

**Affordable Learning Implementation Grant Final Report**  
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**CSD 412**  
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## **Background**

I was awarded an Affordable Learning Implementation Grant for CSD 412: (EPW) Intro to Research Methods, which I taught to 5 students this Spring. It was my hope that using a free textbook would increase students' access to and use of the text to reinforce students' understanding of course concepts. Promoting the understanding and use of evidence in clinical practice through explicit instruction in the classroom and clinic has long been an objective of programs in speech-language pathology. This is because the knowledge consumption of research is one of the backbones of evidence-based practice, or the integration of clinical expertise and client perspectives with a gathering of the best available research evidence (Greenwell & Walsh, 2021). This research methods course is many students' first exposure to formal training related to EBP. Their use of a textbook, along with engaging activities in class, will give them the best foundation possible for moving forward into their graduate and professional careers. A free textbook will increase their access to, and perhaps use of, that resource. (Dierdorff, 2021).

## **OER Resource used in this class:**

I used the following textbook: Research in Communication Sciences and Disorders: Methods for Systematic Inquiry, Fourth Edition by Lauren K. Nelson and Jamie L. Gilbert. This textbook was already available (with no access limits) through the Weinburg Memorial Library at no cost to the students.

I did not use any additional materials (no-cost or otherwise) in this course.

## **Student Engagement with OER**

As the textbook was specifically related to Research Methods within the students' major (communication sciences and disorders), all course content (PowerPoint presentations, activities, examples, and other resources) were drawn from the textbook. Students were assigned chapters to read each week. In-class activities and assignments were drawn from specific portions of the text. In assignment guidelines, I also noted which portions of the text the students could consult for support and examples.

## **Student Feedback**

I conducted a survey at the end of the semester to obtain student feedback on the course materials. The survey was anonymous and voluntary; 4/5 students responded. The questions used a 5-point Likert scale (*strongly agree – strongly disagree*). Below are the survey questions and a summary of responses:

1. The assigned readings were appropriate and relevant to the course content (*3 strongly agree; 1 agree*)
2. The assigned readings were accessible and easy to navigate. (*1 strongly agree; 3 agree*)
3. The free online textbook for this course was a valuable resource for me. (*2 strongly agree; 2 agree*)
4. I would recommend keeping the free online textbook for this course in the future. (*2 strongly agree; 1 agree; 1 neutral*)
5. I accessed the free online textbook as much as I would have accessed a purchased textbook. (*2 strongly agree; 2 agree*)
6. I prefer to use a free resource rather than buying a textbook. (*4 strongly agree*)
7. Please describe the impact that the free textbook had (or did not have) on aspects of this course. For example, were you more/less likely to complete the readings? Did you access the textbook more or less often than you would have otherwise? Any feedback is appreciated.
  - a. *It was helpful when completing assignments*
  - b. *I was equally ask likely to complete the readings with a free textbook or a purchased textbook and equally as likely to access it. However, not adding more financial burden onto students is fantastic with using the ebook.*
  - c. *I definitely found the free textbook encouraged me to use it a bit more, but the accessibility aspect was pretty much the same as an online book I purchased.*
8. Through the course assignments, I gained factual knowledge about research methods and their impact on the field. (*2 strongly agree; 2 agree*)
9. Through the course assignments, I learned fundamental principles and theories about research methods and their impact on the field. (*2 strongly agree; 2 agree*)
10. Through the course assignments, I gained a broader understanding and appreciation of research and its impact on the field. (*2 strongly agree; 2 agree*)
11. Please provide any comments or suggestions or other feedback about using the cost-free e-book for Research Methods.
  - a. *Everything was good.*
  - b. *Having a link directly to the ebook on brightspace may be helpful*
  - c. *I believe that the free e-book is a good option because college is already expensive and stressful enough, so having access to a free e-book as opposed to buying the e-book or physical textbook is much appreciated. I also feel that the book format will not affect the amount an individual reads, but the content may prevent them. I found the content easy to read and digest though.*

## **Future Plans**

Overall, I believe the implementation of this no-cost textbook benefitted students both financially and academically. Given the relationship between this textbook and the course objectives, along with students' positive feedback, I will continue to use this no-cost textbook in future iterations of this course. Based on my own experiences teaching the class for the first time, along with student feedback, I will continue to modify the use of the textbook to continuously point students towards this valuable resource.