

Faculty and Student Perceptions of eTextbook Use in Higher Education

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eTextbook

Perceptions and Behaviors of Community College Faculty

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Introduction

Textbook Affordability Initiatives

Price of textbooks has grown over 186 percent since 1986 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2005)

- Efforts to mitigate the high cost of textbooks for students
 - Federal and state efforts aimed at textbook affordability
 - Numerous potential cost-lowering alternatives: eTextbooks, Open Educational Resources, Custom Textbooks, etc.

Faculty are integral to efforts to lower textbook costs (University of Wisconsin System Office of Operations Review and Audit, 2007).



Introduction

eTextbooks as an Alternative to Traditional Textbooks

eTextbooks seen as a lower-cost alternative to traditional textbooks (Allen, 2010; Acker, 2011)

eTextbook technology is likely to improve over time (Paxhia, 2011)



Introduction

Faculty and electronic textbooks

Few studies have examined faculty contentment with electronic textbooks (Nicholas & Lewis, 2010)

Research is likely increase as e-textbooks availability and usage becomes more prevalent (Nicholas & Lewis, 2010; Reynolds, 2011)

Why e-textbooks?

E-textbooks are emerging as a lower-cost alternative to traditional textbooks (Reynolds, 2011)



Study Background

Faculty and electronic textbook usage

Faculty perception of electronic textbooks and other alternatives (open textbooks, custom textbooks)

Faculty usage of textbook alternatives

Why?

Faculty experiences can help inform policy and efforts



Study Design

Sample population

Three institutions

- Lake-Sumter State College
- Seminole State College
- Valencia College

Survey

146 respondents

- Valencia: 108
- Seminole State: 9
- Lake-Sumter State: 29

Interviews

9 full-time faculty

- 3 from each institution



Survey Findings

Familiarity with Textbook Alternatives

Cost-Lowering Alternatives	Familiarity (N = 135)
Electronic or Digital Textbooks	127 (94%)
Open Textbooks	74 (55%)
Custom Textbook Editions	91 (67%)
“Stripped-Down” Textbooks	80 (59%)



Survey Findings

Perceived Ability to Implement Textbook Alternatives in Courses

Textbook Alternative	Very Difficult	Difficult	Neutral	Easy	Very Easy
Electronic or digital textbooks (N = 136)	5 (4%)	13 (10%)	23 (17%)	39 (29%)	56 (41%)
Open textbooks (N = 135)	16 (12%)	18 (13%)	38 (28%)	29 (21%)	34 (25%)
Custom textbook editions (N = 136)	3 (2%)	13 (10%)	29 (21%)	44 (32%)	47 (35%)
“Stripped-down” textbooks (N = 134)	8 (6%)	9 (7%)	39 (30%)	40 (30%)	38 (28%)



Interview Findings

- Electronic textbooks are viewed favorably
 - One participant adopted an electronic textbook
 - Three participants designed and adopted electronic resource collections
 - Web-based readings and open textbooks



Interview Findings

- Advantages
 - Portability
 - Annotation and highlighting
 - Cost-savings
 - Interactive/embedded features
 - Open textbooks – customizable, free



Interview Findings

- Disadvantages
 - New editions – “re-”annotation
 - Cost-savings myth?
 - Technical support/LMS integration
 - Open eTextbooks (OER) – quality and currency concerns



Textbook Selection Considerations

- Beyond Content
 - **Price - 86%**
 - Availability in lower cost formats – 85%
 - Availability in alternative formats - 77%
 - Availability Online - 65%
- Textbook Price Factor
 - Drives decisions to review current selections and adopt new selections
 - Looking for value



Discussion

- Opinion regarding the use of eTextbooks is changing
 - 94% of faculty are familiar with eTextbooks
 - 70% of faculty perceive their ability to implement eTextbooks as “easy” or “very easy”
 - Four faculty interviewed had adopted an eTextbook or similar resource



Student Perceptions of eTextbook Use in Higher Education

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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

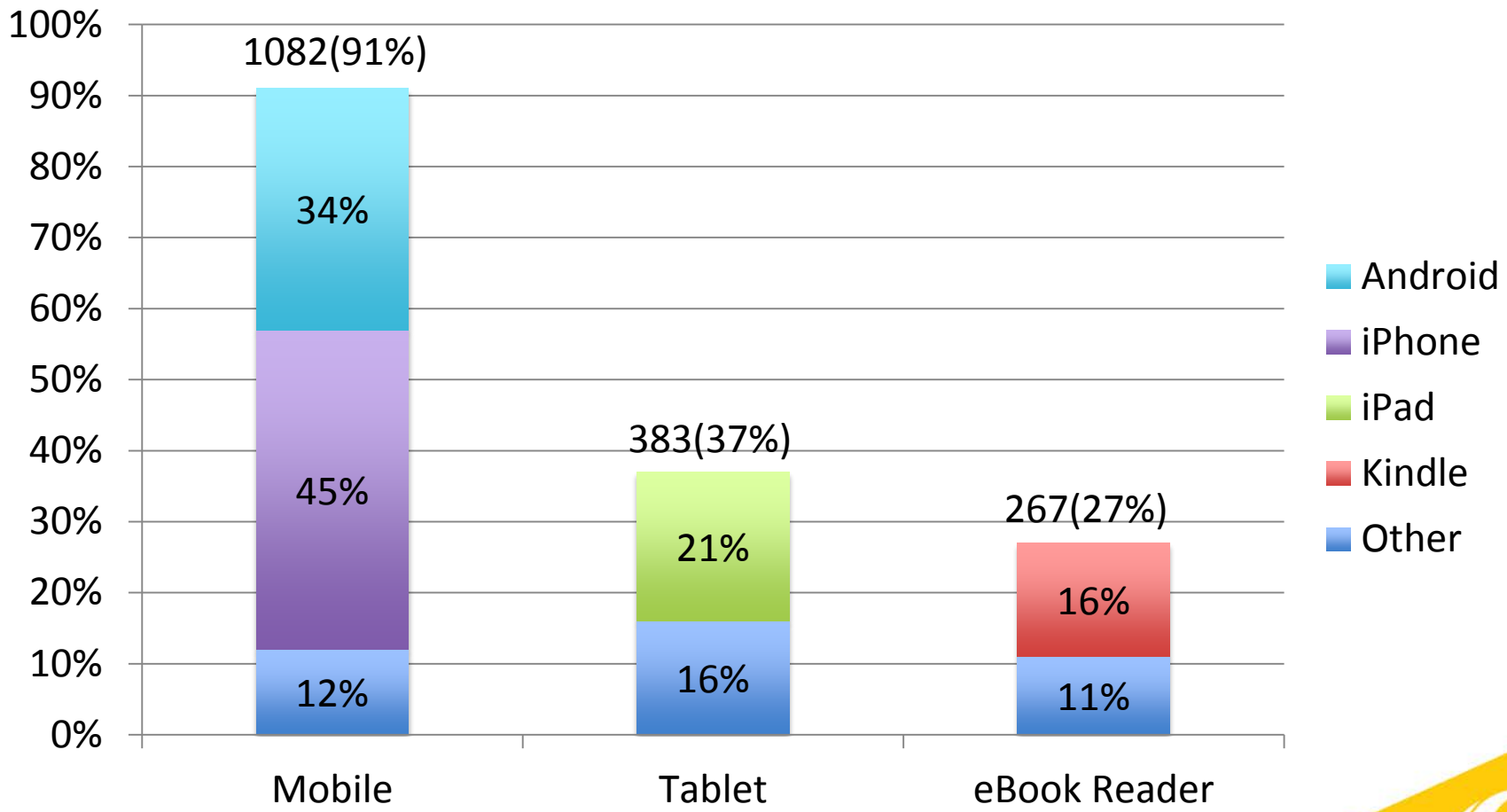


Participants

- 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
 - Ages 18-63 (M=26; SD=8.17)
- 16 instructors



Mobile Access: Device Ownership



eTextbook Access

- Most used device
 - 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%)...
 - 58% purchased, 42% rented
 - 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...
 - Preference for print (38%)
 - Unfamiliarity
 - 13% not familiar with eTextbooks
 - 10% not offered this option by instructor
 - 7% did not know it was an option
 - 9% did not think they have the right device
 - Cost
 - 12% preferred to sell the book back
 - 5% cited cost
- 86% indicated that cost is top factor for influencing them to adopt an eTextbook over print.

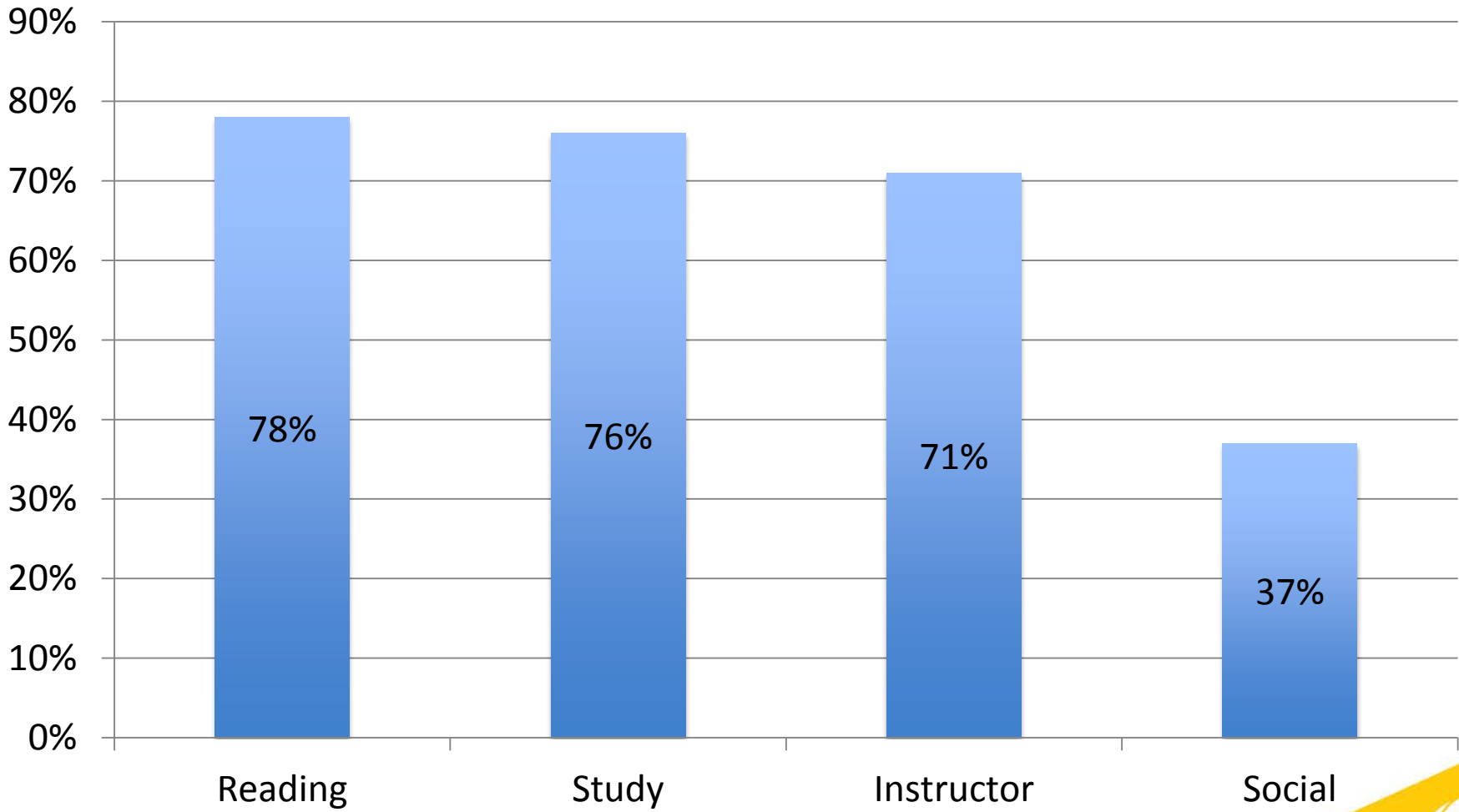


Perceptions of Features

- 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



Student Beliefs

- I have the technical skills to use an eTextbook. (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%)



Conclusion

- Commonalities
 - Around half of teachers and students are using eTextbooks.
 - Both perceive value in the reading and studying features.
 - Cost is a factor toward adopting eTextbooks.
- Differences
 - Community college encourages standardization of textbooks; university promotes choice.
 - The community college institution is driving the conversation because of affordability; university about innovation.



Recommendations

- Increase familiarity with eTextbooks
- Multiple kinds of support needed for teachers
 - Selecting an effective eTextbook
 - How to use technically and pedagogically
 - Support their students to effectively read and study
- Provider Support
 - Seamless LMS integration
 - Availability on multiple devices
 - Technical support
- Further explore “cost savings”



Questions?

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