



# HCC Teaching News



From the Fletcher Faculty Development Center

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## Open educational resources: Low-cost high-quality resources take time to create

Free and low-cost textbooks and other course materials can lower the cost of a college education while improving resource quality, said presenters at a workshop on open educational resources (OER), hosted by the Fletcher Faculty Development Center at Hagerstown Community College (HCC) on Nov. 11. These benefits come with a price tag –significant time investment by the faculty members who create the resources.

At the workshop, Lore Kuehnert, instructor of world and United States history; Thomas Seward, professor of foreign language; and Lori Spessard, assistant professor of economics, showed colleagues the open-license and do-it-yourself course materials that they use to supplement or replace more expensive resources such as textbooks, workbooks, and study tools.

Kuehnert developed a free reader to supplement a world history textbook, saving students about \$30 per semester. The reader was distributed first on CD, then shifted to Moodle for better user-friendliness and course integration. Using OneNote, a free note-taking program, Kuehnert's students learn to critically annotate such documents as the 1919 Covenant of the League of Nations in order to understand the historical context of current political conflicts. With open resources, she said, "You can get exactly what you want. It is easier to give them something that has more depth." The

resources require a "huge investment in time," including writing introductions to the readings.

Seward created a free elementary Spanish workbook because he was dissatisfied with errors and confusing instructions in a \$75 conventional workbook. He started with grammar lessons, then added worksheets, arriving at a complete workbook housed on the Moodle course site. Seward has also developed about 120 videos illustrating Spanish and French lessons. Students do better with the custom workbook. "It is consistent with the vocabulary in the textbooks, with the handouts, and with class," Seward said. The work is time-consuming, he said.

For economics courses, transfer agreements require a standard textbook, Spessard said. She and Stacey McGee, assistant professor of business and accounting, replaced a two-semester Pearson textbook and MyEcon Lab with an OpenStax College book (free in PDF, Web, and e-pub; \$39 in print) and a Sapling Learning homework site. The new homework site offers improved quality and support. These resources save students \$90 over two semesters for an e-book/lab and almost \$300 for a print book/lab. The change created ripple-effect tasks of 15 hours per week including rebuilding the course site.

### Panel Recommendations

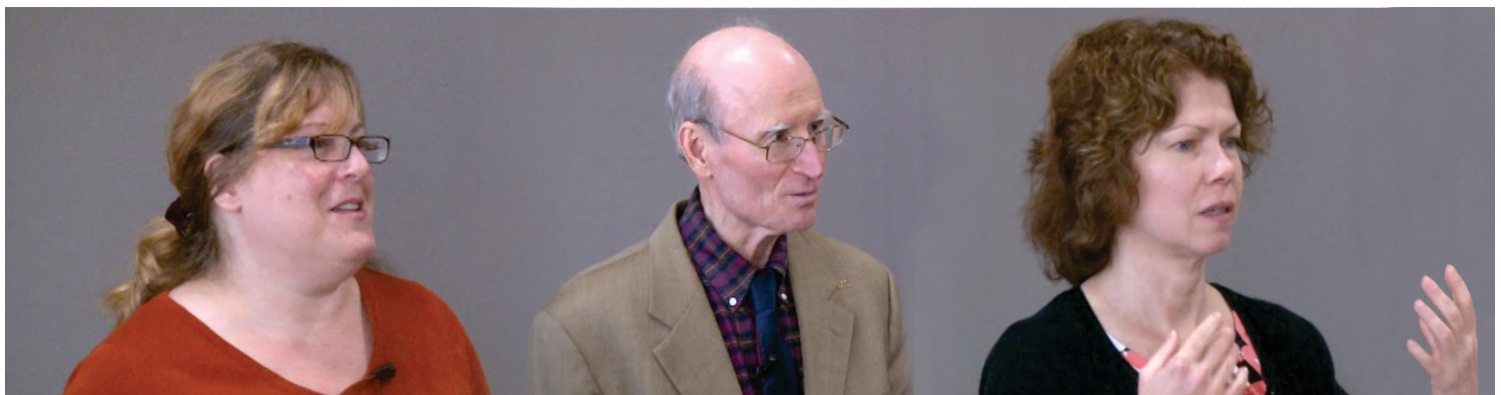
#### Textbooks

- Evaluate textbooks carefully
- Look closely at ancillary materials to evaluate their usefulness
- Be wary of assigning books as "optional reading" as students will often not read books that aren't assigned (even if they're free)

#### Open Educational Resources

- Take time to evaluate materials properly; it's more work than it seems
- Don't do it all at once; do it in bits and pieces
- Slow down and take it easy

*For more information about OER, visit the Fletcher Center Web page.*



**Lore Kuehnert**

**Thomas Seward**

**Lori Spessard**

## Using career resources to help students succeed

Students who have a career goal and declare a major early are more likely to complete an academic program than those who do not. More than half of HCC students are first-generation college students who need information about the diversity of careers available to educated workers. Instructors can help students by integrating career discussions into teaching, advisement, and service:

- When it is relevant to course content, discuss ways that people in various work fields apply research and knowledge from the discipline.
- Invite academic advisor Joyce Shull to visit your class to discuss careers.
- Encourage students to set up a Focus 2 account at [www.hagerstowncc.edu/focus2](http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/focus2) and complete the self-assessments to see how their interests and skills align with majors. If students are uncertain after this exercise, encourage them to schedule an appointment with a career advisor.
- If you are an adjunct instructor who wants to help students connect to internships or information interviews, join HCC's College Central community and complete the Mentoring Network Profile. At [www.collegecentral.com/hagerstown](http://www.collegecentral.com/hagerstown), choose

“alumni” when registering. That group includes alumni and friends.

- Recommend that students investigate internship opportunities that will give them the relevant experience and social capital they need to compete for good careers. Internship coordinator Bonnie Saunders can visit your class to discuss internships in a presentation tailored to the time you have available—even if that is just five minutes. Learn more at [www.hagerstowncc.edu/internships](http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/internships).

## Teaching and learning Q & A

### Q: What's more effective, lecturing with PowerPoint or without it?

“A common complaint I hear from students is that they do not like to be read to from a PowerPoint. They can read the material themselves. They want the instructor to teach. It might be interesting to know if there are any studies regarding the effectiveness of teaching with PowerPoint slides.”

—Terri Bidle, professor of anatomy and physiology

### A: PowerPoint as commonly used has little or no impact on learning – but students like it

Research studies have found that compared to the traditional format, lectures using

PowerPoint neither improve nor harm student learning, grades, or content memory. Students like PowerPoint; using it improves their ratings of lectures, instructor, and course.

PowerPoint is most effective when slides contain few points and few words, especially when the assertion-evidence (A-E) approach is used. However, lecture with or without PowerPoint is less effective than active learning.

“What Is the Impact of PowerPoint Lectures on Learning? A Brief Review of Research” is available on the Fletcher Center Web page.

Curious about research on a teaching and learning topic? Send your questions to Fletcher Center Coordinator Linda Cornwell at [ljcornwell@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:ljcornwell@hagerstowncc.edu)

The Fletcher Faculty Development

Center at Hagerstown Community

College supports excellence in teaching and learning in the areas of curriculum, instruction, standards, and assessment.

The center was established in 2010 with the support of the Alice Virginia and

David W. Fletcher Foundation.

## Busy part-time instructors: The Adjunct Commons is here to help

If you are an adjunct instructor who hasn't yet explored the Adjunct Commons, now is the time. The Adjunct Commons offers HCC's part-time instructors a place to prep for class, store belongings, make copies, check email, meet with a student, and leave or pick up a student paper.

Located in the Fletcher Center, room 106, in the Behavioral Sciences and Humanities Building (BSH), the Adjunct Commons is open Monday through Thursday, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., Friday, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday, from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. When the door is locked after business hours, enter using an HCC ID card or the key box.



## Upcoming workshops and programs

### Get involved in teaching and learning programs

A “Teaching 101” program is in development as a teaching orientation for new faculty and a resource for continuing faculty. What information or training is important for new instructors to know or have?

Consider including the Fletcher Center in your faculty Annual Review/Professional Development Plan by attending, leading, or co-leading a workshop.

Coming soon: A revised and expanded Fletcher Center Web page. Help review it for usefulness—stay tuned!

Contact Linda Cornwell to make a suggestion or share an idea about a teaching topic at [ljcornwell@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:ljcornwell@hagerstowncc.edu)