

NISTS 2023

BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

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The following presentation was given at the 21st Annual Conference for the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students. Please cite responsibly and direct questions to the original presenter(s).

Research Poster

2836 - Transfer Student Expectations for Affordable Course Materials: A Focus Group Study

Transition Programs and Supports, Diversity and Inclusion

This session shares the results of a fall 2022 focus group study determining the affordable course material needs of in-state transfer students to our large research university. The study highlights student expectations and material acquisition strategies based on their (generally) less expensive prior academic institutions and the increasing availability of affordable library resources. This examination of pre- and post-transition experiences guides collection development and other retention strategies, while underscoring outreach that remains to be done.

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TRANSFER STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR AFFORDABLE COURSE MATERIALS: A FOCUS GROUP STUDY

Zach Welhouse, Beth Filar Williams, Stefanie Buck

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

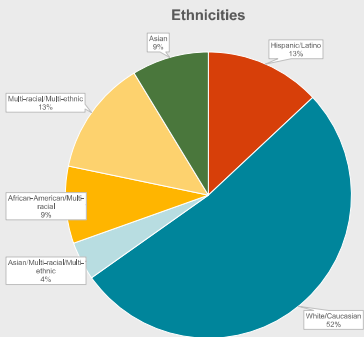
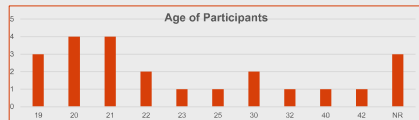
The purpose of this study is to explore what transfer students from other Oregon institutions experience when they use the Valley Library to access their course materials and what their expectations are regarding the affordability of course learning materials, either those available through the library course reserves system or through open educational resources.

DEMOGRAPHICS

"I thought it was a mistake that he didn't require a text book. When I got to class he said, 'Yeah, it's all in Canvas'. The best!"

Total Number of Students: 23

Total Number of Focus Groups: 5



	YES	NO	IDK
Pell-Eligible?	11	11	1
1 st Gen.	10	13	0
Financial Aid this term?	16	7	0

"I bought the book but then the teacher said we don't need it and we were all like 'Wow, I want my \$50 bucks back'."



Oregon State University Valley Library, Corvallis, OR

METHODOLOGY

- Participants contacted by posters, flyers, and e-mail from via comprehensive list of transfer students
- Flyers also distributed during Welcome Week transfer student event
- Compensation: gift card, food, and drink
- Online eligibility screening for age, transfer status, availability, and prior Oregon education
- Four in-person groups; One online group
- Groups met in a variety of locations to accommodate different populations
- 2-hour sessions. Two blocks with three questions each.
- One conversation leader and two recorders/supplemental questioners
- Introductions and icebreakers
- Follow-up questions developed naturally from discussion
- Transcription, coding, and code-checking

1. What strategies do you use to get your required course materials?
2. Are you facing barriers to getting course materials at OSU that you didn't face at your previous institution?
3. Compared to your previous institutions, how often have OSU instructors or departments kept course material costs under \$40?
4. What is your favorite OSU library service?
5. What has been your experience using the library to get course materials?
6. How does the Valley Library compare to your previous library?

DATA

Access

Transfer students found the cost of university textbooks and homework/quiz platforms to be a barrier to their acquiring the needed course materials and use a variety of strategies to acquire them.

"So I have a super tight budget and I always like, I'm already checking for Winter term, for book lists. So I can see, 'Where am I going to get the material?' Is it gonna be county Library, OSU Library, eBay? I literally will just Google every single place you can get the book. Will I rent it? Will I purchase it?"

Affordability

Some students had to make certain sacrifices to purchase their required course materials, such as which instructor to choose.

"I have made my decisions on which instructors to take based on the list of materials, like this book is going to be \$60 cheaper, that's the one I'm signing up for."

Attitudes

Students recognize and value instructors' efforts to lower costs. However, instructors do not always successfully communicate the value or relevance of course texts. In many cases, OSU is viewed as more impersonal than students' previous institutions.

"My professors this term have not really gone into specific details why they chose these textbooks, it's more like 'This is what you need. Go get it'."

Modality

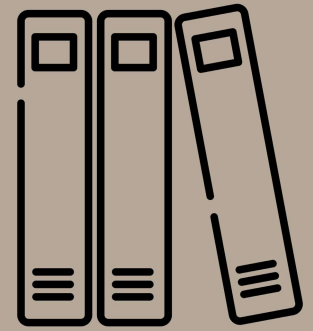
Students have different preferences on print vs. digital, but strongly dislike ancillary software and time-sensitive access to homework software.

"One thing that we haven't talked about much is when a class requires a, I don't know what you call it, when it's not a textbook but a learning platform. That's where I feel like the expenses get high because there are no alternatives."

Service Awareness

Generally unaware of the over 75 different Library resources and services beyond study rooms and printing. Top unaware item that piqued interest – lockers! Course reserves process too confusing, minimal copies – not worth it. But 1search and databases found easy to use and accessible.

"I have never been to a large library except for the Valley Library and it is just, I can't even, I wouldn't even know where to begin ..."



ACTION ITEM: MARKETING

- Don't notice screens. Use paper signs or whiteboards
- Offer small handouts: "something I can hold onto"
- Students look down. Try chalking or stickers on sidewalk
- Use peer leaders to share: it's "more personal"
- Attend student club meetings to share out
- Share through advisors (or majors) – specifics, "not just 'resources'"
- Email: half say YES and half say NO WAY

ACTION ITEM: SHARE DATA

- The Course Reserves task force
- Specific stakeholders in the General Education Council
- The Academic Affairs Leadership Team
- Specific stakeholders on the campus-wide OER team
- The OSU Undergrad Student Success Committee
- The Libraries' Research & Learning Department and Public Services Department

ACTION ITEM: UPDATE

- Library websites
- Liaison librarian guides
- Liaison librarian communications
- Library introduction tutorials
- Library tours
- Canvas training modules