

Open Education Conference 2023

Pick a Path OER Game: Helping Students Find Affordable Course Materials

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Tyler Stephens

University of Ottawa Library



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Presenters



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Open Education Librarian

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Open Education Assistant (Fall 2022)
– Graduate student in Information
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Photo credit: © Bonnie Findley



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Open Education Assistant (Winter 2023)
– Undergraduate student in English

Photo credit: © Tyler Stephens



1. Context at the University of Ottawa



University of Ottawa

**Bilingual
(English-French)
public research
university in
Canada**



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**Over 550
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**48,000
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Language of study:

**70% English
30% French**



2. Textbook affordability at uOttawa



Textbook costs and reported spending in 2022-2023*

Expected spending

French	English
Average expected spending per course \$86	Average expected spending per course \$124

*All amounts in Canadian dollars

CampusStore prices for first-year course sequence in highest enrolment undergraduate programs. M. Brunet, "uOttawa Price of Record, 2022-2023," University of Ottawa Library.



Textbook costs and reported spending in 2022-2023*

Expected spending

French	English
Average expected spending per course \$86	Average expected spending per course \$124
Potential annual cost \$860	Potential annual cost \$1,240

*All amounts in Canadian dollars

CampusStore prices for first-year course sequence in highest enrolment undergraduate programs. M. Brunet, "uOttawa Price of Record, 2022-2023," University of Ottawa Library.



Textbook costs and reported spending in 2022-2023*

Expected spending

French	English
Average expected spending per course \$86	Average expected spending per course \$124
Potential annual cost \$860	Potential annual cost \$1,240

Reported spending

Fall 2022	Winter 2023
Average spending per student \$288	Average spending per student \$235
Total for 2022-2023 \$523	

*All amounts in Canadian dollars

CampusStore prices for first-year course sequence in highest enrolment undergraduate programs. M. Brunet, "uOttawa Price of Record, 2022-2023," University of Ottawa Library.

uOttawa Textbook Broke campaigns, Fall 2022 (<https://www.uottawa.ca/library/textbookbroke>) and Winter 2023 (<https://www.uottawa.ca/library/news-all/textbook-broke-winter-2023>)



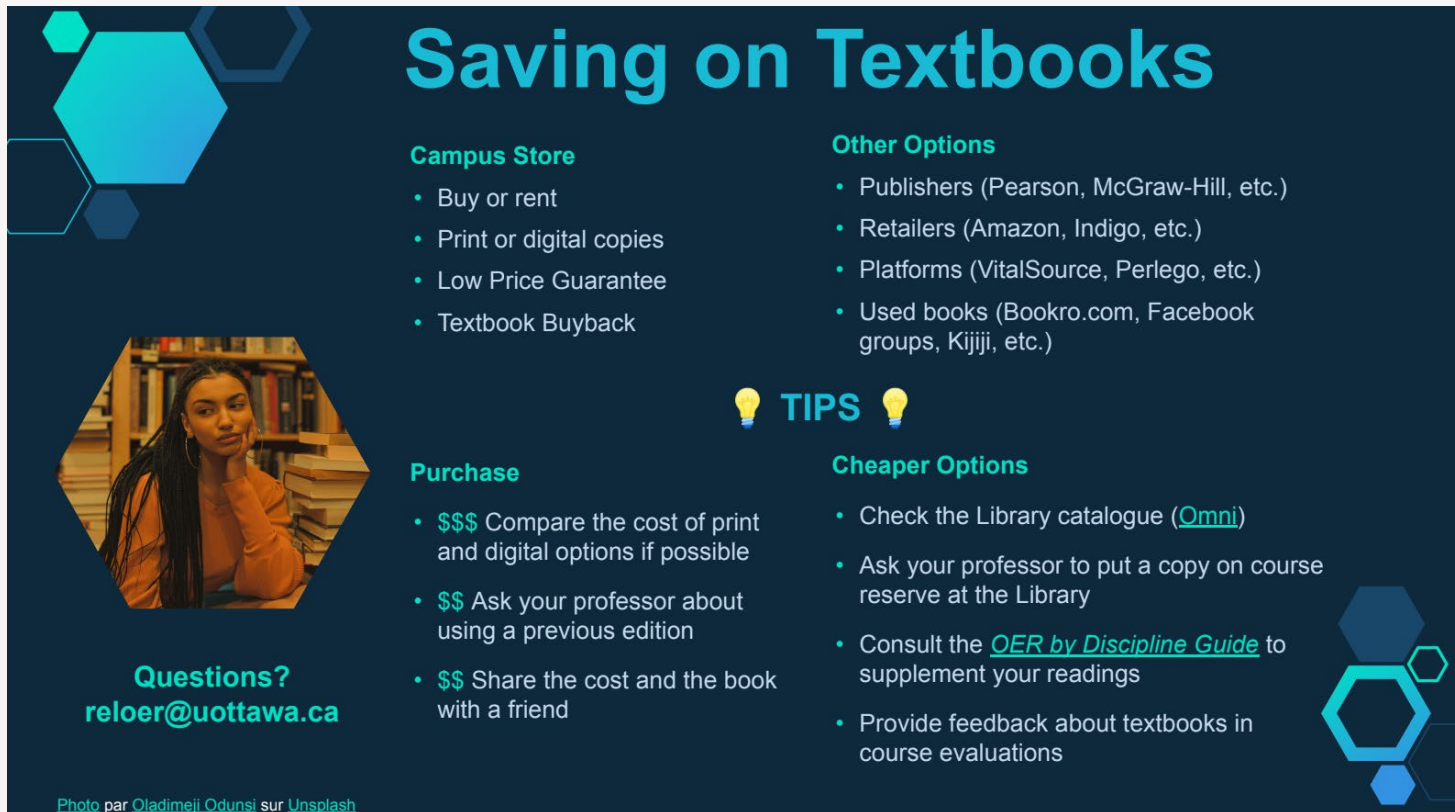


At least 60% of students do not purchase required textbooks at some point during their studies due to cost

Sources: Inclusive Access and SPARC, [History of College Textbook Prices: Examining Past Practices and Emerging Models](#) (May 27, 2022); Florida Virtual Campus, [2016 Student Textbook and Course Materials Survey: Results and Findings](#) (October 7, 2016); Accessible Course Content and Open Educational Resources Task Force, [University of Guelph Student Textbook Survey](#) (October 18, 2017); Yvonne Kim, ["Study: 65% of college students skip textbook purchases during pandemic,"](#) *The Cap Times* (March 3, 2021).



How to save on textbooks



Saving on Textbooks

Campus Store

- Buy or rent
- Print or digital copies
- Low Price Guarantee
- Textbook Buyback

Other Options

- Publishers (Pearson, McGraw-Hill, etc.)
- Retailers (Amazon, Indigo, etc.)
- Platforms (VitalSource, Perlego, etc.)
- Used books (Bookro.com, Facebook groups, Kijiji, etc.)

TIPS

Purchase

- \$\$\$ Compare the cost of print and digital options if possible
- \$\$ Ask your professor about using a previous edition
- \$\$ Share the cost and the book with a friend

Cheaper Options

- Check the Library catalogue ([Omni](#))
- Ask your professor to put a copy on course reserve at the Library
- Consult the [OER by Discipline Guide](#) to supplement your readings
- Provide feedback about textbooks in course evaluations

Questions?
reloer@uottawa.ca

Photo par Oladimeji Odunsi sur Unsplash

- Student union orientation week and Library workshop
- Fall 2022, in person and online
- Poorly attended



3. Origins of the in- person game



How it came about

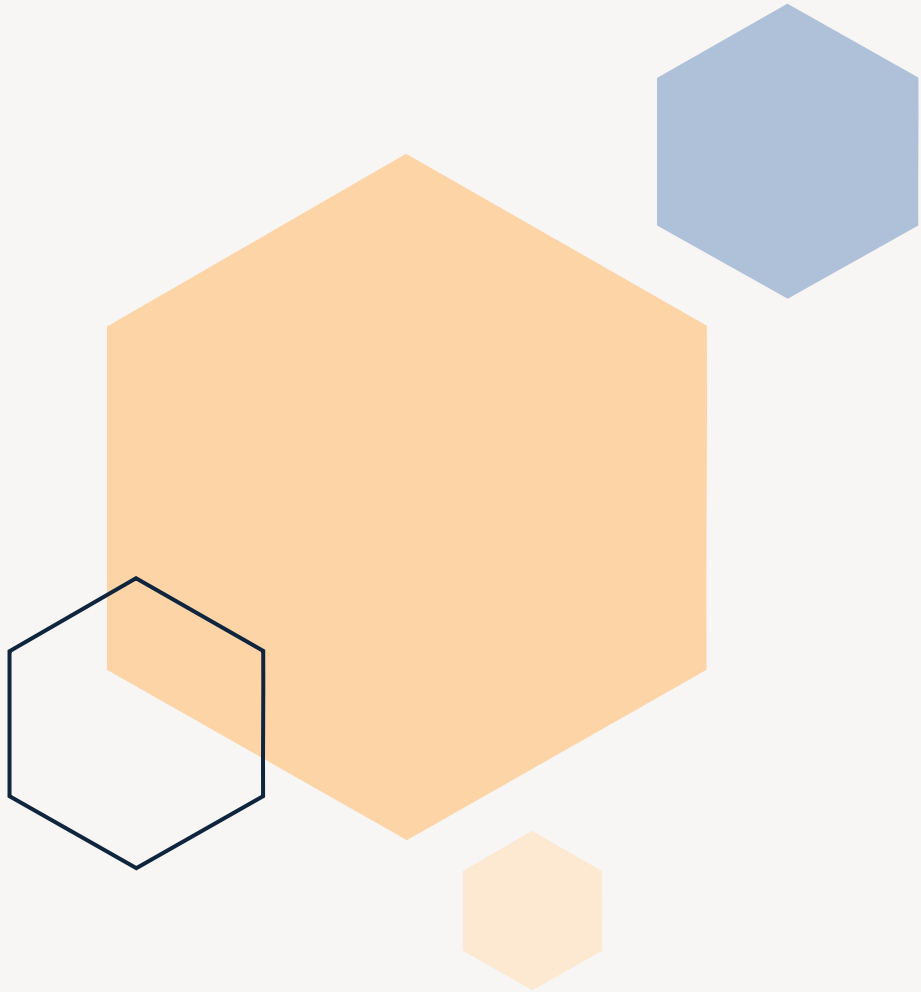
- Interactive activity during Open Education Week
- To provide information to students about navigating textbook purchasing



How it came about

- Designed to be customizable, in-person or virtual
- Loosely modeled after Escape Rooms and Choose Your Own Adventure-style novels





Premise of the game

You're a student starting a new semester.

You've received a list with all your required textbooks.

You're living on a tight budget and are hoping to save some money on textbooks.

Your choices will help you discover ways to lower your textbook costs.



Scenarios and locations

- Inspired by student experiences
- Library
- Used bookstore
- CampusStore
- Websites



Scenarios examples

- Sharing textbooks, using Library's copy
- Finding used copies
- Purchasing from CampusStore
- Finding an OER





Ultimate goal

- Funneling players towards scenarios that teach them about OER and meet the Open Education Librarian

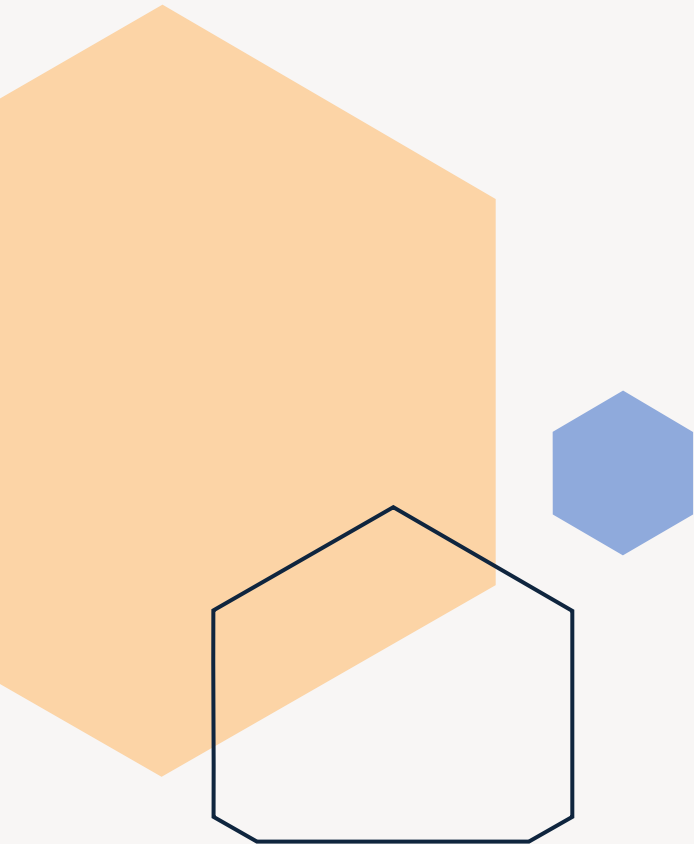


4. Designing the online version with Twine



What is Twine?

- Games are published in HTML
- Desktop app or browser



What is Twine?

- Games are published in HTML
- Desktop app or browser

<https://twinery.org>



From in-person to online game

- Twine coding used to maximize amount of possible “paths,” allowing players to customize experience based on field of study



From in-person to online game

- Integrated locations and scenarios
- Money available and energy status



5. Game preview



Choosing a faculty of study

At the University of Ottawa, there are several main faculties of study. Select which one you would like to study in and get a realistic experience of navigating textbooks and required material for courses.

Arts

Education

Engineering

Health Sciences

Common Law

Telfer Management

Science

Social Sciences

Player
chooses from
eight faculties
at the
University of
Ottawa



Enrolling in a program

Player
chose the
Faculty of
Science and
is now
enrolled in
the
Honours
program in
Biomedical
Science

You are now enrolled in the Honours program in Biomedical Science! You will be transported to your main menu now. From there, you can find out what materials you will need for your classes and start to navigate the world of textbook costs and open educational resources. Good luck!

Continue



Starting the game

OER GAME

Today is January 8

Menu

Inventory

List of Required

Textbooks

Campus Store

Thrift Store

Open Education

Librarian

Walk Around Campus

Study for Upcoming

Tests

Money available: \$350

Energy status: 100% energy

Your mid-term evaluations will be in mid-February and your end of term evaluations will be at the end of March.

You currently have 0 of your 4 required textbooks.

You are currently meeting your academic expectations.

Student starts with \$350 and 100% energy, and has four textbooks to acquire



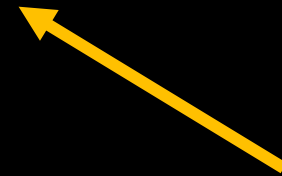
List of required textbooks

Human Anatomy and Physiology I: Modified Mastering Textbook \$202.75

Principles of Chemistry: WileyPLUS Textbook \$148.50

Introduction to Psychology: Top Hat Textbook \$138.82

Note: There is an Open Educational Resource required for one of your courses.
Consult the Open Education Librarian for more information!



One of the
four required
textbooks is
an OER!



Purchasing textbooks at the CampusStore

You have 4 textbooks left to purchase, some of which are available for purchase at the Campus Store.

Human Anatomy and Physiology I: Modified Mastering Textbook \$202.75

Purchase

Principles of Chemistry: WileyPLUS Textbook \$148.50 **Purchase**

Introduction to Psychology: Top Hat Textbook \$138.82 **Purchase** ←

At the CampusStore, the student can choose to purchase all, some or none of the textbooks



After purchasing a textbook

OER GAME

Today is January 9

Menu

Inventory

**List of Required
Textbooks**

Campus Store

Thrift Store

Open Education

Librarian

Walk Around Campus

**Study for Upcoming
Tests**

Your mid-term evaluations will be in mid-February and your end of term evaluations will be at the end of March.

You currently have 1 of your 4 required textbooks.

You are currently meeting your academic expectations.

Money available: \$211.18

Energy status: 98% energy


Less money
and less
energy but still
meeting
academic
expectations



Meeting with the Open Education Librarian

You have a meeting with Mélanie Brunet, the Open Education Librarian! She helps you find the OER that is required for one of your courses. OERs are Open Educational Resources: they are free, high-quality resources that serve as alternatives to costly textbooks. In addition, students are free to download, edit, remake, and share these resources. They are generally made available under Creative Commons licences.

You have now attained one of your course textbooks for free!

To learn more information about Creative Commons licences that might help you later in the game, click [here](#) 

To find out more about OERs at the University of Ottawa, go to our Library OER Website at <https://www.uottawa.ca/library/open-educational-resources>

To speak to the Open Education Librarian, you can contact Mélanie Brunet at melanie.brunet@uottawa.ca

Student
learns about
OER and
Creative
Commons
licences



Meeting with the Open Education Librarian

Student
learns about
OER and
Creative
Commons
licences

You have a meeting with Mélanie Brunet, the Open Education Librarian! She helps you understand Creative Commons licenses. You learn about Attribution (CC BY), Attribution-ShareAlike (CC BY SA), and Attribution-NoDerivatives (CC BY ND). To find more information, you visit the OER Commons website. To speak with Mélanie, you email her at melanie.brunet@uottawa.ca.



Attribution symbol: symbol shows that you have to cite the work to let people know who the rights holder is



Attribution-ShareAlike symbol: symbol shows that you have to cite the work and also that you can edit and share the work so long as you use the same license as the original



Attribution-NoDerivatives symbol: symbol shows that you have to cite the work and also that you can share the work as long as you do not share an edited version of the work

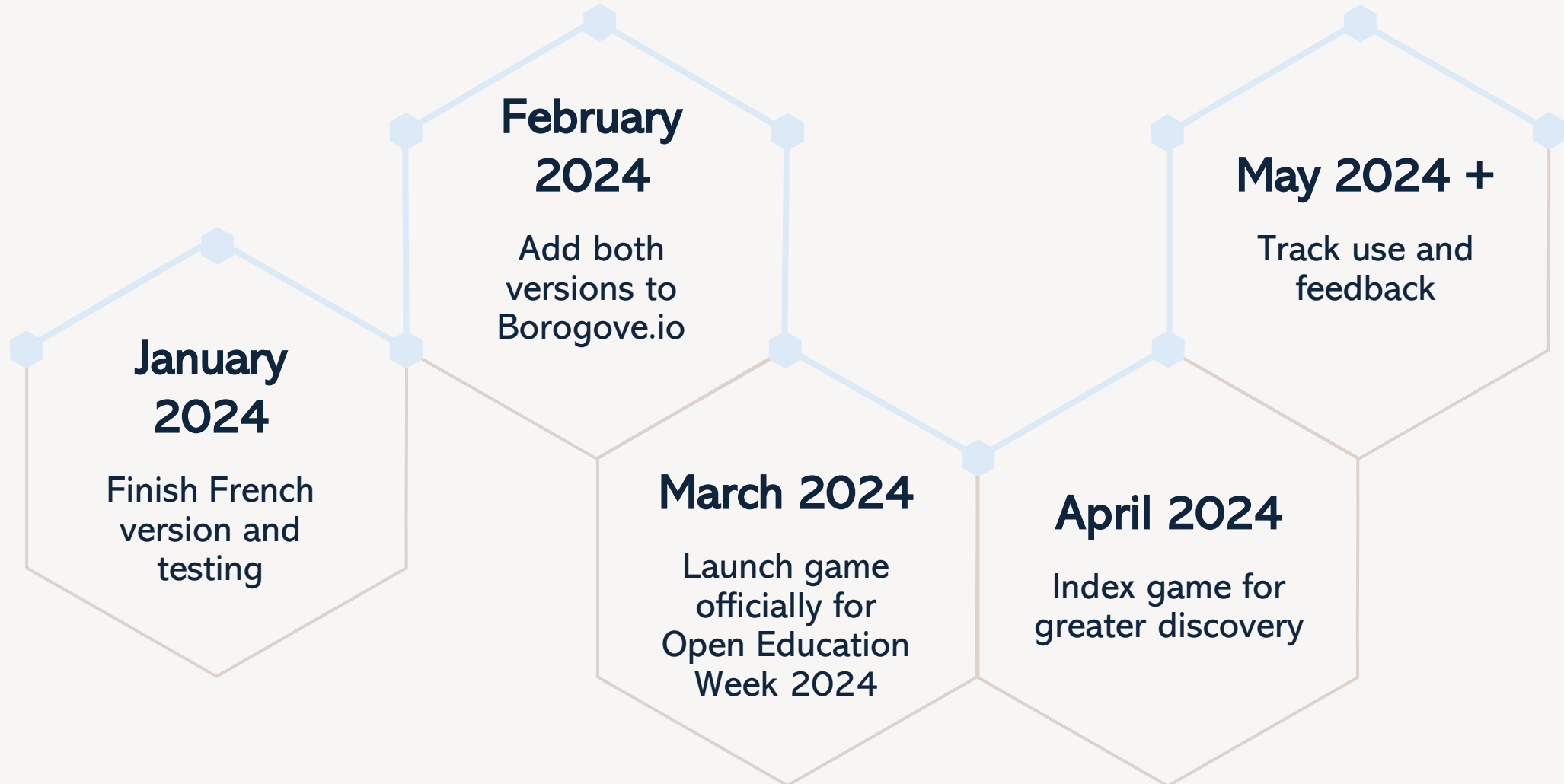




Other game plays



What's next?



Thank you!

Questions?

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