A textbook program is NOT for us: Re-Imagining failure into new possibilities

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A textbook program is NOT for us: Re-Imagining failure into new possibilities

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Creating the UNO textbook pilot:

1. Heard about textbook programs at ACRL 2017
2. Did a literature review on textbook programs
3. Saw student needs in our socioeconomically diverse campus as a metropolitan-serving university
4. Would meet recruitment and retention goals for UNO
5. Asked to pilot the project at UNO Libraries
6. Wrote policies for textbook pilot project
Primed for success:

By July 2017, we had:

✓ Buy-in from library administration - $$$
✓ Buy-in from other subject librarian liaisons
✓ Buy-in from the bookstore (partnership)
✓ Buy-in from student government
✓ Buy-in from advisors who saw student needs
✓ Promoted program through targeted emails, campus website, library signs, daily campus newsletters, social media, and word-of-mouth
Summer 2017
Summer 2018
Why we failed

• Low checkouts
• Not sustainable – new books required within one semester
• Did not meet outside student expectations – all books, every course, available outside the library
• Marketing program could have been better – did we hesitate for too long?
Lessons learned

• Students verbally said it was great, but checkouts told a different story
• Assessment can be difficult; we need to be clear on how we define success
• Be mindful with communication; we had well-meaning people who caught others off-guard who had not heard the news yet
• We needed all the gen ed textbooks or none; completely open to take out of the library so students would have more access
Failure as opportunity
Embracing failure in the project

• We were lukewarm with staff reception – needed to get more buy-in

• We knew books would get checked out in general collection, even if pilot fails

• OER was brought up and changed the conversation

• Pilot died a slow death, not from neglect but from lack of enthusiasm from an otherwise supportive culture
Moving to OER

• Taking faculty champions of the textbook pilot and getting them to champion OER
Embracing failure as a library

• Every franchise has one failure among epic blockbusters
• The textbook pilot was our *The Incredible Hulk*. It sounded great in the meeting, it had all the right components, but just didn’t click with people.
Building the culture

• Innovation
• Assessment
• Learning
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