

University of Illinois - Chicago

Introductory Biology & Ecology Course

Background

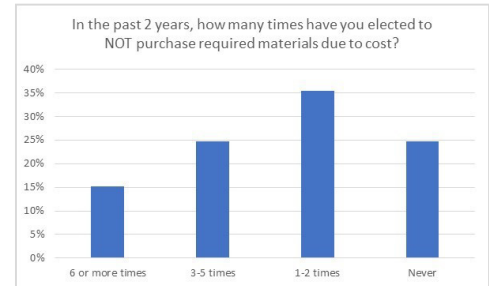
Skyepack began working with an instructor at the University of Illinois – Chicago to develop affordably-priced course materials for an introductory biology course which covers both evolution and ecology. Approximately 400 students enroll in this course each year. Because there was no single textbook available that met the needs of this class, two traditional textbooks were historically used, one for the first half of the course on evolution, and one for the second half of the course on ecology. The combined cost of these two textbooks was \$360. The goal of the project was to develop and curate a set of course materials that met the specific needs of the instructor, the learning objectives of the course, and the needs of the student population.

Process

Skyepack’s instructional design and course materials development teams worked with the instructor to understand the requirements of the course, learning objectives, preferred teaching methodologies, assessment strategies, and the needs of the students. Skyepack then sourced, created, and curated alternative content analogous to the content covered by the traditional textbooks historically used. The instructor participated in the iterative development process by providing detailed descriptions of the topics taught each week of the course, reviewing and approving content curated by Skyepack, and creating self-assessment questions for the students.

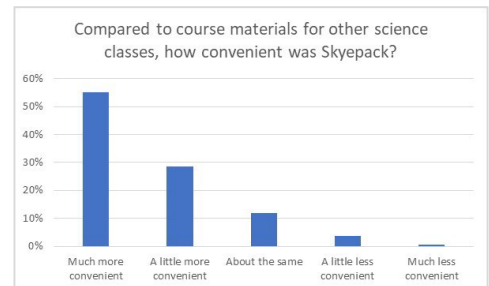
Results

The result of the project was a custom developed digital course pack delivered through the Skyepack platform to students at a price of \$40. Students are able to access the course materials 24/7 on any of their internet connected devices. This resulted in student savings of approximately \$140,000 per year. Student surveys were also conducted to gauge the effectiveness of the Skyepack platform and the students’ perceptions of the custom course content. Of the 179 students enrolled in the course that semester, 158 completed the survey.



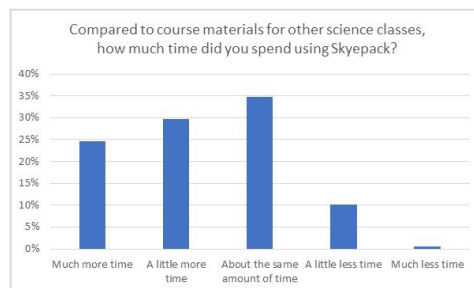
Cost matters

75% of respondents said they have elected to not purchase required course materials due to cost at least once in the past two years.



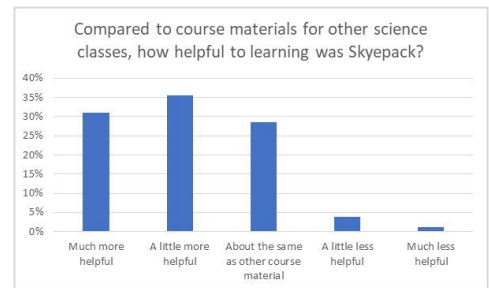
Skyepack is more convenient

84% of respondents say that Skyepack is more convenient than other science course materials.



Skyepack is more engaging for students

54% of respondents said that they spend more time engaging with Skyepack than they do with other science course content.



Skyepack is more helpful to learning

66% of respondents said that Skyepack is more helpful than other science course materials.