

2006 Philadelphia Annual Meeting (22–25 October 2006)

Paper No. 205–2

Presentation Time: 8:00 AM–12:00 PM

### **THE TEXTBOOK: DEAD? OR ALIVE!**

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Traditionally, textbooks play a central role in determining what and how we teach. Textbooks are often viewed by students as the authoritative source for information and as defining the scope of information that is relevant to a course. Similarly, many faculty use textbooks to structure the scope and sequence of material presented and as the primary resource for students to use in preparing for class and reviewing important concepts. However, these views of the textbook derive from a time when teaching focused on factual learning and information was difficult to access. Today, the ubiquitous use of the internet by students and faculty provides a source for up-to-date information, including animations and visualizations, as well as opportunities for learning catalyzed by on-line exploration of data.

In May 2006, NSF supported the Reconsidering the Textbook workshop which brought together >50 faculty, program officers, and representatives from the publishing world (including Microsoft and Google) to shape a vision for the textbook that reflects research on how people learn, the current focus on student-centered teaching, and opportunities for incorporating the internet and computing platforms as learning tools (<http://serc.carleton.edu/textbook>). The vision that emerged from the workshop emphasized an integrated learning environment supporting all aspects of student learning.

Attendees agreed that an essential part of this learning environment will likely be a streamlined course guidebook, modeled on the thin travelers' guides that help tourists understand the opportunities and resources available when they enter a new city. This guide, coupled with extensive vetted on-line resources, will replace the traditional heavy, expensive textbook in providing scope and structure for courses. The key challenge in moving forward is balancing the desire for flexible, customizable, open-ended learning environments with the value of structured, reviewed, authoritative sources reflecting community consensus.

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General Information for this Meeting

Session No. 205

We Can Do Better: Alternatives to the Same Old Lab–Lecture Format in the College Classroom (Posters)

Pennsylvania Convention Center: Exhibit Hall C

8:00 AM–12:00 PM, Wednesday, 25 October 2006

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