

What Can OER Advocates Learn From The Traditional Faculty Textbook Adoption Experience?

ABSTRACT

Previous research has demonstrated the positive impacts that Open Educational Resources (OER) can have on student retention and learning, but these connections may not be compelling enough to persuade faculty to adopt OER resources in lieu of traditional textbooks and materials. What are OER advocates missing? What could OER advocates do better or differently? To be successful with OER, it is important to understand not only what OER are replicating or replacing in the classroom, but also understand the whole faculty experience, including the social aspects of textbook adoption. How do faculty hear about textbooks? Who do faculty speak with about textbook adoption? What are faculty expectations when interacting with new textbooks? This poster reports on a campus survey of faculty and their experiences and expectations regarding textbook adoption and shares opportunities for OER advocates to build upon this knowledge and create peer relationships, collaborations, and communities around OER.

METHODOLOGY

To begin addressing these questions, a Qualtrics survey was created and distributed to faculty at an R2 “high research activity” doctoral university via direct email and within the daily faculty and staff newsletter between February and March 2018. The six elements of the OER Adoption Pyramid (Cox & Trotter, 2017); *Access, Permission, Awareness, Capacity, Availability, and Volition*, were adapted to examine faculty textbook adoption practices and guided the construction of survey questions.

MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN SELECTING TEXTBOOKS

1. Quality of the content and activities
2. Cost for the students
3. Easy to find or use
4. Works with Learning Management System (LMS) / recommended by other faculty

WHERE DO FACULTY FIND TEXTBOOKS?

Faculty leveraged various connections and methods to find textbooks, including academic colleagues, the internet, textbook manufacturers, bookstores, professional conferences, or a combination of multiple methods.

When only a single method was used, differences were seen based on responses to other survey questions.

Internet as the sole method to obtain resources

- 33% of faculty under 44 years old reported using this method compared to 6% of faculty over 45 years old
- 31% of faculty who found searching for educational resources easy reported using this method compared to 0% faculty who found searching for educational resources difficult

Textbook manufacturers as the sole method to obtain resources

- 38% of faculty over 45 years old reported using this method compared to 27% of faculty under 44 years old
- 55% of faculty who found searching for educational resources difficult reported using this method compared to 23% of faculty who found searching for educational resources easy

WHAT DO FACULTY THINK ABOUT SWITCHING TEXTBOOKS?

- “I use digital textbooks that offer robust teaching and learning tools. These digital tools are available at a very reasonable cost. I see no reason to move to OER.”
- “Changing textbooks has little upside in my field as they are all pretty much the same”
- “Don't do [it] often because of work changing [the] course to match new textbook.”

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND TEXTBOOK ADOPTION

When attempting to learn about textbooks in their subject areas and deciding which to adopt, faculty often engaged in social behaviors.

How are faculty made aware of textbooks?

- 32% of faculty reported that they learn about textbooks from vendors
- 27% of faculty reported that they learn about textbooks from peers

Who do faculty speak with about textbook adoption decisions?

- 48% of faculty reported that they spoke with their peers or colleagues
- 23% of faculty reported that they spoke with vendors
- 9% of faculty reported that they spoke with students
- 3% of faculty reported that they spoke with librarians / the bookstore

TOP CHALLENGES WHEN ADOPTING TEXTBOOKS

1. Too hard / time consuming
2. Not high quality
3. Not enough resources for subject /discipline
4. No comprehensive catalog of resources

WHAT ARE OER ADVOCATES MISSING?

For the faculty who responded to this survey, textbook adoption importantly included social interactions with peers, vendors, students, and others.

To support and encourage OER use by faculty, especially in the current climate where open access to course materials is critical, libraries will need to:

“...[refocus] our efforts on relationship-building as a means to build a bridge for faculty between traditional textbooks and OER... [and] create stronger, sustainable, and more supportive OER communities on and across college campuses (Martinez et al., 2020, pp. 181-182).

LOOKING AHEAD: STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARIES

As libraries continue to support campus communities throughout and after the COVID-19 pandemic, OER will continue to be relevant.

In the last few months, many faculty have started to recognize the need to utilize textbooks and educational materials that are accessible and affordable, regardless of student location or course delivery model.

Libraries will have many opportunities to support and sustain OER across their campuses as these resources become more attractive and viable options for faculty.

These opportunities could include:

- Educating faculty about free and low – cost course material options, including OER and electronic course reserves
- “Creating opportunities for teaching faculty to collaborate and learn from each other about OER” (Martinez et al., 2020, p. 178)
- Encouraging librarians to continue building peer relationships with faculty, demonstrating that they are both colleagues and textbook stakeholders
- Developing proactive OER outreach strategies that save faculty time

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Martinez, J., Doney, J., & Stoddart, R. (2020). Emphasizing the social aspect of open access textbook adoption. In D. Chase & D. Haugh (Eds.), *Open praxis, open access: Digital scholarship in action* (pp. 171-193). American Library Association. <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/25398>

Link to copy of this poster, survey questions, and survey respondent demographics: <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/25399>

Cox, G., & Trotter, H. (2017). An OER framework, heuristic and lens: Tools for understanding lecturers' adoption of OER. *Open Praxis*, 9(2), 151-171. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5944/openpraxis.9.2.571>

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