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11 - Open Textbooks - we have led the horses to water – now what?

Tuesday 4 June 2019 16:49 (2 minutes)

The use of open textbooks is increasing dramatically in first year physics courses. This poster will present the result of scholarly research around student perceptions, the use and impact of open textbooks as well as suggestions for how instructors might change what they do in their classroom around their use of open textbooks.

Comparing and contrasting student's attitudes in first year physics, astronomy and biology classes to open textbooks is the theme of this poster. It will also relate attitudes towards open educational resources (OER) to simple demographic information and the overall cost of textbooks to determine whether there are indicators that can be measured a priori to suggest that students in a particular course may be more or less receptive to the incorporation of OER. More than 300 students were surveyed in 10 courses over two years at Douglas College so there is enough data to form interesting correlations.

Procedures, promises, pitfalls, and the possibility of conducting further replications at multiple institutions across BC will be analyzed. The data has suggestions about the utility and ease of encouraging widespread adoption of OER in British Columbia and elsewhere.

What might instructors change about their use and adaptations of open textbooks in response to students' opinions?

Replicating previous studies on open textbooks to allow comparisons of students at Douglas College with those from other postsecondary institutions in BC and in the USA.

This was the first time I, a physical scientist, had done any type of social science research. I have learned a lot in the last two years. Come and learn from the ethical and data collection challenges that were faced, let us discuss how to ensure data reliability from student surveys, and how to discern the best way to analyze such data.

The questions that were asked included demographic questions as well as questions such as "How often does your instructor encourage you to read your textbook?" and "What is your best estimate of the percentage of exam questions that could be correctly answered using only the textbook?"

I will share how the student perceptions have changed what I and other instructors do in their courses, and how they might change what you do in your classroom. It is more than about saving money for students. Open textbooks can change how you teach. Open your mind to open textbooks.

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