

FlexBooks Provide Many Advantages

As many of you by now have heard, Wickenburg High School (WHS) has begun to develop FlexBooks for use in math and the sciences. The books are currently developed for Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology and Chemistry and are being used in both a digital version (iPads and computers) and in print form. You likely are asking what is a FlexBook? Well, FlexBooks are open educational resources (free for use) which are developed by various foundations and schools and are made available through a new type of copyright licensing established by the Creative Commons organization.

In Wickenburg we have worked with CK-12, a non-profit organization, which is backed financially by Sun Microsystems and also individuals from Utah where the state has adopted use of FlexBooks in all schools. Through these partnerships WHS teachers have learned how to take the CK-12 books and create modified versions which align to Wickenburg's curriculum and class requirements. We will continue to expand FlexBook development as time progresses and I truly believe you will see more and more school districts doing the same as time progresses.

FlexBooks are an important innovation, not only because they enable a school district to design resources which align to their curriculum, but also because they hold great promise for saving thousands of dollars. The traditional textbook, which most of us will be familiar with, tends to cost around \$100 per copy in the area of math or science. Alternatively, a FlexBook costs approximately \$7 if provided in print form and comes at no cost if used digitally. Clearly there is a cost for teachers to develop FlexBooks which are aligned with the local curriculum, but it does not approach the expense of purchasing a commercial textbook. Furthermore, when local teachers design FlexBooks they are able to make ongoing adjustments to the material and they tend to have greater "ownership" in the final product.

So, do plan to hear more about this innovation as time progresses and know that many advantages exist with FlexBook development and use in our schools. As stated earlier, I truly believe that FlexBooks will revolutionize the way school districts deal with the textbook issue and am excited to see how this movement progresses.