



OER and Two Textbooks in Philosophy

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Project 1: OER in 100-level “Critical Thinking”

- Develop OER materials for “Critical Thinking” course (PHI 112)
 - Taught both online and face-to-face for the past 10 years (since 2015 at UAlbany).
- In this course students ...
 - Analyze (informally) arguments in terms of premises, conclusion(s), and levels of support
 - Consider others’ viewpoints, charitably interpret them, and then assess them
 - Avoid making and learn to spot fallacious reasoning...
- Course incorporates activities such as:
 - Writing an argumentative essay in stages
 - Examining **realistic** cases of reasoning (e.g., YouTube videos of debates and editorials in newspapers) – finding these is the most challenging part of prepping the course

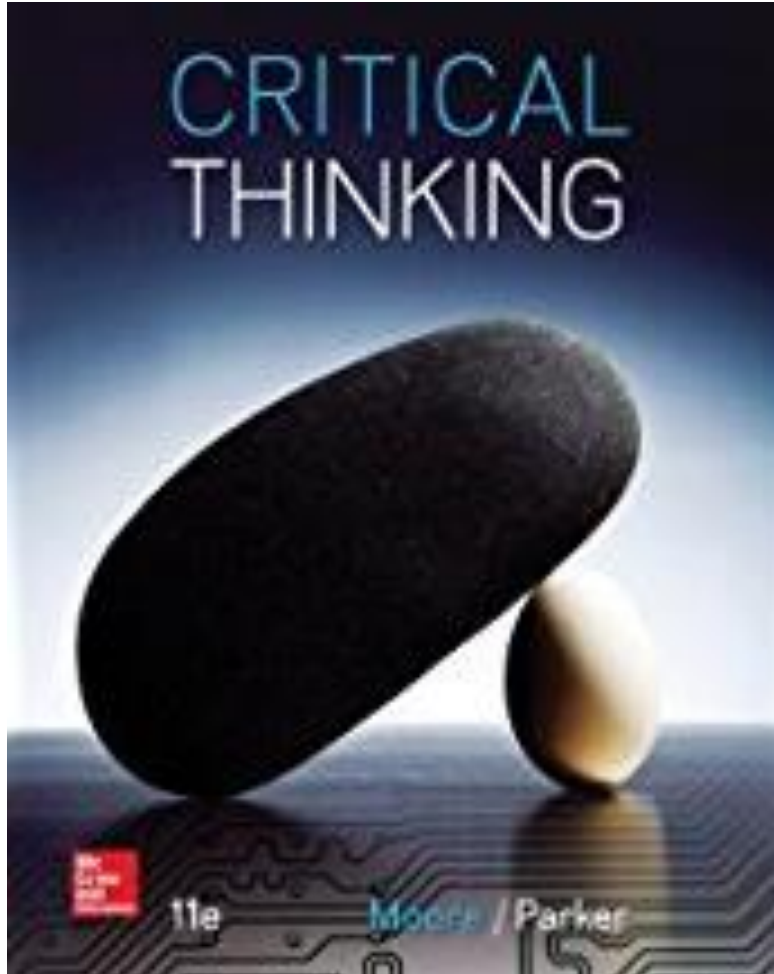
Pricing for Two Critical Thinking Textbooks

\$157

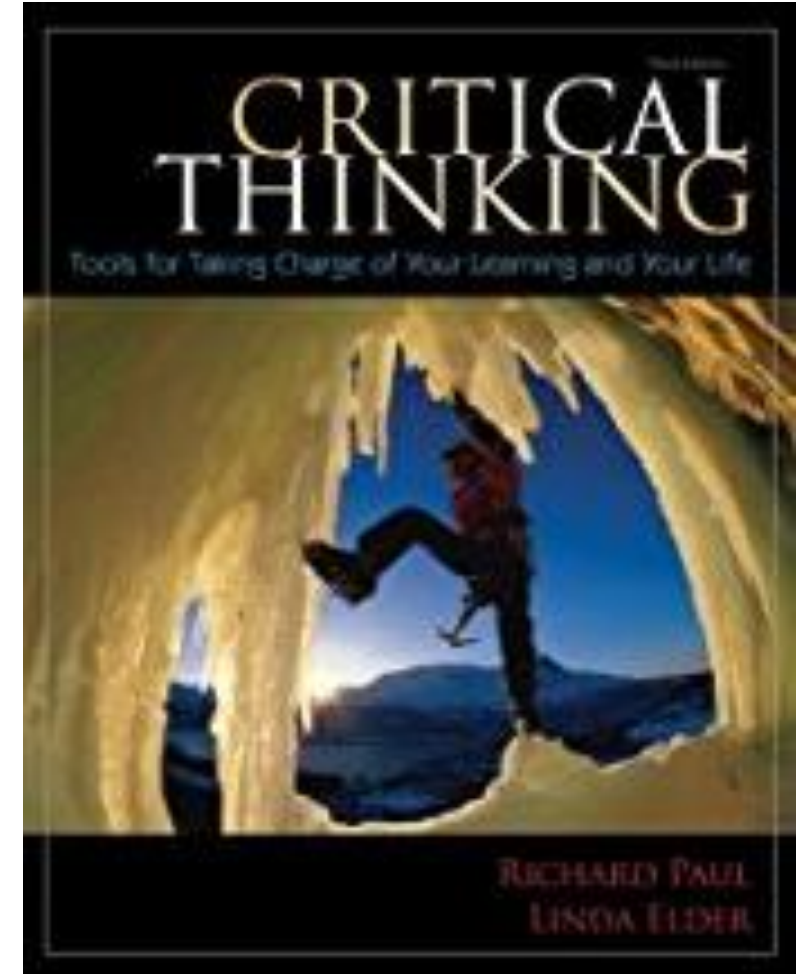
11e

\$218

12e



\$104



One response to this market

| | | | |
|--------|---|-------------|----------|
| Vaughn | <i>Concise Guide to Critical Thinking</i> | OUP | \$49.95 |
| Moore | <i>Critical Thinking, 12E</i> | McGraw-Hill | \$218.75 |
| Munson | <i>The Elements of Reasoning, 7E</i> | Cengage | \$116.95 |

Email from OUP: “...we invite you to compare the price and quality of our book to other books published for your course.”

A brief but thorough introduction to core concepts in critical thinking

Lewis Vaughn's *Concise Guide to Critical Thinking* offers a compact, clear, and economical introduction to critical thinking and argumentative writing. Based on his best-selling text, *The Power of Critical Thinking*, Fifth Edition, this affordable volume is more manageable than larger textbooks yet more substantial than many of the smaller critical thinking handbooks. **Student pricing options start at \$24.95.**

FEATURES

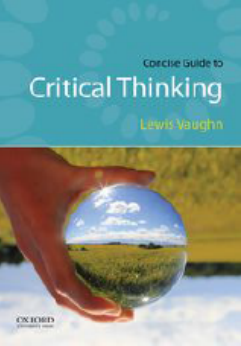
- Six chapters on identifying, evaluating, and devising deductive and inductive arguments
- A chapter on obstacles to critical thinking
- Extensive treatment of scientific reasoning
- A chapter on fallacies and rhetorical persuaders and a substantial chapter on writing argumentative essays
- Numerous exercises

Visit us online to [view the table of contents](#) or to [request an exam e-copy](#).

In addition, we invite you to compare the price* and quality of our book to other books published for your course:

| | | | |
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* List (suggested retail) prices as advertised on publishers' websites as of 10/2017. Prices quoted are for comparable formats. Other formats may be available. Prices subject to change.



Finding OER Textbooks – Two Options

- The OUP book @ \$49 is comparable to the more expensive options
- I was not convinced that there was pedagogical justification for the \$49 option and certainly not for the more expensive options.
- I found two OER alternatives (completely free, including problem sets):
 - Cathal Woods (Virginia Wesleyan), [Introduction to Reasoning](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B-JtWIIJIOaFQmIVLWlrWXktbFE)
 - Brad Dowden (CSU-Sacramento), [Logical Reasoning](#) (previously published through Wadsworth but out of copyright)

Prof. Brad Dowden

Philosophy Department
California State University, Sacramento



Prof. Dowden

[Spring 2018 classes](#)

[Spring 2017 classes](#)

[Personal info](#)

[Research topics](#)

[Deep mysteries](#)

[Logical Reasoning](#)

Spring 2018 classes

- [Phil 4, Critical Thinking](#)
- [Phil 160, Deductive Logic II](#)
- [Phil 192D, Space, Time, and Infinity](#)

Spring 2017 classes

Although many scientific studies of decision-making have shown that people tend to sift sources of information looking to reinforce existing views rather than to accept the view that is backed up with the better argument, your book is designed to combat this tendency.

Facing a Decision as a Critical Thinker

Imagine this situation. You are on a four-day backpacking trip in a national wilderness area with your friends Juanita and Emilio. The summer weather's great, the scenery is exotic, and you've been having a good time. Yesterday you drove several hours into the area and parked in the main parking lot. Then you hiked four hours to your present campsite. The three of you carried all your food, water, sleeping bags, and tents.



Last night you discovered that somebody had accidentally cracked the large water container. Now you are stuck with no water. Although there is a stream nearby, you wouldn't normally drink from a stream, and you remember that your packets of water-sterilization tablets are in the pocket of your other coat—the one you left at home at the last minute. The three of you are thirsty and have only dehydrated food left, except for four apples. You wish you had bothered to haul in that twelve-pack of Dr. Pepper you decided to leave in the car's trunk.

Long-term Goal: Remixing this OER Textbook

- I have been using the **PDF** in my course since 2015
 1. Downside: not easy to use on mobile device/tablet
 2. Downside: not as accessible
 3. Downside: author had placed a restrictive license to prevent alterations
- Author relaxed licensing to CC-BY in 2017 edition
 - I plan to remix this book, but this requires significant work
 - This involves putting it into the **Pressbooks format** and adding my own material to chapter sections, exercises, case studies, and links to YouTube

- Dashboard
- Organize
- Book Info
- Appearance
- Export
- Publish
- Media
- Users
- Tools
- Settings
- LTI Consumers
- LTI maps
- Collapse menu

Edit Chapter Add New

EDITING INTERFACE

[-- Edit Previous \(Front Matter\)](#)

[Edit Next \(Chapter\) --](#)

Chapter 1

Permalink: <http://oer.ed-beck.com/logicalreasoning/chapter/chapter-1/> Edit

Add Media

Visual Text

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How to Reason Logically

The goal of this book is to improve your logical-reasoning skills. These skills are also called "critical thinking skills." They are a complex weave of abilities that help you get someone's point, generate reasons for your own point, evaluate the reasons given by others, decide what or what not to do, decide what information to accept or reject, explain a complicated idea, apply conscious quality control as you think, and resist propaganda. Your most important critical thinking skill is your skill at making judgments—not snap judgments that occur in the blink of an eye, but those that require careful reasoning.

You are not reasoning logically if, when you want a gorilla suit for a Halloween party, the first thing you do is search for the word "Gorilla" in the telephone book, and the problem here is not that you used a telephone book instead of the Internet.

High-quality reasoning is called *logical reasoning* or *critical thinking*. Logical reasoning skills can be learned and improved. It is not a case of "Either you're naturally good at it or you're not." Rather, nearly everyone is capable of reasoning well, and everyone is capable of improvement. The opposite of logical reasoning is uncritical thinking, examples of which are fuzzy thinking, believing what somebody says simply because they raise their voice, and narrowly thinking about a problem without bringing in the most relevant information.

This first chapter explains what it means to be logical—to reason logically or critically. It demonstrates the usefulness of logical reasoning as a means of making more effective decisions about your own life—decisions about what to believe and decisions about what to do. The chapter begins a systematic program of study of all the major topics regarding logical reasoning. Along the way, the book focuses on developing the following five skills: (1) writing logically, (2) detecting inconsistency and lack of clarity in a group of sentences, (3) spotting issues and arguments, (4) detecting and avoiding fallacies (reasoning errors), and (5) generating and improving arguments and explanations. These skills will be taught here independent of subject matter. This book is not about what you ought to believe about some subject such as politics, religion, sports or business.

Although many scientific studies of decision-making have shown that people tend to sift sources of information looking to reinforce existing views rather than to accept the view that is backed up with the better argument, your book is designed to combat this tendency.

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Word count: 6994

Last edited by madams on April 4, 2018 at 6:34 pm

Part Main Body

Status & Visibility Preview

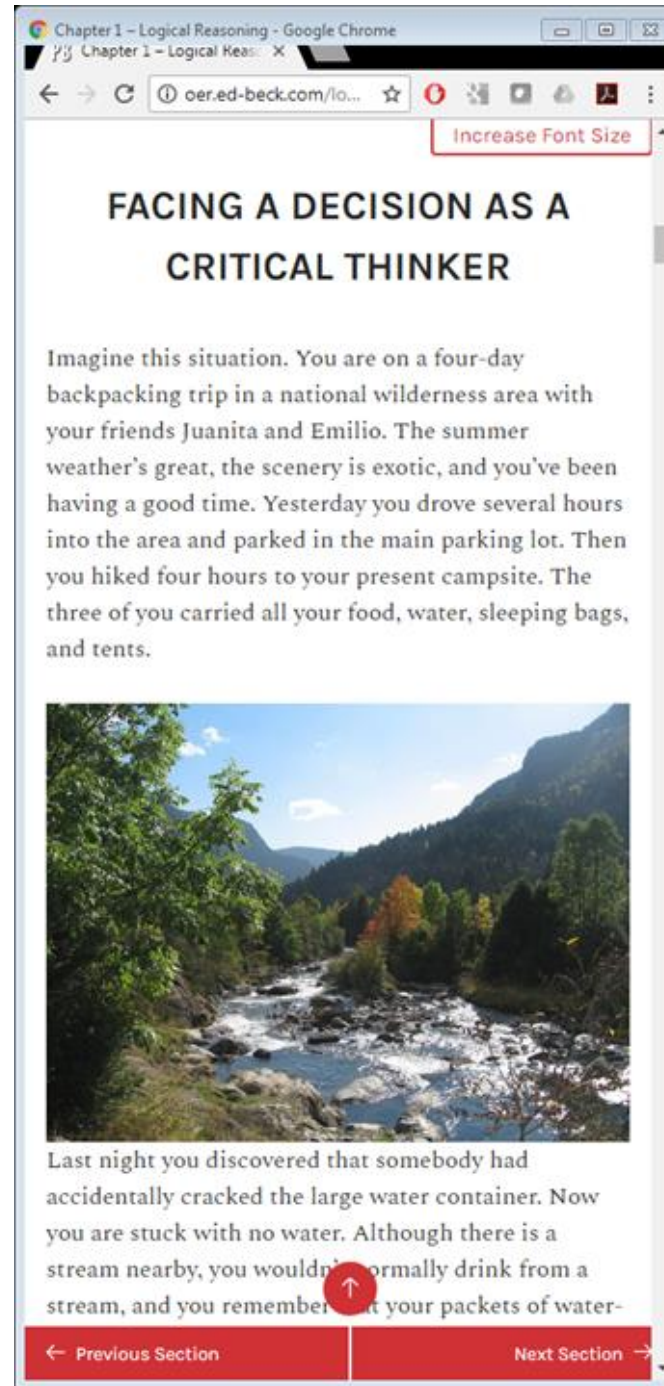
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- Revisions: 2 [Browse](#)
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Chapter Type Standard

How the Pressbooks textbook looks for users...

- Accessible
- Easily viewed on mobile devices




The screenshot shows a mobile browser interface. At the top, the address bar displays 'oer.ed-beck.com/lo...'. A red box highlights an 'Increase Font Size' button in the top right corner. The main content area features a large, bold title 'FACING A DECISION AS A CRITICAL THINKER'. Below the title is a paragraph of text describing a backpacking trip. A photograph of a river flowing through a forested valley is positioned below the text. At the bottom of the page, a red navigation bar contains two buttons: 'Previous Section' with a left arrow and 'Next Section' with a right arrow. A red circle with a white upward-pointing arrow is overlaid on the text 'you remember' in the paragraph below the image.

Chapter 1 – Logical Reasoning - Google Chrome
Chapter 1 – Logical Reas: X
oer.ed-beck.com/lo...
Increase Font Size

FACING A DECISION AS A CRITICAL THINKER

Imagine this situation. You are on a four-day backpacking trip in a national wilderness area with your friends Juanita and Emilio. The summer weather's great, the scenery is exotic, and you've been having a good time. Yesterday you drove several hours into the area and parked in the main parking lot. Then you hiked four hours to your present campsite. The three of you carried all your food, water, sleeping bags, and tents.



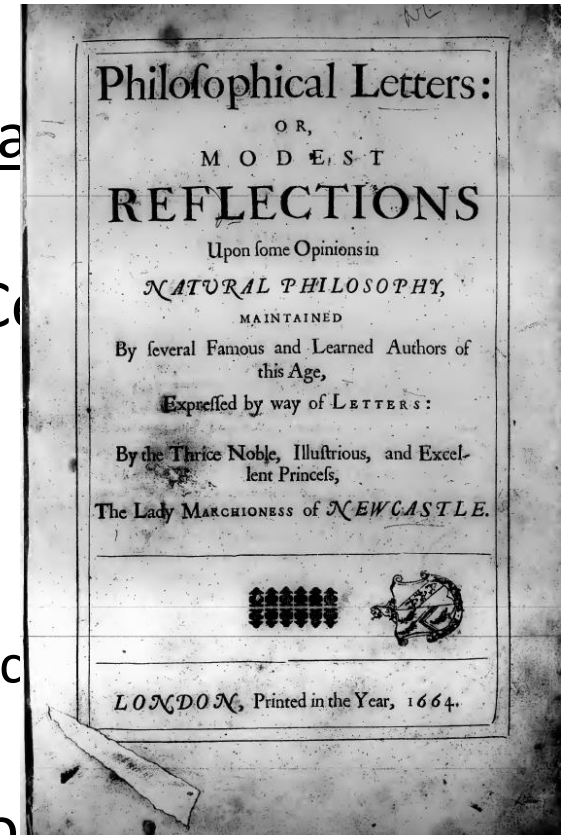
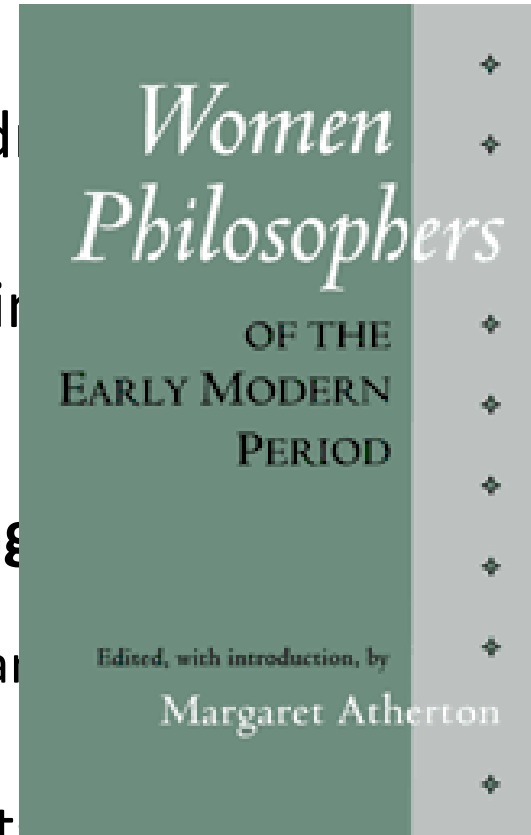
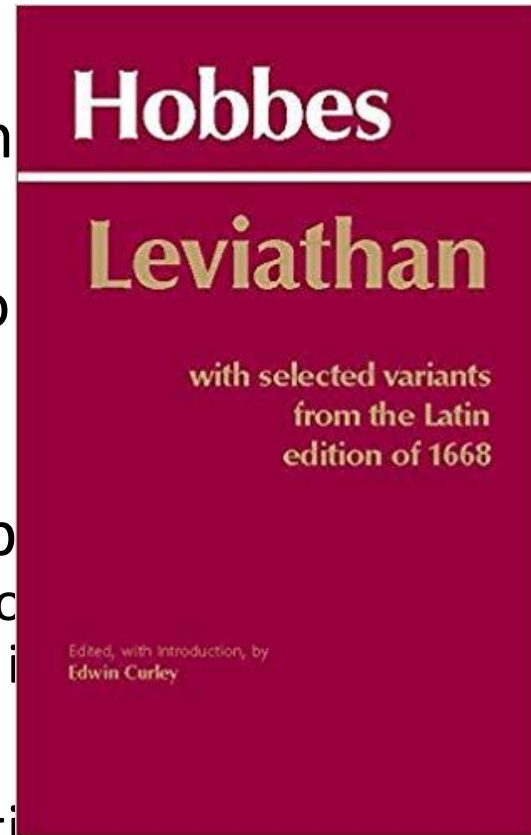
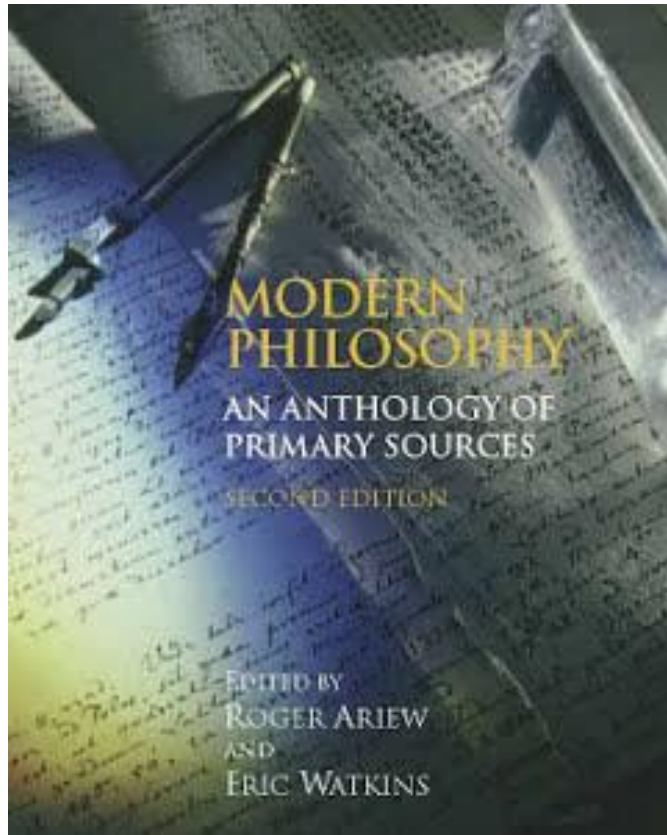
Last night you discovered that somebody had accidentally cracked the large water container. Now you are stuck with no water. Although there is a stream nearby, you wouldn't normally drink from a stream, and you remember that your packets of water-

← Previous Section Next Section →

Challenges for Project 1

- No supplementary course materials with this OER:
 - High-cost textbooks come with a full suite of supplementary materials, such as auto-graded quizzes
 - My experience with these publisher packages for Critical Thinking (PHI 112) and Introduction to Logic (PHI 210) is that they are of **mixed quality**
- Hosting – where does the remixed OER book live?
 - Milne Publishing (SUNY OER) will host SUNY authors: **textbooks.opensuny.org**
 - SUNY OER Services will print on an as-needed basis and students will pay cost + small markup in bookstore (I've done this for Project 2)

Project 2: OER for 17-18th Century Philosophy (300-level course)



without OER, existing solution. student purchase of books on Blackboard PDFs for the rest (difficult for taking notes, remembering texts for class time, synthesizing ideas, etc.)

OER in 17-18th Century Philosophy

- An existing OER anthology (*Modern Philosophy*, compiled by Walter Ott of UVa) included most of the key authors I assign.
- Using Pressbooks, I've "remixed" this OER book by adding two authors:
 - 17 chapters of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651)
 - 29 letters from Margaret Cavendish's *Philosophical Letters* (1664)
 - This took 25-30 hours to format the text from public domain
- Now for two semesters, students have used this remixed OER:
 - A **hard copy** (printed by SUNY OER services) costs about \$18 in campus bookstore
 - A **digital copy** (I provide on Blackboard)

Challenges for Project 2

- There is still work to do (always!). For example, build an apparatus for these text additions.
- Take-away Ideas from Project 2:
 - “Payoff” for students can be **more than cost** (in this case they save \$35): having a single, affordable printed copy that they get to keep is of great value, especially for historical texts
 - Re-mixing and developing OER is a **continuous process** that continues long after the first “edition”
 - Student feedback and feedback from colleagues continuously shape an OER



Thank you!

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