Christopher Richmann: Welcome to Professors Talk Pedagogy, a podcast from the Academy for Teaching and Learning at Baylor University. I'm your host, Christopher Richmann. Professors Talk Pedagogy presents discussions with great professors about pedagogy, curriculum and learning in order to propel the virtuous cycle of teaching. As we frankly and critically investigate our teaching, we open new lines of inquiry. We engage in conversation with colleagues, and we attune to students' experiences, all of which not only improves our teaching but enriches and motivates ongoing investigation, and so the cycle continues.

Today our guests are Drs. Amy Fleming, a lecturer in music theory, Andrea Shepherd, a clinical instructor at Louise Herrington School of Nursing, and Karenna Malavanti, a returning guest and senior lecturer in psychology and neuroscience all at Baylor University. All three of our guests are recent fellows in Baylor's Summer Affordable Course Materials Program, which offers Baylor faculty the opportunity to re-evaluate their course materials with an eye toward replacing required course materials with low- to zero-cost materials, such as open educational resources or OERs, in order to reduce the per-class cost for our students. We are delighted to have Drs. Fleming, Malavanti, and Shepherd on the show to discuss the inspiration, challenges, and impact of adopting, adapting, or creating affordable course materials. Well, Amy Fleming, Karenna Malavanti, and Andrea Shepard. Thank you all for joining the show today.

Karenna Malavanti: We're excited to be here.

CR: Let's start by just getting a context for each of you with your Affordable Course Materials projects here. We might be using the term open education resources or OER as synonym for this, but we know that that doesn't quite catch all of it that might, people might be doing. But let's just hear from each of you what your project is, what inspired you to do this, and what materials did you either adopt or adapt or create for this? So, Karenna, would you start us off?

KM: I'd love to. So I teach very large classes of introductory psychology and introductory neuroscience classes. And one thing that inspired me to apply to this fellowship and really kinda redesign the way I teach this class is hearing directly from students that they were having some hardships from the expensive required textbooks. That are very common in comprehensive science classes. And thinking about these students, there are ways that we can individually help one student at a time, like I get sometimes publishers' copies that I can lend out or give to students or get find them free resources. What I really thought about upon

reflection was why not do this for everyone? Not everyone will have the kind of innovative idea to go and ask the professor when they're having these problems. Some people are probably just not going to buy the textbook and then don't want to ask for help and then have a poor grade as a result. And so because of that experience and reflecting on just my teaching overall, I was really inspired to apply for this new program, this new Fellowship Program, which made me kinda think a little bit more strategically. So, I know that there have been lots of open access resources for introductory psychology in particular. But my colleagues and I couldn't find one that was as comprehensive or as kinda robust and rigorous as we would like. So I kinda thought, well, why don't we create one? Why don't we kinda re-mix and adapt what's already existing and then supplement what we need to create what we need for our class. So now we have a really great press book project that has 13 chapters. And I use information from Lumen Learning, Openstax, Nova psychology. I did have to do some of my own writing and I did also reach out to colleagues at other institutions like Duke, like George Mason University, because this is a passion project that other colleagues share across the nation. And so being able to kinda reach out to my network and create something that is not only going to use, be useful for our students at Baylor, but useful for students at other universities was really intriguing and very, one of the reasons why I want to do this project. So, I'm excited that I got to do that.

CR: Fantastic. Thank you. And Amy, so what was the course and the project that you have worked on here?

Amy Fleming: Yeah. Okay. So, in the School of Music, we have four classes that every music major has to take, they're called Musicianship one through four. There's also a remedial introductory musicianship class. And these are classes where students learn how to write down music they hear, and they learn how to sing or perform rhythms they see. And we had a textbook that we've been using for a long time. That wasn't okay textbook. And it was also an expensive textbook. And it was a textbook that had switched recently to a subscription model, which when you're using it across for four or five semesters, it really makes the price go significantly up. And so, my colleagues, Edward Taylor and Horace Maxilla and I decided that we wanted to just write our own version of it. And there's really nothing out there prior to our project that's open that we could borrow from. So, we just had to create everything from scratch. We composed 1,750 musical examples, and then recorded them and uploaded them and created five press books, one for each semester that our students now have access to with recordings of real instruments. It's also something that really just fits our

curriculum a lot better than the previous one, the previous textbook we had used. So, we're able to create something from scratch that just fit our core curriculum a little bit better, and also saved our students that money of having to pay for the recurring subscription every semester. And it's just way easier to access it since it's just through press books.

CR: That sounds like a lot of work. We can come back to that in a second. Andrea, can you give us sort of the foundational info on your project too?

Andrea Shepard: Absolutely. So, I teach in our nursing school, and I primarily teach with our online graduate students who are studying to be family nurse practitioners. So really studying medicine. And our program is completely online. And our students, when their required textbooks for our class is really, it's just a waste of money, I'm gonna be honest. The students have to take three diagnosis and management course, courses. So, it's where they're learning how to diagnose and how to treat specific illnesses that they're going to see when they become a real family nurse practitioner. And so, as you can imagine with medicine, it is ever evolving. And so, asking our students to buy a new textbook for each of those sequence courses, just really seem like it was unfair. Then, these are graduate students, they have families, they're still trying to juggle work, but the program is rigorous and so oftentimes they have to cut back on work. And so just being mindful about their expenses really helped to inspire this project and really just the nature of how medicine is always evolving helps to also inspire the nature of this project and really pushed, actually with a colleague, Katie Vogel RNAi. She teaches one or the other of the three sequence courses and we both applied and were fellows together. But that was really kinda the foundation of what pushed us to do this, because we just thought it was ridiculous to keep asking our students to buy a new textbook every single semester. So, what we did was actually very different from my colleagues. I wouldn't call it open educational resources or OER. Really what we did is we used a resource that we have here at Baylor, and it's called Access Medicine. And it's basically a database of McGraw-Hill products. So, it's a publisher where Baylor does pay for the licensing to have this open database. This database has a lot of reputable medical textbooks. It has access to, to infographics, to podcasts. So, it really, it's a database full of these materials that can be catered to every single learning style. And so, the thought was, is that for our required textbook in our course, we could use one of the books that's available in Access Medicine, which is for free for our students when they use their Baylor credentials to sign in. And then that way the textbook is actually updated every single year. So, the, the most up-to-date treatment guideline is always

there. And so they would literally have the cutting-edge information at their fingertips for free. That's a little bit about the background of our project.

CR: A common theme that I'm already beginning to hear in each of your stories about just the genesis of these projects is collaboration with your colleagues. So, whoever wants to comment on that, how did you, how did you sort of get a team together? How did you decide who was taking the lead and who would be supportive? How does all of that work with a project like this?

AS: Yes, I can touch on that a little bit. In our nursing school, I mentioned that my colleague, she teaches the sister course to the course that I taught. And we actually decided to tackle this separately. So having separate fellowships, but still collaborating with each other. In our courses, we're both teaching different types of information. Like I'm covering certain illnesses and she's covering certain illnesses. But also, we still wanted our, our own teaching style to shine. And so some things that I pulled from that Access Medicine database, like specific infographics or specific podcast, were things that I felt like I wanted to put in the course to cater to the learning styles of the students I anticipated. And she's had a different take-on as well. So, I felt like the collaboration piece was important to help be sure that we're on the same accord and the sense that we're using the same main or requiring the same main textbook so that our information is consistent in that manner. But at the same time, we also cross collaborated to ensure that our individuality as an instructor was still shining through too.

CR: Amy, you mentioned the importance of fitting the curriculum. So, I assume that means like across many courses, not just this sequence, but maybe like for the major itself.

AF: Yeah, definitely. So, we have, like, the written theory classes and then the musicianship classes that we wrote the textbooks for… are kinda supposed to align well with those. And they mostly do except with the previous textbook. There was always a little bit of trying to work around the textbook of like, Oh, well, they don't really have this information yet and so we've gotta wait, we can't use those exercises. Now. It's just, it aligns perfectly. And as you're talking about collaboration, we met as a theory department, all six of the music theorists on campus to talk about whether we want it to do this. Because since it is a sequence that feeds in from musicianship one all the way through Musicianship four, it was really important that we all wanted to do this project and then we were all on board with it. And then having myself and two colleagues collaborate on actually making the materials was wonderful because when you're composing

melodies and all of that, it's great to have three people doing it. So, we have melodies that are in different people's voices and styles and all of that. I've joked with some of my students that I should give extra credit if they can guess who wrote the exercises that I'm assigning for homework because I think we all have our own styles that you'd be able to tell. But it was great to have Horace and Ed to collaborate with. And then we also had some of our other colleagues share materials that they've created over the years and just kinda like add them into ours as well. So, we have really a broad variety of compositional styles and all that, which is really important.

CR: Great. So, let's talk about challenges. Because each of these projects seems like there's a lot of moving parts and I'll speak for myself. Sometimes, you know, just doing the process of choosing a traditional textbook can be very time-consuming and onerous. So, there's this added level of either creating or combining things that are out there. So, what, what challenges did you run into? What obstacles did you have to figure out how to overcome in this process?

KW: Well, this is where I think the summer affordable, Affordable Course Materials fellowship was really helpful. Because I do think you can do this on your own where you can plan out your materials and how it's going to map on with your class and your curriculum. But with that fellowship in particular, you meet with a learning design team and a librarian in your area. And so you'd have a lot of support to kinda navigate these challenges. In addition to, I was using press books, so, in addition to finding out information about press books and being able to import and export things as necessary, and so the challenges were really kinda navigated through a team kinda atmosphere, which was helpful, because I did this by myself. And even though I had talked to my colleagues about doing it, I was like the head person doing this or interests like, but now this is being used in other sections of intro psych. And so this summer we'll actually build on it, we'll fine-tune some things. And that's, that's the blessing of open access, that you can adapt even within as, not only as you are creating, but as you are using it the very first time or even later on reflection. So, my main challenge really was like buckling down and figuring out, okay, which source am I going to use for this particular content area like consciousness or positive psychology within social psychology, especially in areas where I'm not the expert because I'm a cognitive psychologist. So, kind of going through that, reaching out to people that are more in the know in those areas was helpful. But it is a challenge, is a challenge though that was enjoyable for me. I really like looking at textbooks. I like looking at what would my students really need to know as we're thinking about, like, backwards course design and just designing a class. So doing this actually helped me with my

course design. So absolutely, this is very time-intensive, but it was also very helpful for my pedagogy and my students' comments at the end of the semester, we're like, Oh my gosh, this is, this maps on way better than a traditional textbook would have, because I got to order the chapters the way I wanted to order them. I got to choose content the way that I wanted it to be discussed in class. And so having that freedom can be a little challenging in order to create it at the beginning, but now it maps on like almost perfectly, which was really a great thing for my students.

CR: That's good and I can imagine too that in some cases you just, even if the content itself in your traditional textbook is adequate or does the job, maybe it's like the order of the chapters just seems awkward to you or something like that. And having to ask students, I know we read twelve last week and now we're going to jump to 18 again, come back to 13, can kinda seem weird. So just that ability to move them where you want to in terms of the calendar, I think can probably be very helpful.

KM: Yes, absolutely.

CR: Other thoughts about the challenges in these kinds of projects?

AS: Yes, so what I do… I do want to echo Karenna's challenge of just the time intensity of a project of this magnitude, even with something as simple as, you know, pulling out sources from this Access Medicine database that I was mentioning. It's really, you have to be strategic with pulling out the correct chapters because for us we're preparing our students to take a certification exam. So, we have to be sure that we're pulling out the correct information that's also going to prepare them for that. And I agree that the incentive of the Fellows Program was very helpful with the time intensity. And the fact that it's during the summer is very helpful too, like, there's just no way I can imagine trying to do that kind of work in the fall or the spring. But my biggest challenge that I want to harp on, which is interesting, is really we still had students go out and buy textbooks. And we found, I found that to be the biggest challenge, like I know in the literature. They were saying that there are some students who still prefer to have a hard copy book instead of an eBook, right. It can be dependent on their age or just really their preference. And I did, I did my course evals, but I also did a specific eval on the new course materials just so we can gather more data. In there where we just had a handful of students who prefer to have a hard copy book. And they literally echoed some of the challenges that, that's written in the literature about using e-books, like, there were technical glitches. That, even

though it was an e-book, the students still prefer to print pages out and after a while that still becomes cost intensive. So really just trying to figure out and then there were some miscommunication. They looked at this at a different resource that our school has about their required textbooks. And they didn't see the note that the textbook is available for free for them. It's just figuring out how to, how to get the word out there a little more that this resource is really free for you and you can even play it back, like, if you are an auditory listener, you can play your chapter and listen to it while you're driving in the car, right? So really try to hone in on the benefits and in getting that communicated to the students is one way that we're trying to work against that barrier. I want it to be transparent about that.

CR: Yeah, Absolutely. Any thoughts, Amy, on challenges?

AF: Yeah. I would say for us the biggest challenge was just project management. I mean, we were, we had to compose 1,750 examples, but then also, like, edit the audio files and do the recording process. And we worked with 12 music students to record on real instruments. So, we had to coordinate all of that and then the files and then upload them and then we need keys. And it was just a lot of project management challenge. So, I used a lot of post-it notes and color-coding and Trello boards and Google Sheets and all of that to help. But I'd say that was for sure the biggest difficulty. We were also helped out though by… Our dean was very supportive of the project and Dean. Mortensen gave us funding to pay our student performers to record the examples, but then also funding for a student worker to help with a little bit of that editing process, which took some of the burden off of me since I was like the project lead and trying to juggle all of the things we had moving around.

CR: So, Karenna had mentioned some of the implications for course design, backward course design when you're doing a project like this. So, I'd love to hear your thoughts on how using these kinds of materials might change your learning objectives or maybe refine your learning objectives, what kind of assignments or assessments you're giving students. Because we all know that a textbook cannot just be plopped in there without having implications for so much else that a student is experiencing.

AF: I'll say it for us. I think these things that we created were a lot about having a bank of activities available for assignments. And now they are so flexible and easy to use and easy to tailor for each instructor. Because in a given semester we might, like, have eight or nine different people teaching musicianship classes. And we all have personal preferences about what types of activities we want our students to do

and how much homework about that. In the previous textbook, it was kinda just said it was like, well here's quiz number one, and that's what they're gonna do for homework. And it's all melodies. But we want some harmonies and we want some rhythms too. Now we have the freedom to, for each instructor to just tailor it to exactly what they want. Prospects makes that so easy to just drag and drop materials into a PDF or to just tell the students, hey, do these exercises from the different pages on press book. And, to me, it just makes the learning process way better because you're just approaching it from more different angles every week rather than being pigeonholed into one category for each assignment.

CR: We often talk about when we're working with faculty about the different ways that you might design a course and sometimes those kinda textbook. And I mean that both figuratively and literally let some of the textbook categories work against the integration of knowledge that we want students to eventually be able to do. We just sort of have this idea that because they learned X, Y, and Z, I can give them a test that asks them to synthesize x, y, and z without having done any of that stuff in the process of getting there. I think you've pointed out there where you can do that integration more intentionally when you create the things yourself, right?

AF: Yeah, that's another thing is, I mean, most of the textbooks out there say, okay, we'll do XYZ and that's all the homework is ever. It's just you XYZ do XYZ. And for us, we think there's a lot of things that aren't just XYZ that are really important, that are either steps that help the students build up to being able to do XYZ or just take it in another direction of something they might have to actually do in their careers. That's a little bit more practical like for us, error detection is a big thing of our students need to be able to listen to someone perform something and know when they're not doing it right? And that's not taught hardly ever, and that wasn't in our previous textbook, and yet we expect them to get their music education degree or become a conductor and suddenly magically know how to do that. Our textbook that we wrote, the press books stuff, we have so many exercises designed to help them learn how to do that gradually.

CR: I love that. What a great example. Yeah, Other thoughts about how this process implicates your learning objectives or assessments?

AS: Just to build a little bit off of what Amy mentioned that this process, or you know, having these resources available in our course really helps to develop skills in our students that you don't get with a textbook. I mentioned with medicine, it's constantly changing and what, what really guides our practice, our clinical practice guidelines. And a lot of those are written in journal articles which were also

integrated into our course as part of this project. But as a provider, I mean, we don't know everything. And when we get out to practice, we could come across something that we could recognize it, but we just don't remember how to treat it. And so, we really wanted to be able to build those skills and our students, of, knowing your resources and how to find what you need so you can competently care for your patient. So, by introducing our students to the Access Medicine database, although we use the textbooks out of there, just letting the students know that that was there for them. And integrating some of the things from that database into the course really allowed the students to be active learners and pick out and pull what they needed to learn or things that they needed to hone in on in terms of topics. But it also allowed them to get into the habit of knowing how to search for, um, things that they needed. So e.g. if they were not well versed in how to treat a person with strep throat. They could easily, you know, practice, go in and access medicine and trying to find reputable sources of how to treat strep throat. And then in the long run that will translate to them when they are family nurse practitioners.

CR: Karenna, I know you're always thinking about backward course design. So maybe, maybe this process didn't, didn't change big picture things for you, but maybe it helps you to do some things better than you are aiming for.

KM: Yeah, I think it helped streamline a little bit better my approach to the class with the materials that are used for the class. So that alignment was very helpful just like our other presenters have said. It has done now a better job of matching up some of my objectives with the materials that are supporting our time together in class as we learn together. I also, I'm kinda up against, you know, the publishing industry, which is, you know, a textbook sells not only pages in a book or in an e-book, but also publisher videos and interactive quizzes and adaptive quizzes, slideshows and all of that. And there is, so it can be very challenging for a science instructor to want to give that up, to want to give up access to those things. And so what I liked about press books, so, is that you can include, you know, freely available or publicly available YouTube videos, TED Talks, interactive quizzes, you know, other demonstrations, and that, I think, is very helpful than just having words on a page on a website is this idea of being able to try to simulate some of that, which is great for our students learning. It gives them checkpoints to check their understanding. It gives them really fun and interactive videos and demonstrations to kinda move their learning forward, especially because sometimes our conversation in class maybe takes up some of that time when we would play a video. I really liked that. We can infuse that. And then that

really helped with the alignment of what do I want my students to learn and then what materials are supporting that learning?

CR: Yeah, so, Press Books has been mentioned a couple of times. Maybe it's worth just pausing. I can, I can put something in the show notes here that might give, give, give a good link to it. But what is, what is press books? What, how does this help with the process?

KM: So I am not a press books expert, which is why I was so glad to have a team help me navigate this. But I do know that Baylor has an institutional license for press books and it kinda functions as a way for you to have a URL for your, for your materials. So I have a Psych Science URL that I can embed within my Canvas page and that students are able to bookmark or navigate through Canvas very easily. And that's my textbook. And then I'm able to update that, adapt it as needed even throughout the semester. But it definitely has a bit of a learning curve. I think anybody who has ever blogged before would say like anytime you open up WordPress, you're like what's happening? Anytime you're opening up a new web modality, it's going to take a little bit of a learning, but as far as I know, it is a repository of open access textbooks and materials. And that's kind of one way that we were able to use this open access resources.

CR: Andrea has already mentioned this. Does press books have a simple way to print for those who prefer to, for it to be printed, or is that more complicated? Because I've never used press books and I'm sure many of our listeners haven't either.

KM: I mean, there is a way for you to kind of export it into an ePub file if you wanted a Kindle version or a PDF version, so there are ways to do that. I did have a student that has had some mild traumatic brain injuries that had asked for paper copies and I was able to print that out for her very easily. It does take up a little bit more space, but I didn't mind doing that for my student, especially because I didn't feel like she needed to tell me, but she did tell me kinda what was happening in her background and I was able to say, absolutely, I can print this out for you. But I do think that again, I might now add a little note at the beginning saying, Hey, if you're using this at Baylor, you can contact your instructor and I can get you a printed copy of whatever chapters that you need. Because I do think it's important for us to have this accessible resource for students, even those who need it hard copies.

CR: Yeah. Well, Andrea had already took us down this road too a little bit, but let's talk about how the students have experienced this, how they have reacted to these projects. Because I think probably for many of our students, this is the first experience of having a non-traditional textbook. They may have had E-books before as textbooks, but something that was created kinda especially for this class, that's probably a different experience. So what have you heard from the students?

AS: In addition to what I stated earlier, we have lots of positive feedback. They loved it. They love the fact that their learning styles could be catered to. And they also really love the fact that they had cutting-edge medicine right there at their fingertips. As guidelines were changing, like if a new guideline came out on how to treat pneumonia, it was being updated in the textbook right then and there. And so that's another positive of just OER in general. So, the students absolutely love that aspect that the information they were getting was not outdated like it was in the textbook.

AF: Oh, go ahead.

KM: I took a survey. And I routinely do this in classes. So, students are very used to just telling me their thoughts. But I wanted to know if students actually use this textbook, if they had purchased an additional textbook on top of this open access source, I wanted to know if they felt it was necessary for them to succeed in the class if they did use it, I wanted to know comments. I wanted to know just anything. So, I took a lot of a lot of feedback and these students were overwhelmingly positive and encouraging about future iterations of this as well. And they even kinda stated more classes should do this, especially for courses where professors can write materials or access free materials for their courses, it would benefit all students. They even said it's such a perk to have a free good book that is accessible equally to all students. And so, it was a portion of the class that took the survey, this particular one. But overwhelmingly, all of the students read the textbook, they used it, they use it interactive components. They felt like it was a good resource for them and that they would also use this in the future. They also said things like, oh, this is such a great resource because, you know, I could tell that you were very thoughtful about the material that went into this particular textbook. You know, even some of them said, you know, wow, this textbook was the best textbook I've ever used. It kinda, I think, what I think that they're trying to get at here is that there was no extra stuff that they didn't need. I think that sometimes when we ask students to buy it $200 textbook and then you only use 75% of it. They're like did I really need to buy that? And so, we're able to

curate the materials that are necessary for this class and then there'll be able to keep that forever as well as the updates. So, I think that some of these comments are really getting at what our students want out of a class, which is they want an alignment between the materials and the way that you are teaching the class and the things that are going to help them in the future. And so, I was really glad to get this feedback. And I also got constructive feedback like Hey, there was a time when there was a glossary link that was dead, or a video didn't play, or there was a grammatical error. So now the science librarian and I are thinking of, oh, we need a comment box so that we can get that information tweaked as we go in because it's a lot of information, it's a cumulative textbook. But overwhelmingly students have been very positive, very encouraging, and we're really excited in our department about other instructors now taking this on and doing this in more classes.

CR: I really like how you talk about the material fitting the course just the way that you wanted to, like, having that kind of tailored alignment with, with the course. I mean, I think we run into this in a lot of different ways, even maybe at the chapter level where it's like we assign a chapter and we think it's a really good chapter from a textbook, a traditional publisher textbook. But there may be several things in that chapter that, we are not as an instructor, all that concerned about and we're maybe not going to assess the student on, but the student can't tell the difference between paragraph A and paragraph B. That's something that exists in a hidden way in our mind. So, in this way you can just cut it out, right? If that's not what you're concerned about your students learning, you just cut it out.

KM: Yes.

CR: Amy, you were going to jump in there.

AF: Oh, yes. I was going to say for me one of the most exciting things about using this is I no longer have any students being like, oh, I haven't been able to do the homework for the last month because I couldn't afford the textbook, which sometimes I would get before, not super often, but often enough that it's just a concern and students don't always want to come forward and tell you that at the beginning of the semester when, you know, I would definitely be willing to work with them and find ways for them to access the step. That's no longer a problem, which is really exciting. I also had the experience because I teach sophomore level of musicianship, of teaching students who had the old textbook last year and now are using the new textbook. And they have been really excited about it because number one, it's free, they didn't have to pay for a

new subscription code. Number two, like they know we wrote it for them, and I think they like that, that feels really good to them that like we took the time and we made this huge thing because of them and because we care about them being able to afford staff and because we care about the things we're using, aligning better with our curriculum and all of that. It also, I think, gives them a little bit of a sense of ownership of it. I've been very upfront of this is the first year we're using this and with 1,750 musical examples, I am sure that there are some errors in there. And so the students get excited. I'm like, oh, like we found, we found a thing here that's not quite right. And so…

CR: Not the errors you put there on purpose, right?

AF: Yes. Not just, we've put out that it was on purpose so that they would learn something. Yeah. But it's exciting because they are, you know, paying attention enough to tell us that and they know that we're going to then take it and update it this summer. And it's so easy to do that with the press book, but they just feel really involved and I think feel some ownership over it.

CR: It sounds a little bit like this kind of project, especially if you're transparent with your students about it. It has a, has a way of also kind of pulling back the veil of your discipline a little bit because they can, they can see better the instructor's logic for what you're including or not including in a course.

AF: Absolutely.

CR: Well, my wrap-up question here for you all I hope to hear from all of you is sort of a lesson's learned kind of here. So, what advice do you have for other faculty who are at various stages? Maybe it, maybe this is the first time they're hearing about alternative types of course materials or open access or OER, what advice do you have for faculty who are thinking about this?

AS: Really simply? go for it. I mean, Baylor has such excellent support system here that Karenna mentioned. And I just feel like the benefit, a large benefit that taking on a project of this magnitude will have on the students and the students to come and even on the faculty too. The faculty that will use the same materials and other courses or other sections rather, is so worth it. It's worth it. And in the process, I also want to give the advice to give yourself grace too. It's been spoken of that there's a learning curve, especially when you are creating your own OER, right. And this is a new concept for a lot of us. And so, give yourself grace in the process and just know that you're supported.

KM: Yeah, I'd echo that completely. I think it's important to kind of take, take the lead. If you want to explore open access or alternative materials, there's a lot out there. And if there is it, then there is a fellowship for you to create new content. So having that support here at Baylor is huge. I'll also say that I think students are starting to pay attention to this a little bit more than they were ten years ago. And what I mean by that is to say that students are starting to advocate for themselves and they're wanting to know, like they're wanting that justification. What, why do I need this $200 textbook, you know. Is this going to be a class for my non majors core curriculum? Do I need this textbook to succeed? And most of, you know, I'm talking from a science perspective and most of us are like, yes, you need the textbook. So, if you are able to justify that, I think that students are very happy if they can afford it to buy that textbook. And then we also have to reach out to students who can't afford it. So as Baylor continues to be, you know, an "HSI" or emerging Hispanic students serving institution or increasing the number of Pell eligible students that are coming, you know, we also have to realize that our student demographic is one that they're going to be needing and asking for the assistance. And they might want to know, what have we done to help them succeed here at Baylor, this is one tangible way. This is one very time-intensive, but also very rewarding way for us to connect to our students and their needs and then also to their families, because it's not just them. You know, coming from a first-generation background and also first-generation American background, you know, asking for help can be really hard. But now we've got a lot of resources here at Baylor so that students are asking more savvy questions and I love it. I'm glad that we have the First in Line program (42:57). I'm glad that we have McNair Scholars here, and I'm glad that now they're being advised to ask what textbook is necessary for this class. Is there a free one? Is there some other way that I could do well in this class even if I can't afford this textbook. And then also knowing that we have the store here on campus. So, there's a lot of different things that Baylor is doing, but this is a way that we as professors can help our students succeed here. And so, if we're talking about retention numbers, this is a way for us to increase the amount of people who are going to stay here at Baylor. Knowing that their professors care about them, their well-being, their financial health is important. And so, this is a way that we could do that. So go for it, get a team together through the fellowship, through learning design team through the libraries. It can be challenging, but there are people there to ask questions and get help. And then just know that we can adapt. And then also it is so time insensitive that I didn't finish the entire textbook during the summer. So, we were still working until late September to finish the textbook off. And that as something that I knew going into it. It was such a large project for me, you know, curating and also writing bits and pieces throughout. And so, knowing that to give myself grace and

to know that it was gonna get done and to have a deadline to meet internally was very helpful for me. And so, I went for it. I didn't really have the time to do it. I was glad to be paid for it through that summer Affordable Course Materials fellowship. But it ended up being very beneficial and I can't wait to build on this in the future.

CR: Yeah. So, what I'm hearing is don't wait till you feel like you have the time to do it.

KM: Also true.

CR: Amy, what are your final thoughts for us, advice for your colleagues?

AF: Sure. I just echo what Andrea said is just go for it. I think a lot of us faculty members know the feeling of having a textbook that you use because it's just what you use and it's what was passed down to you or it's kinda like the least bad ones out there, but there's always things that you're frustrated about it or you don't like how it approaches this for the orderings wrong or whatever else. This is a chance to make the textbook that you want to use. You know, it's not just because it's the least bad thing out there. It's because it's exactly what's right for your class. And I think, I would say don't feel, don't feel like, Oh, but who am I like? Could I really write a textbook? Yeah, absolutely, you can. And you're going to have a support team in place to really help you do that, you know, help write something that's going to fit your course and fit your students and everything so well. I think also just talk to people around you. I mean, for me, when I heard about this, I was immediately like, yes, we have to do this and just having those conversations with my colleagues and with my dean, like everyone was so excited about it, you know, out of that came this team that was going to do all this work together. I think if you have conversations with people in your department or with deans or division directors, you'll, you'll get some excitement building that will give you the confidence to go right this new amazing textbook that your students will be able to afford and use for years to come.

CR: Well, thank you. That seems like a good place to close out here. I want to thank you all, Amy Fleming, Karenna Malavanti, Andrea Shepherd, for joining us today and for sharing your experiences with these alternative and affordable textbooks. Appreciate it.

CR: Our thanks again to Amy, Karenna and Andrea for joining the show. If you'd like to know more about Baylor's summer Affordable Course Materials program or OER resources like OpenStax and press books, see the links in our show notes. And remember the best way to support our show and stay up-to-date on our discussions is to subscribe to Professors Talk Pedagogy on whatever podcast app you use. That's our show. Join us next time for Professors Talk Pedagogy.