

Your Students Think They Don't Need Textbooks!

Did you realize that only 51% of your students say they buy *all* the course materials you select for class? Sure, there are other options like borrowing the book from classmates or using the libraries' copies... but they clearly fall short when compared to having 24/7 access to all of the learning tools you've selected.

In contrast, many faculty members feel that textbooks are critical to students' success. Faculty say that students who use textbooks are better prepared and more engaged in the learning process. Moreover, many professors see a relationship between a student's usage of the required textbook and their success in class.

The desire to see students succeed is shared. Here's some data on this challenge to share with you.

Why Students Don't Buy Textbooks

- During a fall 2002 focus group conducted with students by the National Association of College Stores (NACS), students reported that faculty behaviors have the most influence on their decisions. Students don't always utilize textbooks because often they are not used in class for discussions or for test questions.
- During the same focus group, students noted they are also influenced by their peers – if their friends tell them they don't need the book, they'll think twice about acquiring and/or using it.
- Many students have the perception that textbooks are not worth their price. In a student attitude study conducted by NACS, students were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement "textbooks are usually worth the price." The statement received a rating of 2.2 on a scale of one to five; the lowest mean rating of all statements included in the survey in terms of level of agreement.

Yes, textbooks **are** expensive. But the average college stores' margin on textbooks has remained stable for the past seven years – and at a margin that covers personnel, operating costs, rent and the administrative fees that are typically assessed by an institution.

Still, because students indicate that their professor is the most influential factor in their decision to use a textbook, there is hope that students' behavior can be turned around. By using the textbook in class and demonstrating the relationship between having the book and passing the class, you can directly increase the likelihood that students will obtain their textbooks.

Suggestions from Other Faculty Members

NACS collected some suggestions from your peers about how they help boost textbook usage in their courses. Here are several strategies other faculty members have found helpful:

- Using the textbook during the first or second week of class
- Giving open book tests
- Conducting weekly quizzes based on the textbook assignments
- Instructing students to read out loud in class from the textbooks
- Basing class discussions on certain charts, graphs or illustrations from the textbook
- Providing students with a brief summary of the time and rationale used to select the textbook

College stores are as committed to education and learning as you are. Working together, we can help ensure that the materials you've selected actually get into your students' hands – and minds!

National Association of College Stores, Student Watch™ Campus Market Research, *Textbooks and Course Materials II*. Oberlin: National Association of College Stores, 2000
National Association of College Stores, Student Watch™ Campus Market Research, *Textbooks and Course Materials II*. Oberlin: National Association of College Stores, 2000
National Association of College Stores, *College Store Industry Financial Report*. Oberlin: National Association of College Stores, 1996-2003.