Exploring Digital Practices Using Mobile Apps and eTextbooks in Higher Education

2013 AECT International Convention

Aimee deNoyelles

Baiyun Chen

Center *for* Distributed Learning

UCF

Introduction

- Promises
  - Heightened access to information
  - Heightened interactivity with content, peers, instructors, and beyond
- Considerations: Access is not enough
  - Locate, evaluate, manage, use information to build new knowledge
- Understanding practices encourages implementation of support that is more student-centered (Bowen & Pistilli, 2012).

Purpose of Survey

- Understand the landscape of the adoption of mobile technologies and eTextbooks at UCF
  - Baseline for access, usage and beliefs
  - Inform our next course of action regarding faculty development
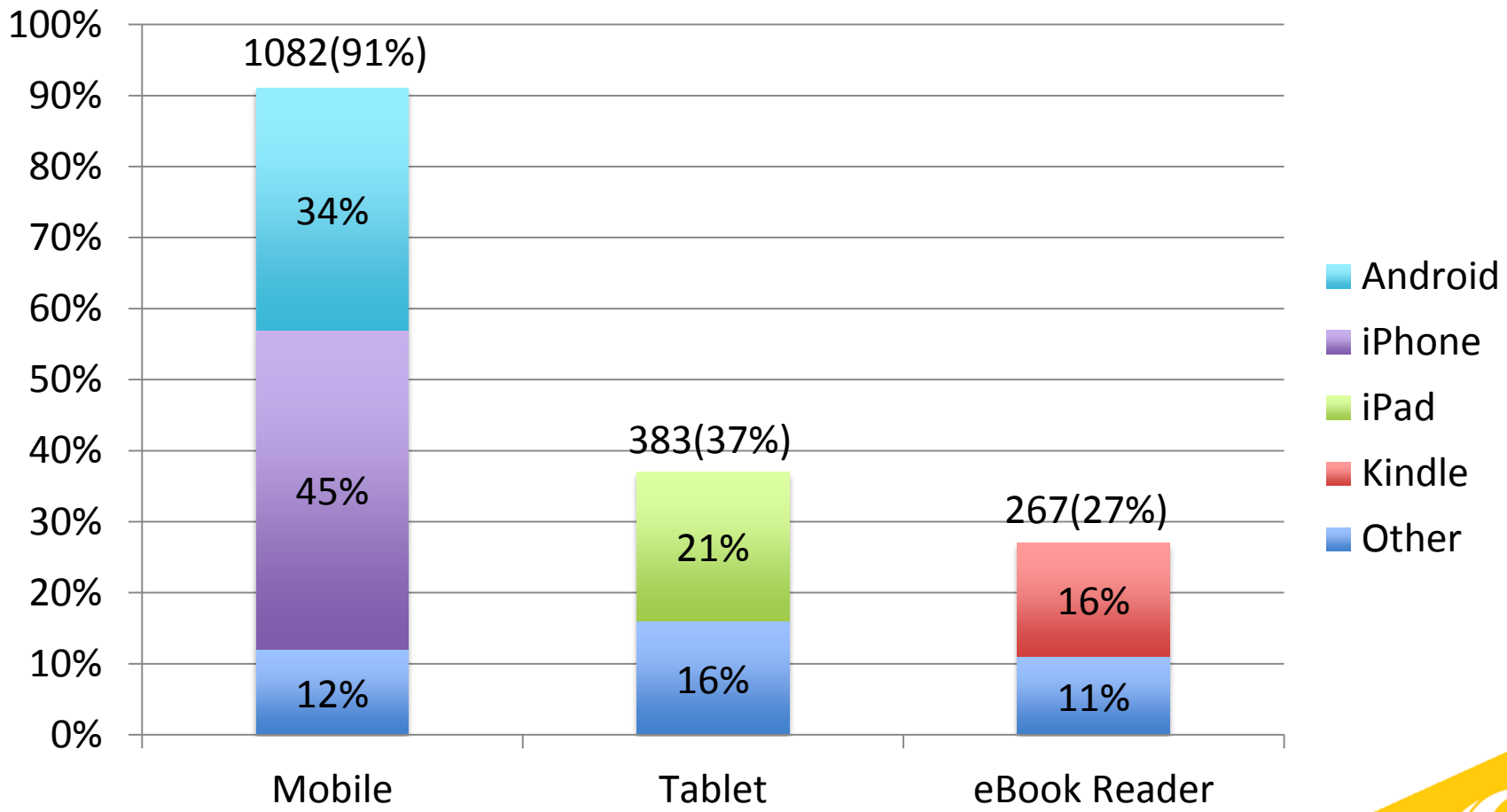
Participants

- 1082 students enrolled in online, mixed-mode and FTF classes in Summer 2012 at UCF
  - 84 courses from all 12 colleges
  - 86% undergraduates
  - 69% females
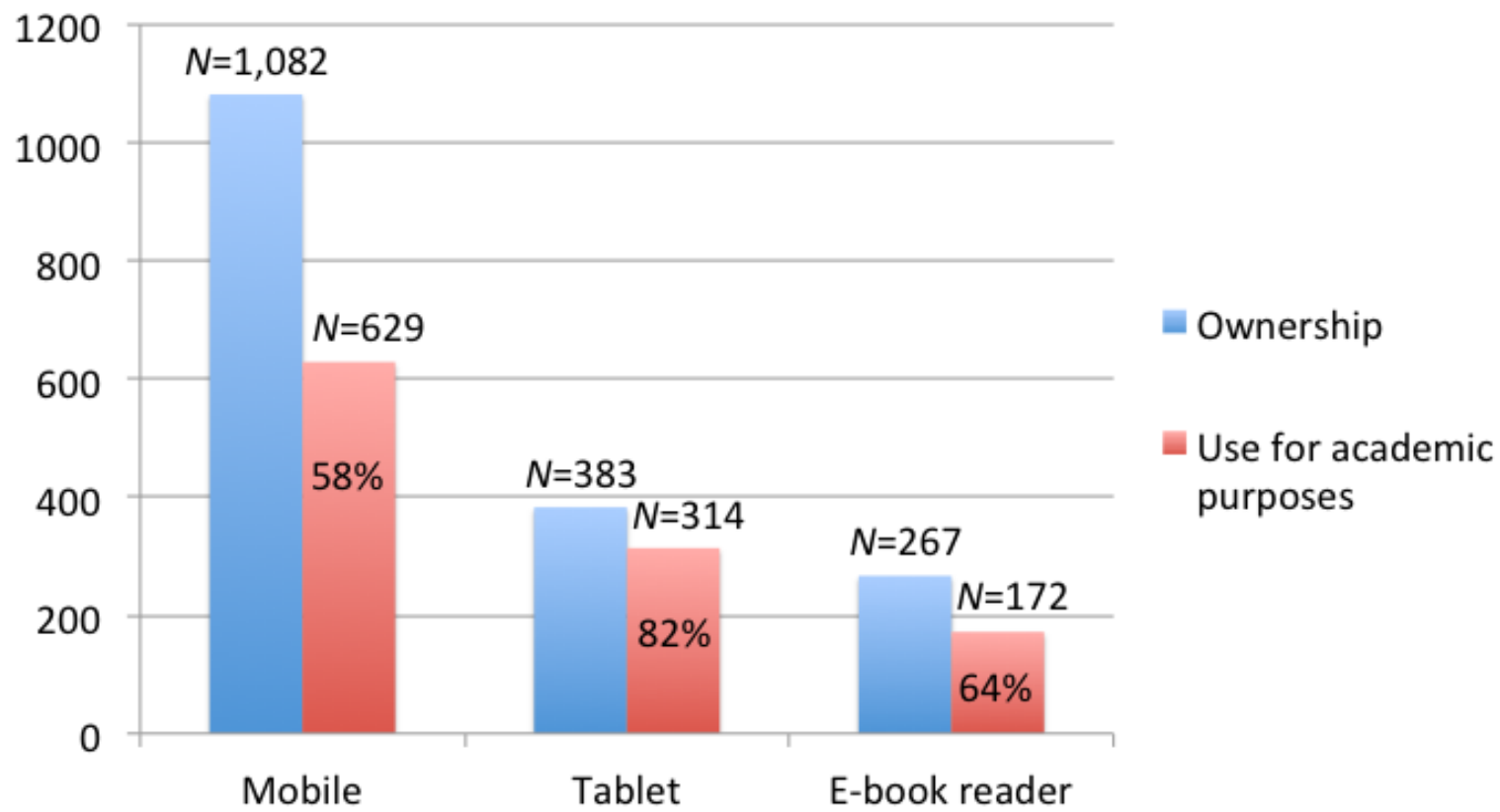 - 60% white
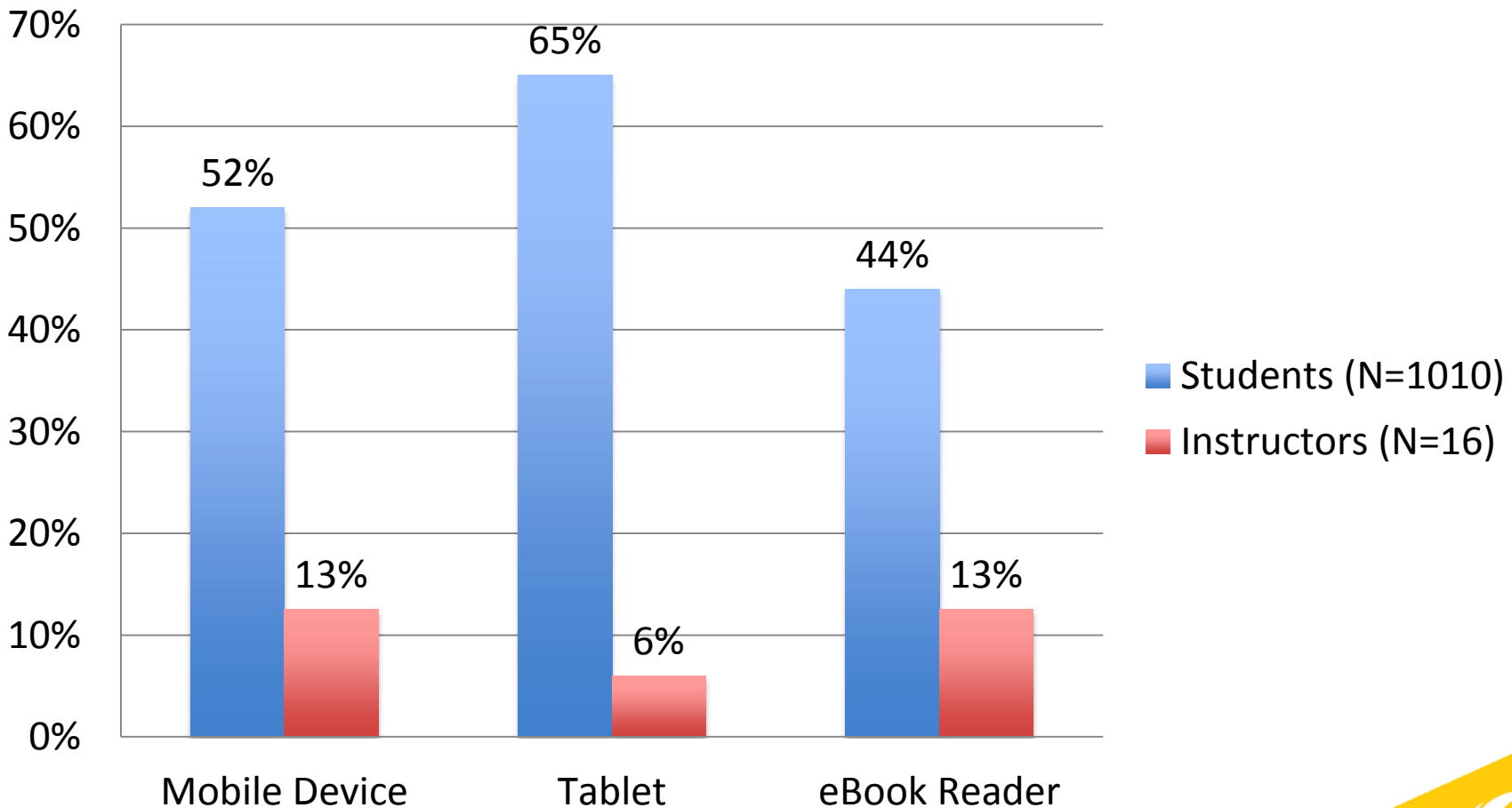 - Age 18-63 (M=26; SD=8.17)
- 16 instructors

Mobile

Use Devices
for Academic Purposes

Demographic Factors

Ownership

- Tablets
  - Graduate students
  - Age
- eBook Readers
  - GPA
  - Gender

Academic Use

- Small mobile devices
  - Freshmen and sophomores
  - Men
  - Asian
  - GPA
- eBook Readers
  - GPA

Perception of Mobile for Academic Purposes

- Easier to access (77%) and complete (64%) coursework

- Increase communication with students (70%) and instructor (55%)

- Increase knowledge in the field of study (58%)

- Improve quality of work (57%)

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eTextbook

eTextbook Access

- Most used devices
  - Mobile device: 1%
  - Tablet: 12%
  - eBook reader: 3%
  - Computer/laptop: 84%

eTextbook Access

- The majority of students (58%) have not used an eTextbook in their college studies.

- Of those that have (42%)…
  - 45% were required to use it
  - 47% became aware of the option from an instructor
  - 42% became aware on their own
  - 6% became aware from peers

eTextbook Access

- Of those who have *not* used an eTextbook…
  - 38% prefer print textbooks
  - 13% are not familiar with eTextbooks
  - 10% have not been offered this option by instructor
  - 7% did not know it was an option
  - 9% do not think they have the right device
  - 5% cited cost
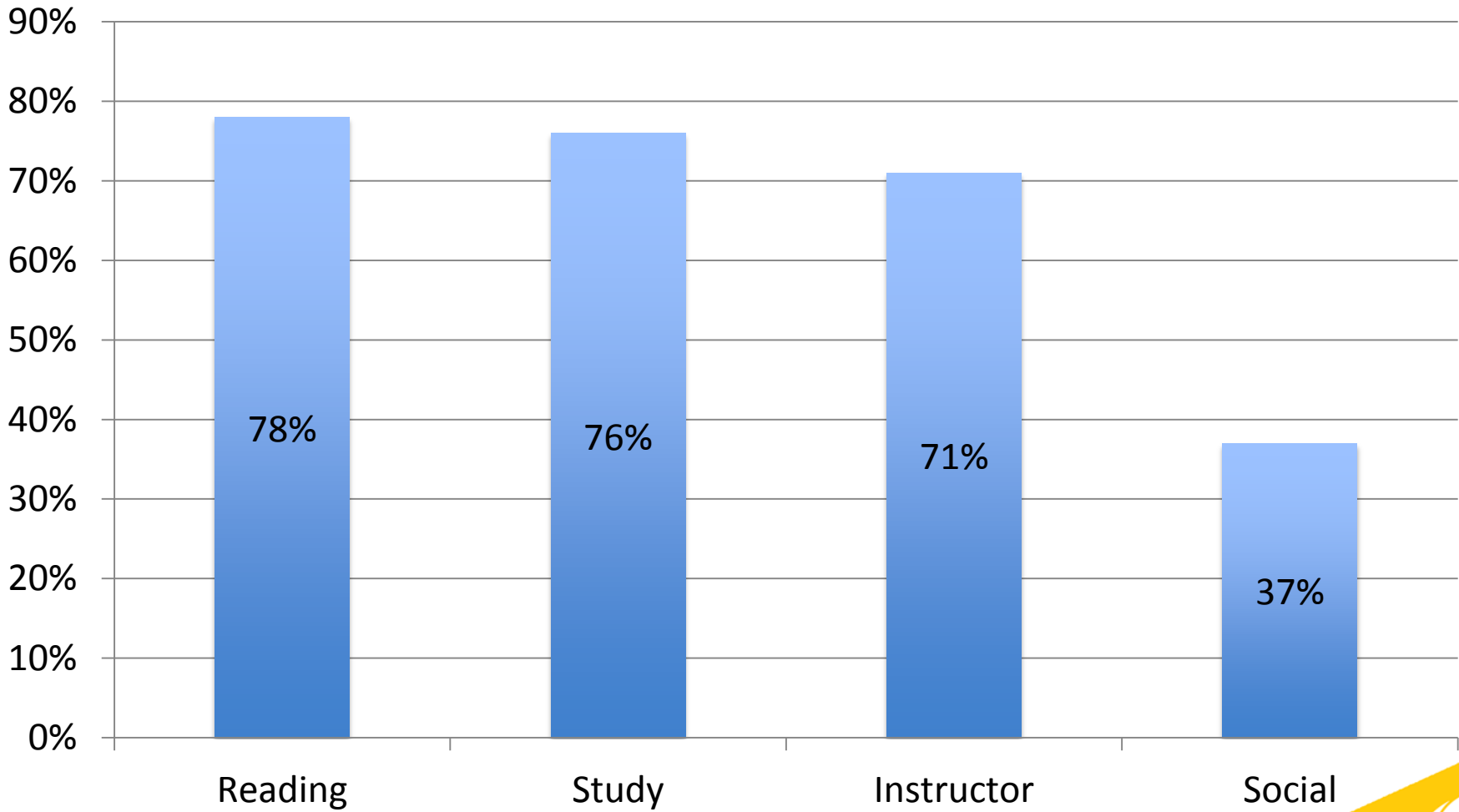 - 12% prefer to sell the book back

Perceptions of Features

- What features are 'important' or 'very important' to influence adoption of an eTextbook over a print book?
  - Read
    - Search for keywords, glossary
  - Study
    - Highlight, notes
  - Instructor
    - Highlight, annotate, respond to notes
  - Social
    - Share notes with classmates, share passages using social media

Perceptions of Features

eTextbook Use: Features

- Around 50% of students seldom or never actively used the features that facilitate learning (highlighting, making notes)
- Around 76% of instructors seldom or rarely used the same features

Beliefs about eTextbooks

- I have the technical skills. (86%)

- I have the study habits to adapt to an eTextbook. (72%)

- I would learn as effectively as with a print book. (60%)

- I would be more engaged/motivated with an eTextbook. (34%)

Main Findings

Finding 1: Access

- Vast majority of students own a mobile device but academic use is not universal.

- Tablets are most popular device for academic purposes but lower ownership than smartphones.

- eTextbooks mostly accessed on laptops but underutilized.

Finding 2: Use

- Mobile learning typically occurs outside of the formal classroom.
  - Large gap between students using mobile devices and instructors requiring mobile devices
- GPA issue
- Limited use of features within eTextbooks

Implications: Faculty Development

- Mobile
  - Leverage the apps students are already using
  - Build mobile into assignments
  - Model effective use
- eTextbooks
  - Select effective eTextbook and require it
  - Infuse into curriculum
  - Model effective use
- Work with support services

Action Taken

- Focus group

- Mobile blog: http://mobile.cdl.ucf.edu/

- Create an open faculty development course
  - Inform faculty of resources and options
  - Provide strategies to help with selection and integration of technologies in curriculum
  - Present best practices and case studies

- 2014 Mobile/eTextbook Survey

References

- Bowen, K., & Pistilli, M.D. *Student preferences for mobile app usage* (Research Bulletin). Louisville, CO: EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research, September 25, 2012.

Questions?

aimee@ucf.edu

Twitter: @aimeedeno