

2012

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Repository Citation

Roberson, Amy Nicole, "A Kindle DX Experiment and Follow-Up Survey on Student Reading and Note-Taking Habits" (2012).
Library Faculty Research. 24.
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A Kindle DX Experiment and Follow-Up Survey on Student Reading and Note-Taking Habits

Amy Roberson, Special Collections and Archives Librarian

Opportunity

Grinnell College received 14 Kindle DXs to use in a section of Tutorial, a required course for all first-year students.



Goals

The research team, composed of the instructor, curricular technology specialist, and librarians explored how well the Kindle DX encouraged active reading and facilitated interactions among students and texts.

Technical Obstacles

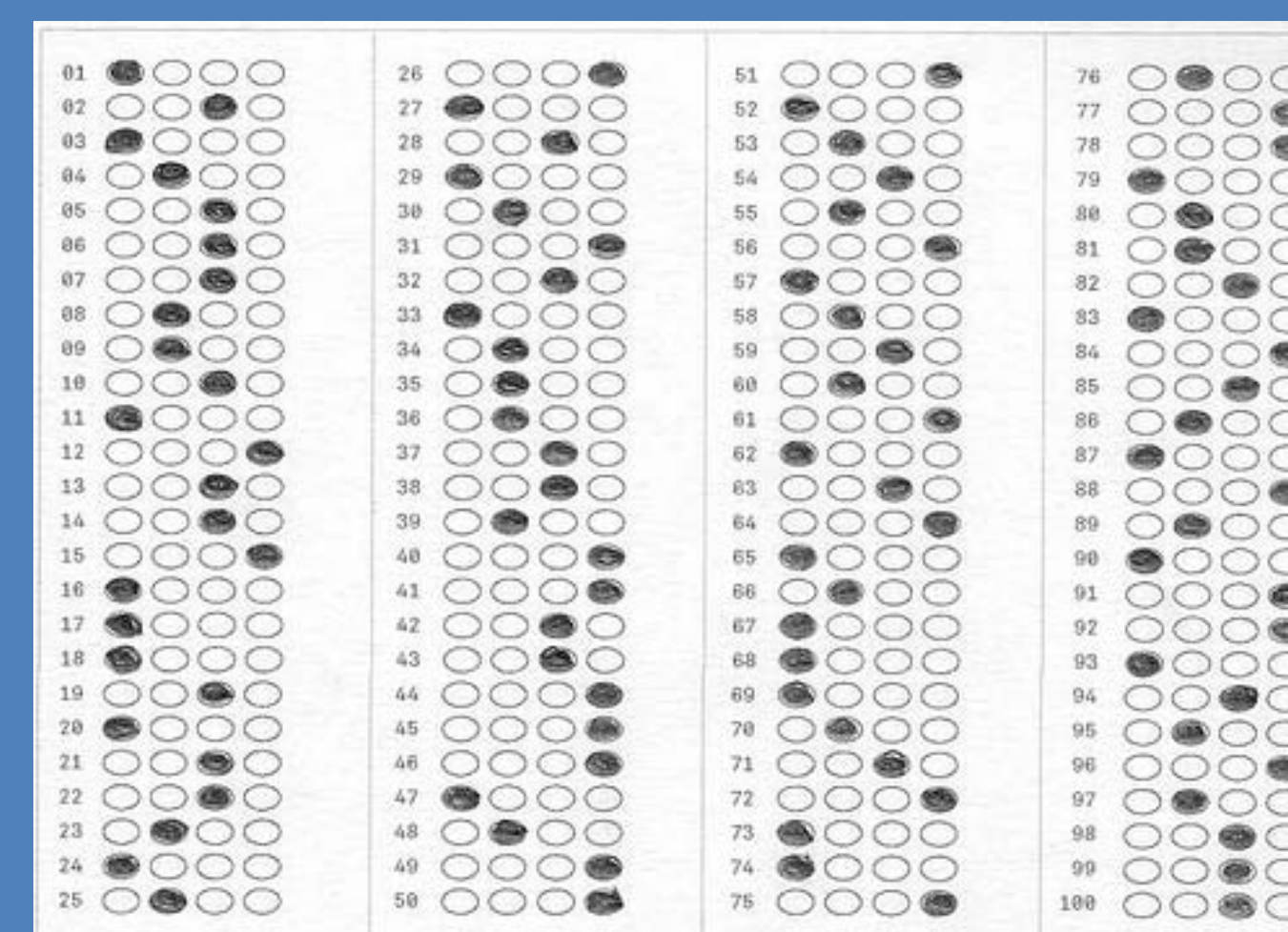
- Cannot annotate PDFs
- Ability to interact with other Kindle users not part of the design process
- Annotations are stored in a cumbersome single text file

Feedback

The 12 students in the Tutorial as well as the instructor were asked to complete a mid-semester and end-of-the-semester questionnaire reflecting upon their experiences.

One student wrote:

I have to think a little bit more carefully about the material that I'm reading for the sake of taking clear, and concise notes..it is a pain...typing on the Kindle..however, while taking notes on it I've noticed that the difficulties presented in typing forces me to be more precise in my note taking...and if I feel like ranting or have a sudden rush of ideas I just bust out my notebook...



The instructor commented:

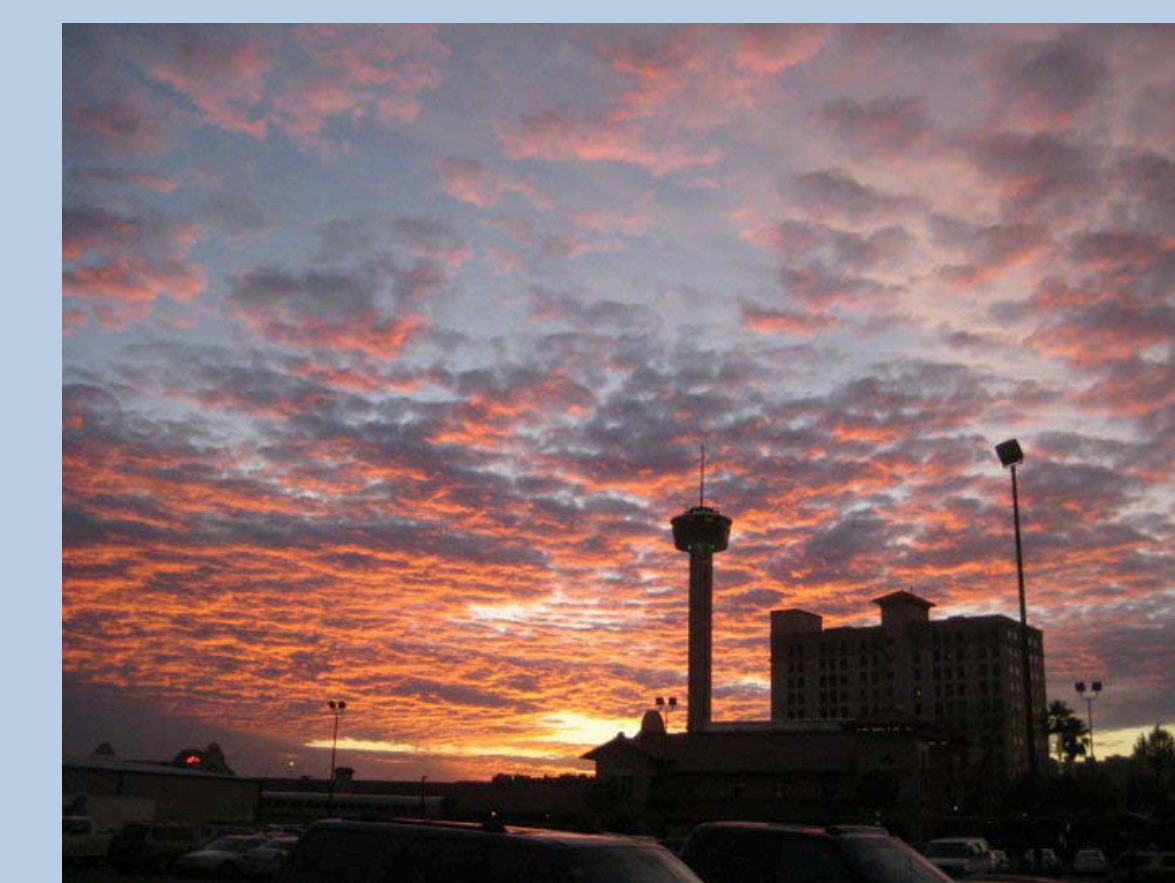
I believe that they have learned to compare texts better as we have moved through the semester. I think that this has been due to the way assignments have been structured, which is in part due to the Kindle. At this point, I believe that the same goals could be reached to the same level without the Kindle."

Conclusions

The lackluster response from the instructor and students led us to study reading and note-taking habits of students.

We found that students had intricate methods of taking notes that included the use of multiple highlighter colors and "sticky notes," to name a few. All of the students surveyed completed course reading on-paper, not on-screen.

A device that allows students to personalize their reading process will surely be the most popular in the future.



Acknowledgements

Mike Connor, Curricular Technology Specialist, Grinnell College
Kevin Engel, Science Librarian, Grinnell College
T. Andrew Mobley, Associate Professor of Chemistry, Grinnell College

Credits

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