

Christiane McDonald, MS, CCC-SLP
Faculty Specialist
Health & Human Performance

Affordable Learning Implementation Grant, Spring 2024

CSD 103 Introduction to Phonetics

OER: Levitt, J.S. and Guigneaux, S. (2023) Introduction to Phonetics for Communication Sciences. Open Resource 2020.

As a new faculty member at the start of this academic year, I was reminded of the financial stress I experienced as a student at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I heard of the Affordable Learning Implementation Grants at the orientation program for new faculty and was motivated to do my best to help students, and myself in the process.

To lessen the expenses of a new semester, I began the search to find open educational resources (OER) for students in the Communication Sciences and Disorders program. In preparing for my new courses, I explored options for students in my three courses for Spring 2024. I was successful in finding OER textbooks for two of my three courses.

I chose to apply the Affordable Learning Implementation Grant to CSD 103, Introduction to Phonetics. This course requires a considerable amount of practical, written activity to enhance the learning of the International Phonetics Alphabet (IPA). Late last summer, a brand new OER textbook on Phonetics, under review by my peers, came to my attention. This is the book I chose as the required text for the class, with a recommended (optional) textbook and workbook bundle available for purchase at approximately \$200 (this was the textbook used by the previous faculty member in Spring 2023).

Being new to planning and preparing course material (e.g., slides, activities, and assignments), I did not quite realize the time-consuming work ahead for me. In hindsight, being new to teaching three (new-to-me) courses, the simpler plan would have been to use textbooks which include accessible slides and resources as an instructor resource. However, after using this OER (and another in CSD 203), I feel confident it was the right decision for my students and for me.

In a survey taken at the end of the semester, most students stated it was helpful to have a free textbook. All students asked (18) said they would recommend this OER textbook for future students in CSD 103.

In saving these CSD students money, it also allowed me to more deeply learn the material through planning, as opposed to being handed down a course syllabus and material. It also encouraged me to look for additional resources to supplement class activities and assignments. I do plan on using the same OER textbook next spring for the course and will continue to seek OER texts and materials in future courses.

As a side note, the other OER textbook I chose for CSD 203 did not pair as well as the one I am writing about here in this report. It was important for me to experience this, as I came to realize how pertinent it is to find material which specifically supports the student learning outcomes.

Students, when asked, were pleased and appreciative they did not have to spend \$200 for a text and workbook. Assignments were done using summaries and self-assessments at the end of each module. Most students chose to complete assignments digitally, which provided an environmental benefit – it reduced the amount of paper used throughout the semester.

Personally, my preference is to use a hardcopy text and/or workbook. With that in mind, I offered to my class a few options for a printed version of this OER textbook (to be printed at the Printing Department here on campus. On our Brightspace page on 1/14/24, I posted this announcement for students in CSD 103:

“For our course, we will be using a FREE open access text/workbook. I will post the PDF as class gets closer. We will use it for reading assignments as well as in-class activities. If you prefer to have this printed at the campus print shop, you can let me know when we meet in class.

B & W copy with spiral binding - **\$14.45 per book**

Color copy with spiral binding - **\$53.67 per book.”**

While none of the students opted for a hard copy of the text, I plan on offering this option again next spring.

In reflecting on the semester, I realize how available and helpful open educational resources truly are for students and faculty. At times, I referred to the optional textbook and was able to use a few of the charts and worksheets as a source for class activities. Overall, it was a great experience. I will tell others about this wonderful opportunity to bring about change in the way we present coursework, reduce costs for students, and support environmentally wise decisions.