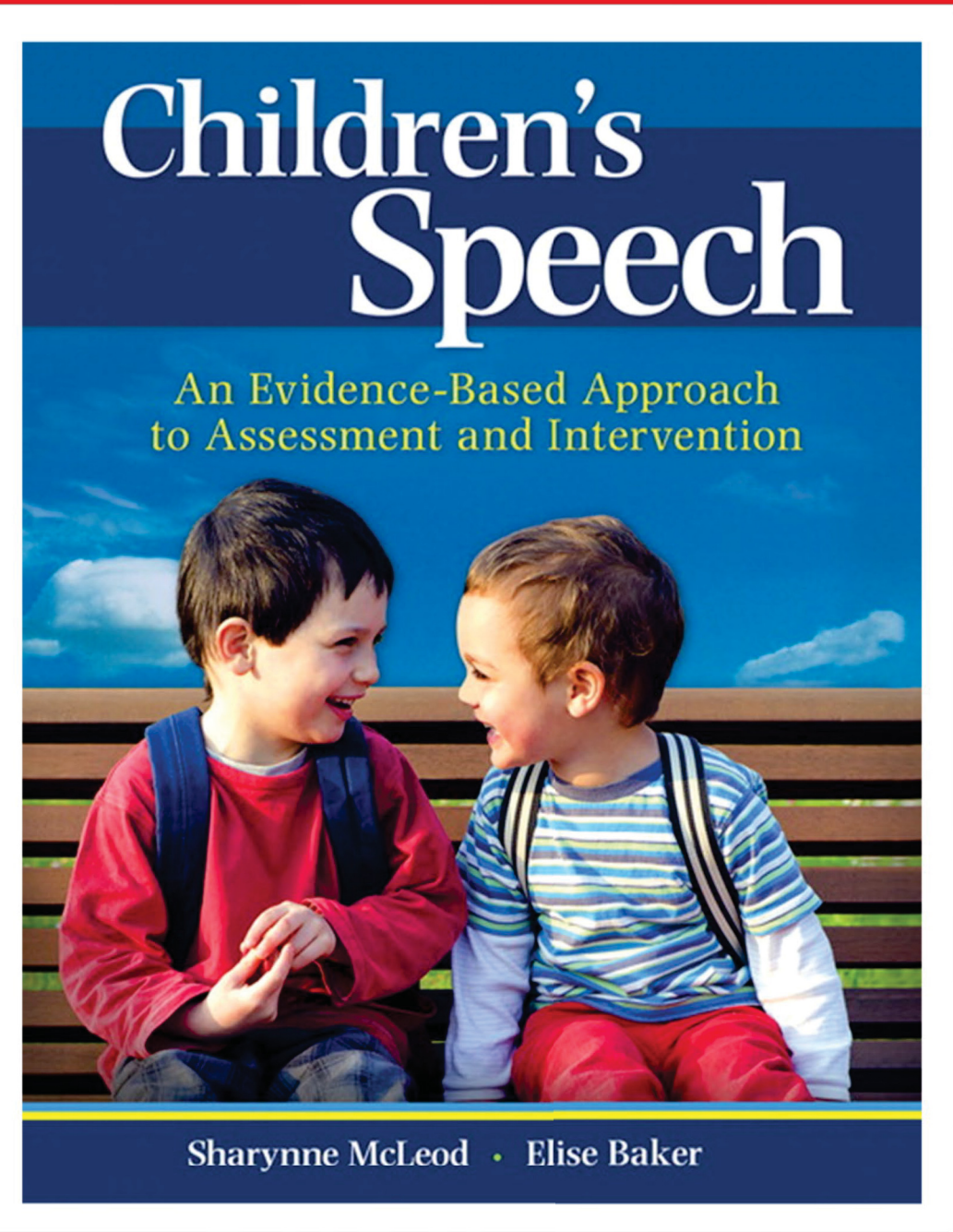
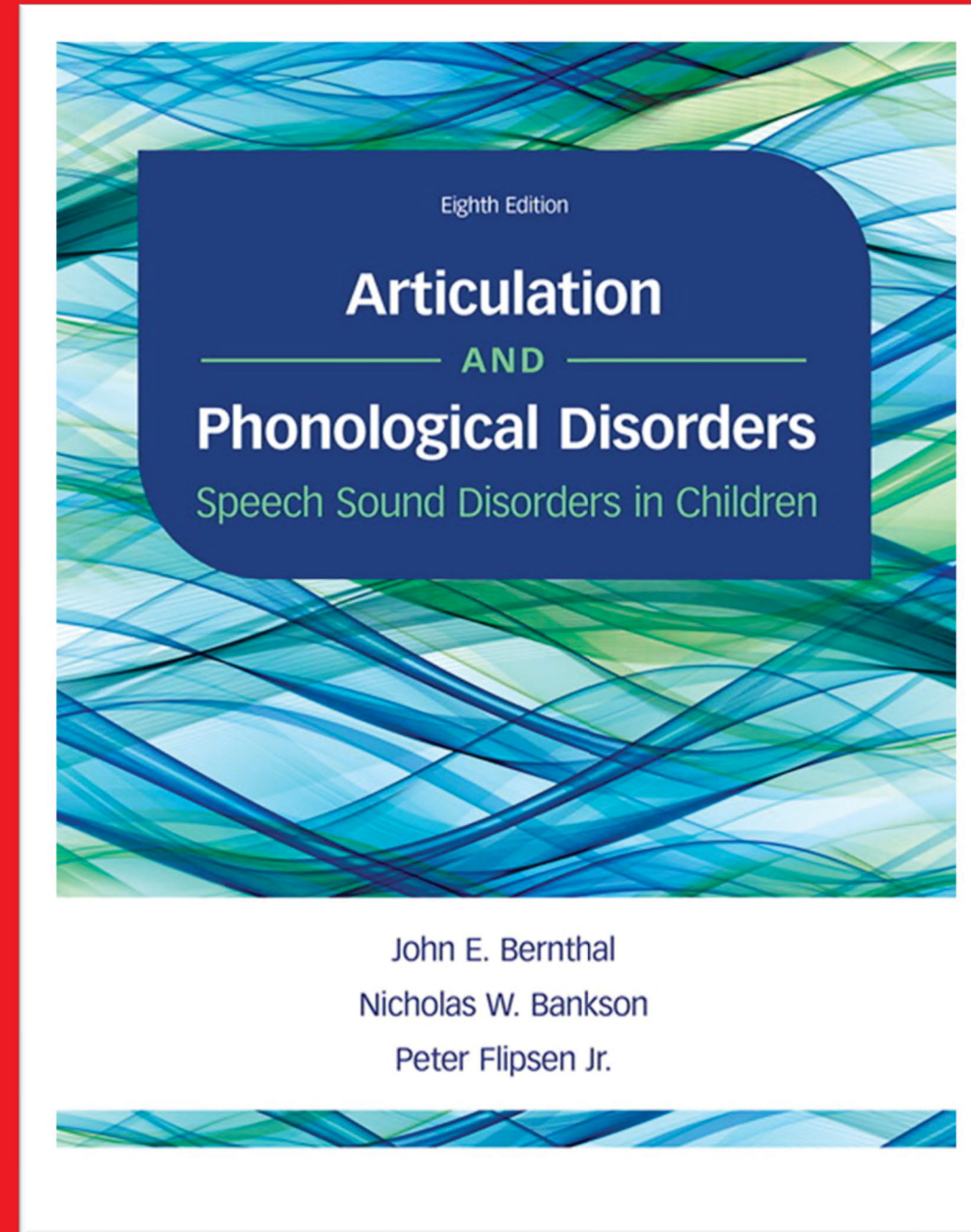


# THE TEXTBOOK CONUNDRUM: CSD STUDENTS' TEXTBOOK PREFERENCES

Julie Tapp

Faculty Sponsors: Drs. Crystal Randolph & Ruth Renee Hannibal  
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

**ABSTRACT** How do most students describe their textbooks? Expensive, confusing, and let's be honest, boring, but are there certain characteristics that make a student prefer one textbook over another? Based on current research, students have been shown to equally recall information read from an electronic book (e-books) and hard copy text. The difference is in the duration a student can focus on the information. Due to eyestrain associated with computers, students cannot stay focused on electronic text as long as paper text. Another factor is chapters tend to be extended for e-books. Students have also been shown to use textbooks more when given assigned reading versus whole chapter reading. Lacking in the literature is information related to preferences for particular textbooks by students in Communication Sciences & Disorders (CSD). Typically, professors choose texts for courses with little regard for student preferences. The current study investigated if CSD students preferred one speech sound disorders textbook to others.



## INTRODUCTION

There is no denying that many students may loath their textbooks. Research may not be needed to inform one of the above assumption. However, research has been completed to determine whether there are aspects about textbooks that students prefer more and whether these aspects would increase students' desires to use their textbooks more. As technological advances increase, the decision to choose a hard copy or electronic text becomes eminent. With tablets and other handheld devices becoming increasingly popular, many companies are now publishing books as hard copies and as electronic books or e-books. One group of researchers compared whether students with e-books or hard copies used their text more (Rockinson-Szapkiw, Courduff, Carter, & Bennett, 2012). Their findings revealed that students who used the e-book understood what they were learning better and felt more positive about their learning than the students who used the hard copy books. Even with the positive findings above, students may still prefer to use hard copy books after using e-books because hard copy books allow a student to highlight and take notes in their books.

Berry, Cook, Hill, and Stephens (2010) examined factors that cause a student to be more likely to read their textbook. One notable finding from this study was that even though students know the importance of reading and realize the expectation of the teacher for them to do so, they will avoid the task of reading their text. Barry et al. (2010) also found that students are more likely to read their text if the reading assignment is given in smaller chunks rather than longer, extensive reading assignments. For example, if a teacher tells a class on Monday that they should have chapter 3 read by Wednesday, but chapter 3 is 50 pages long, then students are less likely to read the chapter than if the teacher requested the students to read the first 10 pages of chapter 3. Students prefer to know essential information rather than additional interesting information a professor may provide (Barry et al., 2010).

Research has been completed about the many factors that may influence college students' motivation to read their course texts. However, no research exists that have studied students' preferences of course texts and whether assisting with choosing texts would motivate students to read more. Many students may complain about their current course text selections but may never have the opportunity to voice their opinions. The current study investigated students in the communication sciences and disorders (CSD) department preferences for texts in the speech sound disorders courses..

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Which speech sound disorders text do students prefer more?
2. Do students agree to read more if they had an option to choose their course text?
3. What are the characteristics of the text most students preferred?

## METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted using a purposive sampling of 136 CSD students. The demographics are as follows:

- 127 Females; 8 Males
- 133, 18-29 year-olds; 2, 30-49 year-olds
- 45 First year graduates; 44 seniors; 40 Junior; 3 Post Baccalaureate; 3 No Response
- 112 Caucasian; 16 Black; 3 Hispanic; 2 Multiracial; 2 No Response
- 63 Rural; 49 Suburban; 20 Urban; 3 No Response
- 74 Currently Enrolled in an SSD Course; 60 Not Currently Enrolled in an SSD Course; 1 No Response

Two different books were used to gather the samples that were used in the survey. Book A is *Articulation and Phonological Disorders: Speech Sound Disorders in Children* and Book B is *Children's Speech: An Evidence-Based Approach to Assessment and Intervention*. From each book, samples of the chapter introductions, charts, explanations of phonological processes, and chapter summaries were selected. Participants were also queried about other general course text preferences. Visual analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze data.

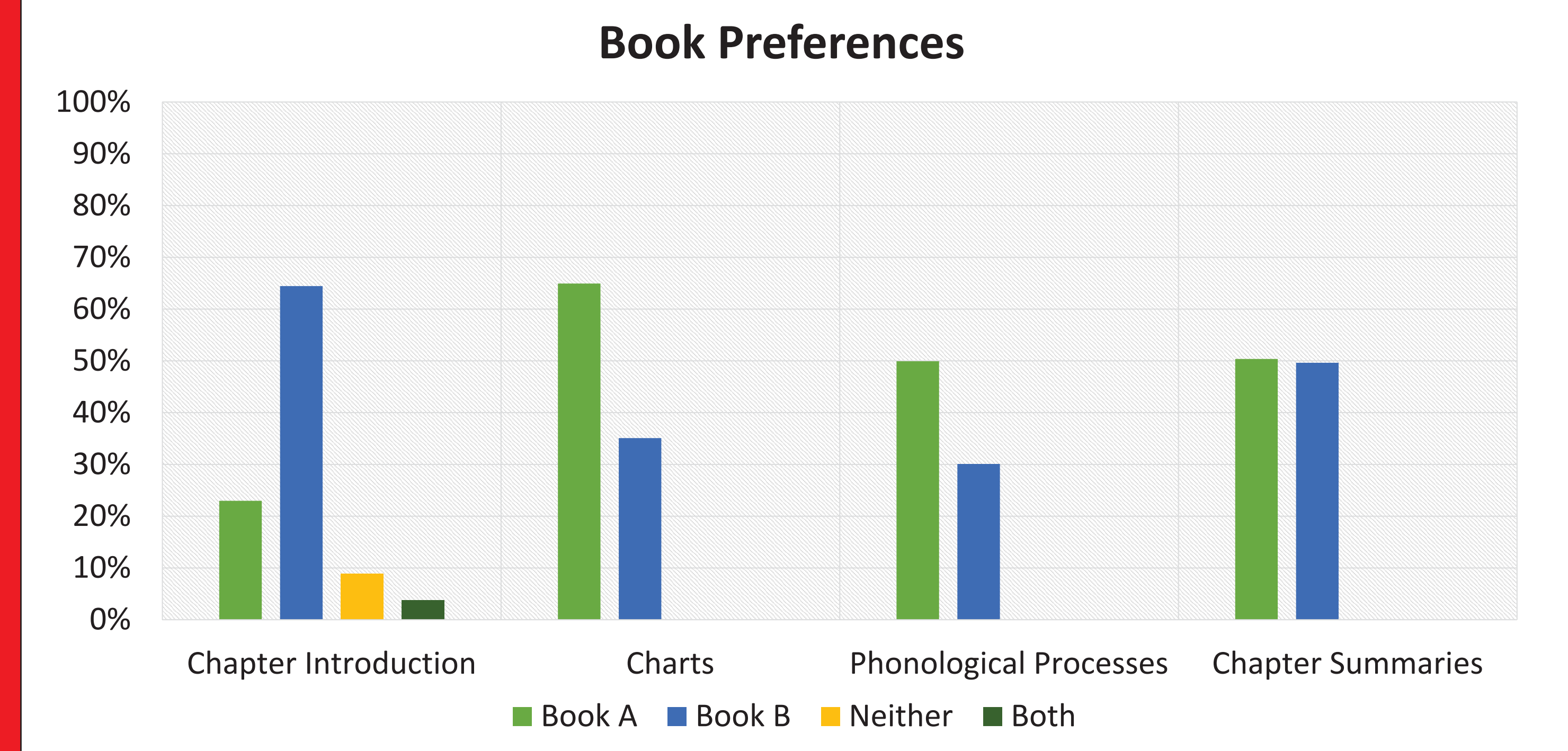
## RESULTS

When examining charts and tables from both books, 80% of the students agreed the information was similar. The majority of students (94.81%) preferred larger text. One hundred percent of the students preferred to have a glossary. In relation to presentation of terminology and definitions, the majority of students (68.38%) preferred the target terminology to be bolded; whereas, 48.89% of students preferred definitions to be presented marginally and in the glossary. Closely following was students' preferences (45.93%) for definitions to be presented in-text, marginally, and in the glossary.

## RESULTS continued

CSD students preferred hard copy texts (94.07%) in comparison to electronic texts (5.93%). Finally, 82.97% of CSD students stated they were very likely to likely to read their textbooks if they were allowed to help choose it.

The graph below shows that a majority of the students chose Book B over Book A when comparing the charts, explanation of phonological processes, and chapter summaries. However, the majority of the students preferred the chapter introduction in Book A over the chapter introduction in Book B.



## CONCLUSIONS

According to the research, CSD students prefer Book A over Book B. However, Book A is an updated version of the book that is currently being used by many of the students in the CSD program, and the students have regularly voiced that they do not like their textbook. This maybe because Book A does not have a glossary and as previously stated, 100% of CSD students prefer their books to have a glossary. The majority of students in this research reported to prefer hard copy texts; this finding conflicts with prior research that found students preferred e-books. Professors may find it advantageous to include students in choosing course texts; most students reported to be more likely to read if they could assist with choosing course texts.

## REFERENCES

- Aagaard L., Skidmore R.L., Connor II T. W. (2014, February). *Self-efficacy, textbook use, and activity preferences of college students in a high-poverty area*. Poster presented at the Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy, Blacksburg, VA.
- Bernthal, J. E., Bankson, N. W., & Flipsen Jr., P. (2017). *Articulation and phonological disorders: speech sound disorders in children*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Berry T., Cook L., Hill N., & Stevens K. (2010). *An exploratory analysis of textbook usage and study habits: misperceptions and barriers to success*. College Teaching, 59:1. 31-39.
- McLeod, S., & Baker, E. (2017). *Children's speech: an evidence-based approach to assessment and intervention*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Rockinson-Szapkiw, A. J., Courduff, J., Carter, K., & Bennett, D. (2012). *Electronic versus traditional print textbooks: a comparison study on the influence of university students' learning*. Computers & Education, 260-265.