What Can OER advocates learn from the traditional faculty textbook adoption experience? (2019 OER Symposium)

Dr Rick A Stoddart, Lane Community College
Jylisa Doney, University of Idaho
Jessica Martinez, University of Idaho
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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 around textbook adoption. How do faculty hear about textbooks? How do vendors communicate to faculty? What are faculty expectations when interacting with new textbooks? This poster reports on a campus survey of faculty and their experiences and expectations regarding textbooks adoption. The results of the survey suggest some lessons OER advocates can learn from when interacting with faculty about textbook selection options such as OER.

METHODOLOGY
A 34 question survey instrument was created in Qualtrics and distributed to faculty at an R2 “high research activity” doctoral university. The survey was distributed via direct email and within the daily faculty and staff newsletter during February and March 2018. No incentives were offered to respondents. Questions were adopted from previous OER surveys and modified to inquire about textbook adoption. The OER Adoption Pyramid developed by Cox & Trotter (2017) was adapted as a framework to examine faculty textbook adoption: Access, Permission, Awareness, Capacity, Availability, and Violation.

TOP 4 CHALLENGES TO TEXTBOOK ADOPTION
1. too hard/time consuming (27%)
2. not high quality (17%)
3. not enough resources for my subject (15%)
4. no comprehensive catalog of resources (10%)

AGE, TENURE, TECHNOLOGY USE, AND TEXTBOOK DISCOVERY
Faculty under 44 years old were more likely to select the Internet as the sole method to obtain resources for courses (33%) compared to those over 45 (6%). Faculty who found searching for resources difficult (55%) as well as those who had not used OER previously (41%) were more likely to select textbook manufacturers as the sole method for learning about resources. However, those with tenure (18%) and those over 45 (15%) were unique in identifying no comprehensive catalog of resources as a challenge, while those without tenure (15%) and those under 44 (14%) identified the difficulty integrating materials into the technology they use.

WHY CHANGE?
One faculty reported that student cost was not high enough to justify making the switch from the “digital textbooks that offer robust teaching and learning tools” “Inertia is a big deal. Changing textbooks has little upside in my field as they are all pretty much the same.” -Faculty survey respondent.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS INFLUENCE TEXTBOOK ADOPTIONS
When deciding which textbooks to adopt, faculty engaged in social behaviors with peers, department chairs, and librarians. Peers were by far the number one response for both OER users and non-users when asked who faculty talk to about textbook adoption. Students, vendors, publishers, department chairs, and librarians are all less likely to be consulted when it comes to textbooks adoption.

Six essential textbook adoption factors
The sixth and final factor relates to both internal and institutional motivation and includes the benefits and deterrents experienced when selecting and creating textbooks. Vignola is shaped by personal and pedagogical values, norms, and support and becomes the key factor in textbook use creation only when the other five factors are met.

Survey questions for textbook adopters
What benefits do you see in an instructor, derive from it a textbook promoted by a vendor?
What perks do you receive if you use a textbook promoted by a vendor?
What challenges or deterrents do you experience when selecting and adopting textbooks?
Do you have any desire to incorporate Open Educational Resources in your courses?

Availability
The fifth factor relates to the whether textbooks of requisite relevance, quality, and quantity can be used, obtained, or created.

Capacity
The fourth factor relates to the means and skills needed to use or create textbooks. These can include factors such as time, technical or semantic skills, search or implementation strategies, and peer or institutional support.

AWARENESS
The third factor relates to knowledge of, or exposure to textbooks in their subject areas. This also includes the knowledge gained by speaking to others about textbook selection or creation.

Permission
The second factor relates to the right to use or create textbooks for their courses. This includes whether institutional permission is required for textbook use or creation as well as who (faculty member or institution) holds copyright over teaching materials.

Access
The first factor relates, and base of the pyramid, relates to the exists institutional infrastructure and how it supports and/or inhibits the use or creation of textbooks.

THE STUDENT’S BEST FRIEND ARE UNTENURED FACULTY
24% of faculty participants without tenure indicated that they also speak with students about textbook selection, compared to none of the tenured faculty indicating student opinions were consulted.

Poster by: Jylisa Doney (University of Idaho), Jessica Martinez (University of Idaho), and Rick Stoddart (Lane Community College)