



Advancing Learning with eTextbooks

Spotlight on: Fred Feldon

It's been said that teaching is not a profession; it's a passion. Fred Feldon, instructor and prior 15-year department chair of the mathematics department at Coastline Community College in California, exemplifies this as a lifelong educator, a pioneer in the movement from print to digital, and a trusted advisor to his colleagues.

Fred is currently retired but continues to teach a couple of sections of his favorite course, Liberal Arts Math.

As a true leader, Fred created Coastline's first online math class in 1999 using digital materials. He initially used WebCT, writing everything from scratch, then moved to Prentice Hall Interactive Math (PHIM), in which he and his students were severely disappointed, finding the technical issues disastrous. In 2005, Fred attended the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC). This annual conference provides high-quality professional development and an opportunity for instructors at two-year institutions to scrutinize publishers and their products. While there, he spoke with Pearson editors,

marketing managers, authors, and reps who walked him through MyMathLab, and he was immediately intrigued, adopting it soon after. He has attended AMATYC every year since and "every year I've always found Pearson to have the best program, the best product, and the best people... It has remained, for me, the premier math online learning and course management system."

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Since adopting Pearson, Fred has welcomed the many opportunities Pearson has offered him and his students to provide their insights and feedback in a continuous effort to improve relationships and products. "I've always been amazed at the level to which Pearson has gone to solicit input from us frontline workers. So, thank you."

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According to Fred, students absolutely love the eTextbook and appreciate the interactivity and variety of features it offers. At the start of every semester, Fred shares with his students how much he recommends the eTextbook version over the physical book because of the various beneficial features it offers them such as the ability to search for keywords, bookmark pages, highlight, and add notes. “I constantly praise to students how much I love the eText.” Explaining to students how it can help them study and prepare for assessments leads to the vast majority choosing to use eTextbook over loose-leaf.

Fred and his students alike use the mobile app because it offers flexibility, convenience, and the ability to read or listen to the text without carrying around a large physical book. Fred has found the mobile app to be especially beneficial for him as an instructor, explaining, “I can work from home. We travel back and forth between homes, and I don’t need to bring the book with me. It’s there, I can open it up, copy and paste, and put pictures of the book into the messages I send to everyone. You just can’t do that with a regular book.”

As with many institutions around the country, there is a big push for affordable course material options at Coastline Community College. While there is considerable pressure in the mathematical department to adopt Open Educational Resources (OERs), Fred finds the price of the Pearson eTextbook reasonable and after researching OER options he says, “I just haven’t found an OER source that’s the equivalent of a Pearson textbook and MyLab

learning management system. The combo of the two (eTextbook plus MyLab and Mastering) is so powerful, well-designed, content-rich, and user-friendly.” In addition to looking into OER options, he has also looked around for other textbooks, but in 1999, while teaching Liberal Arts Math, Fred discovered the Bennett and Briggs, *Using & Understanding Mathematics: A Quantitative Reasoning Approach* textbook and has continuously used the eTextbook through all the editions (currently 8th) because “it’s still the best Liberal Arts Math textbook out there.”

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Though Fred is retired, he very much lives the “once an educator, always an educator” mindset. Therefore, he continues to keep in close contact with his previous colleagues and the majority appreciate his opinion when it comes to course materials. “I do have some folks who admire my advice, and my advice has always been (the price) is affordable.”

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