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**The Search for Textbooks**

Trying to afford books for classes can be really expensive and time consuming. This is a constant struggle for students and decision that needs to be made each semester. One decision is to deal with it, fork over the money to a corrupt business practice that takes advantage of students trying to advance their futures. The second way is to assume what the teacher is wanting before class even starts then go ahead and look online. However, it is questionable what websites are reliable for the best deals.

The best way to approach these issues is to start researching your books quickly. When you have figured out your class schedule for that semester, email your teacher about what options they know about. Your teacher has probably heard from other students about cheaper options other than the bookstore. Having more time for book research will make figuring out the most affordable way to get your books.

Shopping online is a great way to start seeing what options are available to you. There are many online companies focused on getting students the best price. Remember to consider reliability and service.

If you’re looking for reliability, Amazon.com is the way to go. It is such a large company, which often is to the buyer’s benefit. Amazon might not be the cheapest around, but if you want virtually no risk involved they are a great choice. Growing with their success is Amazon’s huge inventory. This is great for students because there is a good chance they will have your book in stock. If new books aren’t your thing, there are cheaper options. Amazon will rent books to you for a discounted price and by the end of the semester they will email you the important shipping information. All you need to do is to print out the information, find a box and ship it by the desired date. No need to worry about paying for shipping, that’s covered in the renting program.

Amazon also works with sellers who can set their own prices. The worse the condition, the better the deal. If you don’t like the product when you receive it, Amazon has got your back. Not all items are returnable, but they are a good company. If you were wronged or deceived in any way or the seller isn’t contacting you, they will work with you. Amazon also offers tablet (Kindle) versions of texts. These options can be cheaper than the printed book. If you love reading on digital devices and the ease of not having to haul around your textbook to class every day, then this is the way to go.

This type of format is not a good fit for everyone’s learning styles. So before you commit to buying all of your textbooks in electronic format, I would suggest you try it out on an elective.

Chegg.com is a site that helps with all things academia. They are a source for study help, tutors, and buying or selling books. The website is user-friendly and works best when you have a membership, which is $15 dollars a month. A small price to pay for all the help they seem to give their members. Searching for textbooks is easy. Just make sure you have the IBSN number for the desired book and press enter. Then, after the semester is over, you can get quotes from Chegg to see how much money you can get back when you sell your textbook.

Some textbook companies such as *McGraw Hill* and *Connect* give the option of printing out the book. This isn’t going to save the trees, but it’s been known to save students hundreds of dollars instead of buying the bound books. These companies will sell online access through their sites as well. It might be a more affordable option to get the book elsewhere and to buy the access from the company itself than to get the bundled version from the bookstore.

Online options like campusbookrentals.com, half.com, ecampus.com, knetbooks.com and bookrenter.com have similar tactics. These various options can create a variety of consumer experiences. When you want to pay the least amount of money possible for your textbooks there is always some sort of risk you take, which can be said about anything bought online. It’s always a bonus to find the best deals. If you do, please don’t keep it a secret. Share it with your classmates so the pockets of students don’t continually run dry.

When buying books from the bookstore is your only option, try to think rationally about your books. For each of your classes there are a couple of questions you need to answer before even stepping foot into the bookstore. Firstly, will this book benefit me in the long run? In other words, will you need this book for your capstone or another class down the line? If that answer is yes, then buy the book, don’t rent. Your best option is to buy a used or loose-leaf version. These options will be less expensive. If the answer is no, then look into renting the book from the bookstore. Secondly, what is my learning style? There are many, but the way you learn is crucial for how you will succeed in your classes. If physical books are the way to go, then steer away from the online only books the store is carrying, no matter how enticing they are versus the heavy and expensive books. Think of it this way: the cost of a book does not compare to the cost of the class if you have to retake it because you had difficulty learning.

As it turns out, the bookstore has a third option. That is its price match program. That’s right, Metro State’s bookstore has a price match guarantee. If you find your book for cheaper somewhere on the internet, they will match the price for you. A few disclaimers to this:

1)You must go to the physical store to use this guarantee.

2)The bookstore maxes out at $100 per item and $1000 per customer

3)The item must have the same IBSN number and edition.

More detailed instructions are on the bookstore’s website under the “price match guarantee” tab. You still pay the full amount at the register, but the dollar difference you save will go on a bookstore gift card. This gift card can be used for whatever you want, but I suggest you save it for another semester to pay for more books.

Happy Savings!