



Colorado Community Colleges Online

Rhonda Epper, Ph.D., Co-Executive Director

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*The students
are getting
excellent content
for a great value.*

*Rhonda Epper, Ph.D.
Co-Executive Director
CCCOOnline*

According to a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, college students spend an average of \$900 a year on textbooks. For community college students, that's as much as 72 percent of their tuition and fees. And for a rising tide of student groups, faculty, and school administrators, that's too much.

Pearson is doing something about it. In a groundbreaking partnership with Colorado Community Colleges Online (CCCOOnline), a distance-learning organization comprising 13 institutions of the Colorado Community College system, Pearson has agreed to provide digital textbooks throughout the program for a reduced and far more affordable fee per semester per student.

"Once e-content became more sophisticated and easier to use," says CCCOOnline co-executive director Rhonda Epper, "we saw an opportunity to improve our course content by adding interactivity while substantially lowering course costs for our students."

Through the new eTextbook program, students pay a onetime digital materials charge with their tuition. They know upfront exactly how much it will cost to take their CCCOOnline course—no hidden fees, no extra course material costs. Students may print sections from their eTextbook and may also obtain their text in a custom, low-cost, black-and-white print version via participating campus bookstores.

CCCOOnline's eTextbooks are more than PDF versions of the text. Each eBook includes rich, interactive digital content and links. "Students are getting more value for their money," says Epper. "The materials can't be separated from the course. They are integral parts of it."

In addition, the Pearson-CCCOOnline eTextbook model represents a solution to the problem of edition changes. "Because the book is digital, we decide when we move to a new edition and revise a course," says Epper. "And we don't worry about the bookstore's running out of an edition. Having control over the revision cycle is a significant savings of staff time."

Student surveys indicate that the embedded videos and slide shows are already big hits. Students appreciate that eTextbooks offer them control over their learning process: they can review concepts as many times as they need to and go as slowly or as quickly as suits their learning style.

Students had the following to say when asked to describe their eTextbook experience:

- I really enjoyed it! I am in the military and have to travel with my laptop and schoolbooks to complete assignments. The digital textbook made a world of difference.
- Way to go green!
- I took the course during the time that my children started school. The money I saved on books allowed me the freedom to do other things for the start of my children's schooling.
- I loved it! It took the school a while to give me my financial aid voucher, so although I got behind on my other classes because of a lack of material, I never got behind in this class; the material was already here for my use.

CCCOOnline launched the program in summer 2008. By the end of spring 2009, 22 courses—in such departments as Biology, Business, Criminal Justice, Economics, Geography, History, Human Nutrition, Management, Marketing, Psychology, and Sociology—will be using eTextbooks. By 2011, the school expects the majority of courses will be taught with eTextbooks.

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