

Nominee: Orange Grove Texts *Plus*

Orange Grove Texts *Plus*: Providing Affordable, Adaptable and Accessible Open Textbooks to Faculty and Students

How effectively the innovation responds to a stated need

The high cost of textbooks negatively impacts the ability of the United States to educate students, especially in the high demand STEM areas. In Florida and elsewhere, many college students pay more for their textbooks than they pay for their tuition and fees, especially for those majoring in math, computer science, business and the physical sciences. According to the [College Board](#), on average, a postsecondary student paid \$1,137 for textbooks during the 2010-2011 academic year at a four-year public college. Since 1994, the cost of textbooks has risen at nearly four times the rate of inflation ([Student PIRGs](#), n.d.). For some students, textbook costs become the “tipping point” between going to college and not being able to afford to go to college ([Student PIRGs](#), n.d.). In a recent survey of over 14,000 Florida enrolled students, 37.1% of students in college report that they do not purchase the required instructional materials. Ultimately, the high cost of textbooks negatively impacts our national economy and global competitiveness.

In response to this problem, Florida’s statewide Orange Grove Repository (OGR) established a unique partnership with the University Press of Florida (UPF) in 2009 to form [Orange Grove Texts *Plus*](#) (OGT+). This initiative makes quality, open access textbooks available to faculty and students anywhere at no or low cost. Currently, books may be downloaded for free from the OGR or a commercial “print on demand” book may be purchased for a modest cost. These textbooks are made available under a [Creative Commons license](#). This means that others may freely download and use the textbooks, and in many cases, permission is given to revise, remix, or redistribute the textbooks under the original terms of the license with attribution to the author(s). In some cases, permission is given to make a new commercial work.

Through Orange Grove Text *Plus*, all students have access to their instructional materials in the format that they choose and on the device that they select. The cost savings are significant. For example, at Florida Atlantic University, 1000 students enroll in an American Government course each year; the commercial textbook is \$140. Faculty at FAU developed an open textbook for use with their students that is available at no cost for download. The annual student cost savings ranges from \$105,000 to \$140,000, depending on whether the students purchase a book or not. That textbook will soon be available for any faculty member around the world to use, revise or even remix under the terms of Creative Commons. This same story is repeated throughout the system as we add new textbooks and more faculty become informed about open access textbooks. Our newest textbooks will be for Theatre Appreciation, Calculus II and III, and Instructional Design.

How the innovation advances the practice of distance learning or education

Whether you are an on-campus student or a distance education student, when faculty use an open textbook, all students will have access to the instructional materials required for that class. Much of the student population that takes courses at a distance instead of at brick-and-mortar institutions do so because the anytime, anywhere asynchronous learning environments provides them the access they need. Many of these students juggle work, family, and other obligations with their online learning commitment. They might not be able to afford to take time away from these obligations to engage in a full-time learning experience. Likewise, the open textbook

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provides access with low or no cost and in a variety of formats that learners can access online and with mobile devices. They make textbooks affordable, adaptable, and accessible.

How the innovation has a broader application and can be duplicated by other providers

A new initiative, led by Orange Grove Texts *Plus*, is underway to form a consortium of university presses and repositories across the United States to increase the availability of open textbooks currently available and distribute the development of needed textbooks. Already, 15 university presses have indicated their interest in participating in the development of the general education textbooks and making available any books under a Creative Commons license.

The open textbooks that are stored in Orange Grove Texts *Plus* (OGT+) are openly available for anyone to access and use through The Orange Grove Repository. This open textbook model has been documented and is freely available at www.openaccesstextbooks.org along with multiple resources. Webinars are offered on topics of interest related to open textbooks such as faculty authoring and adoption, sustainability models, student support for open textbooks, models in other states, the impact of open textbooks, etc. Webinar recordings may be viewed at any time. The purpose of the website is to create a sustainable model for the implementation of open textbooks in a state or at an institution.

How the innovation is cost-effective

By lowering textbook costs to students, the higher education dollar stretches further, allowing decreased federal financial aid, decreased student debt, and in some cases allowing students to take more classes and thus graduate sooner. The Orange Grove Texts *Plus* textbook, *Concepts in Calculus I*, was developed by two faculty members at the University of Florida under a grant to the Math Department. This textbook was field tested in the fall. The math department used this textbook in the 2011 spring semester with 1,000 students which resulted in savings between \$165,000 to \$200,000. These benefits spread to the economy at large.

How the innovation can demonstrate a high level of student and faculty satisfaction

Students appreciate the reduced costs of textbooks and the opportunity to easily access the text in a variety of formats. Faculty that adopt an open textbook and modify it to make their own custom textbook, report greater engagement with the text and more satisfaction with their teaching. Often faculty work to improve and update the textbook each time they teach the course. See, for example, [Erik Christensen's YouTube video](#) about his experience adopting two open Physics textbooks.

How the innovation utilizes a new technology or an older technology in a new way

Orange Grove Texts *Plus* moves traditional publishing into the digital age while allowing the student to select one or more ways to interact with their textbook. And, in the fall of 2010, 70% of Florida students reported that they wanted the option to purchase a print textbook. Students also benefit from a new partnership with [WebAssign](#) to provide all the homework problems for a few open textbooks with immediate feedback, links to the relevant sections of the textbook and videos for just in time help. The cost for this service has been reduced to \$25 at a savings of 175% to 380% off the cost of a similar publisher service. Survey findings also report that 90% of Florida students believe that online homework services help them achieve a good grade.

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How the innovation incorporates a new pedagogy

Faculty report greater satisfaction when using open textbooks because they can quickly and easily update the open textbook to reflect new information, student feedback or address identified learning needs.

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