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# Advancing Learning with eTextbooks

## Spotlight on: Justin Hoshaw

Waubonsee Community College is a public, two-year institution with campuses in Sugar Grove, two in Aurora, and Plano, Illinois. They offer more than 130 degrees and certificates, enrolling over 7,100 students, with a graduation rate of 32.8%. The majority of students are traditional, with a small percentage (2%) of dual enrollment high school students.

Justin Hoshaw, instructor associate professor of biology at Waubonsee Community College, has a history of partnering with Pearson to ensure that quality course materials are up to Waubonsee Community College's faculty standards. He does this by reviewing eTextbooks, creating test bank questions, and utilizing Mastering Microbiology. Recently, Justin and a colleague went through an extensive review for their microbiology course. As part of the process, they reviewed chapters 5 and 8 from Microbiology: Basic and Clinical Principles by Lourdes P. Norman-McKay. Prior to this review, Justin and a colleague had been looking to adopt a new eTextbook and both were so impressed with the Norman-McKay book that they were the first in the country to adopt it, even before it was published.

There are a variety of reasons behind his adoption, with one being that "The writing had exceptional clarity and was engaging, our students weren't going to be confused, falling asleep, or struggling to read… Her writing is excellent and the focus on trying to help students without overburdening them with extra, unnecessary information that they are not going to use moving forward, aligned perfect with what I was looking for."

According to Justin, introducing scientific concepts in a variety of ways is important for student learning and the way the material was laid out in the eTextbook resonated with differing learning styles.  "The way ideas were presented in this book walked a fine line of being familiar but with just enough of a twist to be fresh and we believed in a way that would help students learn better."

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Furthermore, he felt the embedded case studies helped students learn and engage with the material in a meaningful way that supported their learning in the eTextbook. "I believe the embedded case studies helped build upon knowledge in a logical foundational approach and engaged the excited reader with anticipation of what is next."

Finally, what impressed Justin the most and what he had never seen in any other textbook he had used, was the way it supported students with their studying and comprehension with tips and tutoring placed timely throughout their reading. "What sinched the deal was the study recommendations and coaching throughout the text. I had never seen so many tips for students to keep in mind that would help them understand the material. It was as if the instruction was already embedded into the text and coaching them along."

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Student feedback has been encouraging for Justin since adoption. Compared to their previous text, "(students) found the readability was much better. The flow of the writing made more sense. It was more engaging. It wasn't so drawn out, but it felt like it was more conversational." On top of the more engaging content, students also appreciated the study tips that are perfectly placed

throughout and they "felt like they had a tutor right there with them while they were reading the text." Having case studies and interacting with questions is a nice way to engage with the tech. I have heard positive things from the students about that."

The interactive eTextbook, available within the Mastering course, offers a variety of features that maximize student learning, according to Justin. The learning objectives situated in every section help students determine what they should be studying, better preparing them for their assessments. Furthermore, they are helpful for Justin when designing test questions, as it ensures the questions are reflective of what students are studying. "One of the things I really like about the eTextbook are the learning objectives. I think it's fabulous how specific and focused they are. It has been great for creating exam questions. It's been great for students producing study guides." The ability to highlight and add notes into the eTextbook also helps students with studying. It allows them to focus on exactly what they need to know which makes their time studying more effective. "There are some students that are going to go back and reread the whole chapter when studying for an exam. No, let's go back and look at those highlights. Look at the comments you added into the text. It will save you time. It will help you focus on those important concepts that you've already highlighted and already commented on. You are going to be more successful reflecting on that information."

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The Pearson+ mobile app that offers both the eTextbook and audiobook options has been beneficial for busy students. The convenience and flexibility of accessing their course materials on the go has helped them keep up with their assignments and supported their learning. "Many students want to listen to the eTextbook. There is a benefit to being able to go through and read the text, but then having the audio to listen to as they are reading, I think that really helps reinforce the information for the students. It helps keep them on track."

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Previously Justin was encouraging students to buy the print version of the eTextbook, but in addition to the beneficial features and interactivity of the eTextbook for students, he has found some features helpful for himself as well, particularly the instructor dashboard. The analytics provided within MasteringMicrobiology help him gauge the engagement students are having with the eTextbook, providing him with valuable information when speaking with struggling students. "That was something that caused me to take a second look at having students use the eTextbook, the ability for the faculty member to go in and identify how long students have spent reading, how many comments they've made, how many highlights

they've made. Justin encourages his students to use a variety of features such as note taking, to promote active reading and increase student engagement with the text.

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