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“HAVING A TEXTBOOK LOCKS ME INTO A PARTICULAR NARRATIVE”: AFFORDABLE AND OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN MUSIC HIGHER EDUCATION

BY RACHEL E. SCOTT AND ANNE SHELLEY

The increasing cost of commercial textbooks used in higher education has been well-documented, as has the negative effect of expensive course materials on student learning and success.¹ A variety of solutions have been proposed to address the high prices of commercial textbooks, such as Open Educational Resources (OER), textbook affordability initiatives, and inclusive access programs. OER are materials for teaching and learning that may be used and adapted, as specified by an assigned license or by virtue of being in the public domain.² They are often in the form of a digital book that can be adopted or adapted for use as an assigned course text. Academic libraries and other campus partners increasingly support textbook affordability initiatives that provide access to assigned texts in a variety of ways, such as purchasing an unlimited user license for an assigned text, facilitating textbook sharing or swaps, securing access to a digital platform or digital content for students enrolled in a course, or making assigned materials available via library reserves.³ Inclusive access

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The authors thank the twenty-one participants in this study who so generously shared their thoughts and experiences. The authors would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their time, questions, and feedback.

1. Florida Virtual Campus, *2018 Student Textbook and Course Materials Survey: Results and Findings*, accessed 27 July 2022, <https://dlss.flvc.org/colleges-and-universities/research/textbooks/>; Lily Todorinova and Zara T. Wilkinson, “Closing the Loop: Students, Academic Libraries, and Textbook Affordability,” *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 45, no. 3 (2019): 268–77, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacalib.2019.03.010>; J. Jacob Jenkins, Luis A. Sánchez, Megan A.K. Schraedley, Jaime Hannans, Nitzan Navick, and Jade Young, “Textbook Broke: Textbook Affordability as a Social Justice Issue,” *Journal of Interactive Media in Education* 1, no. 3 (11 May 2020): 1–13, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/jime.549>.

2. “Open Education,” Creative Commons, accessed 27 July 2022, <https://creativecommons.org/about/program-areas/education-oer/>.

3. Steve Rokusek and Rachel Cooke, “Will Library e-Books Help Solve the Textbook Affordability Issue? Using Textbook Adoption Lists to Target Collection Development,” *The Reference Librarian* 60, no. 3 (2019): 169–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02763877.2019.1584597>; Emily C. Riha and Danika LeMay, “Saving Students Money with Ebooks: A Cross-Departmental Collaboration Between Interlibrary Loan and Course Reserve,” *Technical Services Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2016): 386–408, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07317131.2016.1203644>.

is a controversial⁴ textbook sales model in which an institution contracts with commercial publishers to provide students with digital copies of textbooks by the first day of class; students are automatically charged for this access unless they opt out during a specified period.⁵

Although previous collection development policies may have discouraged purchasing materials assigned in courses—especially commercial textbooks—academic librarians increasingly partner with teaching faculty to ensure that assigned resources are available to enrolled students.⁶ In addition to commercial textbooks, music instructors in post-secondary education use a variety of course materials, many of which are freely available online or otherwise accessible to students at no direct cost to them. These materials include diverse formats and content types, including notated music, audio or video recordings, primary source collections or digital surrogates, monographs ranging from popular to scholarly, essays, and published writings from a variety of venues.⁷ The ease of access and perceived quality of these materials have also been thoroughly discussed in the literature.⁸

With this study, the authors sought to learn more about the types of instructional resources music faculty use and their motivations for doing so.⁹ Interviews with twenty-one music faculty explored what kinds of

4. In a recent study, the author explores criticisms of inclusive access programs, namely the requirement of students to opt out in order to avoid automatic charges and students' short-term access to the materials; Elizabeth Spica, "Inclusive Access: A Multi-Institutional Study of Academic Outcomes from a Statewide Community College Automatic Billing eTextbook Pilot," *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2021.1990161>.

5. "What is Inclusive Access?," InclusiveAccess.org, accessed 27 July 2022, <https://www.inclusiveaccess.org/resources/what-is-inclusive-access>.

6. Rachel E. Scott, Mallory Jallas, Julie A. Murphy, Rachel Park, and Anne Shelley, "Assessing the Value of Course-Assigned E-Books," *Collection Management* 47, no. 4 (2022): 253–71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01462679.2022.2068465>.

7. The format preferences of music scholars and the availability of music research resources in various formats have been documented in articles such as Kirstin Dougan Johnson, "The Changing Face of Academic Music Media Collections in Response to the Rise of Online Music Delivery," *Notes* 77, no. 2 (2020): 191–223, <https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2020.0092>; Joe C. Clark, Jonathan Saucedo, and Sheridan Stormes, "Faculty Format Preferences in the Performing Arts: A Multi-Institutional Study," *College & Research Libraries* 80, no. 4 (2019): 450–69, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.80.4.450>; Keith Knop, "Music Library Patron Material Preferences: Use and Discovery of Resources in Print and Digital Formats," *Music Reference Services Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (2015): 79–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10588167.2015.1030946>.

8. Joe C. Clark, Sheridan Stormes, and Jonathan Saucedo, "Format Preferences of Performing Arts Students: A Multi-Institution Study," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 44, no. 5 (2018): 620–26, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2018.07.007>; Kirstin Dougan, "Music, YouTube, and Academic Libraries," *Notes* 72, no. 3 (2016): 491–508, <https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2016.0009>; Rachel E. Scott, "The Edition-Literate Singer: Edition Selection as an Information Literacy Competency," *Music Reference Services Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (2013): 131–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10588167.2013.808941>; Joe C. Clark, "Format Preferences of Performing Arts Students," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 39, no. 3 (2013): 297–307, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2013.02.005>.

9. The data presented and examined in this paper have been separated from a single set of interviews into two manuscripts. The authors' sibling article "Music Scholars and Open Access Publishing" was published in *Notes* 79, no.2 (2022):149–178.

course materials they assign, who assigns them, and revealed reservations about both music textbooks and alternative options such as affordable/open educational resources (A/OERs).¹⁰

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is an expansive literature on OER and textbook affordability initiatives in higher education. Bay View Analytics—a research firm that focuses on online learning and OER—has published a series of reports since 2012 exploring faculty use of OER as course texts.¹¹ Their 2020 survey on the impact of OER initiatives in higher education reveals that when implemented at the institutional level, these initiatives result in a noticeable increase in the number of faculty who are aware of OER.¹² However, there are a number of challenges to consider. While there is a connection between faculty awareness and adoption of OER, the overall percentage of faculty who are aware of them remains low at 14 percent who are “very aware” and 17 percent who are “aware.”¹³ Although the use of OER is generally positively received by students, the perceived quality of OER has been called into question by faculty.¹⁴ A concern from the perspective of librarians is that faculty assign texts and have the responsibility of designing and teaching their courses; creating or adopting OER requires substantial labor on behalf of teaching faculty.¹⁵ Due in part to such challenges, librarians have found other ways to address the problem of textbook affordability. Music libraries have long provided course reserves to facilitate access to materials assigned in courses, regardless of format or access model.¹⁶ More recently, librarians have partnered with a variety of campus units to provide cost-free access to assigned materials.¹⁷

10. While the authors are aware that open licensing is a distinguishing quality of truly open educational resources, for this study we asked participants to consider OERs more generally as “materials that are online and free to students.” When asking about affordable resources, we gave participants examples of “readings” such as books chapters, journal articles, essays, as well as audio recordings.

11. Bay View Analytics, “Open Educational Resources,” accessed 27 July 2022, <https://www.bayviewanalytics.com/oer.html>.

12. Tanya Spilovoy, Jeff Seaman, and Nate Ralph, *The Impact of OER Initiatives on Faculty Selection of Classroom Materials* (Bay View Analytics, 2020), <https://www.bayviewanalytics.com/reports/impactofeoerinitiatives.pdf>, 8.

13. Spilovoy, Seaman, and Ralph, *The Impact of OER Initiatives*, 11.

14. Julia E. Seaman and Jeff Seaman, *Freeing the Textbook: Educational Resources in U.S. Higher Education, 2018* (Bay View Analytics, 2018), <https://www.bayviewanalytics.com/reports/freeingthetextbook2018.pdf>, 33.

15. Troy Martin and Royce Kimmons, “Faculty Members’ Lived Experiences with Choosing Open Educational Resources,” *Open Praxis* 12, no. 1 (2020): 131–44, <http://doi.org/10.5944/openpraxis.12.1.987>.

16. Joe C. Clark and Amanda L. Evans, “Are Audio Reserves Still Relevant in Libraries?” *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserve* 25, no. 1–2 (2015): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1072303X.2015.1076552>.

17. Todorinova and Wilkinson, “Closing the Loop.”

A handful of studies have examined instructor practices and motivations for adopting A/OERs. The 2018 Ithaca S+R US Faculty Survey shows “substantial interest in use of open educational resources for instructional practices, particularly from younger faculty members.”¹⁸ The survey found that faculty in humanities and sciences were more interested in engaging with OERs than faculty in medical sciences.¹⁹ Recent focus groups and interviews conducted with faculty across diverse disciplines revealed a variety of obstacles and incentives to adopting affordable course materials.²⁰ In recent interviews with art historians, Natascha Chtena identified six main motivations for OER adoption among those faculty: addressing cultural gaps in the art history canon, covering more current content, more flexibility in how content is organized and presented, bringing the museum into the classroom, localizing the curriculum, and helping to make art history more relevant to students’ lives.²¹

Few studies address the question of how Open Access (OA) relates to the materials music faculty assign to their students, whether in the context of a class or informally. A recent study by Tanya Allen leveraged an email questionnaire to gauge music faculty members’ awareness of OER, potential reasons for adopting an open textbook, and reasons that they would not adopt one.²² Lily Todorinova and Zara T. Wilkinson surveyed students about Rutgers University’s textbook affordability program, which affected seventy students enrolled in music history courses.²³ Elizabeth Whittenburg Ozment, Irina Escalante-Chernova, Catherine Kilroe-Smith, and Todd Mueller documented their grant application to create an OER for Music Appreciation at Georgia Gwinnett College.²⁴ The online publication *Open Access Musicology* published a guide to “Teaching with OAM” that allows music faculty to integrate the content into their instruction.²⁵

18. Melissa Blankstein and Christine Wolff-Eisenberg, “Ithaca S+R US Faculty Survey 2018,” 5, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.311199>.

19. Blankstein and Wolff-Eisenberg, “Ithaca S+R US Faculty Survey 2018,” 47–48.

20. Shanna Smith Jaggars, Kaity Prieto, Marcos D. Rivera, and Amanda L. Folk, “Using Affordable Course Materials: Instructors’ Motivations, Approaches, and Outcomes,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 22, no. 2 (2022): 305–34; Rachel E. Scott, Mallory Jallas, Julie A. Murphy, Rachel Park, and Anne Shelley, “Exploring Faculty Perspectives on Text Selection and Textbook Affordability,” *College & Research Libraries* (forthcoming).

21. Natascha Chtena, “Opening’ Art History: Exploring the Motivations and Practices of Faculty Using Open Educational Resources in Lower-Level and General Education Art History Courses,” *Journal of Interactive Media in Education* 2021, no. 1 (January 2021): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.677>.

22. Tanya Allen, “Awareness and Future Use of Open Educational Resources by Music Faculty,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F87551233211069313>.

23. Todorinova and Wilkinson, “Closing the Loop”

24. Elizabeth Whittenburg Ozment, Irina Escalante-Chernova, Catherine Kilroe-Smith, and Todd Mueller, “Music Appreciation (GGC),” 2017, <https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/arts-collections/3/>; the open textbook is available at Todd Mueller, MUSC 1100: Textbook, Georgia Gwinnett College, 2017, accessed 7 July 2022, <http://hdl.handle.net/10675.3/610743>.

25. “Teaching with OAM,” *Open Access Musicology*, accessed 27 July 2022, <https://openaccessmusicology.wordpress.com/teaching-with-oam/>.

The availability of A/OERs and their use by post-secondary music faculty has been explored in library literature, as well. In 2017, Laurie Sampsel investigated challenges of locating OER in music and highlighted four open repositories with a notable amount of music content.²⁶ More recently, Carolyn Doi outlined her use of A/OERs in transitioning a face-to-face research methods course for undergraduate music students online in response to COVID-19.²⁷ With this study, the authors fill a gap in the library literature specific to the perceptions music faculty members hold about affordability and openness and how these intersect with the instructional resources they assign in their courses.

METHODOLOGY

The authors were awarded a University Research Grant to conduct research on music scholars' perceptions of OA, as relates both to their publishing and teaching. Illinois State University's Institutional Review Board reviewed the study and granted it exempt status. The authors identified interested and eligible participants by developing a screening survey and distributing it to online disciplinary communities of higher education music faculty, such as the email discussion lists for the American Musicological Society (AMS), Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM), and Music Library Association (MLA), as well as the Society for Music Theory (SMT), Music Education Researchers, and Music Librarians Facebook groups and AMS Humanities Commons forum. The authors also sent direct invitations to scholars active in subfields that were not well represented in the initial participant pool. The authors held interviews with twenty-one music scholars representing seven subdisciplines. The survey is provided as Appendix A and the complete interview instrument appears as Appendix B; this article is based on participant responses to questions in the "Teaching Experience" section. The interviews, which lasted around forty-five minutes each, were conducted via Zoom and recorded. Participants received a \$50 Amazon gift card after completing the interview.

The authors used interpretive description, an inductive qualitative framework that promotes understanding through observation, not hypothesis testing.²⁸ The findings are presented in narrative form with

26. Laurie J. Sampsel, "Finding Open Educational Resources for Music: OER Commons, MERLOT II, Openstax CNX, and MIT OpenCourseWare," *Music Reference Services Quarterly* 20, no. 3–4 (July 2017): 224–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10588167.2017.1364608>.

27. Carolyn Doi, Shannon Lucky, and Joseph E. Rubin, "Open Educational Resources in the Time of COVID-19: Two Case Studies of Open Video Design in the Remote Learning Environment," *KULA* 6, no. 1 (2022): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.18357/kula.218>.

28. Sally Thorne, Sheryl Reimer Kirkham, and Janet MacDonald-Emes, "Interpretive Description: A Noncategorical Qualitative Alternative for Developing Nursing Knowledge," *Research in Nursing &*

representative quotations from participants. The authors make no attempt at quantifying the preferences or practices of participants; the open format of the interviews does not allow for mathematical precision in comparing responses. In order to promote validity of the findings, the authors incorporated recommendations of John Creswell and Dana L. Miller.²⁹ Specifically, participants were invited to provide feedback on an early draft and their input was incorporated into the manuscript. “Member checking . . . consists of taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account.”³⁰ Additionally, the authors integrate quotations from participants throughout the document to emphasize participants’ experiences in their own words and to provide “thick, rich description.” This approach, according to Creswell and Miller, “creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study. Thus, credibility is established through the lens of readers who read a narrative account and are transported into a setting or situation.”³¹ This study, then, does not claim validity based on quantitative measures, but rather aims to amplify the participants’ own ideas and understandings articulated in their own words.

PARTICIPANTS

While participants represented a variety of music subdisciplines, such as Musicology, Theory, Librarianship, Performance, Education, Cognition, and even American Studies, musicologists were the largest single group by far. A few participants had multiple affiliations, holding appointments at more than one institution, or were primarily independent researchers who occasionally taught courses for a college or university. A couple participants held an academic position other than faculty. Demographic questions were included in the screening survey with the hope of recruiting a diverse group of music scholars, but based on the resulting group of participants and content of the interviews, analysis of demographic data

Health 20, no. 2 (1997): 169–77, [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1098-240X\(199704\)20:2%3C169::AID-NUR9%3E3.0.CO;2-I](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1098-240X(199704)20:2%3C169::AID-NUR9%3E3.0.CO;2-I); Sally Thorne, Sheryl Reimer Kirkham, and Katherine O’Flynn-Magee, “The Analytic Challenge in Interpretive Description,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 3, no. 1 (2004): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F160940690400300101>; Laura W. Gariepy, “Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses of Academic Library Search Data: An Interpretive Description of Undergraduate Student Perspectives,” *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* 16, no. 2 (2021): 22–44. <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip29923>.

29. John W. Creswell and Dana L. Miller, “Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry,” *Theory Into Practice* 39, no. 3 (2000): 124–30, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2.

30. Creswell and Miller, “Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry,” 127.

31. Creswell and Miller, “Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry,” 128–9.

Table 1. Subdiscipline, Institution Type, and Professional Title of Interview Participants

Subdiscipline	Institution Type – Carnegie
American Studies (1)	Baccalaureate Colleges (3)
Musicology (12)	Doctoral/Professional (4)
Music Cognition (1)	Doctoral: High research activity (3)
Music Education (1)	Doctoral: Very high research (8)
Music Librarianship (2)	Special Focus Institutions (1)
Music Performance (1)	No academic affiliation (2)
Music Theory (3)	
Professional Title	
Adjunct/Instructor/Lecturer (3)	
Assistant Professor (2)	
Associate Professor (6)	
Librarian (2)	
Postdoctoral Fellow (1)	
Professor (1)	
Non-Academic Affiliation (2)	
Other Academic Position (2)	

did not emerge as relevant to the goals of this study. The subdiscipline, institution type, and professional title of participants are provided in Table 1.

LIMITATIONS

The authors acknowledge a variety of limitations to this study. Although best practices for qualitative research suggest twenty-one is an appropriate number of participants to reach data saturation in interview-based research, our findings are not generalizable.³² While there was initial concern that all participants would have a strong ideological commitment to or engagement with OER and textbook affordability, the authors found that participants held a variety of perspectives and that even many of those who supported OER and textbook affordability also held concerns. As noted, the authors have separated the findings from a single study into two manuscripts; a potential limitation is that doing so creates arbitrary boundaries between open practices for teaching and publishing where there are none. A final limitation relates to recruitment: the authors

32. A 2021 content analysis of phenomenological qualitative studies revealed an average participant sample size as just over sixteen. Theodore T. Bartholomew, Eileen E. Joy, Ellice Kang, and Jill Brown, "A Choir or Cacophony? Sample Sizes and Quality of Conveying Participants' Voices in Phenomenological Research," *Methodological Innovations* 14, no. 2 (May 2021): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20597991211040063>.

recruited participants and conducted the interviews themselves; participants may have felt pressure to provide responses that they thought that the authors, as librarians, would want to hear or to evoke the role of the library more than they otherwise would.

RESULTS

How are texts selected?

When investigating how instructors decide what course materials to use, an important starting point is the degree of autonomy instructors have in selecting and assigning materials. The 2018 Ithaka S+R Faculty Survey, which asked faculty to describe their role in selecting materials with which they teach, found “Approximately eight in ten respondents indicated they are the primary decision maker. Humanists and social scientists have more decision-making power than their scientist or medical faculty peers, with medical faculty much less likely than those in other disciplines to be the primary decision maker.”³³ Similarly, in the study at hand, participants reported being empowered to select the texts that they teach, with a few important exceptions.

Undergraduate music history and music theory courses—which often comprise multi-semester sequences—require considerable planning and coordination, and the textbook and anthology have historically been central to both. Texts for these courses were frequently selected, or at least agreed upon, at the area level or by the individuals teaching one or more of the classes. Participants noted that, in the case of these sequential courses, a traditional textbook facilitated students saving money over the span of multiple semesters, changing sections as needed, and having on hand materials they needed to study for graduate entrance exams in music history or theory. In addition, a shared textbook facilitates teaching assistant (TA) training and coordination across sections, which was also associated with sequences in music history and theory.

Those teaching from a shared text and dissatisfied with it may not have any recourse. A few participants noted they have been part of plans to redesign the curriculum but have lost out to those in favor of retaining the textbook. Redesigning a course is a daunting task and convincing colleagues to do so can be politically fraught. One participant noted that musicology graduate students charged with teaching a music appreciation course expressed their dissatisfaction with the textbook and formed a panel to review alternatives. The outcome of that process was that TAs could opt out of using the textbook, but they could not assign a different

33. Blankstein and Wolff-Eisenberg, “Ithaka S+R US Faculty Survey 2018,” 46.

one. Another participant drew a distinction between the experience of being a TA, in which their supervisor selected assigned materials, and teaching their own course, in which they had complete autonomy in selecting materials and designing their course. Another participant recalled in a previous position they had been pressured to use the Norton and Burkholder for a course in the music history sequence but instructed students to take their books back to the bookstore.³⁴

Only one participant noted that textbook selections had to be submitted to an accrediting agency for review. That approval process took one year and was extensive—the accrediting agency evaluates how materials were tied to assignments. Notably, this person taught at two institutions accredited by the same agency and the other institution did not submit course materials for review. The participant appreciated having their materials vetted; it provided them with a sense of security that they are using appropriate materials.

What kinds of materials are assigned?

Textbooks

The topic of teaching with traditional textbooks was fraught; participants articulated strong preferences and justifications for either usage or avoidance. One of the more commonly articulated practices was for participants to use a textbook and anthology for sequences, but to prefer a variety of reading, listening, and viewing materials for upper-level courses. The one-stop shopping, so to speak, of the text and anthology combination provided convenience, coherence, and consistency to proponents. Some participants shared that students benefited from using standard textbooks in music history or theory. Proponents suggested that textbooks were integral to their programs and prepared students for success in graduate admissions. Some participants felt strongly that textbooks are needed in certain contexts, most commonly lower-level courses, sharing a common sentiment that “students need a textbook to guide them.” Other participants were neither opposed nor committed to using traditional textbooks in their classes and emphasized selecting materials based on knowledge of students and institutional context. One participant noted assigning different materials at different institutions based on student backgrounds and “where they were starting.”

Participants noted that textbooks can also be useful guides to instructors who are teaching content with which they are less familiar. A

34. J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Grout, Claude Palisca, *A History of Western Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2019).

musicologist stated, “I was going to teach a jazz course this semester, I probably would have used a textbook because I haven’t taught the topic in ten years and I would have needed the helping hand.” Other participants acknowledged the opportunity to benefit financially by packaging their expertise into a textbook, and one person reported having assigned a textbook they authored in their course, a process that required university permission. Textbooks may be the path of least resistance in certain contexts. For example, one participant indicated they use a colleague’s published textbook for some graduate-level courses. This decision may suggest political pressure to financially support one’s colleagues.

Another common occurrence was to address affordability while still requiring a textbook. Some participants ensured textbooks were on reserve in the library, many used a single textbook across multiple semesters, and some did not require students to pay for other course materials: “Whenever I use something beyond the textbook, I make sure it’s free for students.” Another approach to optimizing the value of the textbook was to “use the whole thing, cover to cover.” This sentiment was echoed by a participant who did not use textbooks: “I’m not opposed to textbooks, but they’re so expensive. If you assign [one], you better use it all.” A few participants noted that colleagues had compiled course packs of materials at significantly lower costs to students.

A handful of participants noted they no longer use textbooks, or never did: “I got rid of textbooks right away.” One participant observed that students who did purchase the textbook would pick up older editions, posing literal and metaphorical challenges to “getting on the same page.” A few participants noted students do not understand how to engage with the textbooks and attributed this to the ways in which textbooks are written as “piles of facts.” The overwhelming concern about textbooks was that they limited the instructor’s intellectual freedom: “Why would we shell out money for textbooks? It locks me into someone else’s teaching priorities.” Additional concerns about textbooks will be discussed at length later in this paper.

eTextbooks/Access Codes

Only a few participants indicated they have required eTextbooks with access codes in their classes. Several noted that when both print and eBook versions are available, they allow students to choose. Those offering students this choice expressed concerns about the cost of many eTextbook options. One participant indicated they had used eTextbooks in the past, due in part to the drawbacks associated with print formats: they are heavy, students often forget or opt not to bring them to class, and they lack the additional content, listening examples, and exercises associated

with eTextbooks. Another participant noted that eTextbook options made more sense in courses taught in an exclusively online format.

Some participants observed that although an eTextbook may have been more convenient and more appealing to younger students (“this generation is different”), the usability experience was entirely unlike that of a print textbook and had disadvantages. One respondent highlighted their preference for print and cited music theory as an example in which students need to work out analytical exercises on paper. Another respondent, also active in music theory, countered that they had made extensive use of eTextbooks and access codes, requiring students to complete analytical exercises online. This respondent had been paid to develop online activities and assigned those in their courses. Another participant who taught music theory mentioned that they required students to subscribe to a low-cost online skills practice platform.

Affordable and Open Educational Resources

Most participants indicated they regularly assign materials that are freely available to students. Several gave examples of incorporating content from digital archives, databases of primary sources, free streaming media platforms, library materials, and other “useful links” into their syllabi. Few participants, however, had adopted an open textbook and fewer still reported relying exclusively on OER in the Fall 2021 semester. This distinction between adopting OER and incorporating freely available content was quite important to participants. Many expressed concerns about replacing traditional textbooks with OER: “I use publisher textbooks because the Open Access ones aren’t good.” Some participants who noted concerns about the quality of OER in music also admitted they have not fully explored new books, for example Danielle Fosler-Lussier’s *Music on the Move*.³⁵

One music theorist reported that *Open Music Theory*, “an open-source, interactive, online ‘text’book for college-level music theory courses” has been a useful resource, though they did not use it exclusively and supplemented it with materials they created.³⁶ For this participant, sharing quality OA and OER with students was important because they did not know about them as an undergraduate music student and wanted students to recognize the difference between scholar-created and reviewed materials and other freely available content that had not been subject to academic review and editing processes.

35. Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music on the Move* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020), https://www.press.umich.edu/9853855/music_on_the_move.

36. Open Music Theory, “About,” accessed 22 December 2021, <http://openmusictheory.com/about>.

Three participants reported they had created or were currently working on OER to use in their courses. One noted their OER project was neither comprehensive nor intended as a traditional textbook, but rather designed “to force students to have conversations.” One had recently been awarded a grant from their university library to create and adopt an OER for their music history sequence. Another had previously received funding from their university library to write an OER and they “liked bragging about how much money I saved students.” This participant had also significantly revised that OER and published it with a commercial publisher to benefit from expert copyediting. In discussing differences between the two texts, this participant revealed: “I did wonder if I gave up [OER] adopters because I used a paid textbook—it haunts me to think about this.” Concerns about OER will be discussed at length later in this essay.

Readings

Most participants reported incorporating a diverse array of readings into their courses, including chapters in scholarly monographs, journal articles, essays, blog posts, online archives, encyclopedia entries, scholarly talks, online exhibits, and interviews. Participants noted these types of resources are helpful in supplementing holes in conceptual areas in lower-level courses that rely on a textbook. One music theorist indicated that because topics like rhythm, meter, and timbre are either not covered or not substantively treated in the assigned textbook, they assign supplemental readings from other sources. Readings seem to play a more central role in upper-level courses where scholarly monographs, chapters, essays, and articles may comprise the bulk of assigned reading materials. One professor noted the difference between teaching from a textbook and examining primary source materials: “we’re kind of creating it as we go together in class.”

Participants reported discovering these readings in various ways, including using personal subscriptions or library resources, relying on OA materials, and making use of the serendipity afforded by platforms like Academia.edu. Participants’ delivery methods also varied; several shared content with students via their institution’s course management system (CMS), others used library reserves, some reported handing out photocopies or sharing scanned content, and one requested and shared out links to content from publishers. Participants mentioned concerns that echoed the aforementioned philosophy about using commercial textbooks “cover to cover”: “I don’t think students should have to pay for a book if they’re only reading a small portion.” One participant who used Slack to facilitate conversation and more casual forms of learning in their classes shared supplemental readings on interesting issues in musicology or theory to Slack. Posting freely available content to Slack allowed

students who have the time and interest to engage with it, but without the expectation that the content will be discussed in class.

Delivering licensed content raised some questions about legality, with participants expressing a broad range of awareness and concern. One participant cautiously “cobbed together scans of published material to stay within Fair Use” where another had “no real concerns with copyright compliance” and was “loosey goosey with laws.” This latter participant indicated that copying a book chapter or other small portion or published materials was unlikely to harm the publisher. Some participants noted doing things they ought not to save students money (“If something is behind a paywall, I will pay for it myself and try not to pass costs to students”) or for the sake of convenience (“occasionally I have used my personal subscription to *JAMS* to post a PDF to Blackboard”).³⁷

Participants reported differing perspectives on teaching and using freely available resources, specifically the extent to which they rely on freely available resources. Most participants wanted students to be aware of and make use of the rich primary sources from such providers as the New York Public Library and Library of Congress, noting the importance of “getting students familiar with those resources.” A proponent of OA emphasized that “A big part of what we need to teach students is how to find resources [they can use] after they graduate.” Another relies heavily on *Music Theory Online* and other OA journals because they are “easier for students to access. I don’t have to scan things in the library, fill out course reserves.” At least two participants, however, indicated that although they taught with OA resources, they also imparted the importance of using licensed content available via the library. One noted assigning journal articles that require a subscription because of the centrality of these journals to their discipline. The other stated, “I think it’s important to assign resources that aren’t just Open Access; students should learn how to use research databases and locate resources. I assign eBook chapters available through the library [and] I know it’s hard for students to navigate, but it’s important that they learn.” Had the interviews not been conducted by two librarians, this perspective might not have been so strongly voiced.

Recordings

YouTube was the platform that evoked the strongest preferences and opinions. These ranged from straightforward appreciation (“I just use YouTube, everything is there” and “YouTube has just about anything you want to hear”) to admissions of guilt and frustration (“I link to [YouTube]

37. As librarians, the authors were professionally obligated to remind participants of the support libraries offer for integrating licensed content into instruction and the CMS.

recordings and even though I'm not in violation if the content is pulled, I don't know if the links will still be there, and it will be a big headache to find substitute recordings").³⁸ When available, video content to accompany music was an obvious benefit of YouTube. A few participants noted they used YouTube not only for music performance, but also for a variety of other content, including interviews, instructional videos ("how to write a thesis statement"), and academic talks ("Bobby McFerrin demonstrating the pentatonic scale"), among other things. Some participants wanted students to engage with a specific performance or preferred that a score be included. Others were less interested in specific recordings and did not share links: "for recordings, the students are so savvy, I don't provide them links . . . I expect the students can find these things, so far, no problem." The instability of YouTube content was the most frequently cited complaint: "the downside of YouTube is when videos disappear, then you have to find a replacement."

For some participants the instability of YouTube is a major drawback and sufficient reason to prefer different platforms: "I prefer Spotify because it is legal and content is more reliable/stable than YouTube, where content is pulled." Several noted preferring Spotify to YouTube and appreciated that platform's playlist building capabilities: "I use Spotify playlists. I'll use YouTube when necessary but am more likely to use Spotify. It is easy to use, and the selection is good." A participant in music education used publisher websites, such as J.W. Pepper, which often included recordings of pieces in their catalog. One participant used Apple Music: "I publish the required listening in an Apple Music playlist and tell [the students] they don't need to subscribe, but some do so they can easily download. Some students [who do not have an Apple Music account] complain that they have to build their own playlist." This raises the question of subscriptions and whether students can be expected to individually subscribe to media platforms. Some participants indicated this is discouraged at their institutions, but others have done so. One participant, for example, encouraged their students to subscribe to Netflix as they flipped a film music course online at the outset of the pandemic. Their institution did not have an online video delivery mechanism and they had been showing DVDs from their personal collection in the physical classroom. Although they ended up making some substitutions when planned films were unavailable on Netflix, that platform proved a relatively low-cost solution.

38. For more context on music faculty sentiments toward and use of YouTube in teaching, see Kirstin Dougan's articles "Music, YouTube, and Academic Libraries"; and "'YouTube has Changed Everything?' Music Faculty, Librarians, and Their Use and Perceptions of YouTube," *College & Research Libraries* 75, no. 4 (2014): 575–89, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.75.4.575>.

Only a few participants reported using library-provided streaming media platforms: “I try to use Naxos over YouTube when possible, sometimes Spotify. When I teach opera history, I use Naxos Video Library.” Some participants who use library platforms like Naxos Music Library and the Database of Recorded American Music stated that they did so when the desired content was not available on a stable commercial platform like Spotify or Apple music. Participants expressed concerns regarding limits on simultaneous users, missing texts, translations, or liner notes, and technical or access problems. One participant voiced significant frustration after having expended considerable time and energy to use Naxos Music Library: “took so much time trying to embed links in my Canvas site and they didn’t always work, even after involving the library and Naxos IT.”

Scores

Several participants indicated that scores were not a concern because they could not assume their students read music. This issue came up in interviews with participants who taught music appreciation to non-majors, participants who worked within a music department that had open enrollment (no audition or music exams prior to admission), participants in a liberal arts setting that offered a Bachelor of Arts degree, participants teaching classes that fulfilled elective credit and general education requirements, and participants who had been made to understand as much.

Those who could incorporate score study in their courses took a variety of approaches. Score anthologies and permissions for notated music were highlighted as a primary challenge in the creation of music OER. A participant who is working on an OER shared: “I kept the score anthology because early music scores are hard to find online, and I like the students to have the physical anthology on hand and supplement with digital sources.” Few participants indicated that they used a score anthology, and the trend seemed to be that participants provided these to their students. A music theorist shared: “I don’t require the anthology because then I feel compelled to use it and I don’t like the composers included. . . . I make score packets for my students that are more diverse in nature [they include] popular, jazz, some world music. They include classical music composers, but I try to vary it.” A musicologist noted that because scores are so expensive, they encourage students to scan quality scores from the institutional library because they have access to them now and may not in the future.

Some participants reported using International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP) and other platforms for public domain scores, despite

the limitations associated with these. A musicologist explicitly used IMSLP as a teaching tool: “I want them to know about critical editions. I use it [IMSLP] as a teaching tool, [asking] is it a pirated edition from the time of the composer?” Another shared that IMSLP “lets you have conversations about music editions with students; anthologies don’t afford this.” A music education scholar noted looking online for content that may have been shared illegally and mentioned that sometimes the publisher will allow score download but not printing. Another participant noted using excerpts from digitized music books and digital musicology projects or digital scholarly editions.

One participant emphasized that score anthologies break down around the twentieth century. A different participant who teaches contemporary music refers students to composers’ websites, which often included scores and streaming recordings of their work. Of course, this prompted discussions about the value of this work and the participant confirmed that “contemporary, living composers need to be paid for their work.” Valuing the work of musicians and music scholars by paying for it arose separately in several interviews and may conflict with affordability and openness. This theme will be explored later in the paper.

What concerns do you have about traditional textbooks and (commercial) course materials?

One musicologist summarized the main complaints about textbooks thusly: “textbooks are expensive, one size fits all, conservative, more about content than critical thinking, and you can’t change them.” The following section expands on these themes using the participants’ own words.

Expensive

Most participants agreed that commercial textbooks are expensive and may contribute to financial hardship for some students. A representative comment was “financial insecurity is a huge problem at my institution, no matter how cheap a book is.” Even those at wealthier institutions noted that costs weigh differently on individual students: “[Institution’s] student body is relatively affluent across the academic landscape, but you still don’t know about each student.” Several participants were aware of the costs of course materials and worked to keep them as low as possible: “There’s a good chance a student could go through any class I teach without having to buy anything.” One participant previously worked for a low-cost textbook company, which had been acquired by a larger company and is well-acquainted with the considerable profit margins of textbook publishers. The cost of materials impacted students differently and

contributing to or participating in a system of inequity was unwelcome for some participants.

One-size-fits-all

Several participants noted that textbooks used across multi-semester surveys or sequences may not be frequently reviewed or changed because it is challenging to get consensus on a replacement. Textbooks help align teaching outcomes and objectives across multiple instructors and semesters, but they force individuals into teaching content and methods that may not align with their pedagogical ideals. A music theorist noted “I think it’s natural that as someone who’s never been that crazy about the textbooks available in music theory, I had to make up my own stuff.” A musicologist asserted “If you’re using a text in music history, that’s pretty much the narrative.” Those participants who used textbooks found they needed to supplement them to fill gaps or acknowledge where students need additional support. One noted: “I’ve tried to build my sources based on curriculum requirements—half of my students are jazz and half are classical—and jazz isn’t covered enough in traditional music history texts. These students need to see their discipline in the textbook from day one.” Textbooks homogenized the learning experience and left little room for non-Western traditions and contemporary perspectives.

Conservative

One participant noted a trend in music history pedagogy groups to “bring greater diversity to materials we are teaching and encouraging new ways of presenting material to students besides a traditional textbook.” This need has also been articulated in music theory: “People are looking to diversify the curriculum and the available music theory textbooks are expensive and they aren’t keeping up with a desire for a more progressive curriculum.” The end of the traditional textbook would necessitate the use of different materials and formats. A participant mentioned being an early reader for a music appreciation text that presented material topically instead of chronologically. They asked: “I wonder if students are using materials in different ways now? It used to be that people bought the Grout and highlighted everything that was important. I don’t have a sense that students are using materials this way anymore.” One participant shared that “it is actually stimulating to students to encounter open content” and described how they had used two vlogs to explore new contemporary analyses of popular music.³⁹ The students “could see active

39. Specifically, the complement chorus in *NSYNC’s “Bye Bye Bye,” see Megan Lavengood, “‘Oops! . . . I Did It Again’: The Complement Chorus in Britney Spears, The Backstreet Boys, and *NSYNC,” *SMT-V7*, no. 6 (October 2021), <http://doi.org/10.30535/smtv.7.6>.

scholars talking about their research, and they could see that those scholars are young and engaging with things the students like.”

Limit critical thinking

One participant shared the desire “to move away from one authoritative, authoritarian voice” and instead present students with different perspectives: “Part of my job is not just teaching them names and composers and dates and pieces, but also teaching them how to think like an historian. They need to be able to grapple with different perspectives and that’s the big advantage, I think, of moving away from a traditional textbook.” Such an approach would seem to engage students in evaluating sources and promote critical thinking. A few participants raised questions about whether or not students were reading textbooks, and even if they were, if they were thinking critically or otherwise knew what to do with the information: “The Grout is too detailed [with] lists of names of people. It’s not well-edited or updated [and] I don’t want to overwhelm the students.” One participant promotes critical thinking by comparing content in Grove Music Online with Wikipedia: “engaging with Wikipedia as an Open Access resource, checking the citations [and having a] discussion about authorship.” Another participant has created a Slack workspace for all their classes to promote critical thinking over content and has found “different levels of students communicating has been great. More advanced students can help beginning students and build teaching skills.”

Fixed and restrictive

Participants agreed that when a textbook was assigned, they felt obligated to use it comprehensively, even though its fixed form did not acknowledge changes in the class schedule, let alone the discipline. This lack of flexibility felt restrictive to many participants. A musicologist indicated “My syllabi are living documents . . . having a textbook locks me into a particular narrative and I’m not interested in those narratives.” Another shared, “I have more flexibility when I don’t assign a textbook. If they buy a text, I feel obligated to use it even if I don’t want to teach some of the content.” One music theorist wanted the flexibility to bring in researchers/speakers and follow up on that experience organically. A musicologist described a text they hoped to write as “web-based and modular, it will be dynamic and alive in a way that a print book is not.” With the change in teaching modalities due to COVID, one musicologist noted that not using a textbook removed obstacles because students could access all materials remotely. A music education participant stated they find textbooks restrictive because of the work publishers do to create

new editions and limit the used textbook market. Another participant mentioned concerns about assigning an older book and worrying that either a new (and expensive) edition would replace it or that it would go out of print. The most prevalent concern about the fixed nature of textbooks seemed to be that participants often disagree with content, organization, representation, or approaches in these texts. As one musicologist quipped: “I don’t need to be talking to a textbook author about their interpretation of French symbolism.”

What concerns do you have about incorporating Open Access or freely available resources in your courses?

Most participants initially reported having no concerns about incorporating freely available resources into their courses; when prompted to dig a bit deeper, however, several potential concerns arose. These concerns are presented in the order of frequency, with stability, quality, and availability of relevant content far outpacing other concerns in prevalence, if not intensity.

Lack of stability

Participants noted having encountered previously open materials becoming paywalled or disappearing entirely. This happened to content in an array of formats, from journal articles and eBooks to videos on YouTube or institutional library platforms. The following concerns were accordingly quite common: “wondering if they will durably stay OA” and “some crowd-sourced resources can disappear, unstable links.” Some had even anticipated the problem by downloading teaching content: “For my own purposes I’ve started downloading content, so I don’t have to worry when things disappear. This happened with a [library] collection that I used for my teaching.”

Lack of quality

Concerns about the quality of OER were common but not monolithic. Several participants had general concerns that might apply to any potential resource (“Have to vet the quality of the material, but you have to do that with anything”). A few shared specific concerns related to the potential lack of quality control processes. One indicated that although they regard open resources favorably in principle, “the seminal articles on a topic are likely to be in gated journals.” A few participants asked, “has it been peer reviewed?” This process, as well as developmental- and copy-editing, may be missing in the creation of OER. One relayed a story about a high school teacher who wanted an OER music text; they noted

that Esther Morgan-Ellis's⁴⁰ and Danielle Fosler-Lussier's⁴¹ books were not yet published and said the available options were not written by musicologists. The participant noted that Morgan-Ellis's book was well done and attributed that, in part, to the feedback received from the American Musicological Society (AMS) pedagogy group peers. The AMS pedagogy group was described as "a strong and active study group—a place where [OER authors] could get feedback, it's a nice community built around pedagogy that's already happening."

Related to a perceived lack of quality in OER is the concern that non-experts, and undergraduate students specifically, may not be able to recognize quality issues. A few musicologists expressed concern that music appreciation courses are frequently taught by non-musicologists and using texts not authored by musicologists or other music academics. "Music appreciation books are not good; they don't seem to be reviewed/written by musicologists, the writing isn't gender balanced, [and] the examples aren't diverse. I wouldn't feel comfortable teaching from them, but I realize it's early days and we're in the beginning of this shift."

A music theorist offered concerns at the intersection of expertise and edutainment. They "have no concerns with resources written by trained music theorists; I use the Andre Mount text and *Music Theory Online*. I'm more selective with YouTube when suggesting free resources to students; I'm only going to suggest resources that align with our curriculum [and note that] there are errors in a lot of YouTube videos. As music professors, we need to be aware that students are heading to YouTube first. . . . Edutainment is okay, but there may be errors and contradictions with what you're learning in class." A musicologist articulated concerns that the use of Beyoncé's *Lemonade* to teach the song cycle in a recent OER music text may not stand the test of time. They also acknowledged the challenge of balancing "teaching the students what they need to know and presenting it in a way they are drawn to. Professors seem to want to make these topics contemporary."

Lack of relevant content

Several participants noted that "trying to find materials is my biggest challenge" and proceeded to share concerns related to specific texts, formats, or content type. "The only existing open textbooks for music are for music appreciation; these don't cut it for the majors' classes. Source

40. Esther Morgan-Ellis, ed., *Resonances: Engaging Music in its Cultural Context* (Dahlgonega, GA: University of North Georgia Press, 2020), <https://ung.edu/university-press/books/resonances-engaging-music.php>.

41. Fosler-Lussier, *Music on the Move*.

readings (these are hard since the translations and notes are under copyright), score anthologies—it's a lot of work finding these resources." Others explained their "struggle to find recent scholarship. . . . It's hard to find work that makes the connections I want. So, I rely less on scholarship for something for a topic, more on primary sources." When the desired content is not available or accessible, some participants are compelled to create it for their students: "[It is] hard to find good OA sources on some topics. I have to write my own sometimes even though I'm not the best person to do it."

Lack of student engagement and critical thinking

One participant mourned that OER will not likely travel with students in the same way a print textbook might: "[It's] hard to engage with material while in school, might need to save it for later. There's so much going on as a student [and it's hard to] go beyond checking the box and doing what you need to do to graduate. [I want them to be able to] go back and graze . . . and internalize books." Some participants encouraged students to explore and evaluate freely available resources. For some, this was especially important when incorporating open sources: "I do several sessions on how to assess online materials, especially for my research course. I am concerned that students are increasingly uncritical of resources they can access online, concerned they don't read past the first paragraph and not really assessing in a critical way the source of the materials, authenticity, author credentials." Two participants considered how paying for commercial materials might impact student learning and behaviors. One shared: "I noticed that many of my students still didn't use it. Maybe this is 'you get what you pay for' and paying for materials affects them differently." Another shared, "I'm not sure of the connection between a paid resource and how much a student uses it, if [they] spend more, maybe they'll use it more?"

Inequitable infrastructure

Some participants noted that open and online did not necessarily equate with universally accessible and usable resources. One participant acknowledged some students' lack of reliable Wi-Fi became more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be a particularly important consideration given the often media-rich content included in music courses. Another raised concerns about students potentially disengaging when content is hard to navigate or access. They reported having a conversation with a colleague about a potential online resource and were told: "I don't want them to have to learn how to use another entire

interface or resource. I might lose them if I ask them to do this.” A music theorist cited a variety of music theory applications they are not yet using because of the learning curve.

Lack of framework

Participants noted that the tried-and-true combination of textbook and anthology offers narrative, structure, and form. In other words, “Traditional textbooks have clear mission and purpose and [demonstrate] how class relates to music as a whole.” A musicologist expressed concern that “being too free-form can be dangerous. Decolonization and deconstructing are theory; practically, music history professors want students to have core skills and don’t [want to] lose sight of how this class can serve the mission of the university department.” Undergraduate music courses have traditionally relied on a foundation of inter-related areas including music theory, music history, and aural skills; this framework is often supported by commercial textbooks. Music scholars understand their responsibility to contribute to core skills in their respective areas to ensure that their colleagues can also teach what they are required to and to honor everyone’s time.

Lack of instructor time

Textbooks can be time savers. One participant related their experience of having only a matter of days to prepare and teach a course as a graduate student and confirmed that having the textbook and syllabus in place facilitated that process. Another participant related this to planning a course and teaching students: “If you don’t have a text, you need to be more explicit with students about expectations, [you] have to collate a lot of material (scores).” The availability of an instructor’s manual was reported as “a huge element in my decision for textbooks—I need a standard set of homework that I can quickly grade.” To the question of whether the time involved in identifying and compiling instructional materials might be a disadvantage to using OER, however, one proponent of OER simply stated that “this is the labor of preparing a class.” Questions of time and labor relate to the ease with which a single textbook can coordinate curriculum across multiple instructors and sections and highlight tensions in whose labor is valued in music higher education.

Lack of benefits to the author

Some participants noted it was important for textbooks to be associated with a reputable publisher, especially when they considered their own

output. As one participant stated, “Open textbooks don’t do a whole lot for your C.V.” A few participants discussed the decisions they had made about selecting academic and commercial publishers for textbooks and academic monographs. Very often these decisions and discussions included an acknowledgement of choices that would “drive up the cost” of a book. One participant addressed wanting to include notated music outside of the public domain in an upcoming text and not wanting these licensing costs trickling down to buyers: “We don’t want to disadvantage students when we’re trying to empower [them]. Currently there is no [similar] textbook carried by a publisher and we are trying to reinvent the curriculum from the ground up. We wanted to go with an established publisher so we can get reviews and guidance from the publisher; we wanted to shift discourse in the field, and so we needed that support.”

Lack of precedent, opportunity, and viability

An array of concerns centered around the longstanding success of publishers in creating music textbooks. One participant said somewhat defeatedly, “I don’t know if Open Access textbooks are going to happen because publishers want their money, especially in cases of established music texts like Norton anthologies/texts.” Publishers have indeed figured out the copyright concerns that some participants cited for notated and recorded music in particular: “I don’t want to place our institution at risk to be cited for an unethical practice/copyright violation with [our] accrediting agency. [For] printed music and audio I’m hesitant to use Open Access materials.” A few participants spoke up for textbook publishers and the services they offer: “Norton, they’re not bad people, they keep trying to improve their product. The people who spend time creating textbooks should be compensated for their work.” Another noted most publishing houses are not making large profits and cited an example of a publisher that’s recently laid off staff. They continued: “If OA is the way of the future, then finances need to be rethought . . . how does this preserve the working cycle of those in producing the content?” One participant wondered about support for publishing OERs, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One participant who was opposed to OA noted that “open and free are two different things but so many people intertwine them.” The participant did acknowledge equity issues surrounding textbook affordability and shared: “If you want to make something equitable it doesn’t need to be Open Access, just give it to a particular population for free to achieve equity.”

What conversations have you had in your institution or among disciplinary peers regarding textbook affordability?

Several participants acknowledged “cost is a barrier to student success at our university” and traditional textbooks are broadly understood to be part of the problem. Participants varied in the degree to which they discussed textbook affordability and with whom they had these conversations. Some participants did not think there was much to discuss (“Not much to talk about, there is agreement that they are high cost”) and others were quite passionate about the topic (“Over 90 percent of [our] students get financial aid; we are increasingly aware of financial challenges to students and want to lift burden by requiring a lot of things” and “All [required materials should be] free for students. I really strongly believe in this. Students are paying too much for this stuff anyway”). Many participants referred to their student populations to frame why this topic mattered, noting first generation status, scholarship recipients, and a general financial strain: “Many of my students are on scholarship or lack resources; [there is] always a concern to balance their access options and affordability.” There was also an understanding that faculty may not recognize the financial needs of individual students.

Although many participants recognized textbook affordability as a problem and indicated their colleagues agreed, others suggested that some “faculty don’t remember how expensive it is to be a student.” Specifically: “This conversation splits down class lines—people at better-funded institutions or higher socioeconomic class have different opinions than people who had to use the library.” A participant at an Historically Black College and University suggested “faculty don’t really have time or agency to have these discussions at my institution.” A participant at an Ivy League institution indicated this “doesn’t come up because those students can afford it.” This participant had previously worked in a different setting in which the topic “repeatedly came up . . . many students could not afford materials and we tried to find a compromise.”

Conversations in music departments often focus on multi-semester courses; several participants said they and their colleagues have selected books that are more affordable and used them across multiple courses, or they required the textbook but not the anthology. “We use the same text for all four theory courses. It’s an expensive book but spreading it out makes it more affordable. Same with the aural skills textbook.” Some even noted they have selected fewer or less-expensive materials to balance their colleagues’ courses that have higher costs. One participant shared that an upper administrator had expressed concern to them that a colleague’s baroque music class required \$600 of materials. The professor had been requiring students to purchase print scores and resources which were freely available online. Some participants spoke to the cost

of music textbooks relative to those in other disciplines and considered post-graduation earning potential: “Affordability is one thing musicology faculty have talked about when discussing curriculum. We have talked about not using a textbook and just using the anthologies. Music is not as bad as other disciplines in the sciences, [but we have to] consider job prospects and earning potential.”

Several participants said cost has been a deciding factor in selecting assignment materials: “Affordability is the primary motivator. No matter how good a book is, if they can’t afford it, they’re not going to be using it.” Previous studies have shown students delay purchasing required materials and sometimes opt out entirely.⁴² One participant highlighted not only cost, but also ownership: “We want our students to thrive, to be able to afford materials and to keep them.” For some then, it isn’t just about access to textbooks during the semester, but rather about having resources on hand to prepare for graduate admissions tests and for reference as professional musicians.

Participants shared strategies for textbook affordability beyond using a single text over multiple semesters. One way in which participants reported making textbooks more affordable is assigning out-of-date editions. One participant noted doing this frequently for graduate topics/period courses. Another participant shared that an expensive text could start a course off on a bad note and, for some majors, expensive history textbooks do not make sense: “I have a variety of students in music technology and production; they don’t need to pay all this money for a resource they’re not going to use. If a student really wants a resource, I will recommend stuff for graduate school entrance exams. There’s so much that’s free and accessible online, it’s hard to justify a textbook.”

Some participants noted the opportunity to address textbook affordability via scholarly societies: “We need more discussions in AMS and [Society for American Music] SAM about this; more roundtables, more discussions at pedagogy sessions. How can we get better resources, get better credit in our workloads for doing this work?” Another participant noted the AMS pedagogy group maintains a list of teaching resources, “not just OERs but organized around typical courses that are taught in musicology. . . . It does come up in musicology, particularly around the majors survey course. [There are] currently two main textbook options and an OA textbook hasn’t broken into the market.”

42. The Florida Virtual Campus conducts a periodic Student Textbook and Course Materials Survey in which students are asked to share their experiences of how textbook costs affect their education, behaviors, and academic success. The latest survey, published in 2022, revealed 53.5 percent of students did not purchase a required textbook for a course: <https://dlss.flvc.org/colleges-and-universities/research/textbooks>.

One participant described an initiative at their institutional library to promote OER by asking faculty to review open textbooks. The participant indicated they had reviewed one and found major quality control issues, observing that “publishers charge a lot of money but also add value.” Another participant stated that all textbooks are available for use in the institution’s library. They noted department administrators regularly remind instructors to be cognizant of the cost of textbooks and to assign only what is necessary. The tension expressed by this participant and some others can be summarized in their response: “I appreciate this, but as someone who has published materials, I want people to buy my book. I am mindful of the materials I assign, and I always explain to students why a resource is required for the course. I advocate for getting a music notation program now as a student while it’s less expensive.”

In what ways, if any, does your institution recognize or reward instructors for creating or integrating Open Educational Resources?

Most participants indicated they are not aware of any institutional recognition or reward for creating or integrating OER, though they did not have evidence doing so would be held against an author in any way. Although some participants indicated an OER should carry the same weight as a book published with a scholarly or commercial press, others noted that music academic publishing is still staunchly prestige-based and that’s “a hard inertia to break.” One participant suggested incentivizing OER could be problematic, because some would have more of an opportunity than others to do so and because of concerns about quality. This participant’s final word on the topic was “I like Open Access as someone who doesn’t want to pay. I don’t like it as someone who wants to publish in reputable sources.”

Some participants worked at institutions that offer grants for writing or adopting OER. One noted that grants at their institution ranged from \$2,500 to \$5,000 depending on the project, and that the funding was available to anyone who wanted to write an OER. Another participant was part of a team that received a grant in Spring 2021. Each instructor received \$1,000 plus \$2,000 for library resources but “the grant was not intended as compensation for time spent.” In other words, the amount of time spent on the project far outpaced the funding received. The grant also required training which was focused on the sciences and mathematics. They quipped: “Humanities are different, we don’t have problem sets.” One participant mentioned their university was offering summer fellowships to incentivize OER use and creation, which was part of a larger initiative to lower costs for students. They also noted their institution and

state were far behind initiatives in places like Georgia to encourage and coordinate OER at a state-wide level.⁴³

One participant highlighted institutional funding that focused on pedagogical elements like diversity, equity, inclusion, and continuing education, but may also be used to support OER adoption. Another mentioned their center for teaching offered support which included access to graduate student assistance in researching and preparing the books. A few noted their institutions designate courses as no-cost or low-cost in the course catalog, one admitting that designation “looks good [and] might lead to recognition.” They wondered aloud if promoting low-cost and free resources would help with student recruitment.

A handful of participants noted librarian assistance in creating, funding, or identifying OER, or supporting software and applications that enable their discoverability and interoperability. One respondent whose library publishing office worked with institutional authors to publish and host OER also offered publicity and promotion of OER. Two participants were aware of services and support offered by institutional centers for digital scholarship. Some participants discussed incentives and rewards offered by scholarly societies such as AMS and SAM.

DISCUSSION

Audience and gatekeeping

The question of audience loomed in numerous interviews. Although most participants had an institutional appointment and primary “audience” of music students by nature of their teaching responsibilities, many also acknowledged a desire to engage with broader audiences, either through selling their work or making it freely available. One participant noted opportunities to engage audiences outside of academia and make music scholarship public facing. Their work on timbre and orchestration targeted a wide range of audiences and they found many articles on the topic are not OA, which meant that people outside of academia are very unlikely to access them. For them, this equates to a loss of impact and outreach. Participants who did not have institutional affiliations expressed strong preferences that scholarly work, whether textbooks, monographs, journal articles, or other materials, be open and accessible to all—they understood this to be an equity issue.

43. Affordable Learning Georgia, “Affordable Materials Grants,” accessed 27 July 2022, <https://www.affordablelearninggeorgia.org/about/grants>.

A participant highlighted that “95 percent of likely use in higher education is in teaching.” In other words, if authors want readers to engage with their work, writing materials suited to the classroom is a great way to reach a large audience. Although many expressed the desire to connect with a broader audience, current textbook publishing systems do not support this. Scholar-authored, peer-reviewed, professionally-edited, and traditionally-disseminated texts maintain the status quo and perpetuate gatekeeping.

Value(s) and cost

The tension between the affordability of music teaching resources and the value of a music scholar’s labor was another important theme. Several comments conveyed a desire to disentangle affordability from valuing music scholars’ labor: “I do want people to buy monographs, but it would be better if books were OA and people’s career success wasn’t dependent on selling copies of their traditional book.” One participant noted having conversations about the costliness of music with their students: “Being a musician is not cheap—you need to buy gear and sheet music, etc. I talk about this early on in my music fundamentals class, which is an early class in the major.” They also indicated that the high costs of academic textbooks are warranted. The conflict between affordability and costliness was evidenced by statements such as: “While I try to make my courses low or no cost, I want students to be aware of the cost of being a musician.”

Regardless of their job classification, several participants noted that current systems did not sufficiently value or reward their labor, or that existing systems that did value it—primarily tenure and promotion—were elitist and dated. Academic publishing in music is currently framed through tenure and promotion, despite an ever-decreasing proportion of music scholars having the privilege of a tenurable position.⁴⁴ Without the recognition and rewards of tenure and promotion, music scholars have little personal incentive to make their labor and its outcome freely available or to participate in the unpaid labor of reviewing and editing the publications of their peers. Although most participants acknowledged the importance of providing their own students with excellent and affordable

44. In their 2022 Survey of Tenure Practices, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) “has noted the increase in contingent appointments as a proportion of the academic workforce” over the past several decades. https://www.aaup.org/file/2022_AAUP_Survey_of_Tenure_Practices.pdf, 7. The AAUP also spells out the challenge of measuring trends in tenured-track employment: “Colleges and universities are not required to report detailed employment data on contingent faculty members.” Employment data for part-time and contingent faculty accordingly may be excluded from National Center for Education Statistics or National Association of Schools of Music data. “Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2020–21,” https://www.aaup.org/file/AAUP_ARES_2020–21.pdf, 12.

learning materials, this understandably may not have been the primary concern for those whose own position in the academy is precarious.

Institutional support

The aforementioned 2018 Ithaca S+R study found that only 14 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their institution provided “excellent training and support” or offered faculty incentives or rewards for using OERs in their teaching.⁴⁵ Participants in this study reported similar experiences. This was a stark contrast with the number of participants who reported interest or activity in using OERs. Libraries may wish to consider increasing personnel and financial resources in this area; possibilities include but are not limited to helping faculty locate OERs in their discipline, providing or suggesting publishing venues for faculty-created OERs, helping faculty navigate copyright and Creative Commons, or offering a stipend to incentivize faculty to integrate OERs into their teaching.

CONCLUSION

As the first qualitative study to explore music scholars’ perceptions of and engagement with OA with respect to both their teaching and publishing, this article and its sibling publication document an array of perceptions and experiences music faculty currently hold on these complex topics. As A/OER continue to evolve, so will the experiences and preferences of music scholars. Further research might explore A/OER creation and adoption rates in music courses, and impediments to both; the impact of A/OER on music learning; institutional and social support for the creation, revision, and publication of music OER; strategies for licensing notated music for OER (a noted impediment to creating music OER due to cost); publishing models that simultaneously respect the need of authors to generate revenue from their work and the need of students to reduce spending; and ways music librarians might support A/OER initiatives.

Although most study participants incorporated some affordable/open materials in their teaching, few have replaced a commercial textbook with an open textbook due to a lack of acceptable options. To address the drawbacks of both commercial textbooks (e.g., high-cost, lack of diversity, failure to fully address curriculum requirements) and open educational resources (e.g., unclear peer review process, not written by disciplinary experts, unreliable access), post-secondary music instructors must have

45. Blankstein and Wolff-Eisenberg, “Ithaca S+R US Faculty Survey 2018,” 49.

the jurisdiction and flexibility to choose course materials that they feel best support their students' experience. Most participants recognized textbook affordability was a problem and many would welcome more dialogue among institutional colleagues and in their professional societies, along with increased opportunities for recognition or reward for creating or integrating A/OER in their course materials.

This study is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to share the ideas and experiences of music scholars with respect to the materials they assign in their courses, how textbook affordability plays into their decisions, and their institution's support for affordability or OER. By synthesizing the perspectives of participants in their own words, the authors aim to promote dialogue within the discipline and encourage those working within music higher education—instructors, librarians, and administrators—to continue to honor and align their pedagogical aims with the evolving needs of their students.

ABSTRACT

This paper reports music scholars' experiences with and perspectives on commercial textbooks and Open Educational Resources and situates these within the context of music instruction in higher education. Interviews with twenty-one music scholars in various subdisciplines explored the course materials they assign and their motivations or obstacles with respect to integrating open or affordable resources in their courses. Participants articulated a variety of concerns about both commercial and open course materials and spoke to institutional support for creating or adopting open and affordable course materials. Analysis of the interviews reveals tension around audience and gatekeeping, the value of music scholars' labor, and institutional support.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. When did you / do you plan to complete your terminal degree?
2. What is your current college, university, or other educational institution affiliation?
 - a. What is your professional title/role?
 - b. How long have you been in this position/role?
 - c. What basic Carnegie classification best describes your institution?
 - i. Doctoral: Very high research activity
 - ii. Doctoral: High research activity
 - iii. Doctoral/Professional

- iv. Master's
 - v. Baccalaureate
 - vi. Associate's/Two-year
3. What age range do you fall in?
- a. 20-30
 - b. 31-40
 - c. 41-50
 - d. 51-60
 - e. 61-70
 - f. 71+
4. What is your current gender identity? (Check all that apply)
- a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Trans male/trans man
 - d. Trans female/trans woman
 - e. Genderqueer/gender non-conforming
 - f. Different identity (please state): _____

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Publishing Experience

1. In which venues have you published your work? (Check all that apply)
- a. Peer-reviewed journal
 - b. Encyclopedia
 - c. Monographs
 - d. Critical or scholarly editions of music
 - e. Newspaper/magazine/trade journal
 - f. Blogs/other online fora
 - g. Liner notes or program notes
 - h. Repository/website for Open Educational Resources
 - i. Other, please describe _____
2. Have you have published your own work Open Access, which we define as publishing/sharing your work in a venue that allows readers to access it free of charge by any legal means?
- a. If so, please share the factors that led you to do so.
 - b. If not, please discuss why.
3. What are your impressions of Open Access publishing opportunities in your specific discipline of music?
4. How do perspectives on Open Access in your discipline compare to those in other disciplines?

5. How have these perspectives evolved, if they have, over time?
6. In what ways, if any, does your institution support Open Access publishing?

Teaching Experience

1. Who selects textbooks and other course materials that you use in your music courses?
2. What kinds of materials do you assign in your (music) courses?
 - a. Traditional (print) textbooks
 - b. eTextbooks with access codes
 - c. Open Educational Resources (textbooks that are online and free to students)
 - d. Scholarly or trade monographs
 - e. Readings, for example book chapters, journal articles, essays, etc.
 - f. Music albums (physical)
 - g. Selections from audio recordings – library database
 - h. Selections from audio recordings – freely available
 - i. Other, please describe _____
3. Do you assign resources that your students can access free of charge?
 - a. Yes, these comprise the majority of assigned readings.
 - b. Yes, I occasionally include these.
 - c. No, this is not a consideration.
 - i. If so, please share the factors that led you to do so.
 - ii. If not, please share why Open Access is not necessarily something you have sought out.
4. What concerns do you have about incorporating Open Access, or freely available resources in your courses?
5. What conversations have you had in your institution or among disciplinary peers regarding textbook affordability?
6. In what ways, if any, does your institution recognize or reward instructors for creating or integrating Open Educational Resources into their teaching (in the tenure and promotion process, by providing funding, or otherwise)?

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