daunting and overwhelming if left to accumulate.

The researcher kept the participant's data organized and properly labeled to ensure easy and traceable access to information throughout the analysis process. The researcher used Otter.ai to transcribe audio recordings and organize notes as each interview was completed. Maxwell (2013) recommended first reading over all documents associated with the interview and then listening to the audio recording while writing memos to identify potential themes.

Immediately following each interview, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings, reviewed both the transcribed text and audio recordings, and created a critical analysis of thoughts into a narrative. The researcher continued to review the data while taking notes and identifying codes. Coding is "the process of labeling data" (Seidman, 2019, p. 133). Three levels of coding were used: open coding, axial coding, and clustering. First, the researcher used open coding to identify words or phrases within the transcripts that described the text's meaning. Theoretical researchers use this type of coding first. Seidman (2019) advised going back through each file multiple times to identify the "compelling" data from the "less interesting" (p. 134). Second, axial coding was used to identify categories across all data sets. Conceptual themes for the study were identified during this phase. Third, clustering was used to create a list of all code words. The researcher did this by reexamining the codes to a manageable number (25 or 30). The researcher continuously refined the list until it was narrowed down to seven themes that best described the experiences and beliefs of the participants. The final list of themes reflected the most compelling data identified by the researcher (Seidman, 2019).

The researcher transcribed the data using Otter.ai, an online transcription tool. Transcripts and audio recordings were reviewed to correct any errors with the transcripts. Transcripts were then organized and coded manually by the researcher. The researcher evaluated the transcripts and determined the reoccurring ideas and phrases. Stake (1995) stated

that case studies relied on both aggregations of instances and direct interpretation as the ways

to find meanings. The researcher used categorical aggregation to identify meaningful

segments, categorized into common themes that emerged to provide meaning to the

study (Stake, 1995). The researcher listened to the audio recordings and read the transcripts

several times to determine the most relevant patterns to the research questions. Direct

interpretation was used to analyze single instances that stood out in the interviews and

documentation (Stake, 1995). The researcher used the single instances and looked for

reappearance in other interviews. The researcher reviewed documents collected from

participants and LibGuides created by librarians on the library's website to determine the

information most pertinent to the case. Documents were then coded by hand. The researcher

analyzed and compared the codes before writing up an interpretation of the results.

After the analysis was completed, a narrative description of the findings was

constructed. The narrative included quotes, vivid details of each participant's responses, and

tensions and contradictions found in individual experiences. A *thick, rich description* is crucial

for any qualitative data analysis and allows the reader to become more involved with the

process (Merriam, 2002). Naturalistic generalizations provide new information to others from

which they can learn from a single case study (Stake, 1995).

Validity

Maintaining authenticity and accuracy of the information interpreted was important

during the data collection, analyses, and report of findings. Although qualitative research

cannot be completely separated from subjective interpretation, there are ways in which the

researcher did maintain some form of validity and reassurance. The main area is

trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described trustworthiness as increasing the

audience's trust in the worth of the research conducted by the researcher. Criteria used to

establish trustworthiness in a qualitative study are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

The researcher used two primary methods to increase this study's credibility: triangulation and member checks. Triangulation is a method used to check the accuracy of specific data. The researcher used multiple data sources to confirm and validate findings and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher reviewed various interviews, documents, and website information to gather data for the study. Using multiple sources provided a way to compare what was said in the interviews with documentation collected from individuals and the college website. The comparison allowed the researcher to make sense of the different sources and check the interviewee's statements for consistency. Triangulation reduced bias and allowed better generality when using various methods to collect and review data (Maxwell, 2013).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described member checks as a process used to check data and interpretations by returning to the sources and allowing them to react. After analyzing the data, the researcher submitted the findings to the respondents and asked for feedback to ensure their comments were interpreted correctly. This allowed the interviewees to review transcripts, fill in gaps, assess intentionality, and verify statements made during the interview. Both methods provide a judgment of credibility and accuracy to increase the reader's trust in the research.

Transferability

Judgments of transferability are made by the stakeholders who may potentially use the research. Purposeful sampling was used to engage those most knowledgeable and provide a thick, rich description of the data collected to increase transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Maxwell (2013) stated that researchers should study the audio recordings and transcripts and

compare interviews to ensure that participants' answers are consistent. Based on the study's

data, others can decide if it applies to their situation, population, or phenomenon.

Dependability

Dependability, or consistency, cannot be obtained without credibility (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). A crucial part of dependability is maintaining accurate and detailed notes of the study.

Merriam (1998) stated when an outsider could draw the same or similar conclusions from the

data presented; it showed the research was dependable. Through triangulation and detailed

data collection, analysis, and interpretation, the researcher demonstrated dependability through

an audit trail and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). Merriam (2002)

stated triangulation, member checks, peer review, and extensive time spent in data collection

provide the researcher with multiple options for validating the data and findings.

Confirmability

Confirmability was accomplished by using a combination of an audit trail,

triangulation, and reflexive journaling. An audit trail provides other researchers transparency

into the processes, notes, decisions, data, and findings. Confirmability was realized when the

results showed they were derived from the data and not the researcher's viewpoints. Reflexive

journaling provided a record of the researcher's insight into themselves and the reasoning

behind decisions made during the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Researcher Bias

Maxwell (2013) stated that researcher bias and reactivity are the two primary threats in

a qualitative study. As a researcher investigating colleagues' experiences, practices, and

strategies in my field, my perspectives and beliefs on the topic are considerable threats to the

study. As a librarian who has struggled to get faculty and administration involved in the OER

process, the researcher can be very passionate and opinionated about the topic. To ensure

integrity within the study, the researcher created a list of biases at the beginning of the research and used member checks to rule out misinterpretations of what participants said. Member checks helped to control reactivity and researcher influence. All participants were given a copy of their interview transcript to validate accuracy. Seidman (2019) pointed out the researcher needs to make sure the interview could "breathe and speak for itself" during the transcription process (p. 125). The researcher's personal feelings and beliefs were monitored continuously to ensure the participant's stories were accurately understood and shared in the data.

Ethical Issues

Participants who had collaborated to incorporate OER into courses at an established community college were asked to volunteer for this study. All participants selected were willing participants in the study. The researcher received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to work with human subjects (see Appendix C). The IRB at Valdosta State University (VSU) ensures that the highest possible ethical standards are met to protect participants' rights and welfare (VSU IRB, 2013). The IRB approved the proposal before any participants were contacted for research purposes. All VSU policies and procedures were followed when conducting the interviews and collecting data. Merriam (2002) stated, "a "good" study is one that has been conducted in an ethical manner" (p. 29). A well-written informed consent document was created and signed by each participant and the researcher.

Informed consent was the first step to informing participants about the potential risks of the interview process (Seidman, 2019). After IRB approval, the researcher provided volunteers with more in-depth information about the study, gave a time frame for participant questions to be asked and answered, and ensured all potential participants understood this study would be

conducted voluntarily. After participants indicated an interest in continuing the study, the

researcher provided an informed consent document.

The informed consent document was comprised of seven key areas outlined by

Seidman (2019). The first section of the informed consent document included what the

researcher asked the participants to do, how long the process would take, and how the

interview would be conducted. It also included who would be involved in the study and who

would have access to the recordings, transcripts, and analyzed documents (Seidman, 2019).

The second section identified risks, discomforts, and vulnerabilities that could arise during and

after the interview process. To reduce participant risks, discomfort, and vulnerabilities,

participants would not be required to answer a question with which they were uncomfortable.

The researcher compiled results and avoided using large identifiable portions of a participant's

interview. Section three covered the rights of the participant. In this section, the researcher

identified areas that helped minimize risks to the participants. Participants understood that

participation was voluntary. Participants could drop out of the study at any time. Participants

had the right to review interview materials and request specific things to be withheld.

Participants could request to remain anonymous and their contributions to remain confidential

(Seidman, 2019).

The final four sections of the informed consent covered the study's potential benefits,

the confidentiality of records, data dissemination, researcher contact information, and a copy of

the signed consent document for the participants and the researcher (Seidman, 2019). The

benefits of the study are intangible. The researcher let the participants know that the study's

anticipated outcome was to provide other college librarians with best practices and tools for

successfully implementing an OER program. Participant identities remained confidential by

using a coding system to file and name documents. Participants were made aware of the

interviews and use of the data, and no financial claim will be made against the interviewer. The researcher provided participants with multiple ways to contact the researcher. The researcher provided all participants with a copy of their signed consent document.

The goal of the consent document was to provide participants with information about their rights and responsibilities. Participants felt comfortable with the document before signing or could request clarification of an area if necessary. No participants were interviewed without a signed informed consent document. Merriam (2002) reminds us all that "Ethics begins with the conception of the research project and ends with how we represent and share with others what we have learned" (p. 313).

Summary

The case study used interviews, documents, and website materials to explore the strategies and practices of librarians and faculties who collaborated to move an OER initiative forward. The literature examined for this study promotes qualitative research to better understand *why* and *how* librarians and faculty collaborated regarding OER. The research questions were created to provide a basis for the research areas to deeply explore using a case study. Being new to the process, the researcher relied heavily on the chair, committee, and expertise of the participants to ensure that any biases and subjectivity were recognized throughout the process. The researcher intended to provide a well-documented and analyzed study that will be meaningful to the participants, the researcher, and other librarians and faculty needing guidance on initiating conversations and moving OER initiatives forward.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study was to examine the strategies and practices used by librarians and faculty at a community college, who collaborated and assisted in the implementation of OER to avail students with low or no-cost resources for courses. Open Educational Resources (OER) are "teaching, learning or research materials that are in the public domain or released with intellectual property licenses that facilitate the free use, adaptation and distribution of resources" (UNESCO, 2019, para. 1). The overall objective was to learn how community college librarians and faculty worked together to learn, identify, and select OER for courses. The participants currently use OER in courses and have worked with a campus librarian or faculty member to identify resources. The researcher collected data from participants through interviews to investigate how collaborative relationships began among faculty and librarians and what both groups were doing to spread the word about OER. Participants shared details about the benefits, challenges, and perceived best strategies and practices for others in the beginning phases of implementing OER initiatives at their college.

This chapter contains the case study results guided by the central research question: What strategies and practices are faculty and librarians at a community college in Alabama using to enhance collaboration to move OER initiatives forward?

The following sub-questions assisted in further exploring the topic:

1. How were individual faculty and librarians at the college first introduced to OER?

2. What were the individual faculty and librarians' attitudes toward OER?

3. What individual and collaborative activities and decisions lead faculty and librarians to implement OER on campus?

4. What strategies and practices have been implemented by faculty and librarians to sustain the long-term use of OER at the college?

The thematic analysis ties back to the theoretical framework of Rogers (2003) and the research questions. The researcher used open coding to analyze the interviews, documents, and website. Constant comparisons were made until seven themes emerged from the data.

Overview of Data Collection

Five participants were interviewed for this study. The researcher used purposeful sampling to begin the selection of participants, followed by snowball sampling. The Library Director was identified as having a primary role with OER and referred other participants she worked with on OER at the college. Faculty participants were also instrumental in referring potential participants for the study. Individuals selected were actively using OER in their courses and had worked with a librarian or colleague at the college to implement OER in their courses.

A qualitative semi-structured interview design was used to collect data. Emails were sent to potential participants, and interviews were scheduled virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions on campuses and faculty schedules. All interviews were completed between July 2021 and December 2021, audio-recorded, and transcribed using Otter.ai automated transcription service. Transcripts were reviewed and corrected as needed before coding. The transcribed interviews were hand-coded and analyzed multiple times to identify the most compelling data. The identified words and phrases were refined to determine the final themes reflecting the participants' experiences. The participants' names were replaced with a pseudonym to protect their identity. Documents and website information were analyzed to

understand the policies, procedures, and creation of OER resources for faculty and students at the college.

Description of Participants

Joseph was a male full-time economics instructor. He earned his two-year Associate of Science degree from East Central Community College in Decatur, Mississippi, then transferred to Mississippi State. He earned his bachelor's and master's degree in agricultural economics. During his early college years, he decided to be a teacher. After graduating from college in 1996, he worked for the Social Security office for about six months. He applied at East Mississippi Community College for an evening coordinator of Enrollment Services and adjunct economics instructor position, where he began working. The Enrollment Services position provided him with the opportunity to get to know the students at the college at a deeper level, which provided him with a better understanding of the population when he entered the classroom. He worked for East Mississippi Community College for several years before moving to Alabama, where he took a job at a community college that mirrored what he did in Mississippi. Ten years later, he was hired as a full-time economics instructor at the college. He had now been working in the education field and teaching for around 20 years. One big obstacle he stated about the textbooks used for economics was that they cost too much money for lower-level community college students. He typically told students not to buy the suggested textbook because they would not use it. He mostly used his materials to get down to the basics of economics that he needed to teach his students. When the head of the department retired, he finally had an opportunity to identify a different textbook that better met the needs of his students. He worked directly with a librarian at the college to select and implement an OER text and other resources for his courses. He has been using OER in his classes for about three years.

Pamela was a female librarian who began serving as the Head Librarian and Director of Learning Resources at the college in 2007. Before moving into her current position, she started her career as a librarian at a four-year college in Montgomery, Alabama, later taking a job at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. She had worked in the two-year college system for over 14 years. She quickly realized the student population and how students served in the community college system differed from the four-year system. She praised her administration for supporting the library and allowing necessary purchases that benefitted the students. She mentioned that one of the biggest challenges in libraries was reaching faculty and staff and reminding them of the library's services. She stated that outreach was vital because many faculty and staff did not realize how librarian jobs have evolved over the years. The library is often a hub for students' questions ranging from math skills to information about dealing with stress in their daily lives. The librarians are always looking for new and innovative ways to help students. After learning about OER from another colleague, she knew the students would benefit greatly. It was also a way the librarians could collaborate with faculty to identify quality resources for the students. She worked directly with faculty to identify resources and create course specific OER LibGuides with links to student and faculty resources. She published her first LibGuide for OER in December 2016 and has been promoting and working with faculty on OER ever since.

William was a male librarian and adjunct instructor. He worked in various two-year and four-year colleges since 2005. He earned a BA in English and History from Samford University, his MLIS from The University of Alabama (UA), and a Master of Arts in English and Sociology from Arizona State University. He taught undergraduate English, reading, and sociology courses as an adjunct instructor at various colleges. He also taught graduate library information science (LIS) courses. He began his career in libraries working as a Library

Assistant in 2005 and since worked at various two and four-year college libraries in Alabama. He held many titles, including Library Director, Information Literacy and Digital Learning Librarian, Reference and Instruction Librarian, and User Services Librarian. He currently works as a full-time librarian and an adjunct instructor of sociology and English. He began incorporating OER around 2012 or 2013 while teaching LIS classes. OER became a large part of his teaching when he started teaching English and sociology in his current position around 2017. He first worked promoting OER with another faculty member at a previous two-year college. He worked with faculty members and another librarian at the college to encourage and use OER. He provided unique and valuable insight from a librarian and a faculty perspective for this study. He had been promoting OER use for around ten years and had used them consistently in courses since 2017.

Susan was a female full-time English instructor. She began her teaching career as an adjunct instructor at a four-year college in Alabama. She worked full-time at the college for five years teaching English 101 and English 102 composition courses. Most of the classes she taught were for dual-enrolled high school students. Transitioning to OER was a departmental decision that followed a shift in the curriculum. It would have customarily been when a new textbook was selected, so instead, it was decided the swap would be made to OER. All the transitioning happened after she began working at the college. From the student's perspective, she loved the idea of access and cost savings for her students. From the instructor's perspective, she considered herself "an old soul at heart" in having a physical resource along with a pen to make notes as she goes. OER meant no more excuses for her students not having books on the first day, but it also meant tweaking how she organized and engaged with the resources. She worked closely with the librarian to identify and locate OER resources for her students and courses. She also collaborated with faculty in her department to determine what

resources and course readings resonated best with the student population and encouraged engagement. She was a huge supporter of the library and encouraged students to use their resources. She had been using OER in all her composition courses for several years.

Kimberlee was a female full-time Biology instructor and Chair of Biology. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and Molecular Biology, followed by her Ph.D. in Pathology. She worked as an adjunct instructor for the biology department at the college for a year and a half before joining as a full-time faculty member in 2012. During her tenure, she taught classes on all four campuses. She realized early in her career that a large percentage of the students she taught were non-traditional students trying to work, raise a family, and get an education to get a better job. Just paying for classes was a hurdle for most students. After first learning about OER, she decided to investigate on her own. She realized there were some great peer-reviewed texts, and she began the transition process one course at a time. She primarily worked with other faculty members at her college and other colleges to identify and create OER for her classes. As a biology instructor, she found labs for her students the most challenging aspect when converting her courses to OER. She wanted to keep costs minimal for students and worked to create labs using everyday materials students had at home. Collaboration with other instructors in her field yielded a collection of lab ideas that have worked best among the students. She identified several areas where she felt librarians could play a valuable role with OER at the college. About five years ago, she began using OER in her course as a free text option for those who could not afford the publisher copy. After about a year, the OER became her official coursebook.

Results by Research Questions

Findings from the study are reported in this section. The research questions were developed based on previous OER literature and dissertation committee feedback. Librarian

interviews were guided by the interview questions in Appendix A. Faculty interviews were guided by the interview questions in Appendix B. The following section provides data for each research sub-question. The findings from the sub-questions below were merged into a comprehensive analysis to answer the central research question. The data provided insight from the participant's personal experiences, from first discovering OER to working with librarians and faculty to adopt and further promote OER.

Results for Research Sub-question 1

How were individual faculty and librarians at the college first introduced to OER? This research question aimed to understand the point of origin for faculty and librarians first learning about OER. Participant responses were analyzed according to the analysis method outlined in Chapter III, leading to identifying one prominent theme: communication between colleagues and administration drives campus changes.

Communication between colleagues and administration drives campus changes. During the interviews, each participant provided insight into how they first learned about OER. Joseph, a full-time faculty member at the college, shared that he was first introduced to the idea of OER by the campus librarian. The librarian came to two or three faculty meetings and spoke about the resources available through the library and free OER textbooks and ancillary materials open through several different OER repositories. Pamela, the library director, was first introduced to OER by another librarian she worked with on campus. She stated that she was unsure if the faculty would adopt the textbooks but thought at the very least, she could add the resources to the library website to help students. William, a librarian and adjunct instructor, first learned about OER around 2011 or 2012 from a colleague at a previous community college where he worked. The colleague was another faculty member using OER and shared his experiences. Susan, a full-time English instructor, learned about OER through

other colleagues in her department. The department had researched OER textbooks for their area and decided to swap from a traditional text to an OER. Since then, she has worked with other faculty to identify additional OER resources for the department. Kimberlee, a full-time biology instructor and chair of her department, was first introduced to OER when the ACCS began promoting them around 2017. She has since partnered with other colleagues and colleges to create several resources and labs.

The participants all learned about OER through different chains of communication. Some were first introduced to OER by librarians, others by colleagues or administrators. The key is they all learned through communication and conversations with others. Communication of innovations is the first step in providing knowledge and starting conversations that can result in campus change.

Results for Research Sub-question 2

What were the individual faculty and librarians' attitudes toward OER? The purpose of this question was to gain insight into faculty and librarians' initial attitudes and thoughts when they first learned about OER. This question sought to understand the driving forces and possible hesitancies that led to further investigation and understanding of OER. The following two themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) students benefitted most from the equity and affordability of OER, and (2) the hesitancies of instructors centered around time and content availability for their subject area.

Students benefitted most from the equity and affordability of OER. Faculty and librarians both shared an immediate interest in OER solely based on the cost benefits to students and the ability for students to have access to course resources on the first day of class. Joseph shared:

So, when I first heard our librarian mention it [OER]…automatically, my antenna went

up. And, and I was like, now wait a minute, are we saying we can get a textbook in

student's hands for free...this is really worth looking into. Many of our students were

on financial aid, well on Pell Grant…textbooks were a huge concern…many of our

students were first-generation kind of students.

Pamela shared:

As librarians, we are always looking for something new to help our students…I started

looking around, and I thought, even if I can't get our faculty to adopt these textbooks...I

can add that content to the library website. And then, as I started looking and realized

how good some of the content on OpenStax was and the instructor resources, I just

slowly reached out to faculty that I knew would kind of be on board.

William's initial reaction was, "this is phenomenal." He said, "I came from a working-class

family, first-generation college student, and always had to pay attention to the costs of

textbooks." Susan was equally excited about the idea of OER and expressed what she thought

were some of the most significant benefits.

I love the access that it gives them. Access anywhere, anytime, at their fingertips at all

times. Not an extra burden cost-wise. Full textbooks often cause students anxiety,

where OER consists of only the links and resources being used within the course, and

students find it less overwhelming compared to a 300-page book that they will never

get through.

Susan also expressed cost concerns for dual enrollment students, where financial aid was not

an option. She stated that OER could help eliminate both accessibility and cost barriers for

students who were already "paying for that course, full price out of pocket." She also stated

that using OER eliminated the student's excuse of not having their textbook for class since it

could just be pulled up on their device. Kimberlee said that when it came to her students

purchasing textbooks, they "were turning into the haves and have nots in regard to resources,

so it just wasn't equitable." She further stated:

> …we have a large percentage of non-traditional students who are working, raising a
>
> family, and they're trying to get their education to get a better job. So, they are already
>
> kind of short on money, and paying for the class is a hurdle in itself.

Kimberlee continued by saying:

> I think it has made my courses more accessible and equitable in that all of my students
>
> have all of the materials they need on day one; nobody has to wait for financial aid to
>
> come in. Nobody has to make a decision. Am I going to feed my kids, or am I going to
>
> buy my textbook?

Faculty and librarians seemed to understand the affordability of OER and the

equitability that it offered students. Another component to the theme was that although faculty

were excited and open to the idea and benefits of OER, there were apparent hesitancies from

faculty about content availability and the time needed to convert a course from a traditional

textbook to OER. Librarians seemed more hesitant about whether faculty would even buy into

the idea.

The hesitancies of instructor's center around time and content availability for their

subject area. All participants spoke about their hesitancies surrounding the idea and adoption

of OER. This theme spoke to what faculty and librarians saw as potential challenges for

identifying and potentially adopting OER.

Participants explained their initial thoughts and challenges. Joseph shared, "I would

dare say that most faculty don't like the idea of changing textbooks… it's going to be a lot of

work for the faculty member." On the positive side, Joseph added that one of the most

significant benefits to faculty is that "you get that creation…from somebody that's in the classroom doing it every day, versus I think the depthness of the textbook sometimes." Pamela shared that many instructors would be thinking, "you're going to make me learn something else?" Pamela also spoke about publishers' role in offering fee-based content that creates all the resources, test banks, and homework grading for faculty. If an instructor already had a full load of classes and the publisher was going to do the work for them, "of course, he wants to go with them." She further commented:

> I think if we eliminate the concern over learning something new if I try to do as much for the faculty member as I can to encourage them to use this product because what they're dealing with are students who don't have the money to buy the book.

William worked with a faculty member who introduced him to OER to figure out his role as a librarian. He often pondered, "What could I do to promote and encourage others to get on board?" He further added, "As a librarian, I wanted to work with my faculty colleagues, but most faculty would prefer to hear from another instructor versus a librarian that they may feel like 'what do they know about instruction?'". Susan stated that the electronic resources were more challenging to navigate. She said:

> I still wanted the print copy. The resources are not as user-friendly to skim through and look at the readings. Finding new material to introduce to students was a bit challenging. Getting lost in the digital format as opposed to having highlights and annotations to teach from the print copy.

Susan also stated that she had these "grand intentions" to rework assignments and materials throughout the semester, then found herself "treading water" to get through the current classes. The "time crunch" of one semester and less than two weeks to prepare for another semester proved challenging for any significant course changes or transitions.

Kimberlee expressed her concern for discipline-specific content. She stated:

> I wasn't sure. I didn't know if they would have offerings in my discipline…I knew English faculty and History faculty that were using some open resources…I looked at OpenStax primarily because those are peer-reviewed. They happened to have books in anatomy and physiology, which was, I think, the first textbook I transitioned to.

Kimberlee also stated, "I believe it's part of my job to create materials, but there is a limit to what I have to do and what I have time to do…" She continued to suggest administration offer incentives like a course release, supplement, or fellowship to faculty to faculty working to transition and create materials. Kimberlee slowly transitioned all her classes, one at a time, over several semesters, but commented that "labs are a little trickier." She stated that there were some OER resources for labs, but she preferred to create her own. Some lab simulations were available online, but "they cost $60 to $75 for the students, and they're really bad…tech support is bad." She added that the labs were not meeting her objectives, and better labs could be created for students at home with free resources.

Faculty hesitancies toward OER are not uncommon. Time and content availability were the two main areas of concern for the participants. Publishers offer faculty the complete package of a textbook and ancillary materials, easing the burden of faculty who are already stretched thin on time. Switching to an OER textbook requires more time from the faculty to discover appropriate course materials and often create the supporting content and test banks. Librarians expressed their understanding of faculty hesitancies. The librarian offered to create LibGuides on their website to easily link potential resources for a specific course to ease faculty's time and content barriers. By collaborating with other faculty and librarians, the faculty did not have to assume the full burden of transitioning their course to OER.

Results for Research Sub-question 3

What individual and collaborative activities and decisions lead faculty and librarians to implement OER on campus? The purpose of this question was to identify faculty or librarian led activities and decisions that impacted the use of OER on campus. This question sought to understand what types of events or activities motivated or impacted individual decisions to adopt OER. The following two themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) OER adoption was impacted by departmental textbook decisions and push from the administration, and 2) partnerships with librarians and other faculty helped lead to OER implementation.

OER adoption was impacted by departmental textbook decisions and push from the administration. The impact of departmental decisions on OER adoption was explained further in the data. Several participants agreed that departmental decisions affected their use of OER. William noticed an effect on OER adoption when the administration made a push. Kimberlee, a department chair, decided to adopt OER after digging into the resources slowly. Joseph mentioned that a committee adopted textbooks. Susan stated that textbook decisions were a "departmental decision…although it was not forced but recommended." William agreed and stated, "As an adjunct faculty member, the department dictates what I use, and I have no control over what textbook I use in the classroom… unfortunately, as an adjunct instructor, it's very difficult to have that kind of control." Joseph, also an adjunct instructor, echoed the same stating:

> …the way that works would be the full-time economics professors would get together and discuss or suggest if anybody had ideas about a new textbook…so the routine was, you just adopted the next edition of whatever we had been using…no intention of ever-changing textbooks.

After the retirement of others in the department, Joseph found himself in a position to implement OER, stating he was "in the process of transitioning class online and started thinking about changing textbooks, so he knew it was the right time." William added that the English department was switching over to OER textbooks when he began in his current position. As a librarian, he wanted to "practice what I preach and find the best way to incorporate OER into my classrooms to make the experience better for my students." He continued by stating, "I did several presentations on OER with a faculty member over the years to educate and try and expand the use, but it wasn't until the system office started pushing the idea that more people got on board." Susan stated, "moving into OER with more baby steps, examples of what has been done before, helps instructors' transition easier and decide what may work best for their courses." Joseph added that "an administrative push on development textbooks" would help to increase student enrollment and retention dramatically. Pamela reminds us:

> Students are our number one priority… Give students a fighting chance…Let students have a chance to realize they can do the work and move forward without the barriers of textbook costs slowing them down or deterring them from moving forward.

Although faculty are the driving force behind OER, departmental or administrative decisions can often impact what faculty can or cannot do. Faculty and administration must understand OER and its impacts on students before making decisions on new departmental textbook adoptions. Adjunct faculty rarely have a voice but teach many lower enrollment courses or overflow from high-demand courses. The inclusion of full-time and adjunct faculty in textbook decisions and administrative directives could lead to more change and impact the lives of more students.

Partnerships with librarians and other faculty helped lead to the implementation of

OER. The data explained the impact both librarian and faculty partnerships have on the follow-through and implementation of OER on campus. Librarian presentations and faculty outreach were essential lines of communication to open the communication channels on campus about OER. Librarians have been vital in helping instructors identify resources, and instructors are the guide to tell them if the materials meet the subject matter taught. Partnerships with other faculty who teach similar courses are also crucial in validating resources and how well they are working for students. Pamela and William were both librarians and spoke about faculty outreach initiatives. Pamela stated:

> I reached out to the instructors I felt would be the most open to the idea first. Instead of making them think they had to learn something new, I create a password-protected guide for instructors and break it down by chapters, instructor resources, lecture slides, as well as test banks and solution manuals when available. Once instructors realize most of what they need is right there, they are more open to using OER. I think if we eliminate the concern over learning something new and gathering content for the faculty member, I can encourage them to use this product.

William added:

> As a librarian, I want to practice what I preach and find the best way to incorporate OER into my classrooms to make the experience better for my students. After numerous bits of talking and presentations, the sociology department also made the switch. The sociology instructor was able to collaborate with another faculty member at another college in the system and, through talks, decided the switch was a good idea.

Joseph said, "we've kind of realized that we are stuck in our ways…we don't like change…this is the way we've done it." Communication and knowledge were crucial to faculty

understanding OER. Faculty professional development sessions that included information about OER led Joseph and Susan to reach out to the campus librarian for further information and guidance. After talking to the librarian after a faculty meeting, Joseph said he reached out about a week later. Joseph continued by saying that the librarian immediately sent back a link to an OER textbook, "…the economic theory was almost identical to the way I already presented it." The way it was laid out in the OER text was "phenomenally similar to the way I learned economics and the way I wanted to present economics to my students now." Susan shared a similar scenario stating that her relationship with the librarians was wonderful. She said, "I have in the past, just kind of sent her my syllabus… here are the readings we are doing, and she has made an entire library guide." She went on to explain how the librarian also helped create tutorials for accessing the resources. Joseph said that the librarian was "phenomenal…an amazing resource," with a rapid turnaround time on resources. Pamela mentioned how faculty were the content experts, and the librarians could use the faculty content to pull peer-reviewed resources for the instructor to review for use. Susan echoed this statement by saying, "Working with the librarian is good because our perspectives differ greatly. Faculty perspective on resources seems more focused where the librarians broadened out to reach more resources." She further commented, "Collaboration has been key to the success of this text in my class."

Partnerships offered a balance for both the instructors and librarians. Pamela mentioned, "faculty have become accustomed to publishers providing all the content and doing things for them." As librarians and instructors, we must share what we know and create resources and content to help others in our field. Kimberlee never worked directly with the campus librarian but shared the importance of collaborating with faculty in their subject area. She collaborated directly with other faculty at her college and other colleges. Her partnerships

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centered more around creating labs for Biology. The instructors would talk about different lab ideas, implement them in their courses, and then come back together to determine which ones worked best. Pamela added that it would be ideal if librarians could build out courses similar to publishers to encourage faculty adoption. Joseph stated that once he chose an OER textbook and the librarian shared links to editable instructor resources and test banks, he knew it was all he needed to move forward. Kimberlee copied all her instructional materials for each course onto a thumb drive to provide to other faculty and adjuncts in her department. They could choose what resources they wanted to use or expand on however they choose. Pamela said, "Work together to stop reinventing the wheel at each institution." Collaboration offered an environment where everyone had an input and could determine what met their needs the best. Susan summed it up by stating, "Faculty professional development and partnering with librarians to create accessible and manageable materials for students is key."

Partnerships between faculty, librarians, and other colleagues contributed greatly to the implementation and success of OER for these participants. Communication through professional development and faculty meetings opened the door for more collaborative conversations. Faculty were able to reach out to librarians to provide their syllabus and specific course needs, and the librarians worked to find quality resources to meet the course objectives. Faculty also relied on relationships with colleagues to create and test resources that worked best for students in their discipline area. The partnerships offered a balance to the process and provided a support system for the faculty.

Results for Research Sub-question 4

What strategies and practices have been implemented by faculty and librarians to sustain the long-term use of OER at the college? The purpose of this question was to identify the best strategies and practices for sustaining the current and future use of OER on campus.

This question sought to understand how to remove faculty barriers best to encourage use, create a local repository of faculty resources for easy access to course materials, and librarian persistence and involvement in campus meetings. The following two themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) librarian persistence and inclusion at campus and statewide events to educate and ease faculty barriers, and (2) building a campus repository of resources.

Librarian persistence and inclusion at campus and statewide events could educate and ease faculty barriers. The data explained the importance of librarian inclusion to continue providing guidance and knowledge to faculty and other librarians wanting to learn more about OER. Joseph stressed, "use your librarian; they know more than you do." Pamela added that retention and student success discussions should include librarians. Pamela stated:

> Everyone's hiring success coaches, and they want to build success hubs; if they don't include a librarian, they've already lost. When libraries and librarians are valued at an institution, students get more from it than other institutions where the administration knows little about the library. Everything comes from the top down.

William agreed:

> Librarians should be a part of all campus meetings involving curriculum and textbooks, but that is usually not the case, so always be aware of meetings and changes taking place at the college. If there is a textbook selection meeting or curriculum meeting coming up, make sure you attend or provide information about OER at those meetings.

Susan felt that it was essential to have librarians speak at professional development meetings. She said they should "show others how OER is being used to continue to expand the use and help others understand OER who have not experienced it." Joseph added that knowledge of OER was a key factor and to "make sure faculty understand that just because it's free doesn't mean it's not good information." William stated that it was essential to identify and understand

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what was holding faculty back from considering or adopting OER. He added some key areas that librarians could use when educating and promoting OER.

> Promoting resources and addressing common challenges experienced by instructors, such as ancillary materials. Have faculty consider the benefits of OER: materials are not outdated, supplementary resources to enhance learning, and student access and cost. Most faculty don't solely use the textbook as is, so promoting content creation, many are already doing it and don't realize. They just need to cut the cord to the textbook and know that they are still okay. Cost and control are major areas of promotion.

Pamela echoed that librarians must communicate and get the word out. She said, "I ask potential faculty candidates about OER, and almost every one of them had never heard of it." She continued by stating that "Librarians provide presentations to instructors at a state level. Most of the time, when our librarians do presentations at the system-led meetings, librarians show up, but instructors do not. We need that to change." Kimberlee said, "…not many campus activities for promoting OER, and when there are, it is always the same folks that tend to participate." William said essential was to "make sure you [librarians] are persistent and meeting with instructors when it matters most." He continued by saying that librarians must be persistent and "encourage collaboration and validate faculty concerns." Pamela said when getting started, librarians should begin by contacting faculty they already have a relationship with and help create content. Susan stated, "communication and sharing of resources" were important factors. She said, "provide information and education, rather than forcing decisions that cause more pushback…encourage faculty to slowly work OER into their courses and provide additional direction on how to navigate OER." Pamela said, "network with other instructors, when you hear complaints about textbook publishers or costs, offer a solution you can work with them on."

The library website provided many resources to educate and guide faculty through the OER adoption process. First shown was an introduction to OER, licensing information, and the steps to create and publish your own OER to benefit educators everywhere. Links provide directions on searching for OER, Open Textbook Collections, the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL) OER Commons, Open Educational Repositories, and Open Educational Multimedia resources. The librarians have also provided the necessary forms and procedures for OER adoption approval to department chairs and the appropriate department Dean.

Librarians play a key role on campus as advocates for OER. Their unique skills are instrumental in easing some of the faculty burdens that pertain to adopting OER. Librarians are often an afterthought for curriculum and textbook discussions on campus, yet the participants in this study agree they play a key role and should be involved. For OER adoptions to continue growing, librarians must be persistent and advocate to educate faculty, administration, and students on the benefits and resources available.

Building a campus repository of resources. The data explained the importance of having a campus OER repository for librarians and faculty to easily access OER course materials used and created by other faculty at the college. Susan recommended "building a repository of resources for courses using OER so students and faculty can easily access resources." Pamela stated it would be ideal for working collaboratively with the librarians around the state to "establish a repository of course-specific OER resources." She spoke about the limited number of staff in community college libraries and its effects on time for working one-on-one with faculty, "four campuses and four librarians, makes the task harder." Kimberlee said, "…it would be great if there were kind of an ACCS maybe like a group of faculties who are using OER and can start a database of their resources and what they use." Pamela mentioned the same idea, adding that we all teach the same general education and

developmental courses across the state. A collaborative project with a collection of developmental textbooks and basic resources would provide faculty with materials they could quickly implement and tweak without reinventing the wheel at each school.

The library website reflects the beginning phases of a campus repository of resources for courses that have adopted OER with the assistance of the library. Course guides for students connected to the main library page include links to resources. Faculty could log in to a password-protected area to access teaching resources and test banks they could easily integrate into the learning management system. Joseph stated that faculty would know how much material they could cover in a semester and relay those content areas to the librarian. They could help create a resource with only those links and publish the materials on the website. The librarians have developed and published content-specific guides for the faculty that they have collaborated with on OER. What is missing are the resources created solely by faculty. The addition of resources created by faculty, who did not collaborate with librarians, would open further lines of communication between faculty and librarians and make those resources more readily accessible to faculty and students.

Having a campus or state-wide OER repository was important to faculty and librarian participants. A campus repository would provide a common location for housing OER used by faculty on campus. A state-wide repository would provide more resources to the faculty created by others in their discipline. Librarians could play a critical role in managing campus repositories and assisting faculty with proper licensing for publishing.

Results for the Central Research Question

What strategies and practices are faculty and librarians at a community college in Alabama using to enhance collaboration to move OER initiatives forward? The results from the sub-questions directly contributed to the overall results of the central question. The sub-

questions provided further in-depth analysis of the strategies and practices used by the faculty and librarians to enhance OER initiatives. The data indicated that faculty and librarians who worked together successfully implemented OER in their courses. Communication between faculty, librarians, and community college administrators was a critical factor in initially learning about and understanding the benefits of OER. Student success was a top priority of the faculty and librarians interviewed and the primary reason for adopting OER. Initial reactions from the participants included Joseph asking, "…are we saying we can get a textbook in student's hands for free," Pamela mentioned, "we are always looking for something new to help our students," William exclaiming, "this is phenomenal" Susan expressing, "I love the access it gives them…not an extra burden cost-wise," and Kimberlee voicing that OER provided equity and accessibility for all her students. Although all participants acknowledged the benefits, they were still hesitant about content availability and time constraints.

Faculty hesitancies consistent throughout the data were time and content availability. Faculty often found the idea of changing textbooks and having to learn something else on top of their teaching loads to be daunting tasks. Joseph summed it up nicely for everyone "…it's going to be a lot of work for the faculty member." Susan stated she always had good intentions but would find herself in a "time crunch." Kimberlee said, "there is a limit to what I have to do and what I have time to do." Most faculty participants were also unsure of available OER content in their discipline. This was where the librarians could serve a valuable role. Faculty would share their syllabi with a librarian, who would then investigate potential resources for the faculty and send links back for review. Faculty would review the resources and then guide the librarian based on what worked for them and what did not, or if something more was needed. Once the faculty decided what specific resources and information was needed, the librarian created a student LibGuide that included all the resource-required links for that

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particular course and posted it on the library website. The librarian also created a separate faculty guide with additional ancillary materials. Kimberlee investigated resources herself and found OER textbooks for all her biology courses. She worked to integrate them into each course slowly, one semester at a time. She found it advantageous to work with other faculty at her college and other colleges to create labs for the classes. Building partnerships with librarians and other faculty in their discipline helped ease both barriers.

The data presented one additional barrier to OER that the researcher was unaware of before the study. Joseph, William, and Susan reported that textbook decisions were made departmentally. Susan stated that they were not mandatory, but recommended. This posed a barrier for Joseph and Susan, who had to wait for changes before adopting OER. For Susan, the decision to switch to OER happened as she came on board at the college. This is another reason faculty and librarians must advocate and educate others on campus to bring about change.

When faculty were asked what librarians could do to assist them in moving initiatives forward, the primary responses were librarian persistence, inclusion at campus events, and creating a campus OER repository. Faculty participants stressed the importance of faculty getting to know the campus librarians and understanding their roles. All participants acknowledged it was important for librarians to be persistent. It was recommended they send out information about resources and speak at campus events about OER to educate current and new faculty further. When librarians were asked the same question, they mentioned that being a part of campus meetings involving curriculum, textbooks, and student retention was vital. Meetings and faculty professional development sessions provided librarians with a platform to get the word out about OER and showcase how it could benefit students.

Building a repository of OER resources was also a suggestion made by faculty. Participants all agreed that a campus repository would provide a central location of course-specific OER for easy access. Librarians have already begun this process by creating course specific OER LibGuides housed on the library website. Librarians felt that having a state-wide OER repository for all the community colleges to contribute to would be the best idea. A collaborative project among the librarians across the state could bring together a collection of OER that would provide faculty in all disciplines with more options. The faculty across the ACCS all teach the same core developmental and general education courses. They could benefit from what others have created and help more students without reinventing the wheel. Data collected throughout the interviews reveals how partnerships with librarians and faculty helped pave the way for implementing OER in several courses.

Summary

The purpose of chapter four was to present the data gathered from five participants. Data analysis revealed that faculty and librarians learned about new initiatives through word of mouth. Whether speaking to a colleague or attending a campus or system-wide meeting, faculty, librarians, and administration drive change by communicating. Librarians and faculty have the same goal: helping the student by removing cost burdens and creating equitable access to learning resources. Faculty barriers could be easily addressed by working with campus librarians and other faculty within the community college system. Collaborations between faculty and librarians helped all the participants implement OER in their courses. When faculty collaborated directly with librarians, the librarian was able to identify resources and create guides with all the OER links for students and faculty to access information quickly. When faculty worked with other faculty, they were able to identify and compare what resources worked best in the classroom. It is essential to continue educating others about OER

and creating a repository of resources that is easily accessible by faculty, which can be used to

adapt and update for future users. The next chapter will discuss the findings, the limitations of

the study, implications, and future research that should be explored further.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored the strategies and practices of librarians and faculty who collaborated to adopt OER at a community college in Alabama. This chapter provides an overview of the study, findings, discussion, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Overview

This study focused on how collaborative efforts between faculty and librarians at a community college in Alabama have led to OER adoption. Five participants who had adopted OER in their courses by collaborating with a librarian or other faculty were selected and interviewed for the study. The participants included the head librarian, a librarian who was also an adjunct instructor, and three full-time instructors. The researcher interviewed participants via telephone and audio recorded the conversation. The interview questions (see Appendix A and B) were designed to gain an understanding of how participants first learned about OER, their initial attitudes and thoughts toward the idea, the collaborative activities and decisions that led the participant to implement OER, and strategies and practices that have been put in place or should be put in place to sustain long-term use of OER at the college. The interview and sub-questions helped answer one central question: What strategies and practices are faculty and librarians at a community college in Alabama using to enhance collaboration to move OER initiatives forward? Interviews were transcribed using Otter.ai and hand-coded using three levels of coding: open coding, axial coding, and clustering.

After analyzing the data, the researcher derived seven themes: (1) communication between colleagues and administration drives campus changes, (2) students benefitted most from the equity and affordability of OER, (3) the hesitancies of instructors centered around time and content availability for their subject area, (4) OER adoption was impacted by departmental textbook decisions and push from the administration, (5) partnerships with librarians and other faculty helped lead to the implementation of OER, (6) librarian persistence and inclusion at campus and statewide events could educate and ease faculty barriers, and (7) building a campus repository of resources. The findings from the data indicated that communication and knowledge were two of the most significant factors that brought faculty and librarians to collaborate and work to implement OER in courses at the college. Although many barriers existed with OER, the push for equity and cost savings among students helped faculty decide to move forward. Faculty and librarian collaboration was able to ease the time constraints and provide content-specific resources for faculty to adopt. All participants agreed that faculty and librarians must increase discussions to raise awareness. A campus repository for all course related OER is also needed to make faculty resources around campus more accessible.

Summary of Findings

This case study was guided by one central research question: What strategies and practices are faculty and librarians at a community college in Alabama using to enhance collaboration to move OER initiatives forward? Seven major themes emerged from the four sub-questions, which contributed to answering this central research question. The themes encompassed areas of communication, student benefits, faculty hesitancies, departmental decisions impacting OER, partnerships, librarian inclusion, and OER

repositories. The uncovered data showcased the importance of communication and partnerships to enhance OER initiatives.

Communication between faculty, librarians, and community college administrators was a critical factor in initially learning about and understanding the benefits of OER. Faculty and librarians indicated that their primary reason for adopting an OER was student success. Faculty spoke about their hesitancies in getting started, including time and content availability. Joseph summed it up nicely for everyone "…it's going to be a lot of work for the faculty member." Kimberlee said, "there is a limit to what I have to do and what I have time to do." An additional challenge Joseph, William, and Susan reported was that textbook decisions were made departmentally. William stated, "As an adjunct faculty member, the department dictates what I use, and I have no control over what textbook I use in the classroom… unfortunately, as an adjunct instructor, it's very difficult to have that kind of control." As faculty members left the college or curriculum changes were made in specific subject areas, textbook renewal discussions allowed for conversations resulting in OER adoptions for these faculty.

Partnerships between librarians, faculty and other colleagues helped establish the adoption of OER in each course. When asked about the impact of partnerships and their impact on OER implementation, the librarians expressed their willingness to partner with faculty and their desire for inclusion at campus meetings. Pamela stated:

> Everyone's hiring success coaches, and they want to build success hubs; if they don't include a librarian, they've already lost. When libraries and librarians are valued at an institution, students get more from it than other institutions where the administration knows little about the library. Everything comes from the top down.

William agreed:

Librarians should be a part of all campus meetings involving curriculum and

textbooks, but that is usually not the case, so always be aware of meetings and

changes taking place at the college. If there is a textbook selection meeting or

curriculum meeting coming up, make sure you attend or provide information about

OER at those meetings.

Participants in the study were asked how librarians could help, and the responses

ranged from inclusion at campus events to creating a campus repository for OER. Susan

felt that it was essential to have librarians speak at professional development meetings.

She said they should "show others how OER is being used to continue to expand the use

and help others understand OER who have not experienced it." Kimberlee said, "…not

many campus activities for promoting OER, and when there are, it is always the same folks

that tend to participate." William said that librarians must be persistent and "encourage

collaboration and validate faculty concerns." Susan recommended "building a repository

of resources for courses using OER so students and faculty can easily access resources."

Pamela stated it would be ideal for working collaboratively with the librarians around the

state to "establish a repository of course-specific OER resources."

The overall collaboration among colleagues at the college resulted in the adoption

of OER for several courses. The following four sub-questions summarize the findings of

the central research question in more detail.

Summary for Research Sub-question 1

How were individual faculty and librarians at the college first introduced to

OER? Faculty and librarians all learned about OER through communication with other

colleagues or administrators. Joseph shared that he was first introduced to the idea of OER

by the campus librarian, who spoke at several faculty meetings. Pamela was first

introduced to OER by another librarian she worked with on campus. William first learned about OER from a colleague at a previous community college where he worked who had shared his OER experience. Susan learned about OER through other colleagues in her department after a departmental decision to switch the traditional text to an OER. Kimberlee was first introduced to OER when the ACCS began promoting them during several state workshops.

Summary for Research Sub-question 2

What were the individual faculty and librarians' attitudes toward OER? Faculty and librarian attitudes were similar when it came to OER. They all understood that OER provided students with an equitable and affordable learning opportunity, but faculty were hesitant about content availability and how much time transitioning could take. William's initial reaction after learning about OER was, "this is phenomenal." Susan stated, "I love the access that it gives them. Access anywhere, anytime, at their fingertips at all times." Kimberlee said, "I think it has made my courses more accessible and equitable in that all of my students have all of the materials they need on day one; nobody has to wait for financial aid to come in." As participants' understanding of OER grew, their hesitancies surrounding the time commitment and availability of resources increased. Susan mentioned the "time crunch" of one semester and less than two weeks to prepare for another semester proved challenging for any significant course changes or transitions. Kimberlee expressed concern for discipline-specific content, stating, "I wasn't sure. I didn't know if they would have offerings in my discipline…." Joseph shared, "I would dare say that most faculty don't like the idea of changing textbooks… it's going to be a lot of work for the faculty member." Both librarians interviewed wanted to find a way to best help the faculty remove some of the barriers to adopting OER.

Summary for Research Sub-question 3

What individual and collaborative activities and decisions lead faculty and librarians to implement OER on campus? The decision to implement OER is not always the faculty member's decision. Departmental textbook decisions initially impacted the faculty participants in this study. Once departmental decisions changed, partnerships with librarians and other faculty helped lead to OER implementation. Susan, William, and Joseph mentioned that textbook decisions were departmental decisions. William stated, "As an adjunct faculty member, the department dictates what I use, and I have no control over what textbook I use in the classroom… unfortunately, as an adjunct instructor, it's very difficult to have that kind of control." Joseph echoed the same, stating, "…the routine was, you just adopted the next edition of whatever we had been using…no intention of ever-changing textbooks." Retirements and curriculum changes eventually allowed for the switch to OER. Librarians were able to assist faculty in finding OER and creating LibGuides for specific courses. Pamela explained her role, stating:

> I reached out to the instructors I felt would be the most open to the idea first.
> Instead of making them think they had to learn something new, I create a password-protected guide for instructors and break it down by chapters, instructor resources, lecture slides, as well as test banks and solution manuals when available.

Joseph, Susan, William, and Kimberlee agreed that their partnerships with the librarians and other faculty made the process easier. Susan summed it up by stating, "Faculty professional development and partnering with librarians to create accessible and manageable materials for students is key.

Summary for Research Sub-question 4

What strategies and practices have been implemented by faculty and librarians to sustain the long-term use of OER at the college? Librarian persistence and inclusion at campus and statewide events could educate and ease faculty barriers. The creation or use of a campus repository could help sustain the long-term use of OER at the college. Pamela believed meetings regarding retention and student success should always include a librarian. She commented, "Everyone's hiring success coaches, and they want to build success hubs; if they don't include a librarian, they've already lost." William agreed, "Librarians should be a part of all campus meetings involving curriculum and textbooks, but that is usually not the case, so always be aware of meetings and changes taking place at the college." Susan also thought it was essential for librarians to speak at professional development meetings to "show others how OER is being used to continue to expand the use and help others understand OER who have not experienced it." Susan also said the administration should "provide information and education, rather than forcing decisions that cause more pushback…encourage faculty to slowly work OER into their courses and provide additional direction on how to navigate OER." Participants also expressed the importance of a campus OER repository where all faculty can easily access resources at the college. Kimberlee said, "…it would be great if there were kind of an ACCS maybe like a group of faculties who are using OER and can start a database of their resources and what they use." Pamela mentioned the same idea, adding that we all teach the same general education and developmental courses across the state. A collaborative project with a collection of developmental textbooks and basic resources would provide faculty with materials they could quickly implement and tweak without reinventing the wheel at each school.

Discussion

Enhancing collaboration among faculty and librarians to move OER initiatives forward begins with communication, awareness, and support. Rogers' (2003) framework outlined the innovation-decision process. The interview questions asked of each participant followed the four elements of Rogers' process. Throughout the discussion, Rogers' five sequential stages to the innovation-decision process tied in with the responses from the participants. There are five sequential stages to the innovation-decision process: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (Rogers, 2013).

The first stage of Rogers' innovation-decision process, The Knowledge Phase, was evaluated in the data (Rogers, 2003). The researcher wanted to learn how librarians and faculty were first introduced to OER. The librarians and faculty interviewed indicated that they first learned about OER by word of mouth from librarians, faculty, or administration. The participants in the study gained awareness of OER through various "change agents" (Rogers, 2003). Rogers defined a change agent as "an individual who influences clients' innovation decisions in a direction deemed desirable by a change agency" (Rogers, 2003, p. 27). The initial introduction to OER probed all the participants to investigate the idea further. Anderson et al. (2017) said faculty knowledge and understanding of OER impacted overall perception. The two librarian participants immediately acknowledged the student benefits, but both shared hesitancies on how many faculty would be willing to adopt the idea. Martin et al. (2017) believed that educating faculty on OER was the first step to changing faculty perceptions. Rogers (2003) emphasized that a person had to have sufficient knowledge of an innovation to determine if it was relevant to move into the persuasion stage.

The Persuasion Stage, the second stage of Rogers' innovation-decision process, was evaluated by examining the data to understand the participants' initial attitudes and questions that influenced their decision to form a favorable opinion towards OER. This stage allows individuals to determine the advantages and disadvantages of an innovation (Rogers, 2003). When participants were asked about their initial thoughts and attitudes about OER, there was a familiar excitement. The data collected fully supported the concerns mentioned throughout the literature. Participants were excited about eliminating financial barriers and providing equity among the students. In the literature, Okamoto (2013) mentioned a primary concern was creating an educational environment that was equal and accessible to all students. Pamela felt that regardless of faculty buy-in, the resources could be placed on the library website to provide students with free additional course resources. Anderson et al. (2017) spoke about student benefits, including students having the learning materials on the first day of class, access to materials, and the use of alternative resources outside of a textbook. The benefits provide equal access to materials on the first day of class, increasing students' chances for success. Participants Joseph and Susan echoed these benefits. Susan, who instantly fell in love with the accessibility of OER, loved the idea of students always having the resources at their fingertips and eliminating excuses for not having the book. Joseph immediately felt the need to investigate OER further when he learned that students would have access to a textbook for free.

A common theme throughout the literature addressed the affordability issues of community college students. Bliss et al. (2013) and Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) spoke about how community colleges traditionally served many first-time and disadvantaged students. Research conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges Fast

Facts (2020) indicated that 92% of students enrolled between 2017 and 2018 relied on federal financial aid to attend college. The data collected showed that affordability was still a top concern amongst faculty and students. Joseph shared that most of his students were first-generation receiving Pell grants and the fears many of them expressed about the cost of textbooks. That was echoed in the literature by Ocean (2015), who explained how Pell grants made college more affordable, but did not always cover all costs. William, a first-generation college student, shared how textbook costs were always a factor he had to pay attention to as a student. Susan, who worked primarily with dual enrollment students, expressed cost concerns because financial aid was not an option, and students were already paying out of pocket for the course. They all agreed that OER would eliminate the extra burden of cost for these students. Okamoto (2013) discussed the affordability crisis and how affordable textbook initiatives were created to eliminate the costly barrier of textbooks and provide an equitable learning environment for all students on the first day of class. Data presented provided detailed accounts about how OER eliminated the barriers mentioned in the literature. Susan spoke about how OER helped eliminate accessibility and cost barriers for her students. Kimberlee also shared how OER made her courses more accessible and equitable. Her students no longer have to wait for financial aid and have all the materials they need on day one. Hilton et al. (2013) further emphasized that first-generation and low-income students who did not have the required resources for class on the first day of school are disadvantaged. Data gathered from Kimberlee described her students as "turning into the haves and have nots" and how OER frees them from deciding between feeding their kids or purchasing a textbook. These specific thoughts echoed the findings of Braddlee and VanScoy (2019), Crozier (2018), and Hilton et al. (2013), who connected the significant increase in college textbooks directly affecting students having to

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choose between a text they may or may not use and other needs. The interviewed

participants understood and acknowledged the benefits OER offered to students. They also

expressed the challenges of moving towards adoption.

Participants' hesitancies for adopting OER mirrored the concerns talked about

throughout the literature. Within the literature, Anderson et al. (2017), Hess et al.

(2016), and Hilton et al. (2013) concluded that faculty knowledge of OER, time, and

efficacy of resources presented challenges with selection and adoption. Research

conducted by Colson et al. (2017) found that faculty find the process of locating OER,

evaluating its appropriateness for a course, and adapting the materials to meet their current

course needs challenging and time-consuming. The perceived challenges of OER have not

changed over the years. Participants in the study shared similar challenges. They

specifically mentioned publisher packages, time, and the availability of discipline-specific

resources as primary concerns when considering adoption. After interviewing both faculty

and librarians, they shared similar concerns regarding faculty time, but the librarians saw

the primary challenge as faculty having to learn something new. Convincing faculty to

change from the publisher resources to which they had become accustomed, to using

something new, would be challenging and require more tweaking and creation from them.

In the literature, Collins et al. (2020) wrote about how the big publishers had gained the

edge on the market by adding ancillary materials such as test banks, presentations, lecture

materials, and course resources that have all driven up the cost for students who may not

receive the direct benefit. Pamela stated that librarians could help eliminate this concern

by helping faculty see what was available for free and reminding them of the students and

why they were doing it. William also felt that faculty might question the librarian's

instruction knowledge and feel more comfortable working with other faculty. Rogers

(2003) stated that individuals debating an innovation often look to those around them who have adopted the idea themselves to learn from their personal experiences.

Faculty participants all mentioned time and resources as one of the biggest deterrents of adopting OER. Waltz (2017) indicated several concerns that faculty expressed regarding OER. The first was that faculty were skeptical of free resources also considered high quality. Joseph also touched on this idea stating that faculty needed to be educated on the resources available to understand that all free information was not wrong information. Waltz (2017) reported the second concern was the change and perceptions other colleagues may have of them for venturing into the unknown world of OER. This was not an element of concern found in the data. Most participants said they would strongly encourage OER and shared their success stories if colleagues asked them about OER. Susan felt it is important for librarians to advocate and continue to get the word out about OER. She said she would work with others who had not experienced OER. Joseph said he would tell any faculty member thinking about transitioning to OER, to "go for it…use your librarian and the resources there to get it going because they know more than you." Waltz (2017) said the third common issue was the time investment to explore new resources, integrate them into the curriculum, and author or create new resources. In this study, time was the number one issue expressed by faculty. Kimberlee said, "I believe it's part of my job to create materials, but there is a limit to what I have to do and what I have time to do…". Susan spoke about the "time crunch" of the semester and, even with good intentions, would find herself buried by the demand of her classes. Joseph talked about the amount of work to transition just one course over. William said he preferred working from printed materials; skimming through new content in a digital format was challenging. Kimberlee was unsure if there would be OER content available for her course. She found

materials she could integrate into her class slowly as she investigated. Throughout the literature and data, the benefits and challenges of OER have remained consistent for faculty. The faculty agreed working together, learning from each other, and using the resources around you ease the challenges.

The Decision Stage, the third stage of Rogers' innovation-decision process, was evaluated by identifying the activities that led to the adoption of OER. Faculty participants interviewed were asked about actions and decisions that led to the adoption of OER. Departmental or administrative decisions impacted all participants. All the faculty participants interviewed indicated that departmental decisions ultimately dictated the timing and adoption of resources. Hess et al. (2016) suggested that faculty were the driving force behind OER adoption and implementation. The data fully supported that faculty drove change, but it also highlighted the obstacles faced by faculty regarding departmental decisions. Although Joseph was fully on board with the idea of OER, the decision of what textbook to use in the course was not his, but one made by a committee with no intention of changing from the current textbook. Joseph and William were adjuncts who had little leverage in the textbook decision process. Kimberlee, a department chair, was able to slowly make changes in her department and hand down the new content to other instructors for use. Martin et al. (2017) collected data indicating that faculty were willing to adopt OER but needed more training, direction, and support from institutions. The data from this study showed that even when faculty were eager and ready to transition to OER, more training, guidance, and support were needed at the administration level to impact and implement change. Participants William and Susan mentioned curriculum changes in their department led to a new textbook that opened the door for OER. Departmental retirements led to departmental changes for Joseph. As a librarian and

adjunct faculty member, William advocated for OER use both on and off-campus. Still, it took more administrative push before faculty started getting on board.

For decades, librarians have advocated for free and open resources (Young, 2016). Librarians have been called upon to support and champion OER by advocating and promoting faculty resources (Anderson et al., 2017; Braddlee & VanScoy, 2019; Colson et al., 2017; Crozier, 2018; Hess et al., 2016; Mitchell & Chu, 2014). Katz's (2019) research indicated that librarians needed to garner administration support and educate faculty about available benefits and resources. The data from this study widely supported the importance of librarian partnerships for moving OER initiatives forward on campus. The impact of librarian outreach showed early in the data when participants shared how they learned about OER. Two of the four faculty members interviewed learned about OER through faculty professional development meetings. Crozier (2018) emphasized the importance of librarians building relationships with the different departments on campus and sharing quality and relevant resources in their instruction area with faculty. Pamela and William spoke about their relationships with faculty on campus. Both indicated that they began promoting OER to those with whom they had already established a rapport. Kimberlee mentioned that the same people tend to attend when training or professional development is offered around campus. William said that he could better connect with the faculty in person. Whenever there was any campus event, he would find ways to speak one-on-one with faculty about OER. William also mentioned that the limited staffing in libraries often hindered getting out and meeting with faculty face-to-face. Still, whenever he could walk around campus, he took advantage of this time to visit faculty to remind them of the resources available for faculty and students.

Martin et al. (2017) found that it was critical to encourage faculty who have OER experience to advocate and promote adoption. Rogers (2003) spoke of these advocates as the change agents that speed up the decision process by sharing their experiences and demonstrating their use of OER. This study found that faculty advocates proved to be just as crucial as librarians in getting the word out about OER. Three of the five participants interviewed initially found out about OER from other faculty. All the participants agreed that working with a librarian or other faculty member to identify resources helped get them started. William shared his advocating efforts with the sociology department on campus. He was advocating as both a librarian and adjunct instructor for the department. He sparked enough interest in the department that they decided to collaborate further with a colleague at one of the other colleges to make the switch. Kimberlee was a natural advocate of OER as a department chair within her department. She shared resources and content she created with others in her department. She constantly collaborated with other faculty to determine what resources and labs worked best for the student population and shared this information with others in her department. The faculty and librarians also agreed that sharing resources prevented others from reinventing the wheel. Two of the faculty interviewed indicated that they had not done anything to promote OER to other faculty further. They both said if asked for their thoughts or input, they would be happy to share. As seen in the data, faculty were huge influencers on other faculty adopting OER and should also make a point to share and advocate.

The Implementation Stage, the fourth stage of Rogers' innovation-decision process, was evaluated by determining faculty and librarians' roles to put OER to use in courses. Mwinyimbegu (2018) discussed the library's and librarians' critical role in identifying high-quality OER materials, managing OER, and raising awareness of OER among faculty and

students. Borchard and Magnuson (2017) said librarians often saw the barriers faculty face as an opportunity to create a partnership. The data collected specifically from the librarians in this study highlighted the critical roles in assisting faculty. Both librarians were able to relieve the hesitancies of faculty and help make OER a reality for their courses. The librarians asked the faculty to submit their course syllabus. They were then able to search for and identify peer-reviewed resources for the faculty member to review. The librarians were able to help identify OER-specific resources and link faculty to library subscription content to broaden the resources. Mitchell and Chu (2014) wrote about how libraries already have many resources available to faculty, including subscription content, eBooks, institutional archives, and special collections. All the participants spoke about faculty as content experts and the librarians being key in locating and supporting the content. Bliss et al. (2013) wrote about the importance of faculty identifying and evaluating resources to determine if the content met their curriculum needs. After the faculty member reviewed the resources, they let the librarian know what chapters and information best fit their curriculum needs. The librarian would then create a course specific LibGuide for the faculty member to integrate into their learning management system. The librarian would also make a separate password-protected guide for the faculty member that included ancillary materials to support the student resources. Pamela felt it was important for the librarians to help create resources as much as possible, to remove that barrier from the faculty. Participants in the study who actively collaborated with a librarian on OER praised them for their assistance in identifying and creating easy access links for them and their students. Susan said that the collaboration efforts were instrumental in making the switch to OER successful in her class.

The Confirmation Stage, the fifth stage of Rogers' innovation-decision process, seeks to avoid dissonance (Rogers, 2003). A support system needs to be in place to reinforce the innovation-decision for sustainability. Faculty and librarian adopters could continue to teach others and help maintain current and future collections of OER. Anderson et al. (2017), Mitchell and Chu (2014), and Mwinyimbegu (2018) wrote about how academic libraries should promote and raise awareness of OER and how to work closely with faculty to better understand and support their curriculum needs through OER. The participants of the study echoed the same sentiment. When interviewing faculty, they all felt that it was important for librarians to continue educating faculty about OER. William spoke about the importance of librarians understanding what may be holding faculty back from adopting OER. Librarians interviewed also agreed that awareness and support are vital in reaching faculty. Pamela mentioned that institutions that valued their library and librarians gained much more value for their students. Within the literature, several researchers expressed the importance of librarians. Anderson et al. (2017), Braddlee and VanScoy (2019), Colson et al. (2017), Hess et al. (2016), Mitchell and Chu (2014), Mwinyimbegu (2018), and Young (2016) agreed that library advocacy, workshops, faculty liaisons skills, and focus groups brought about awareness and assistance to faculty. They also said librarians were equipped with unique skillsets to support and help faculty transition to free or low-cost resources; however, they were often left out of discussions regarding curriculum and resources. Data collected from both librarians support the findings in the literature. They feel they were often left out of meetings and discussions, including student success and textbook selections. Pamela was passionate about the administration's role to include librarians in student retention and success discussions. William also agreed that librarians should be invited to campus meetings involving

curriculum and textbooks. Both mentioned that these meetings were critical to introducing

both faculty and administrators to what was available through OER.

Librarian and faculty change agents must continue supporting and reinforcing the

decision already made in the implementation phase, or adopters may reverse their decisions

(Rogers, 2003). Faculty and librarian support and encouragement are crucial in

maintaining and moving initiatives forward at community colleges. Mitchell and Chu

(2014) reported how OER changed the role of librarians and provided opportunities to

bring back value to libraries. Data collected from faculty and librarians supported the need

for librarians to further educate faculty and administration on their roles and skills related

to OER. Braddlee and VanScoy (2019) provided detailed examples of roles that librarians

filled with supporting faculty, which included: adoption, advocacy, curation, preservation,

repositories, content development, description, cataloging, metadata, discovery, funding,

information literacy, licensing and copyright assistance, policy development, professional

development, publishing, recognition, and team members. Braddlee and VanScoy (2019)

and Mwinyimbegu (2018) agreed on the importance of librarians' roles in supporting

faculty adoption of OER and promoting and curating resources. Borchard and Magnuson

(2017) agreed that librarians work hand in hand with faculty to identify gaps and help

faculty locate quality OER. Data collected showed faculty participants valued the work

librarians were doing on campus to help support OER initiatives. They said networking

with librarians and faculty helped lessen the workload and better navigate resources. Katz

(2019) further stated that librarians must work with the administration to create policies

and initiatives to encourage faculty adoption of free or low-cost resources. The library

website at the college reflected the collaborative efforts of librarians and administration to

create OER adoption policies. The website included all necessary forms and procedures for faculty to submit and receive OER adoption approval from the administration.

Identifying the curriculum's needs is the first step for libraries to build sustainable OER collections (ACRL, 2018). Mwinyimbegu (2018) identified several ways for libraries to promote OER access and usage, including information literacy training, the university website, face-to-face sessions, an institutional repository, an OER portal, or a learning management system. The librarians at JSCC have started the process of building an OER repository. This is evident on the library website, where the librarians have created course specific LibGuides for faculty they have worked with to adopt OER. Additional guides have also been designed to introduce faculty and students to library resources and databases to support the curriculum. Colson et al. (2017) wrote about how selecting and creating the ancillary materials was a growing concern, as the need for institutional repositories. Kimberlee, who worked exclusively with other faculty in adopting and creating her resources, suggested the faculty need for librarians to help with the publishing side of OER. The website did not reflect the work of individual faculty who have not collaborated with librarians. The bridge between librarians and these faculty members could enhance the library website and resources available to others in those departments. Mwinyimbegu's (2018) faculty survey suggested that librarians could play roles in OER collection creation and management. The data showed that all participants agreed that a course specific OER repository would help faculty and students access resources. Pamela agreed, but further addressed the need for the community colleges in the state to come together to create a repository. All the community colleges in the state were teaching the same developmental and general education curriculum. One large repository would make the resources available to everyone, and there would be less reinventing of the same

resources. Faculty could quickly adapt resources to fit their needs or update them and republish for others.

The collaborative relationships between librarians and faculty have proven essential and necessary to help move OER initiatives forward. Faculty and librarians must share their OER experiences to help educate other faculty and librarians who have not yet decided to take the plunge. Continuing to share knowledge, resources, and collaboration can lead to higher rates of adoption of OER and lower rates of discontinuance (Rogers, 2003). The existing literature with this study's support provides working examples, ideas, and solutions for faculty and librarians interested in campus OER initiatives.

Limitations

This study was limited to librarians and faculty at one community college in Alabama due to the lack of librarians in the Alabama Community College System who had collaborated with faculty on OER. Another limitation of this study was that the researcher could not work directly with the librarians or faculty to observe the processes due to COVID-19 restrictions on campuses and faculty still working remotely. The researcher collected data via telephone interviews, electronic documents, and website review. Qualitative studies can also be limiting as they are not generalizable to the population. This study used snowball sampling that limited the possible number of participants to include. However, this study represents an essential aspect of how collaborative relationships impact OER adoption at community colleges.

Implications for Practice

The adoption of OER at community colleges can significantly impact students. The data gathered from this study showed how collaboration between librarians and faculty could impact OER adoption, benefitting faculty, librarians, and students. The themes

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found throughout the results section dig deeper into how knowledge and collaboration could ease common barriers faced by faculty. However, challenges still exist. Faculty knowledge and time are still common barriers, as are librarian staffing and time.

Being the primary adopters of OER, faculty must possess a basic understanding of OER functionality and licensing. Understanding the benefits and barriers allows faculty to decide whether the transition would work for their course. Based on curriculum needs and goals, faculty must determine the most appropriate resources for their class. Building relationships with campus librarians and other faculty in their subject area can reduce the time spent locating and vetting quality resources. One of the first steps a faculty member could take when considering OER is to reach out to their campus librarian. Talk to the librarian about the library's services and the resources available to assist with OER. Department chairs could also go a step further by inviting a campus librarian to a division meeting to speak with faculty about OER and library services. Librarians often offer professional development sessions on campus for faculty and staff. These are often poorly attended by faculty but can serve as a great resource for faculty who attend. Administrative incentives for faculty could provide much-needed time for transitioning a course over. Participants suggested a course release over a semester would free up work hours to transition a course fully. Other suggestions were monetary incentives, campus recognition, or counting toward tenure for those at universities. Working together ensures a greater probability of success.

Librarians are vital in raising awareness about OER on community college campuses. Many colleges have called upon librarians to head up campus OER initiatives because of their unique skills. Specific course content is not always easy to locate, but librarians can quickly assist faculty in searching, organizing, and adapting resources to fit

their course curriculum. As OER adoption increases on campus, creating a repository is vital for housing course-specific resources. Having a campus repository makes the resources more accessible for faculty and students. A campus repository can be as simple as a password-protected webpage or LibGuide available to faculty. Items could include OER textbooks adopted or adapted for a specific course on campus, PowerPoints, activities, labs, test banks, answer keys, etc. A campus repository would provide a central place for all full-time or adjunct faculty teaching the same course to grab resources or remix something existing to fit their teaching needs. The Alabama OER Commons is a larger-scale repository option located on the Alabama Virtual Library website. The Alabama OER Commons is available to everyone in Alabama to access and submit materials. It is separated into several collections to make searching and locating resources easier. An important part of OER is continuing to update, remix, and publish resources. The more resources openly licensed for faculty provides more options for the classroom and hard-to-find subject areas.

The adoption of OER impacts student equity and saves students money. Most community college students depend on government funding to attend school, and they often must decide whether to spend the money they do have on books or necessities. OER provides students with the class materials they need on day one, providing an equitable learning experience for all students. Faculty and librarians can pool resources together to help students obtain their goals and successfully matriculate through classes with one less burden. Faculty and librarians can work together to identify OER and additional resources for the course that may combine both OER and library resources.

Before this study, little research had been done to identify the strategies and practices that have been put in place on college campuses to enhance collaboration with

faculty and librarians to move OER forward. Faculty who collaborated with librarians and

other colleagues in their discipline decreased common barriers associated with OER

adoption. Working alone to search, verify, and adapt OER can be daunting and frustrating.

Collaboration often translates to success. Faculty looking to transition courses from a

traditional text to OER should check to see if there is anyone on their campus heading up

OER initiatives. If not, the librarian can offer support and assistance with getting started.

If there are other faculty on campus or at another campus using OER, reaching out to them

can prove to be beneficial for obtaining information and tips. The key is collaboration. It

is important for faculty who have successfully integrated OER into courses to become

advocates on campus. Talking with other faculty will promote the benefits and student

success stories. Being willing to help others also wanting to transition is also helpful. One

should keep in mind to put students first and understand that OER is the combined work of

many. It takes a village to create change.

<p style="text-align:center;">*Implications for Future Research*</p>

This case study examined strategies and practices used at one community college to

enhance collaboration and move OER initiatives forward. The study documented how

faculty and librarians first learned about OER and their initial reactions. The study then

examined how the collaborative relationships between faculty and librarians helped

transition their courses from using traditional texts to OER. Faculty and librarians spoke

about the roles they played in transitioning the resources. Faculty spoke about additional

ways librarians could continue promoting OER on campus and their critical functions to

assist faculty. The ideas for future research build on current strategies and practices

mentioned in the data.

Future research should extend this study to more community college campuses across the state or southeast. Since beginning this study, other colleges have started implementing campus OER initiatives. It is essential to understand and compare what strategies and practices enhance collaboration and drive OER adoption on each campus. A more comprehensive understanding of policies and procedures for adoption at each campus can help unify campus practices. The research could also include interviews with the administration to determine their perception and support of OER on campus.

Additional research could also be conducted to understand why faculty may choose or not choose to collaborate with librarians when working to implement OER in a course. Faculty focus groups could provide further insight into what faculty need or want from librarians during the implementation process. More qualitative studies are needed to understand the specific roles and responsibilities librarians are taking on at their campus'. Librarian focus groups would also be instrumental for combining ideas and strategies they have found to best assist faculty.

Additionally, more research is needed on creating and managing campus OER repositories. What are librarians doing to manage campus OER repositories? After the initial adoption of OER in a course, is the faculty member still using it? Are faculty who have adapted or created OER licensing and publishing their works? Identifying the process and procedures colleges and universities have in place for faculty is important in ensuring resources stay current and are made available for others in the same discipline areas. Administration, faculty, and librarians could be interviewed and surveyed to determine what resources are required and where the resources could be housed for easy access, thus helping to determine what policies are in place for keeping resources updated and assuring links to resources work.

Conclusion

The cost of textbooks has skyrocketed over the past decade. Community college students are often first-generation or lower-income students who face an overwhelming cost burden when they choose to attend college. OER initiatives are just one-way community colleges can drive change and eliminate the burden of textbook costs for their students. OER have proven to reduce student costs and create an equitable learning environment. Faculty knowledgeable of OER are usually excited to learn more about adopting but often need assistance navigating common barriers; librarians and other colleagues are vital in providing this support.

Rogers's (2003) DoI theory guided the study's framework. Research sub-questions and interview questions followed the five stages of the innovation-decision process; in the data, faculty and librarians revealed how they first learned of OER and what led them to adopt it in their classes. The essential roles librarians and faculty could play in the process and strategies to further promote and sustain OER initiatives at the college were discussed.

Librarians in the study saw themselves as the primary advocates for OER on campus. They felt it was important to be included in campus meetings regarding student success and retention and part of curriculum and textbook meetings. They felt the best way to assist faculty with OER was to educate them and then create a guide of potential resources and ancillary materials supporting the curriculum outlined in their course syllabi. Helping faculty locate and organize the content reduced the time faculty spent looking for quality resources and compiling links.

The faculty in the study praised the work the campus librarians had done to promote OER on campus and create course guides for specific classes. All the faculty agreed that students were their main priority and the driving force behind adopting OER.

Collaborating with either the campus librarian or other faculty in their discipline helped

them leverage resources for their courses. All the faculty members interviewed addressed

the issue of time and quality content for their discipline. But, with a bit of research and

assistance, resources were quickly located. Faculty felt that if the administration had

offered some incentives, compensation, or a course release for a semester, time would have

been less of a barrier.

Overall, the collaborative efforts of librarians and faculty have helped move OER

initiatives further at this college. Statewide collaborations of like-disciplined faculty and

librarians could further advance OER initiatives across the state. Identifying key strategies

and practices throughout the data has provided valuable information to others looking to

start the collaboration process at their college. Hess et al. (2016) stated faculty were the

driving force behind OER adoption and implementation. Braddlee and VanScoy (2019)

documented librarians' detailed roles for supporting faculty, which included adoption,

advocacy, preservation, repositories, content development, discovery, publishing, and

more. Collaboration builds lasting relationships and contributes to the overall knowledge

pool to share with others. Work still needs to be done to promote OER and educate faculty

on the benefits and overcome barriers. Faculty and librarians must share their stories and

successes to encourage more faculty to adopt OER.

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APPENDIX A:

Librarian Interview Guide

Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Description: Thank you for agreeing to share your experiences about OER and faculty collaborations. The purpose of this interview is to understand your experiences working with faculty to move OER initiatives forward.

Prompt: Your responses will remain confidential so that you may speak openly. As a volunteer research participant, you are not obligated to participate, and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

I will now begin asking you a set of questions related to your personal experiences with OER and the strategies and practices you have put in place to enhance faculty collaboration. For the purpose of this study, OER are defined as learning and research materials freely available in any medium that is available in the public domain for remixing, adaptation, adding to, and redistributing. There are no correct or incorrect responses to the questions. I will be recording the interview so that I can transcribe it at a later date. I may also take notes throughout the interview. After transcribing the interview, I will forward you a copy of the interview via email to review it for accuracy. Do you have any questions about the study or my role as the researcher before we begin?

Questions:

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself.

2. Tell me about your experiences as a librarian and describe some of the most significant barriers you have heard about from college students.

3. What were your early beliefs and first impressions of Open Educational Resources (OER)?

4. How would you describe librarian and faculty relationships on your campus?

5. As a librarian, what do you see your role being, as it relates to OER? How do you think faculty perceive your role as it relates to OER?

6. Describe what steps you have taken to promote OER and raise awareness on your campus.

7. What specific steps have you taken to reach out to faculty to educate and facilitate

OER?

8. What role did the faculty play in assisting you with OER?

9. What impacts have OER had on your campus?

10. What recommendations would you make to other librarians trying to promote faculty collaborations through OER initiatives on their campuses?

11. What else do you feel faculty could do to assist with the overall implementation of OER?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with faculty collaboration to enhance OER initiatives?

APPENDIX B:

Faculty Interview Guide

Time of interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Description: Thank you for agreeing to share your experiences about OER and librarian collaborations. The purpose of this interview is to understand your experiences working with librarians to move OER initiatives forward.

Prompt: Your responses will remain confidential so that you may speak openly. As a volunteer research participant, you are not obligated to participate, and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

I will now begin asking you a set of questions related to your personal experiences collaborating with librarians to increase understanding and implement OER in your courses. For the purpose of this study, OER are defined as learning and research materials freely available in any medium that is available in the public domain for remixing, adaptation, adding to, and redistributing. There are no correct or incorrect responses to the questions. I will be recording the interview so that I can transcribe it at a later date. I may also take notes throughout the interview. After transcribing the interview, I will forward you a copy of the interview via email to review it for accuracy. Do you have any questions about the study or my role as the researcher before we begin?

Questions:

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself.

2. Tell me about your experiences as a faculty member and describe some of the most significant barriers you have heard about from students related to textbooks.

3. What were your early beliefs and first impressions of Open Educational Resources (OER)?

4. How would you describe librarian and faculty relationships on your campus?

5. As a faculty member, what do you see your role being, as it relates to OER? What do you see the librarian's role being?

6. Describe what steps you have taken to promote OER and raise awareness on your campus.

7. What motivated you to implement OER into your course(s)?

8. What role did the librarian(s) play in assisting you with OER?

9. What impacts have OER had on your campus?

10. What recommendations would you make to other faculty interested in implementing OER in their courses?

11. What else do you feel librarians could do better to assist faculty with the overall implementation of OER?

12. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with librarian collaboration to enhance OER initiatives?

APPENDIX C:

Institutional Review Board Exemption

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
For the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 03723-2021   **Responsible Researcher(s):** Amy Smith

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Jamie Workman

Project Title: *Promotion and Integration of OER: A Case Study of the Community College Librarian's Role.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is Exempt from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under Exemption Category 2. Your research study may begin immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of the research study collected data must be securely maintained (locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed. If applicable, Pseudonym lists are to be kept in a separate secure file from corresponding name lists., email addresses, etc.*

- *Exempt protocol guidelines **permit** the recording of interviews provided the recording is made for the sole purpose of creating an accurate transcript. Upon creation of the transcript the recorded interview must be immediately deleted from all devices. Recordings are not to be collected, shared, or stored.*

- *The research consent statement must be read aloud to each participant at the start of each interview session. The reading of the statement, confirmation of participant understanding, and their willingness to participate must be included in the recording and documented in the transcript.*

- ☒ *If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at irb@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.*

Elizabeth Ann Olphie   **07.09.2021**

Elizabeth Ann Olphie, IRB Administrator

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-253-2947.

Revised: 06.02.16