No name, no game: Challenges to use of collaborative digital textbooks

# Details

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* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Digital and socio-cultural environment

## Sample

Thirteen seventh- and eighth-grade classes, 370 students and 30 teachers in five Swedish secondary schools.

## Implications For Educators About

* Digital citizenship
* Professional development
* School innovation
* Other

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Collaborative digital textbooks – comprehensive materials covering entire curriculums – are developing from being books in pdf format to becoming collaborative digital environments where teachers and students can communicate, engage in feedback and discussions, share and manipulate materials, test knowledge, and monitor results. This study investigates how these digital environments are used in school practice: How are the collaborative tools used to improve learning? Thirteen seventh- and eighth-grade classes, 370 students and 30 teachers in five Swedish secondary schools, were investigated over 1,5 years by means of questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews with teachers and students. Here, questionnaire results are presented, while observations and interviews serve to provide contextual insights. Collaborative tools were very little used; often teachers and students were not even aware of their existence. Most use was individual, students were left alone with the digital material. Students read or listened to the text and did not actively engage in learning by e.g. making notes or marking text. Most teachers did not use the material actively to help students understand and learn, most did not even check student results on automated tests. We conclude that the teachers have not incorporated the new, collaborative design of the digital textbook into their thinking regarding tools for teaching and learning and still regard it as a static book. This suggests that making full use of digital tools requires new ways of thinking of teaching, and that it takes more than providing digital tools to achieve this end.

# Outcome

"We found that use principally resembles paper book reading, or reading a static pdf book. Students read alone and answer questions on the text individually. They fre- quently use some tools for facilitating reading, such as listening to the text, and some learning tools such as quizzes. Text manipulation tools, such as making notes and marking text, are seldom used. Tools for communication between teachers and students and among students are not used at all. Teachers do not monitor student progress or results, e.g. using the statistics on quizzes, but appear to see student textbook use as an individual activity.... This study followed the development over three semesters, 1,5 years, and did not see any change in this respect taking place over time. On the contrary, individual work was more common during the second year than during the first." (Authors, in Conclusion)