

Chapter 21

Adopting E-Textbooks in Higher Education: Are You Ready?

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ABSTRACT

E-textbooks make digital learning content portable, transferrable, and searchable, increase students' engagement, and enable highly interactive learning opportunities. However, adopting e-textbooks in higher education is far from its confirmation stage. This chapter examines the relationship between the perceived attributes of using e-textbooks by instructors and their actual use of e-textbooks in higher education settings. Further, the study explores factors that prevent instructors from fully adopting e-textbooks in teaching and explains how to circumvent such challenges. Challenges of adopting e-textbooks for instructors in higher education have been revealed by the survey. The findings suggest that instructors, institutions, and e-textbook publishers should work collaboratively to enhance the adoption of e-textbooks in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

E-Textbooks provide a solution for instructors and learners to personalize content, accommodate students' learning styles, and change instructors' teaching methods digitally (Baek & Monaghan, 2013). By integrating multimedia within textual components and adding hyperlinks to text for accessing external resources, e-Textbooks make learning content highly innovative, flexible, and immediately accessible, and bring more learning opportunities in and outside traditional textbooks (Abaci, Marrone, & Dennis, 2015).

A greater increase of e-Textbooks use among students has been noted (Denoyelles & Chen, 2014; DeNoyelles & Raible, 2017; Moro, 2018) and the interactive features of e-Textbooks have provided students with various options (Parsons, 2014). E-Textbooks can change the future of teaching and learn-

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ing by increasing student engagement and deepening understanding of the content with their portable, transferable, and searchable features. With accessibility to mobile devices and digital technologies on the rise in higher education, e-Textbooks can provide valuable teaching and learning opportunities.

These benefits have not led toward aggressive adoption of e-Textbooks in higher education as originally anticipated. Instructors have not utilized or modeled the use of e-Textbooks in instruction with the same fervor (Bossaller & Kammer, 2014) and college students have not necessarily adopted this format with eagerness (Benoit, 2018; Denoyelles, Raible, & Seilhamer, 2015; Peterson, 2017). The question remains why has e-Textbooks not been so readily applied even with their special features toward enhancing teaching and learning.

The reluctance to adopt e-textbooks is the focus for this research study. The study examines attributes perceived by instructors toward e-Textbooks and explores challenges concerning the use of e-Textbooks in higher education. A survey method measures how instructors from public universities in the field of education regard the use of e-Textbooks for instructional purposes. Descriptive data regarding reasons why instructors are not fully implementing e-Textbooks into their instruction offers insight. This paper reports findings and conclusions concerning how instructors perceive as variables and challenges toward adopting e-Textbooks in higher education. The paper concludes with recommendations for improving the adoption of e-Textbooks and further examination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigates the relationship between perceived attributes of e-Textbooks by instructors and their use of e-Textbooks in teaching, as well as the challenges that instructors experienced. The literature explores factors that influence instructors' decisions of adopting e-Textbooks in higher education. The four main sections of literature that includes the influence of digital learning, digital content, adoption of e-Textbooks in education, and instructor perspective frame the environment in which this study takes place. Within this framework, Rogers' (2003) perceived attributes and diffusion theory help guide the research design, data collection, and analysis of this study.

Digital Learning

Technology had lead education toward more creative ways of teaching (Costa, 2012). The times of learning by sitting in the classroom with papers and pens is diminishing from education, "the future of learning and work is digital" (Costa, 2012, p. 54). Instead of learning occurring in schools or classrooms with hard-copy books, digital learning can be an instructional practice that uses technology to enhance acquisition of knowledge (Moro, 2018; Reid, 2017). Digital learning plays an important role in improving educational quality in today's technology learning environment (Cator, 2019). An effective digital learning environment can provide students and teachers with more highly interactive communications, more collaboration among groups, and better mastery of knowledge and skills. Digital learning adopts diverse content delivery methods, and provides interactions, assessments, and flexible learning opportunities in and out of school settings. Within the digital learning environment, learners' interests increase, diverse learning needs fulfilled, and flexible adjustments applied to learning the content based on both learners' learning interests and learning needs occur (Quarles, Conway, Harris, Osler II, & Rech, 2018).

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