OER, Open Pedagogy, & Experiential Learning: SOCW 5321 Course

Dr. Joyce M. White, LMSW – APT Faculty: Professional Learning OER Committee
UTA School of Social Work

VISION

Bring Open Education Resources (OER), Open Pedagogy, and Experiential Learning into Social Work graduate level macro courses within the Community & Administrative Practice (CAP) specialty. The pilot course will be SOCW 5321: Advanced Community Practice.

BACKGROUND

Each semester, students in the graduate level social work courses that I teach either do not purchase the course textbook, or they struggle with the cost and at times, they wait until they have enough money to purchase the textbook. In some cases, students were not able to purchase textbooks until weeks after the start of the semester. In addition, once the semester was over, students no longer had access to the information they had created for the course. Further, several CAP students shared their desire for more creative ways to engage with information beyond discussion boards and writing papers.

Gaining information from students gave birth to a desire to employ more innovative approaches to teaching students about macro social work, leadership, and administrative practice. A colleague made me aware of UTA's Professional Learning Community (PLC). Once I joined the OER subcommittee, I began to learn of the many resources available to faculty to enhance their teaching methods, and to increase student success by reducing and/or eliminating the costs of course materials. As part of the OER committee, I was also able to participate in a life-changing tour of the UTA library. My eyes were opened to experiential learning opportunities, open pedagogy, and so much more.
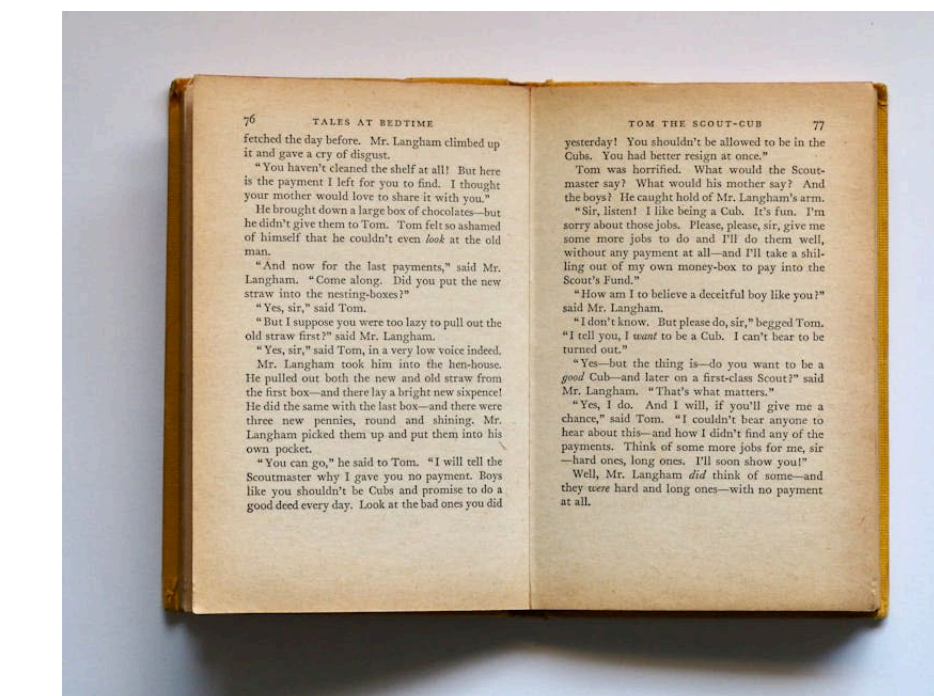

CURRENT PROJECT

The current project is to infuse OER zero-dollar course materials into SOCW 5321: Advanced Community Practice for fall 2024. The approach will be to utilize proposed funding from the UTA CARES Modification Grant to transition an existing OER textbook based in psychology to a social work macro level textbook.

In addition, an Experiential Learning Faulty Fellowship (ELFF) award will fund development of a website for students to post discussions and activities. The ELFF grant will also support integration of selected items from the library's Special Collections in the course. Students will be able to connect with one another during the course, as well as access the information once the course has been completed.

Modified OER Textbook

Student Populated Website

Incorporation of Special Collections Items

COMPONENTS

Four Components – Funding for each component is provided by UTA Library Grants & Resources

1) **Open Educational Resources (OER)**: Modify an open access textbook based in psychology to fit a social work graduate macro level course – Advanced Community Practice (the intended funding source is the UTA CARES OER Modification grant)

2) **Experiential Learning**: Integrate resources from the UTA library's Special Collections for some of the activities in the course (the funding is the Experiential Learning Faculty Fellowship

3) **Open Pedagogy**: Work with the UTA Library to create a website for students in the course to use for Discussion Boards, as well as to add various other types course-related information and assignments. By doing so, students' work lives on beyond the course allowing future students to access and add to the website (the funding source is the Experiential Learning Faculty Fellowship).
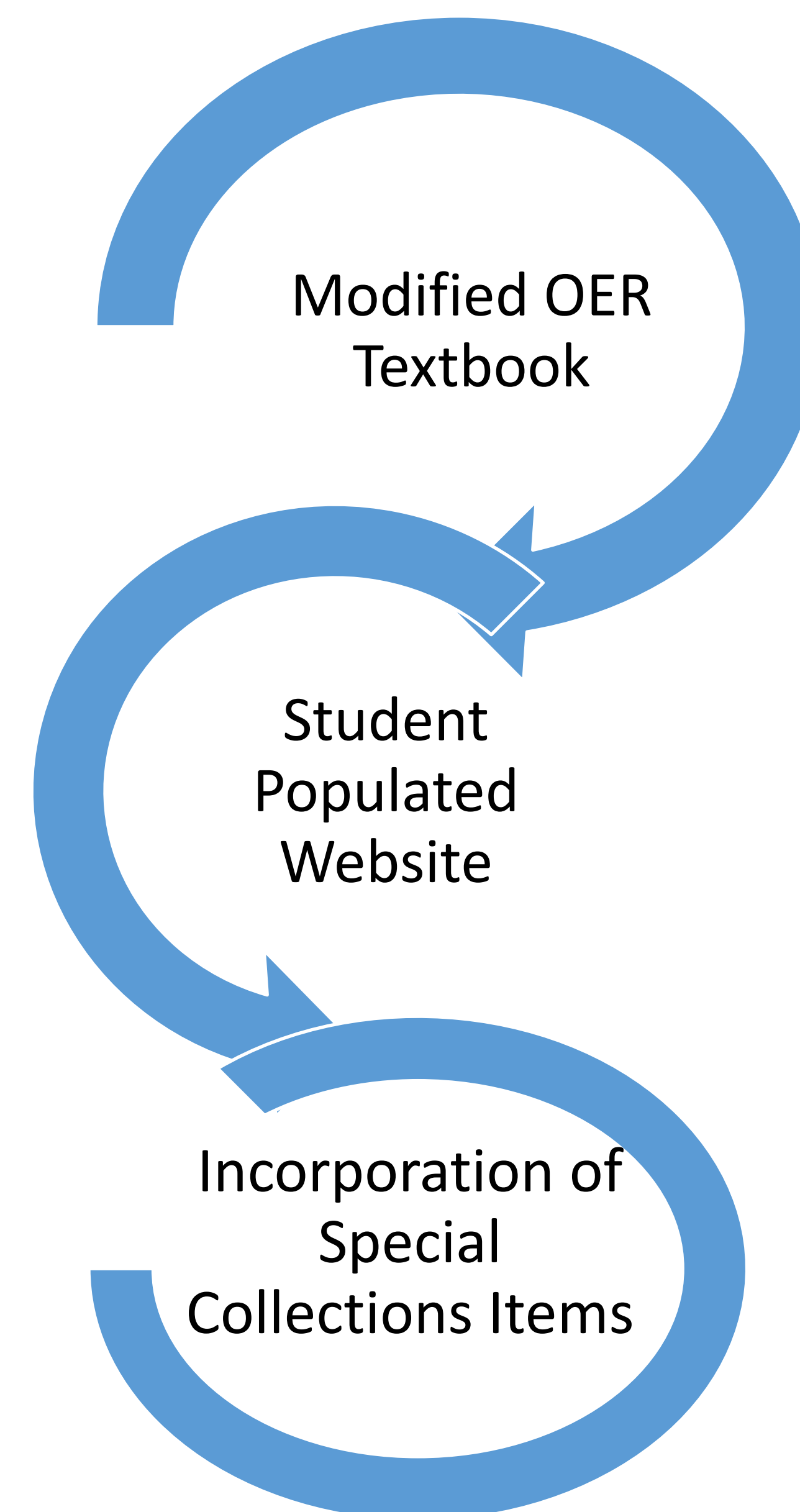

4) **Expansion of Open Pedagogy**: In fall 2024, work with the UTA Library to expand the website to allow access to all students in every course that I teach to have a course tab on the website to post and review information from others in the class they are taking, as well as across all classes they enroll in that I teach (the targeted funding source may be the "Open Initiatives" grant).

TIMELINE

The proposed timeline will run from Spring 2024 through spring 2025.

Organization/Activity	Work Period	Due Date
Update course activities & assignments to frame the focus for the modifications to be made to the OER textbook, along with use of items from Special Collections, and incorporation of the new website	5/20 – 6/3	6/3/2024
Modify existing OER textbook to fit SOCW 5321 course, and work with Experiential Learning team on website development	6/3 – 7/1	7/1/2024
Peer review OER textbook, activities, & assignments; and work with Experiential Learning team on website development	7/10 – 7/31	7/31/2024
Finalize OER textbook for piloting – based on Feedback from peer review	8/1 – 8/14	8/14/2024
Pilot teach course with updated OER textbook, items from Special Collections, and new website	8/19 – 12/3	12/3/2024
Collect student feedback	9/9 – 12/3	12/3/2024
Update activities & assignments, OER textbook, and website based on student feedback	9/16 – 12/6	12/6/2024
Peer review of updated OER textbook, activities, & assignments (based on student feedback)	9/23 – 12/13	12/13/2024
Finalize OER textbook, Special Collections items, and website with peer review feedback	9/30 – 12/19	12/19/2024
Copy editing for textbook	9/30 – 12/30	12/30/2024
Teach course with updated OER textbook, Special Collections items, assignments, and updated/expanded website	1/13 – 4/29	4/29/2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTACT

Dr. Joyce M. White, LMSW – Academic Professional Track, School of Social Work. Joyce.white@uta.edu