

Anson Fong Reflections on ZTC

Open Education Student Ambassador

As a university student, using textbooks are part of the university experience. However, many university students dread the cost of textbooks for their courses. It would not be unprecedented if students have thought of ways to avoid paying for textbooks, such as using an older edition, buying a used textbook, or borrowing one from the library. Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) initiative has helped a myriad of students save a few hundred Canadian dollars each semester. I had benefited from the Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) initiative before I became the Open Education Student Ambassador. The first KPU course I took with the ZTC attribute was ENGL 1100 (Introduction to University Writing). Instead of using traditional textbooks, the instructor decided to use online news articles for course reading material throughout the semester. None of the articles/online reading material had a paywall. Thus, it enabled all students in that course section to easily access reading materials. It created a classroom environment where students were able to have a dialogue and listen to different viewpoints. A main benefit of ZTC course materials over paid learning materials is the ability to access it after the semester has ended. There have been times where I have found myself refer back to a news article that was assigned because the author of the article had written phenomenal talking points. If the course used paid textbook materials, I would not be able to access the content after the semester has ended and would have to forgo those talking points. In some subject areas, information is changing continuously, and information in traditional textbooks can swiftly become trivial. Nevertheless, open education resources offer a solution to this complication. Open education resources have an open license and are online, thus they can easily modernize content and display the latest progress.