The New Face of Textbooks: Guiding Faculty Toward Alternatives
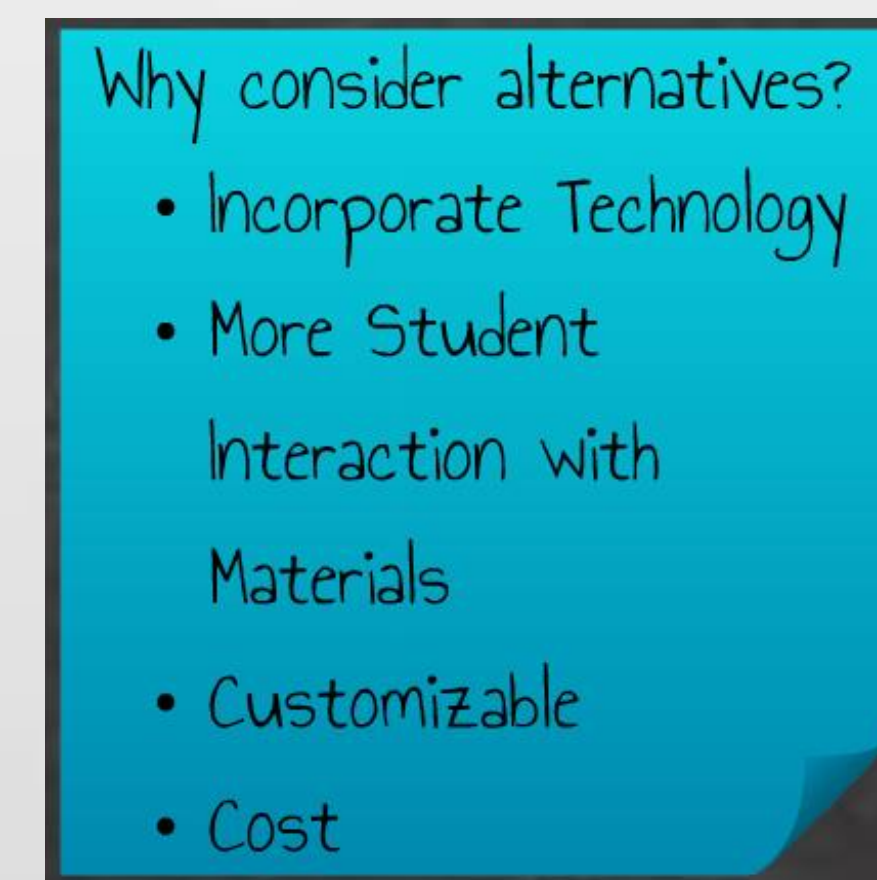
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Abstract

Are students at your institution complaining about the high costs of textbooks? Do they continually ask if your library has copies of textbooks that can be checked out? Is it even possible for faculty to require course materials for their students that are not so expensive? Discover how librarians at two campuses have launched a pilot project to work with professors to find cost-effective and appropriate textbook alternatives for their courses.

Why consider alternatives?
- Incorporate Technology
- More Student Interaction with Materials
- Customizable
- Cost

Starting the Pilot

- Librarians from both campuses decided to collaborate
- Discussions with other units on campuses who might already be thinking about/using textbook alternatives (Center for Teaching and Learning, Bookstore, E-Learning)
- Held separate informational sessions on each campus
- Facilitated a combined-campus session
- Built a resource guide

How Do We Define "Textbook Alternatives"?

Any item other than a traditional textbook that professors could use as required materials in their courses. Examples include: OERs (Open Educational Resources), E-books, Articles, Library Resources, Book Chapters, Learning Objects, and Streaming Videos

Why Did We Start the Pilot?

- The librarians at both campuses have seen an increase in inquiries from students about the availability of textbooks for classes. Both campuses already have a "Textbooks on Reserve" program in which textbooks for most of the core courses are purchased and placed on reserve in the library.
- There has been a push on both campuses for professors to incorporate more technology into their course delivery.
- The cost of textbooks continues to rise.
- Some faculty only use portions of books as required for their courses. It would be really nice if there were options of things to piece together to make a more usable and course-appropriate required "textbook".
- Textbook alternatives is a rising buzzword in academia. We wanted to get a feel for how the faculty on our campuses felt about textbook alternatives and start a discussion about options and how the library could help in finding some alternatives.

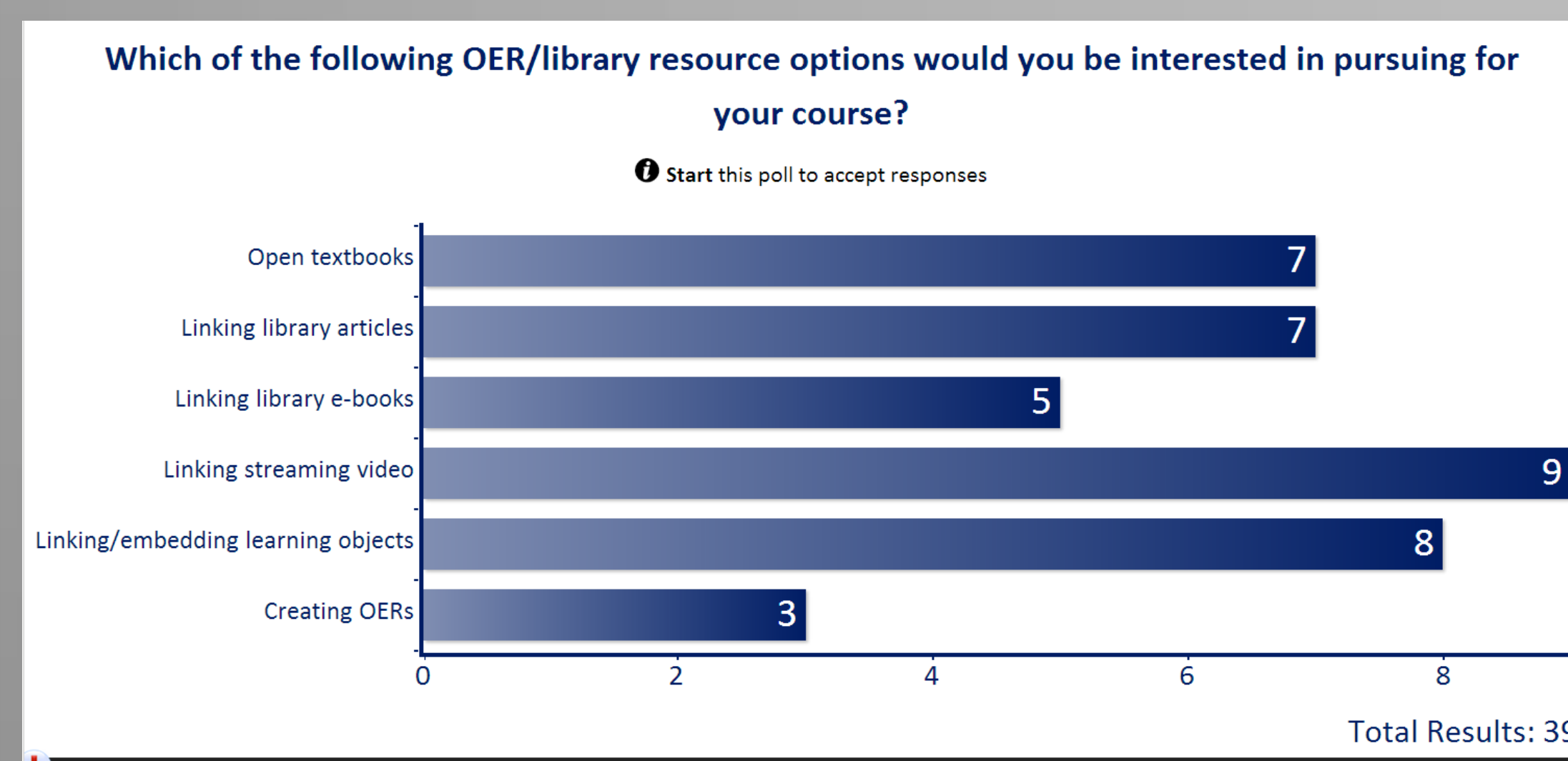## What Did the Faculty Have to Say about Textbook Alternatives?

Pros and Cons

Pros
- More cost efficient
- Customizable
- Portability
- Current information
- Working with Library and ELearning staff develops relationships on campus

Cons
- Technology Gaps
- Quality
- Extra work to get it set up
- Sometimes just prefer print
- Students who keep textbooks to study for exam may not have access to online materials when they need it
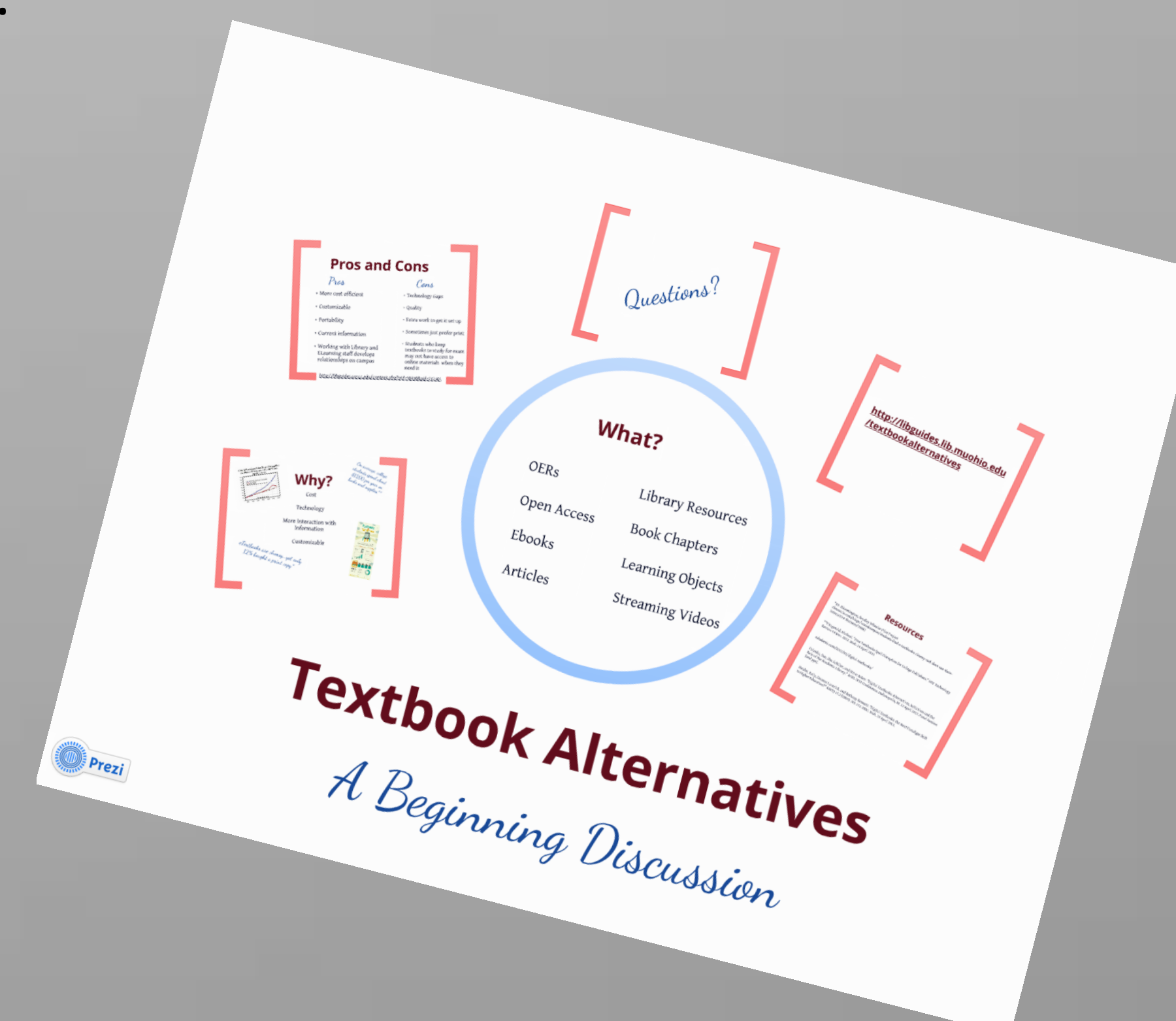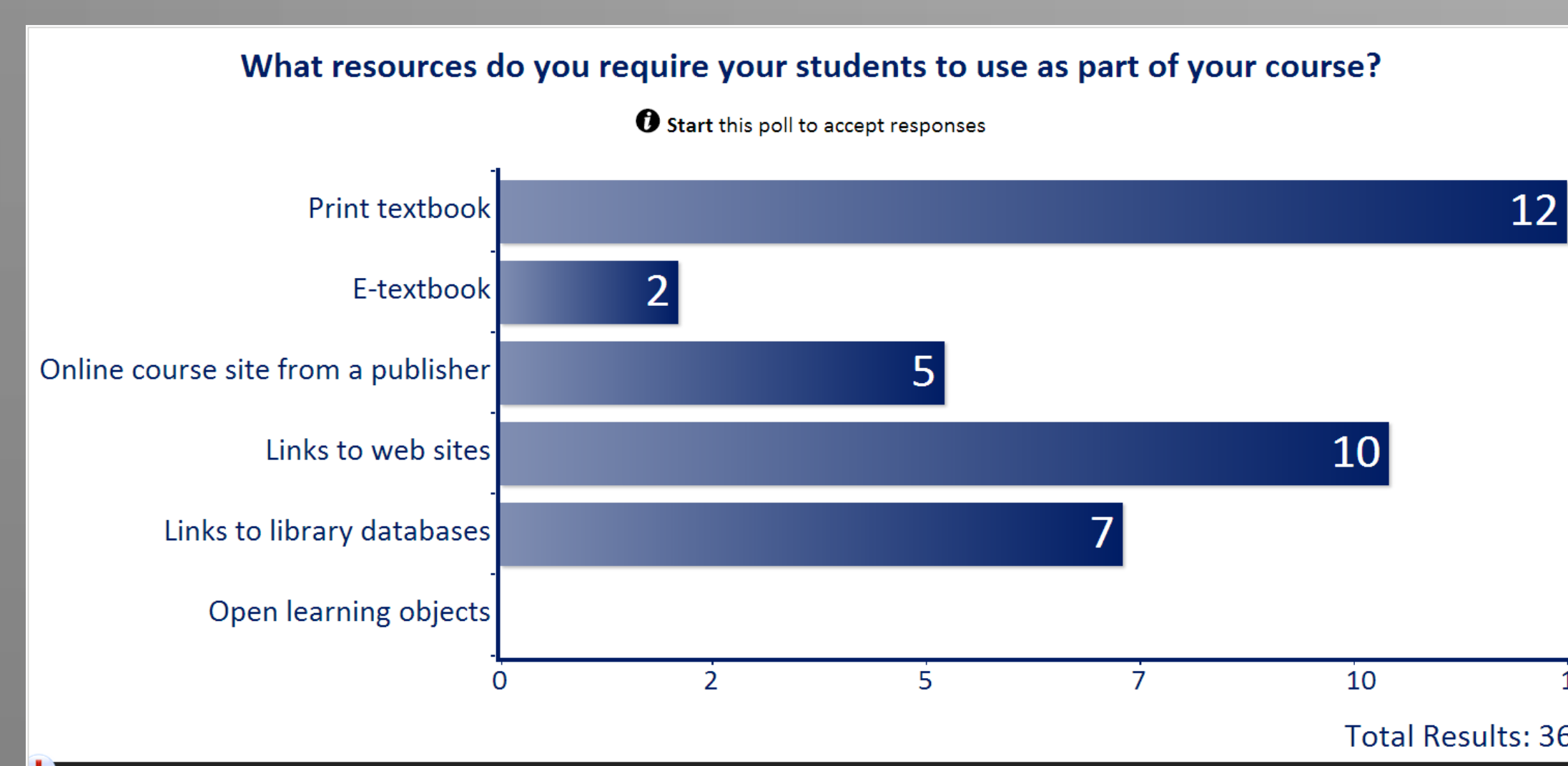
http://libguides.umuc.edu/content.php?pid=98930&sid=742401

What Sources Are Faculty Willing to Explore?

Which of the following OER/library resource options would you be interested in pursuing for your course?
Start this poll to accept responses

- Open textbooks: 7
- Linking library articles: 7
- Linking library e-books: 5
- Linking streaming video: 9
- Linking/embedding learning objects: 8
- Creating OERs: 3

Total Results: 39

What Sources Are Faculty Already Using?

What resources do you require your students to use as part of your course?
Start this poll to accept responses

- Print textbook: 12
- E-textbook: 2
- Online course site from a publisher: 5
- Links to web sites: 10
- Links to library databases: 7
- Open learning objects

Total Results: 36

Next Steps?

- Continue to communicate with other units on campus (Centers for Teaching and Learning, E-Learning, Bookstores)
- Work with individual faculty members who are interested in more information and/or incorporating textbook alternatives into their courses
- Off workshops through the Centers for Teaching and Learning at each campus
- Continue to keep faculty informed about the initiative through newsletter articles, blog posts, and emails