



## Tests and textbooks

Textbooks are changing, and their future is digital:

- This free HTML book is [used in classes at Northwestern University](#)
- The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) [is testing crowdsourcing for its new book publishing venture](#) by inviting members to submit book proposals to be reviewed and voted on by other AEJMC members.
- Apple has a textbook-optimized [version of iBooks and iTunes U](#), which hosts full courses.

Can the education philosophy of “teaching to the test,” currently being promoted by test and textbook companies, survive as textbooks change their identity?

### Activities at three levels:

**Flashlight:** Review the [Shorenstein Center news-in-the-classroom study](#) from Harvard. Discuss with your class: Do they agree that a shortage of current affairs discussion hurts students’ education? What about your own class? When discussing the news, how much is enough?

**Spotlight:** Printed journalism textbooks for high schools, because of the slow publishing and approval process in many states, can be out-of-date by the time they get to the classroom. In high schools, for example, highly regarded texts include [“High School Journalism”](#) by Homer L. Hall and Logan H. Aimone and [“Scholastic Journalism”](#) by C. Dow Tate and Sherri A. Taylor. Ask your students to do a paper or blog post comparing high school and college texts designed to teach journalism. Is it possible through a web review to determine if they include social and mobile media?

**Searchlight:** [Secretary of Education Arne Duncan strongly advocates the use of eBooks](#). Assign students to explore research on learning outcomes and eBooks. Do they work just as well as printed books? What about other digital distance learning, such as webinars or videos? Assign a paper or blog post: Can students exist on digital books alone? Why or why not? Is your school as digital as it should be?

**Extra credit:** As a homework assignment, ask students to research MOOCs, massive open online courses, being offered on media and journalism, such as those done by [Professor Rosental Alves at the University of Texas](#). MOOCs include many thousands of participants. As with other forms of e-learning, some faculty have voiced strong opposition to MOOCs. Ask students to write a paper or blog post considering their arguments. Are they valid? Given your answer, what’s the right course of action for educators?

