

Affordable Learning Implementation (OER) Grant

Fall 2022 Report

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Course: MGT 509 – Business Policy – ONLINE

Background and Description - MGT 509 – Business Policy is the graduate capstone course for the Kania School of Management's MBA Program (traditional and online). As part of the new term alignment within the University's schedule, courses in the online MBA Program changed from an eight-week delivery model to seven weeks, necessitating the conversion, or in the case of MGT 509 online, full course redevelopment for the Fall 2022 H1 term. The online, mostly asynchronous course includes as its population, students who have several years of professional business experience. I taught the redeveloped course for the first time in the Fall 2022 H1 term.

Full redevelopment of the course presented the opportunity for change and, in Spring 2022, I applied for an OER grant with the intention of replacing the textbook and review materials using available OER items. The inclusion of OER materials stemmed from three known issues as I embarked on course redevelopment:

1. Unreasonable cost for the text. Unlike prior years, the latest edition of the text included (at an increased cost) only a version with cases and related materials that went unused. Case analysis for the course utilizes a custom Harvard Business School Publishing (HBSP) case pack instead. In addition, about one-third of the text chapters, about corporate strategy, fell outside the scope of the course. The focus of the course addresses the strategies of the single business unit and its integrated relevant functions, the topics of the remaining two-thirds. No other available graduate text covers these relevant chapters on its own;
2. A need to address the same number of course topics in seven weeks instead of eight;
3. Student feedback that indicated an excessive reading load. In prior course evaluations, some students reported feeling overwhelmed by course reading or reported that they had difficulty making relevant applications of the text to case analyses because of volume. The shorter timeframe would serve to exacerbate this issue.

In redevelopment, I replaced the course text with a single chapter from the original text and with topic-specific articles that include seminal works and current thinking that relate to specific course topics. I found two current open-source textbooks (one for accounting, one for general management) that can serve as review resources for students.

Utilizing these materials reduced the reading load by over 20 percent as calculated by Michelle Goeders, a Learning Technologist from Wiley, who guided the technical side of online redevelopment. In addition, these changes and the reduced cost resulting from them enabled me to incorporate an experiential component that allows students to apply theory in a live setting. While not an OER, the Business Strategy Game (BSG) provides students the means to make and effect business decisions based upon their developing an integrated understanding of course topics. Also, adding the simulation allowed me

to limit the number of cases needed in HBSP case pack to four instead of six, which reduced both cost and reading load.

Student Engagement with OER Materials –

With the guidance of University Library's Sylvia Orner and utilizing Google Forms, I conducted a survey of the students in my MGT 509 course at the end of the seventh/final week. Eight of 13 students responded. When asked if they used the OER items, 62.5% stated that they used the resources to complete assignments or when the need arose. When asked if the resources were effective and appropriate for furthering their understanding of topic contents, 100% of the students agreed or strongly agreed. When asked how much they valued not spending money on a traditional text, 87.5% of the students said they greatly valued this.

Dr. Jerry DeSanto, an adjunct instructor, who taught the same version of the online course in Fall 2022 H2 term, asked similar questions of his students via email. While anecdotal, he wrote in an email to me regarding the results, that his students expressed appreciation of the reduced costs and used the available resources. In addition, students reported that they found a good balance in topic-related material.

Future Plans for OER –

In Spring 2023, I shall teach the online version of MGT 509 once again and plan to survey students about the resources in the course, making adjustments and updated resources as necessary.

In addition, I shall teach two traditional sections of MGT 509, in which I plan to replace the textbook with the OER materials from the online version of the course along with the BSG simulation. The majority of the student population for these sections will include those from the on-campus accelerated MBA Program. Most of the students will have more limited professional business experience than their online counterparts, which will necessitate some preparatory material for participation in the BSG simulation. Because of the traditional semester term length, I have the opportunity to add these materials to the course and I have begun the search to find appropriate OER materials.

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