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**Timely assistance: A collaboration between campus librarians
and instructional designers on a textbook affordability initiative**

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Timely Assistance: A Collaboration between Campus Librarians and Instructional Designers on a Textbook Affordability Initiative

Final Report on a \$25,000 LSTA Improving Access to Information Grant to the Eastern Michigan University Library from the Institute for Museum and Library Services administered through the Library of Michigan from October 2019 to October 2020.

Final Report submitted October 30, 2020 by Kate Pittsley-Sousa.

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Grant Abstract:

This project explores a collaboration between campus librarians and instructional designers to promote and expand a textbook affordability initiative. The EMU Library Textbook Affordability Initiative promotes adoption of open educational resources, other free materials, and online library resources that are free to students. These efforts have influenced classroom faculty practice and lowered barriers to successful degree progress for low income students. This project addresses two limits to expanding the reach and impact of the initiative: difficulty in getting the attention of busy faculty members and limited funds for library e-book versions of course titles. The instructional designers will help librarians reach faculty at a key point of need when requesting a new course through their automated system, thus increasing faculty awareness and use of library services to find free or affordable alternatives. The resulting increased demand for one of those services—providing library e-books for course reading—will be substantially met with the requested grant funds.

Note: The following sections are drawn from the official report submitted electronically to the Library of Michigan following a prescribed format, some documents provided via web links have been added to this document as appendices. See appendices for budget and detailed evaluation survey results.

Activities

Restate the project's goals and describe how they were met.

Purpose 1: Increase classroom faculty engagement with the EMU Library Textbook Affordability project

The new step in the course shell request process made more faculty aware of the range of services offered by the EMU Library Textbook Affordability Initiative. In addition to an increase in requests for library ebook versions of course books, the most promising sign of increased engagement were the 28 consultations with library faculty to explore alternatives, many of which resulted in the adoption of open education resources (OER) or the use of library provided electronic materials free to students with an institutional login.

Purpose 2: Assist a significant number of students in obtaining course reading materials, thus improving classroom performance for those who would struggle through the course without the text and allowing those who would otherwise drop the course to make faster progress on degree completion.

IMLS grant funded ebooks were made available in 210 course sections with an estimated enrollment of over 5000 students. Of the surveyed students who used a library ebook provided for a course, 39% reported that without the library ebook they would not have read the book.

Purpose 3: Develop best practices for collaboration between campus instructional designers and librarians to promote faculty use of library services to support adoption of open educational resources or other free/more affordable course readings. Subsequently share best practices with other Michigan colleges and universities.

We found productive ways to collaborate with the Center for Online Learning and are planning for further collaboration. MIALA plans to accept proposals for breakout sessions or posters in late 2020. The PI plans to submit a proposal.

Describe the project’s collaborative efforts and how collaboration impacted the project and its outcome. Did you form new partnerships or strengthen existing partnerships?

We collaborated with the director and staff of the EMU Center for Online Learning. The technical step in the course shell request process helped to make faculty aware of the Library’s Textbook Affordability Initiative services. Since this step will remain after the grant, it will continue to increase awareness in years to come.

Our meeting between library faculty and Center for Online Learning staff was productive. We were able to share information that will strengthen both librarian and instructional designer services for faculty in providing course content. We established useful lines of communication for questions between Center for Online Learning staff and library faculty. The Center for Online Learning is now suggesting regular meetings with the Library faculty to continue communication and collaboration.

Library faculty continued to develop ways to collaborate with each other on efforts. Notable progress included collaborative work with the Systems Librarian and Acquisitions Librarian to establish more efficient workflows for course ebook purchases and methods for gathering ebook usage, expertise contributed by the Emerging Technologies Librarian and Online Learning Librarian in the development of online tools for the Initiative, subject librarian work with academic departments to support adoptions of OER or library provided content, and “yeoman’s work” by conscientious staff in the administration office handling grant accounting. Numerous library faculty and staff contributed significant expertise, skills, and time to the project.

Describe the overall planning and implementation of the project, including information about revisions made during its implementation. In retrospect, are there things you would do differently?

For the most part the project progressed as planned and according to the established timeline, although at two points early on the project was hampered by technical issues and later in March activities and timelines were affected by the pandemic. We also added three additional activities to the project: two coming from needs uncovered in the course of the project and one related to an unexpected opportunity.

Technical issues occurred when there was a disruption in access to the EBSCO ebook database provided by the Michigan Electronic Library, which was heavily relied upon for the project. Initial technical issues in establishing a new ordering process for grant funded course ebooks delayed purchases of ebooks in the Fall 2019 semester; however, the new system did make the process of acquiring and accounting for the ebooks much more streamlined throughout the rest of the project.

In preparing for the pandemic, the Center for Online Learning was asked to create course shells for all courses at the university. This eliminated the need for faculty to request shells for their courses, thus bypassing use of the new step in the course shell request process which provided information on Textbook Affordability Initiative Services. This limited the number of faculty who received the information during the grant year. However as the step remains as part of the course shell process, it will be used again after the pandemic.

The move to teaching courses entirely online during the pandemic shutdown also greatly affected the workload of library faculty and especially of the instructional designers from the Center for Online Learning. This caused our joint meeting to be rescheduled twice, although we were eventually able to meet in Fall 2020.

The pandemic also offered opportunities for Initiative efforts. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, many publishers offered temporary free online access to texts and the Internet Archive opened up an Emergency Library, which included some titles assigned in classes. We cross-searched 2000 to 3000 course assigned titles against these temporary offers and sent hundreds of individual emails to faculty with instructions on how students could access texts for free. Since these emails also publicized Textbook Affordability Initiative services, it was an effective way to reach out to instructors who have only used traditional texts. Additionally, the move to online courses appears to have increased instructor interest in providing online reading materials. Some instructors requested library ebooks as part of redesigning courses for online delivery.

Because communicating about course ebook availability with instructors and students became so time-consuming, the PI created an online resource which links library ebooks used as course reading for specific programs: <https://guides.emich.edu/classbooks>. Although it took many hours to create this resource, we can now use the guide list to more efficiently inform instructors and students of course ebook availability.

Because so many instructors were requesting consultation on textbook alternatives, the PI held an in-service for subject librarians on how to consult with faculty on textbook alternatives.

In retrospect, the PI wishes she had considered the amount of time the multi-faceted evaluation planned for the project entailed. She planned to measure almost everything that could be measured. For future projects, we would plan to focus evaluation on key aspects of the project rather than attempting to measure every facet of the project.

Evaluation & Outcomes

Restate the project's objectives, including benchmarks, and describe how the project's outputs and outcomes were met.

1. Objectives related to increasing faculty use of Textbook Affordability Initiative services.
 - a. Implement a step in the course shell request project to inform instructors about Textbook Affordability Initiative (TAI) services.

A question was added to the course shell request process: Are you interested in library services that might provide your students with free or less expensive course reading materials? An affirmative answer generates an automated email from the Textbook Affordability Initiative outlining service options.

- b. We expanded and improved the Textbook Alternative finding tools at <https://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts/oatexts> and also updated the non-EMU version of this tool shared with a Creative Commons license at <https://guides.emich.edu/texts>
- c. We created a new online request form for library ebook versions of course readings at <https://www.emich.edu/library/forms/ebookrequest.php> .
- d. The PI wrote and revised usage tips for several ebook platforms at <https://guides.emich.edu/ebooks/PQtips> .
- e. The PI held a professional development in-service for subject librarians on how to provide consultations for instructors on textbook alternatives.

2. Objectives related to assisting a significant number of students in obtaining course reading materials

- a. Each semester we researched possibilities for providing course ebooks using existing collections, Michigan Electronic Library ebook databases, and grant funded ebook purchases. Through this process and in response to faculty requests we purchased 135 grant funded library ebook versions of books assigned in EMU courses from Fall 2019 through Fall 2020. We also matched 119 books assigned in EMU courses to ebooks available via the EBSCO ebook databases provided by the Michigan Electronic Library.
- b. We emailed hundreds of individual faculty each semester with a link to the course ebook(s) and use tips for students.
- d. We assisted faculty in the adoption of at least five open access texts, including adoption of an open access text for all sections of one of the highest enrollment courses at the university.

3. Objectives related to developing best practices for collaboration between campus instructional designers and librarians to promote faculty use of library services to support adoption of open educational resources or other free/more affordable course readings.

- a. Staff of the Center for Online Learning met with key library faculty to share information and discuss ways to collaborate. Regular meetings are planned to continue after the grant year.

Describe the evaluation methodology used and the evaluation finding

We measured numerous aspects of the project, including use of three anonymous surveys.

Evaluation of Purpose 1: Increase classroom faculty engagement with the EMU Library Textbook Affordability Initiative (TAI)

Target outcomes:

Demonstrated use by EMU instructors of the Textbook Alternatives finding tool and librarian consultations on finding alternatives. A measurable increase in course e-book requests.

- a. & b. 31 faculty answered yes to the question in the Course Shell Request Process about interest in Textbook Affordability Initiative services. Faculty use of TAI services was measured through an anonymous survey of the

31 faculty. Results can be found in [Appendix B pp. 8-12]. The most notable result is the high percentage of faculty expressing interest in consulting with a librarian on finding text alternatives.

c. We recorded 28 consultations on textbook alternatives between librarians and instructors. Known outcomes include 2 cases where an OER text was adopted as the main text, 3 cases where an OER text was adopted in addition to an inexpensive print book, 9 cases where titles with library ebook access were adopted as the main text, 4 cases where a mix of library and web resources were adopted, 9 cases where the instructors are still considering options or the outcome is unknown, and 3 cases where a suitable alternative was not found.

We consider this one of the project's biggest successes, as there were many more consultations than we expected. In 12 of these cases, students will have zero costs for course readings and in 4 cases text expenses were significantly reduced. The large number of cases still in progress isn't surprising as it can take time for faculty to evaluate options. The three cases where an alternative was not found were also partial successes in that instructor's expressed satisfaction with the process (and in one of these cases we found an alternative for a different course taught by that instructor).

d. The new Ebook request form was used 71 times from October 2019 through September 2020, as compared to 19 requests using the old form from October 2018 through September 2019. Many of these requests were fulfilled with an ebook purchase or a match to an ebook in a Michigan Electronic Library ebook database. In other cases, we were able to initiate discussions on alternatives including open educational resources.

Evaluation of Purpose 2: Assist a significant number of students in obtaining course reading materials, thus improving classroom performance for those who would struggle through the course without the text and allowing those who would otherwise drop the course to make faster progress on degree completion.

Target outcomes:

Provision of approximately 60 to 180 library e-books to support a minimum of 70 classes during the grant year, making the free reading option available to at least 2000 students. As a result, more students complete assigned readings and there is a perceived increase in student success.

a. 135 library ebooks were purchased with IMLS funds. A list of these titles can be found at <https://guides.emich.edu/classbooks/IMLS>. In addition we matched 119 titles from MEL's ebook databases to courses and sent instructors links and tips for these.

b. The grant funded ebooks supported 210 course sections during the grant year with an estimated enrollment of 5200 students. Since these ebooks will remain available after the grant year and many will be assigned again in future semesters, the benefits to students will continue.

c. We purchased ebooks from 8 different vendors and were able to gather usage statistics from 6 of the vendors for the entire year, while for 2 of the vendors we have data from just Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 (missing data was for only 4 titles). This showed 24,462 Counter 5 Item Investigations. An Item Investigation can represent a chapter accessed online or the downloading of an entire book.

Especially heavily used titles included a text for an environmental science class that we could provide in a convenient DRM free format, a psychology text on behavior modification, a text on nonverbal communication, two texts on health care management topics, and a text on the psychology of religion.

During the grant year, some turn-away alerts from ProQuest on individual titles were used to decide whether to purchase additional copies of ebooks. We found it necessary to examine such data closely as often a report of multiple turn-aways were the result of one user repeatedly trying to access an ebook with only seconds between attempts. The PI attempted to analyze turn-away statistics for all titles, but found it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the Counter 5 data we had.

c. Faculty and student surveys

The PI sent a link to an anonymous survey to instructors who were provided with grant funded ebooks for their course and asked instructors to forward a link to a different anonymous survey to students in these courses. Each survey included an option to comment and the comments are interesting. See [Appendix C pp. 12-18 for instructor survey; Appendix D pp. 18-24 for student survey].

Describe the impact of the project on your stakeholders, i.e. patrons, community, and staffs.

Students

Most EMU students come from households with low to moderate incomes and 46% of EMU students receive Pell grants. Usage statistics showed that students made heavy use of the ebooks provided. The student survey showed that 54% of students relied solely on the library ebook for course reading, 9% relied on the library ebook until they could obtain their own copy, and 12% chose to use both the library ebook and a print book. Of those who used the library ebook, 40% responded that they used the library ebook to save money, while an additional 39% of students said that if there was no free library ebook version they would not have read the book. That a large number of students would not have otherwise had any access to the texts corresponds to the finding that 75% of surveyed faculty observed more students were completing readings.

Faculty

When we can influence faculty to consider textbook alternatives and effectively support them in the process, we end up helping thousands of students for years to come. Provision of library ebooks to support course readings demonstrates to faculty the difference that it can make for students and this can lead to more enthusiasm for also exploring use of Open Educational Resources. The scale of the project helped in that it made faculty in some departments aware that many colleagues are using alternatives, and seeing other faculty use alternatives helps change the culture around using free and less expensive reading materials.

The following comments illustrate faculty experience when using library ebooks and OER reading materials, as a result of this project:

“Having a copy of the book available in the library, and in a format that will make it available to multiple students at once, can be a game changer. It will allow my most vulnerable students access to essential course material, and help ensure that all students are given equal opportunities for success, regardless of economic resources.” – Pam Stewart, Art Dept. Faculty, using a library ebook for multiple sections of a 100 level Art History course.

“My students have been most appreciative of this and I am seeing more evidence that they are actually engaging with the reading.” – Amanda Stype, Economics Dept. Faculty using a library ebook for a 400 level course

“I am very happy with the OER text that we are using for COMM 124. It has great resources, updates, and the authors communicate with all of us who are using it.” Nick Romerhausen, Communication Dept. Faculty,

coordinating use of a free open text found in collaboration with library faculty for a very high enrollment undergraduate course on public speaking.

Staff

Librarians are always trying to get the word out to faculty about services that we provide. This project increased librarian interactions with faculty related to selection and provision of course materials, an area where instructors are often unaware of possibilities for collaboration.

This project furthered communication between the Center for Online Learning and Library faculty. We found ways to support each other's efforts and plan to continue more meetings between the units.

Promotion

Describe project promotional activities.

An article posted on the library web site (with credit to IMLS) can be found at <https://www.emich.edu/library/news/textaffordability.php> Several Subject Specialist Librarians sent emails or spoke with specific departments about the project. The PI spoke briefly about the project at an orientation for new faculty, lecturers, and staff and at a meeting of Emeritus faculty. The Faculty Development Center distributed flyers on the project. The Director of the EMU Faculty Development Center, distributed information on the project to new part-time lecturers when she met with them individually.

The integrated step in the course shell process, implemented as a key part of the project, is a means to promote services of the Textbook Affordability Initiative (TAI) that was active throughout most of the grant year and will remain active in future years.

There is a public web page about the project at: <https://guides.emich.edu/classbooks/IMLS>

Sustainability

Describe the plans to continue the project. Include how evaluation results will be used for future planning.

EMU Library Faculty Librarians are committed to finding ways to lower text expense barriers for low income students. The Textbook Affordability Initiative Coordinator is holding discussions with EMU Library faculty in preparation for writing a white paper on future directions of the Initiative. The outcomes of this grant will help inform future direction of the project. Although plans are dependent on a future group decision, it is likely that the growing interest of instructors in using library consultations on text alternatives will lead us to emphasize efforts between subject librarians and specific departments on campus.

Describe how the project will be funded in the future.

A decline in enrollment leading to severe budget cuts at the university this year makes internal funding for the project less unlikely.

The PI obtained a \$2500 sponsorship from the EMU Credit Union for the purchase of course ebooks during the 2020/2021 academic year. We also accept donations to the project through the EMU Foundation and recent appeals to Emeritus Faculty resulted in donations, so we have added another \$1300 of funds to the money from

the EMU Credit Union for purchase of course ebooks. We are currently working with the foundation on a future crowdfunding campaign.

We applied for a 2nd year of LSTA funding for a similar project, but the grant was unsuccessful. We subsequently applied for a Brickley Award (a donor funded award for EMU faculty projects) for a similar project, but that grant application was also unsuccessful. We will continue to look for new funding opportunities.

Lowering text expense barriers for low income students is a difficult project, which requires much persistence. We are grateful for the significant progress we were able to make with funding from this IMLS grant and will persevere in finding additional funding and more ways help low income students.

Appendix A. Budget

Overall Grant Budget: LSTA \$25,000, spent \$24,995.92

LSTA, \$19,841, Supplies, -- spent \$19,838.04 on library ebooks

LSTA, \$5,159, Indirect Costs -- reimbursed \$5,157.88

There was no Cash Match in the grant application, however:

1. We were able to spend \$1950.60 of the indirect cost reimbursement on additional library ebook purchases for the project.
2. Although we did not track labor as an in-kind contribution, numerous hours were provided by several library staff members on the project and the PI donated approximately 10 hours per week of unpaid overtime hours to the project.

Appendix B. Survey 1 Results

Use of Services by Faculty Setting up New Course Shells who Indicated Interest in EMU Textbook Affordability Initiative – April 2020

When requesting a new course shell, faculty at EMU are asked in the shell request form whether they are interested in EMU Library Services related to textbook affordability. Those who checked “yes” were sent an email that provided information and links to services.

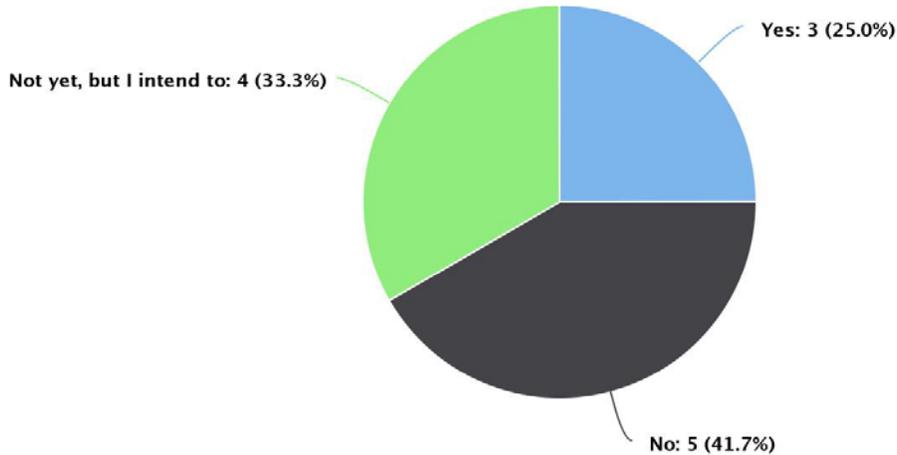
31 Faculty Members checked “yes” that they were interested in services offered through the EMU Textbook Affordability Initiative

12 of these faculty filled out an anonymous online survey, a 38.7% response rate.

Question 1:

Did you use the Textbook Alternatives Finding Tool at <https://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts> ?

use the Textbook Alternatives Finding Tool at <https://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts>



Question 2:

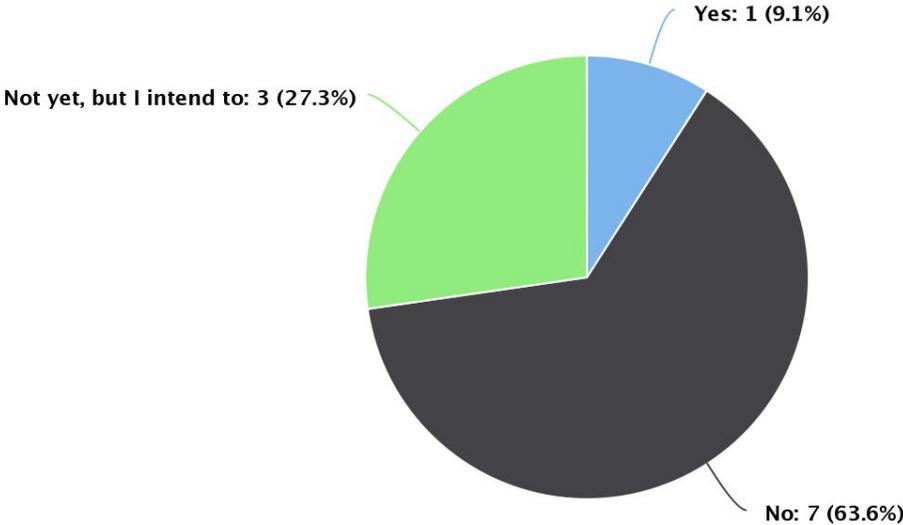
If you used the Textbook Alternatives Finding Tool, did you find an open text or other alternative that you adopted or intend to adopt?

Of the five faculty responding yes to Question 1 (they used the Finding Tool), two responded that they did not find an open text to use and three responded that they are still considering options.

Question 3:

Did you use the Ebook Request Form at <https://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts/lib-ebooks> ?

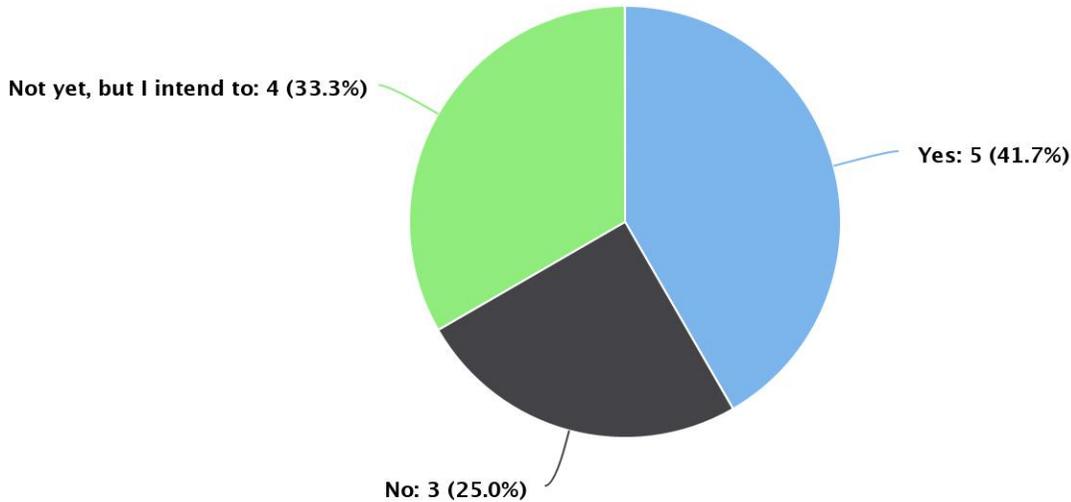
3. Did you use the Ebook Request Form at <https://guides.emich.edu/alt-texts/lib-ebooks> ?



Question 4:

Have you consulted with a library faculty member for help finding or obtaining open texts, course ebooks, or other text alternatives?

4. Have you consulted with a library faculty member for help finding or obtaining open texts, course ebooks, or other text alternatives?



Question 5:

If you used this consultation service, did you find an open text or other alternative that you adopted or intend to adopt?

Although only 5 faculty responded in the previous question that they consulted with a library faculty member, 6 faculty members responded to this question.

Four of these six responded that they found an alternative that they adopted or intend to adopt. Two of the six responded that they are still considering options.

None of the six responded “No.”

Faculty members were also invited to comment:

Would you like to share anything about your experience with EMU Library Textbook Affordability Initiative services or your experience using text alternatives in your course(s)?

Eight faculty responded with comments. The comments are provided below in no particular order.

Our librarian has been the one reaching out to me on the above issues. I greatly appreciate her expertise in this area.

I had good intentions but have dropped the ball in actually utilizing the resources available. I teach two courses here at EMU and three at Schoolcraft this term, and I think my plate has just been a bit full (if that's a suitable excuse, I don't know).

Very glad to have found an alternative textbook for my course. Katie was very helpful. Wish there were available texts for the other classes I teach, but at this time there are not.

I think this is a good initiative. The only issue is timing. When the canvas shell requests go out for a class it is often too close to the start of the semester to order/consider new books for that semester.

I am so appreciative of the help from the library and finding ebooks. My course costs for books is below \$50 in all of my courses. One class is only \$12 if students to utilize ebook offerings.

Our Science Librarian found 10 different resources for my winter offering of Food Microbiology. She then went on to provide me with the textbook I planned on using free through the Library. These resources helped both me and my students during this initial semester of Food Microbiology. I hope these resources will be available for future offerings of this course.

The problem I have had is with how many users at a time can be online to access some of the sources I'm considering. Thus, I have avoided the option of going this route because I know I would get bombarded with student emails when too many of them were trying to get access at the same time.

It has been super valuable to have an ebook version of my text for class. Thank you so much.

Appendix C. Survey 2 Results

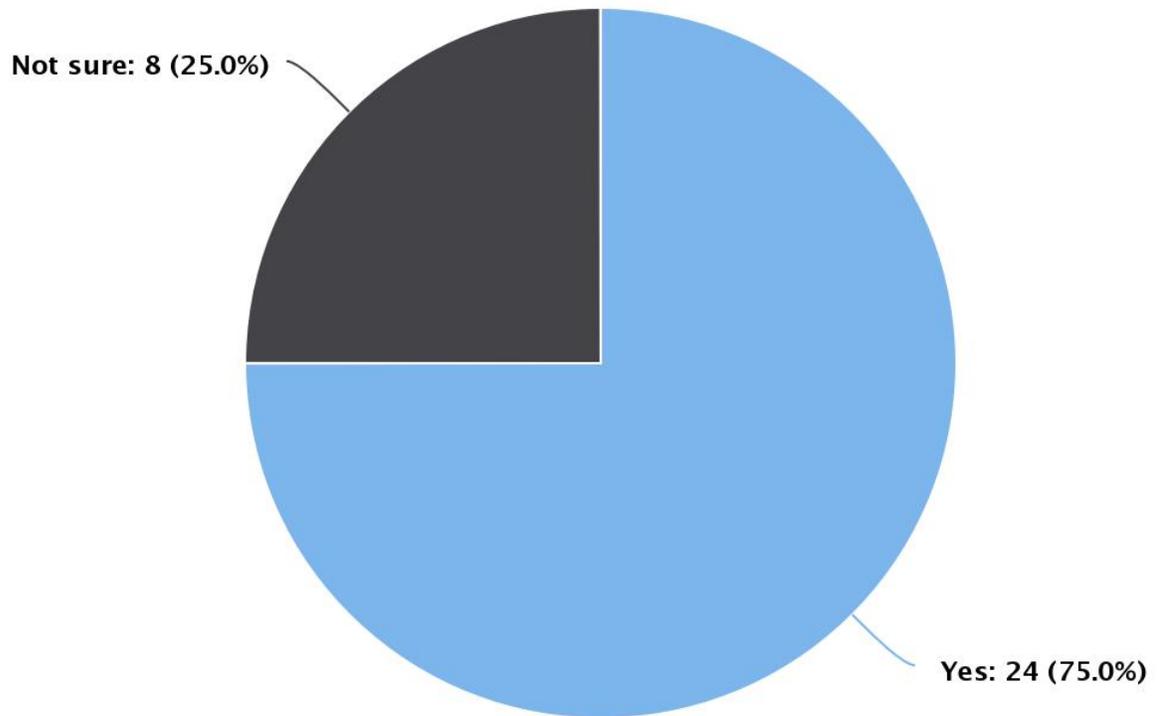
Survey of Instructors who received an IMLS funded Ebook to Support Course Reading – results compiled October 2020

Instructors whose courses were provided with a library ebook purchased with IMLS funds during Winter 2020, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020 were sent a link to a brief anonymous survey about their experience using the library ebook and their attitudes toward using open educational resources and other Textbook Affordability Initiative services. To avoid survey fatigue, we did not send surveys to the 31 faculty who were previously sent a survey after indicating interest in TAI services via the course shell process, although some of these also received ebooks for their courses.

Surveys were sent near the end of Winter 2020 and Spring 2020 semesters, but during Fall 2020 surveys were sent mid-semester to gather results before the grant's Final Report due date of October 30. This survey was sent to 39 instructors and we received 32 completed surveys, an 82% response rate.

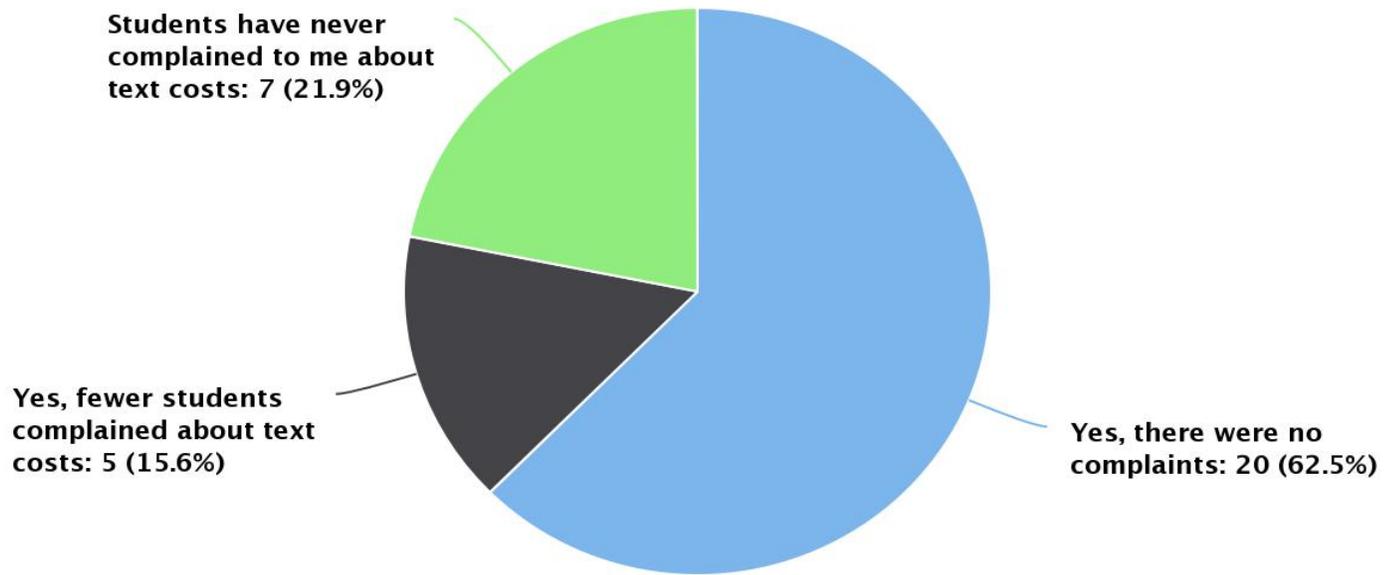
The survey included four questions and an opportunity to comment on the EMU Library Textbook Affordability Initiative.

1. As a result of having access to a free library ebook version of course reading, do you think that more students completed readings?



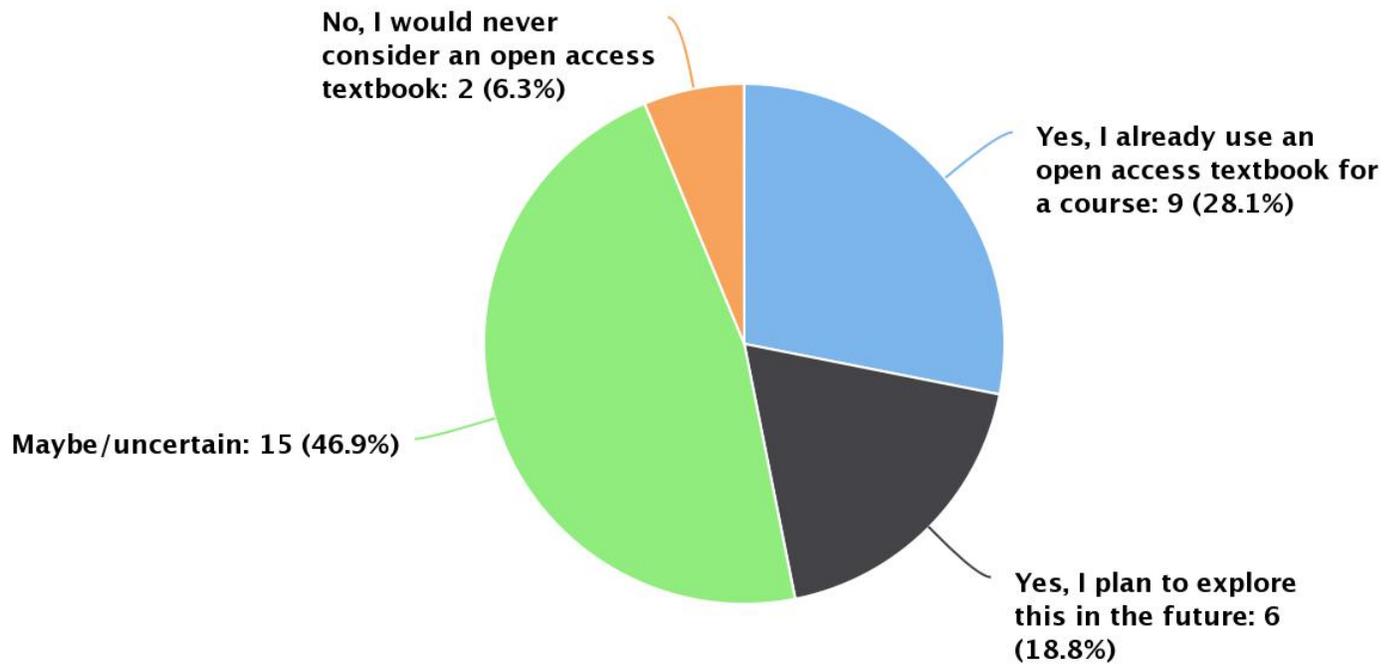
Note: Respondents were also given the option "No", but no respondent chose that answer.

2. As a result of having access to a free library ebook version of course reading, did fewer students complain to you about text costs?



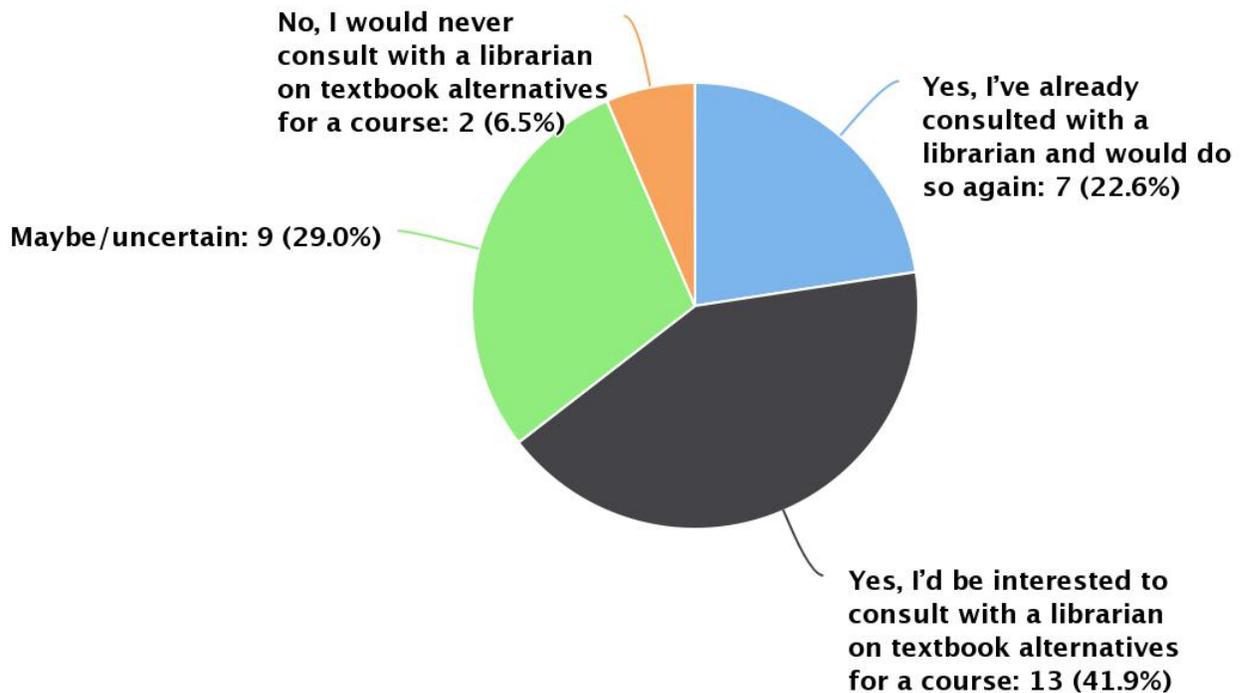
Note: Respondents were also given the option "No, students still complained", but no respondent chose that answer.

3. Would you be interested in using an open access textbook for course readings?



Note: We'd be thrilled if 28% percent of respondents are using OER, however we recognize that the 9 respondents indicating that they use an open access textbook might include instructors who define "open access textbook" to include free resources beyond OERs with a Creative Commons License.

4. Would you be interested in consulting with library faculty for help finding textbook alternatives, such as open educational resources or library ebooks?



5. Are there any observations you would like to make about use of library ebooks for courses or the EMU Library Textbook Affordability Program in general?

23 instructors provided comments. We are providing all comments below organized by themes.

On Economic Impact for Students

This program makes a positive impact on my students who already are living paycheck-to-paycheck.

I believe more students had access to the readings as a result of this program, as EMU students generally have serious financial limitations and often complain about cost barriers to getting the books. The more we can do to help them overcome these barriers, the better. Of course there are other, indirect economic obstacles that may limit their ability to complete the readings, such as the need to work long hours (and commute from home) in order to afford college.

The textbook choices here are really affordable! My last university used \$400 textbooks that were written by the professors themselves. That's not the case here!

I said above that students haven't complained to me about text costs, which is true, but I still think there's tremendous benefit in helping students save costs (whether or not they would otherwise complain). I'm very grateful for the availability of library ebooks, and I'm certain my students benefit from them!

The book that I used was a very affordable paperback book. The complaining or completed readings answers may have been different if the textbook was expensive

I answered the questions as best as I could. This is the best program I can think of for cost effectiveness.

I greatly appreciate the money that the program has saved (and will save) our students!

On Other Advantages

Having these three ebooks was great! I'm not sure students are taking advantage of them, but since I only use parts of each, this was a way to get those legally without having students buy the whole book.

I think it's great! I used to put books on reserve, but students won't go to the library. This provides that service. I really appreciate receiving an email from the library informing me about the books that are available through this program. Great work! Keep it up!

This is the first time that I actually accessed an open educational resource for a class. This particular book is not expensive, which is why I chose it, but it was very helpful at the beginning of the semester - due to the fact that because of CORONA-VIRUS my own book was in my office, and the students hadn't purchased it for the first several class periods. Thank you. [PI Note: It's likely that this instructor doesn't yet understand that a library ebook is not technically OER.]

Skeptics

My classes consist of much discussion of the books I assign, so ebooks are problematic. Even when read as an ebook, students don't have access in class to the ebook, can't discuss it as clearly as when they have the actual book on paper with them.

Quite often, we encourage our clinicians to buy assessment texts because of the informal protocols within them. That way, the clinicians have a library of informal tests and resources at their fingertips throughout their careers. As I understand it, access to the ebooks is just for the semester?

[PI note: Ebooks are available after the semester as long as a student is enrolled in classes, but only ebooks from the Michigan Electronic Library are available after graduation.]

On Consulting with Librarians

I've already consulted with a librarian and would do so again.

I love this. I'd love to be able to create a "wishlist" of books for my classes (I teach mostly novels) and then edit the list based on what was available as an ebook to make as many books as possible available via ebook.

The resources have increased steadily over the 3 years that I have been here, and it has helped students to contain costs related to textbook purchase. I have also been impressed by our librarian's response to any questions I have regarding e-textbooks.

Kate does a great job advocating for our students, and securing grants to acquire Ebooks. I wish students could have access to the video companion of the Ebooks, but I understand that it would significantly add to the cost. [PI note: Sometimes ebooks don't include DVDs that accompany a print book or online extras that require an access code. Usually not being able to provide videos or other extra resources is due to access/publisher issues rather than costs. We do have some cases where videos and other extras are still available to students using library ebooks.]

General Positive Comments

Makes a huge difference for students and faculty!

The e-book was a great success in my course. I will be using it again in the future.

Access to ebooks for my courses has been something my students report that they appreciate.

I don't use textbooks in the traditional sense so I don't use this program as much as others. That said, I also didn't know about this program until a random conversation with my librarian about a year ago. It makes me wonder how many others aren't aware of this program and how many more professors would use it if they did. I think it would help our students out a lot if more professors did know about it and used it.

Thank you for making books I teach available electronically. It is a fantastic resource!

Thanks!

Appendix D. Survey 3 Results

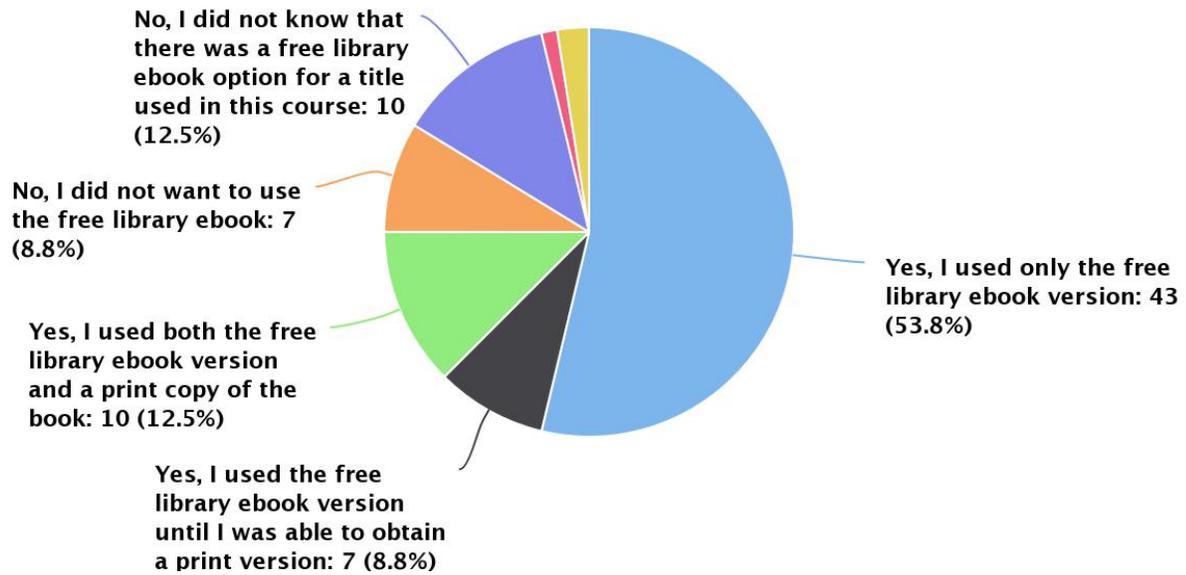
Survey of Students in Courses where an IMLS funded Ebook was Provided – results compiled October 2020

All instructors whose courses were provided with a library ebook purchased with IMLS funds during Winter 2020, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020 were asked to forward surveys to students in the courses. Surveys were sent near the end of Winter 2020 and Spring 2020 semesters, but during Fall 2020 surveys were sent mid-semester to gather results before the grant's Final Report due date of October 30.

The survey included four questions and an opportunity to comment on the EMU Library Textbook Affordability Initiative.

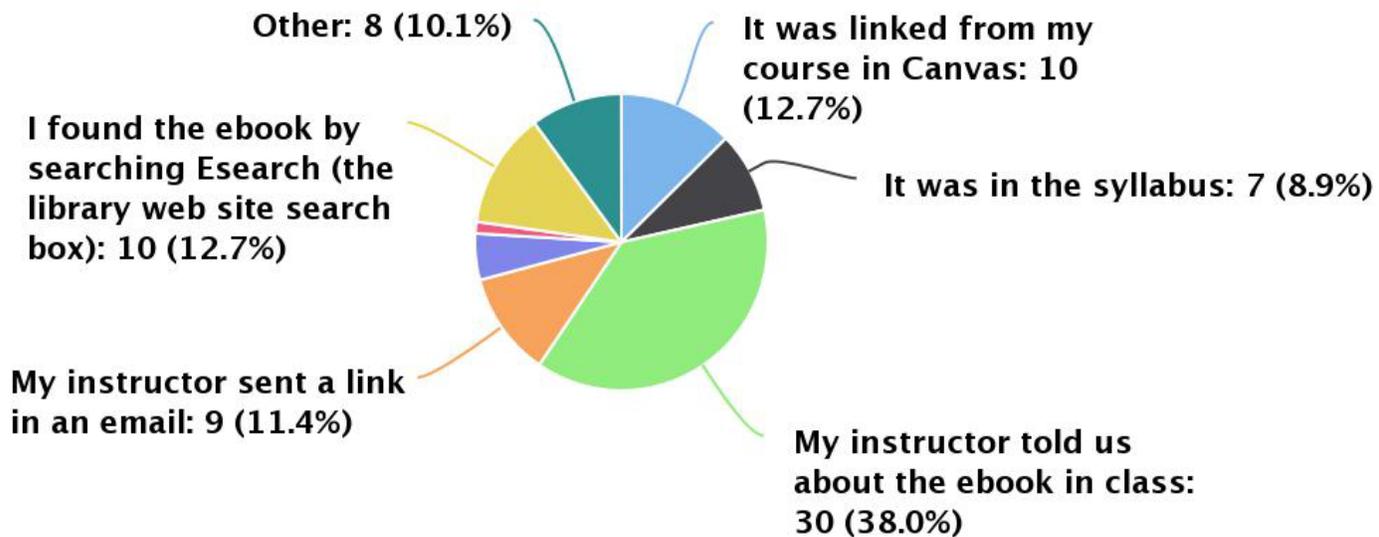
We received 80 completed surveys. Since it is unknown how many faculty forwarded the survey link to students, we are unable to compute a response rate, however, given the large total enrollment in these courses the response rate is likely fairly low.

1. Did you use the free ebook title(s) provided by the EMU Library?



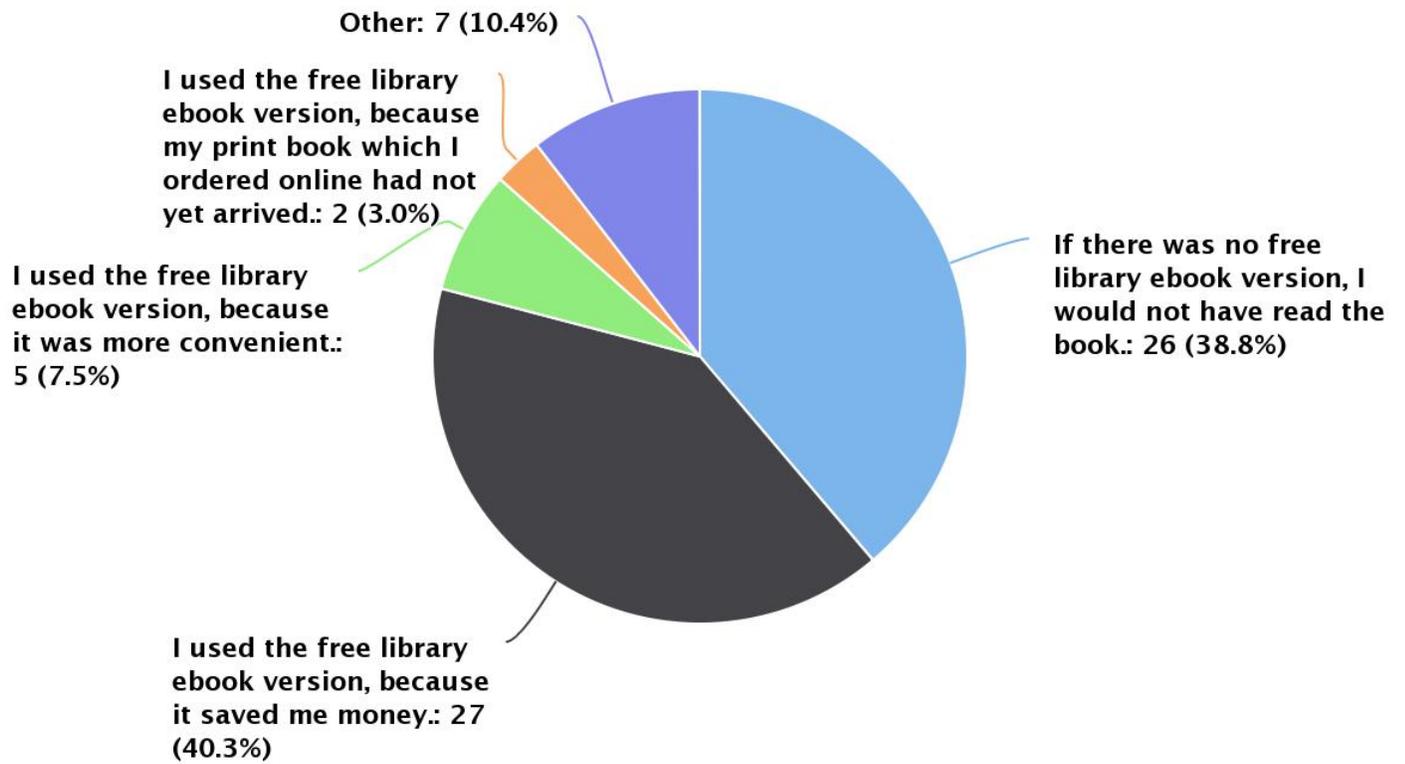
Unlabeled sections of pie chart above represent two students (2.5%) who successfully accessed the library ebook, but chose not to use it (yellow) and one student (2.3%) who tried to use the library ebook, but had difficulty accessing the book (red).

2. How did you find out about the library ebook?

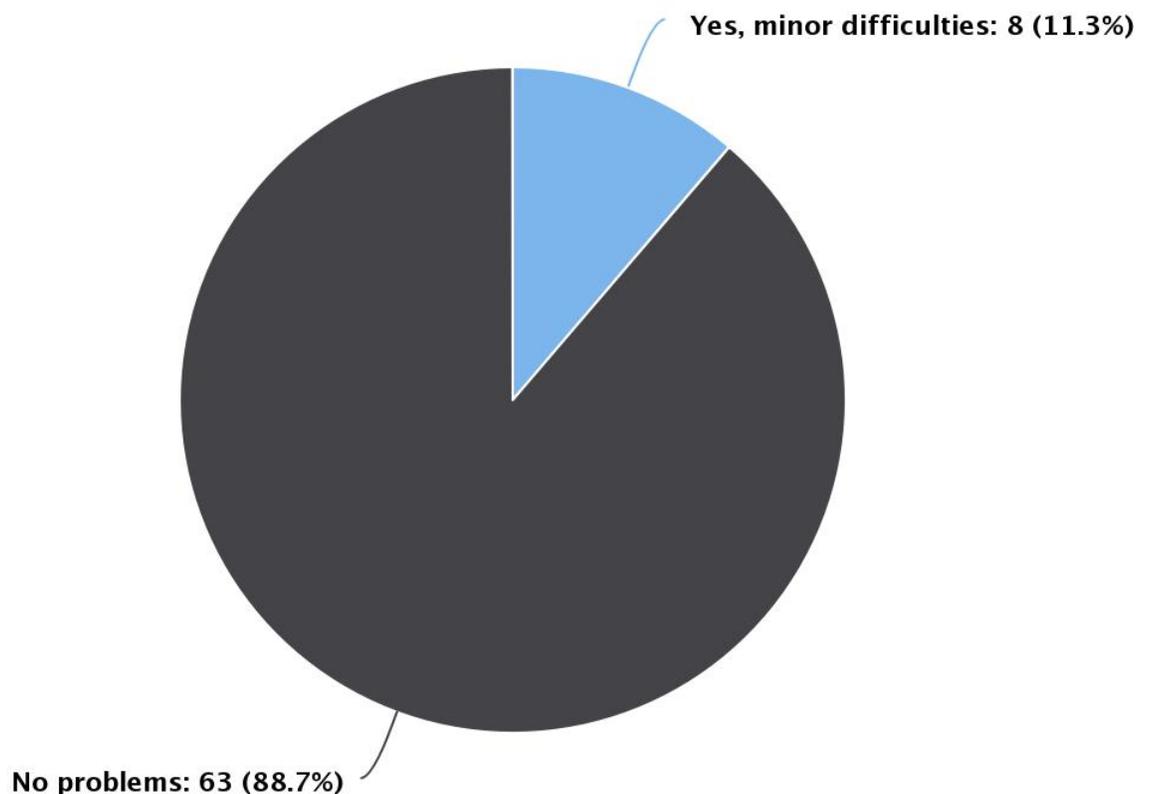


Unlabeled sections of the pie chart above represent 4 students (5%) who answered that “another student told me about the book” (purple) and one student (2.3%) who found the book on the Library Ebooks Used in Classes guide (red). The Other responses (dark green) include 8 students restating that they just learned about the course ebook or didn’t know about it. There was an option to answer “A library staff member helped me find the ebook.” Although no student checked this option, a comment indicates that one student did learn about the ebook from a Librarian.

3. If you used the ebook, which best describes your situation?



4. Did you experience any technical problems using the free library ebook?



Note that there was an option “Yes, big problems” and no student chose that response.

5. Are there any observations you would like to make about use of library ebooks for courses or the EMU Library Textbook Affordability Program in general?

22 students provided comments here. We are providing all comments below organized by themes. We also included two substantive comments made in an “other” box for previous questions.

On Economic Impact for Students

It's a lifesaver for students like myself that have a tight budget.

In other classes it has saved me so much money.

More affordable means so much.

In the grad program this semester we were required to get over 9 textbooks. Having an Ebook through the library helped me so much cost wise.

Personally I did not use any ebooks for courses here at EMU, most of my required materials were quite accessible in terms of price.

On Other Advantages

It made doing quizzes faster because I could quickly search for key words.

By having the ebook I was able to refer back to it at any time and I never had to worry if other people had it!

Concerns

It's hard when there is only one version of the online book available and so if someone else is viewing the book at the same time, then you cannot view it as well.

It's awesome and very helpful. Sometimes I have trouble accessing the book due to use by other students, but did not run into that with this particular book.

It was extremely beneficial. The only challenge was the books that only allowed one user at a time.

If possible, make sure the website is formatted to work on phone screens/mobile devices as well as laptops.

I would like to try an ebook for the upcoming Summer courses yet I do not know if they will be available. I do have some concern about the ability to read on the computer. I am a much older learner and prefer hard-copy books. Thank you.

Communication and Timing Issues

When the list of required texts for a class come out, tell students which books are available for free from the EMU ebook library!

I wish I had known about this option. I would have certainly used it and saved money.

I always ask the library for access to textbooks before I buy them. I was not informed this was an option.

I didn't know about the program nor that EMU offered ebooks for some courses. This is a great resource.

I was informed about the free access to the ebooks during face-to-face orientation from Elizabeth. I had already purchased all of my books. So, the message was a little untimely.

General Positive Comments

Library ebooks are great!

I think it's very helpful to provide these texts online for students

THANK YOU!!!

Keep the online book version for students.

Thank you!!!!

More ebooks

I think it's a great idea and support it. I have had similar experiences in the past with other institutions and it was very successful.

So helpful!! Please continue providing ebooks for classes!