

Packing problems away

Business



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Carrying heavy schoolbags all day, every day, has caused many problems in schools throughout the nation.

For example, at my school, students need to carry numerous books for four class periods each day, which adds up to a lot of books. With most classes requiring a heavy hardcover textbook, a workbook and a notebook, the weight of the schoolbags quickly becomes excessive. Most students carry this heavy weight in large backpacks, which include room for all school related supplies and a laptop computer. This results in strong weight being placed on young students' back for long periods of time and problems that come along with this physical stress. First, students have trouble bearing books from building to building which can result in long term back problems. These back problems may be serious and can include osteoporosis, lumbar spine fracture, and spondylolisthesis.

Each of these conditions can get progressively worse throughout lifetime and can result in the need for surgeries, physical therapy and ongoing pain and discomfort. Furthermore, in addition to potential medical concerns, the limits of a student schoolbag can also contribute to a decrease in productivity. For example, if a student wants to start additional homework for another class and they do not have the appropriate book with them, they are not able to be productive with their time. The inability of the student to carry all books is because of the extreme weight and limited capacity of the schoolbag. Lastly, some students may forget the schedule and bring the wrong books to class, which will end in deduction of participation points.

However, if the students were not limited by the weight and capacity of their schoolbag, access to the necessary books would never be a problem. After many discussions with the students at my school, they have agreed that book bags have only caused unnecessary problems and a better solution is possible. The solution to the ongoing problem associated with the heavy schoolbags is to have all books available electronically on the student laptops. Currently, electronic books are limited to only some course textbooks instead of every essential book needed for classes. This includes any books we read throughout the year including workbooks, textbooks, novels, etc.

In addition to the benefits electronic books provide in decreasing the physical load on a student's back, they also help increase productivity and study skills. Many electronic books provide helpful interactive study guides and practice tests. Also, homework and the checking of homework will be made easier by the student submitting all homework electronically for the teacher to verify. The Information Technology department could help make the books accessible to the students. Given the high cost of current school books, an electronic version should not result in an increase in overall costs or tuition.

Also, the long term cost of potential health problems is much greater than any increase in the cost of providing all books in an electronic format. Also, at the beginning of each school year, the students could download all books necessary for the upcoming school year. In case a student's laptop has any trouble with the electronic books, the students' books will be available from any computer in the computer lab or home computer. If my school converted

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to all electronic books, the results would definitely be effective and helpful. For example, students would no longer have to lug around their backpacks, which will eliminate the issue of future back problems such as osteoporosis, lumbar spine fracture, and spondylolisthesis.

Although there is some weight of the laptop computer, it is much less than the incredible weight of all of the actual books. Also, constant access to electronic books would allow the students to complete homework for any class at anytime, which will result in using time more wisely. For instance, if the student has some time available in another class, she can pull up the electronic book and complete additional classwork. Finally, electronic books eliminate the problems of a student that may mix up the class schedule. In case of an unexpected class change, she will still be prepared for class because all essential books will be on her laptop. Therefore, for all of the reasons explained above, having all necessary books on computers will result in major improvement with health, organization, and accessibility.