REBUS COMMUNITY REPORTS

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Insights from OER Project Leads

Donna Langille

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

We in the extended Open Education community often say that 'open' is a process and a movement, not just an attribute or a license. Publishing, too, is a process, and when it is community-driven, the output is more than just books and articles. For Rebus, *open* and *publishing* come together as a vision, a practice, and set of relationships. As we have grown in the ways we support the open publishing ecosystem, we have learned, adjusted, and reconfigured. With this collection of reports, we aim to share some of that learning and adjustment, even as the projects described continue to follow their own evolving trajectories. As we always espouse, there is no 'final' publication, just a revised version, an adaptation, a new release.

Like much of what we do, the efforts that this booklet represents have been deeply collaborative, spread across many hands, heads, and hearts. The project was led by Rebus Community's 2019 practicum student, Donna Langille, who was then enrolled in the Master of Information Studies program at McGill University in Montreal. (She has since gone on to work as a community engagement librarian at the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus.) Her objective was to understand what makes open publishing distinctive—specifically, publishing OER with Rebus Community—including the hurdles and hazards that project teams sometimes have to

navigate. Over the course of three months, Donna interviewed the lead editors of ten of Rebus Community's first projects, probing for what makes them unique. We are very grateful to these people for sharing their stories with candor and good cheer.

As Donna's work progressed, it became clear that her texts were unfolding more as evolving narratives, and less as analytic case studies. Logistical details, team dynamics, institutional support (and barriers)—all of these elements became part of her portraits. And within them, the underlying motif that emerged was not just the importance of collaboration, but that of the relationships within collaborative efforts. Student-teacher relationships, individual-institutional relationships, subject-context relationships, writer-editor-technology relationships. Perhaps this is why the *process* of open publishing should always be emphasized: relationships change in time, and when they do, focusing on them—rather than just the 'final' product—keeps up momentum and helps resolve new challenges.

To maximize the value of these reports, both to the project teams and the OER community at large, we decided to publish them in several ways. As individual blog posts, they become bite-sized and shareable, a part of the social media landscape. As chapters in a multi-format booklet, they reveal themselves as part of a larger whole, a snapshot in the continuing history of a global movement. And because we have followed the ethos that Rebus holds across all its initiatives, this booklet is licensed CC-BY, so it can be revised, remixed, and redistributed, as well as augmented over time.

I became involved in this publication to help Donna shape the narratives and manage the process. As her editor, I brought my own perspectives to what the reports

might reveal, both individually and as a collection. I also had enough distance from the original interview-conversations that Donna conducted, so that I could help her make decisions about what to include and what to cut. (Oh, the anguish of having too much great content!) Together, we brought the pieces to a close-to-finished state, at which point the project leads had the chance to review, fact-check, and adjust the texts. Donna and I learned much through the process, including the diverse range of experience that open publishing encompasses.

Here, then, is the result (for now): Ten reports on publishing OER with the Rebus Community. They include a wide range of insights and learnings, as well as innumerable happy outcomes.

Christina Hendricks' account of how *Introduction to Philosophy* expanded from one book into nine demonstrates the power of a diverse and willing community. With several of the books released as of September 2019, the project as a whole also represents the importance of working along multiple, parallel timelines when publishing collaboratively. *Sight Reading for Guitar,* led by Chelsea Green and Nadine Aboulmagd (with advice from Maha Bali), created its own set of rhythms, which continue to play out in both book and video form. The challenges of incorporating multimedia elements and accommodating more than one license also figure in this account. At a different scale of openness, what Deborah Amory, Sean Massey, and Allison Brown have done with the creation of *Introduction to LGBTQ+ Studies* is to make a complex subject accessible across the planet—both in academic terms and practical ones. For all those who live in societies that are not open to queer discourse, the book is a bridge to understanding and a tool for creating critically needed change.

Literature Reviews for Education and Nursing Graduate Students is an OER created by librarians Linda Frederiksen and Sue Phelps, both of whom witnessed a gap in their fields and then decided to fill it, promptly. Focused and deeply applicable, the book shows how responsive open publishing can be to immediate student needs. Likewise, Michelle Ferrier and Liz Mays were inspired by their own subject when it came to constructing *Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship.* Because it is such a dynamic field, books about media studies must be conceived from the start as revision-ready; this book is just that. Similarly, *Marking Open & Affordable Courses* is an OER about OER, a text that shares the implications involved in demonstrating to students and administrators which of their institution's courses use open resources. Michelle Reed, Sarah Hare, and Jessica Kirschner dive into the legislation, institutional policies, stakeholder needs, technologies, and communications around marking courses as open. As these issues evolve, so will their book.

Two of the reports describe the process of creating literary anthologies in collaboration with students. Tim Robbins' *Open Anthology of Earlier American Literature* and Julie Ward's *Antología abierta de literatura hispana* both reveal how making OER with students can improve classroom experiences in many ways. In selecting works to include, doing background research, and writing up introductory texts that contextualize the works, students come to learn what it means to both read *and* write critically.

Inspired by a meeting with Rebus's executive director, Hugh McGuire, Werner Westermann took on the process of translating the *Digital Citizenship Toolkit* into Spanish. His story brings to light how cultural and institutional

contexts are always a part of the publishing process. The English-language version of *Toolkit* was led by Ryerson University's Michelle Schwartz, and as Werner's Spanish version progressed, it became clear that 'translation' entails more than just language. Rounding out the ten projects is Dave Dillon's *Blueprint for Success in College and Career,* itself a success story about process, translation, evolution, student collaboration, adoption, licensing, filling gaps, and iterative development. A winner of multiple textbook awards, *Blueprint* lives up to its own name, offering innumerable points of guidance for both present-day students and future OER creators.

In reading, editing, proofing, formatting, and trying to summarize these reports, I find myself once again impressed by the power in the 'public' aspect of publishing. By *making things public*—including the process and the product, but also the people, potentialities, and pitfalls—we make publishing a community act, not a corporate one. We learn from each other, both through our successes and roadblocks. And the more those learnings are made public, the better we get at what we do. As Donna has said in her acknowledgements, we are very grateful for the openness that our project leads have offered, as well as for the communities of colleagues and users who surround and support them. Openness is indeed a process, a set of relationships, and a movement that both guides and inspires us.

As ever, we encourage and welcome your feedback on these texts, and on everything we do at Rebus. In the meantime, I hope you find inspiration in this booklet, and in the positive change that it signals for our community.

—David Szanto, Rebus Foundation
Montreal, Québec – September 2019

ABOUT THE PROJECT LEADS

Many thanks to the Rebus Community project leads who generously shared their time, insights, and honesty in the making of this collection of reports.

Christina Hendricks is a professor of teaching and researcher in philosophy at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. She is a long-time advocate for and champion of open educational resources (OER). Her open textbook project, *Introduction to Philosophy*, started as one book and then grew into a series of nine individual titles.

Chelsea Green an associate professor of music at The American University in Cairo (AUC). She also directs the Cairo Guitar Collective and the AUC Guitar Ensemble. **Nadine Aboulmagd** is a senior officer in instructional design and digital education at AUC, working in their Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT). **Maha Bali** is an associate professor of practice, also affiliated with the CLT at AUC. Their project, *Sight-Reading for Guitar: The Keep Going Method Book and Video Series* includes embedded graphics, videos, musical scores, and MP3 audio exercises.

Deb Amory is a a cultural anthropologist who teaches anthropology, queer culture, and LGBTQ+ studies at SUNY Empire State College. **Sean Massey** is an associate professor of gender and sexuality studies at Binghamton University, where he is also affiliated with the School of

Management. **Allison Brown** is the Digital Publishing Services Manager at SUNY Geneseo. Within two days of posting the call for contributors to *Introduction to LGBTQ+ Studies: An Open Textbook*, the team had nearly 30 people get in contact with them.

Now retired, **Linda Frederiksen** was the Head of Access Services at Washington State University (WSU), with interests in global resource sharing, e-books, and interlibrary loan systems. **Sue Phelps** is the Health Sciences and Outreach Services Librarian at WSU, and is involved in research on information literacy, accessibility of learning materials, and diversity and equity in higher education. *Literature Reviews for Education and Nursing Graduate Students* is available in both print and digital formats.

Michelle Ferrier is the Dean of the School of Journalism and Graphic Communications at Florida A&M University and co-hosts the annual Scripps Howard Journalism Entrepreneurship Institute. **Liz Mays** is an adjunct professor at Arizona State University and the former marketing manager for Rebus Foundation. She currently works in sales and marketing for Pressbooks. Their book, *Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship,* was most recently revised and re-released in the summer of 2019.

Michelle Reed is the Director of Open Educational Resources at the University of Texas Arlington and is a past participant in the SPARC Open Education Leadership Program. **Sarah Hare** is a scholarly communications librarian at Indiana University, working to educate and advise the campus community on open access and related issues. **Jessica Kirschner** is an OER librarian at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she coordinates the library's open and affordable course materials

initiative. *Marking Open & Affordable Courses,* their collaborative OER, helps instructors identify their courses as OER-based.

Timothy Robbins is an assistant professor of English at Graceland University in Iowa, where his research includes the ways readers interpret and use literary texts to bring about action towards social change. His project, the *Open Anthology of Earlier American Literature,* is produced in collaboration with his own students.

Julie Ward is an assistant professor of Spanish and Latin American literature at the University of Oklahoma, where her scholarly focus is on Mexican drama, narrative, and performance. *Antología abierta de literatura hispana,* which is also created in collaboration with students, has proven to be an effective learning tool that also reduces classroom attrition.

Werner Westermann is a history teacher and the head of the civic education program at the Library of Congress in Chile. He also consults on instructional design, e-learning platforms, and virtual and personal learning environments. His Spanish-language version of the *Digital Citizenship Toolkit* is based on an English-language OER of the same name, led by Ryerson University's Michelle Schwartz.

Dave Dillon is a full-time faculty member at Grossmont College in California, where his key focus is helping students succeed in both academics and athletics. *Blueprint for Success in College and Career* has been lauded by several organizations, receiving both the Textbook & Academic Authors Association 2019 Textbook Award and the Open Textbook Award for Excellence from the Open Ed Consortium.

A NOTE ON VERB TENSES

The ten reports in this booklet cover ten different projects that are at various stages of development. As of September 2019, some of the textbooks and OER have been released, some have been revised and re-released, and some are approaching release. For these reasons, the verb tenses in these reports vary from past to present to future. Although this means there is some stylistic inconsistency across the collection of reports, we (the editorial team) believe it represents the projects more accurately. As this booklet is itself revised over time, we will also review and revise the ways in which the reports have been written, including the temporality of the verb conjugations.

BECOMING A RINGMASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

CHRISTINA HENDRICKS AND HER PARTY OF NINE

Christina Hendricks knows a lot about the complexities of teaching and writing about philosophy. The field comprises myriad branches and threads, multiple schools of thinking and doing, and endless future directions to explore. In the classroom, finding that one, perfect, introductory philosophy textbook is therefore something of a contradiction in terms, given the inherent diversity. Coupled with the existing challenges of outlandish book prices and reading accessibility, such issues suggest that there is a space for creating one's own open textbook. But what about creating *nine* of them?

Professor of Teaching in Philosophy at the University of British Columbia, Christina is a powerful voice in the world of open education, championing and advocating for OER since 2012. It was around then that she first started going to workshops and talks about the subject, and quickly became an active part of the movement. Today, she is the Canadian representative to the Creative Commons Global Network Council, and is therefore ever more attuned to the vicissitudes of open licenses and emerging implications.

In her own introduction to philosophy courses, Christina had stopped using a textbook many years ago. Instead, she assigned many original readings (some in the public domain, some available through the library), and did the summary and synthesis work herself. Yet this put a lot of labour back on her own shoulders: textbooks do provide an advantage in that regard, and the time incurred is significant. Nonetheless, having cobbled together a solution that was 'good enough', it took some time for the desire to create her own OER to emerge.

Having been advocating for OER in a broad sense, Christina received a fellowship with BCcampus, to work on advocacy and research on open textbooks. It led her to see the value in the way that OER authors can mix and match together different pieces of content—one chapter from here, another from there. It provides the flexibility to create a custom textbook, but without having to reinvent the wheel at every step.

Around that time, Christina met Rebus's Hugh McGuire, who told her about the community publishing initiative that they were about to launch. Would she be interested in leading one of the selected pilot projects? Having searched for a textbook that would suit her own needs, and ultimately not finding anything geared to a first-year philosophy class, the answer seemed obvious. And thus, in early 2017, the *Introduction to Philosophy* project was born.

Publishing an open textbook for the first time can be daunting. Yet the high-touch support that Rebus Community's Zoe Wake Hyde and Apurva Ashok gave to the original pilot projects was extremely helpful, as was the technical infrastructure that the platform offers. Importantly, it was that *community* aspect that made a difference: many people stepped forward to support the

project. When Christina sent out the call for contributors, she received numerous responses from prospective authors and editors. She was both surprised and relieved to see such a large interest. Questions swirled as to how much volunteer time people would be willing to contribute, as well as how many of those volunteers would have the skill and scope to actually write their own chapter. As the number of participants grew, however, the questions were answered. The collaboration would significantly decrease each person's workload, while also providing a diverse range of insights into different perspectives and teaching styles. This was particularly helpful in the context of a philosophy textbook, given that there are multiple responses to philosophical questions and interpretations of philosophers' views.

Collaborative authorship has been both one of the book's biggest strengths, as well as a significant challenge. While single authorship can enable a consistent approach and a consistent voice, it was important to Christina that the workload be balanced. Nonetheless, there were issues. The author guide that was originally set out was sometimes followed and sometimes not. It meant more reworking and rewriting of certain sections, to make the content more consistent. And it of course meant wrangling many opinions on consistency, keeping the information flowing, and negotiating occasional frictions.

As the number of chapters started to grow, Christina realized that her single textbook was becoming a full-blown series. Each section became its own book, and the project now includes a total of nine titles. In parallel, Christina's role as book editor evolved into series editor and project manager. Each book acquired its own lead editor and team of authors, as well as its own schedule. By the end of summer 2019, four of the books had gone

through peer review (*Ethics, Philosophy of Mind,* and *Logic*), with a few still looking for additional authors and one starting afresh.

As ringmaster of this nine-project spectacle, Christina has learned to navigate the complex dynamics of multiple opinions and educational cultures. This often means supporting editors as many views on a given reviewer's comment come in—and then helping to reach a decision on how to address those views. But the offset to this challenge is that all of those voices can also speak on the book's behalf.

One of the biggest challenges in open publishing is getting the word out when a textbook is released, and then encouraging people to adopt it. Academics are generally overloaded with emails from listservs, associations, and their own institutions. So trying to ensure that your announcement email doesn't end up in the trash bin (or spam folder) requires significant effort. There are a few metrics in place to track adoption rates—download analytics, surveys and forms—but for the most part the community relies on word-of-mouth. That's where the verbal muscle of the 80 or so *Introduction to Philosophy* authors really flexes.

The community of authors, editors, and reviewers also supports the perceived credibility of the series. One of the biggest misconceptions about OER is that they don't don't go through the same quality-assurance processes as textbooks put out by conventional publishers. Like Christina, however, many academics don't actually rely on a publisher's brand name to assume good quality. It's only after reviewing the text *themselves* that most adopters decide whether it will work for their course. The built-in

word-of-mouth network that comes with the *Introduction to Philosophy* series makes that decision-making process faster. Can one hundred of your peers be wrong?

Having now created not just one open textbook project, but instead, a suite of nine, does Christina recommend others to do the same? Absolutely. She suggests starting small, however, rather than trying to emulate what her project has become. A single powerful idea will always attract people willing to share energy, contribute efforts, and advocate on behalf of it. Sometimes the momentum gathers and hits a tipping point, and you find yourself spawning a family of OER. Sometimes the project remains singular, and the circus of performers is contained to one ring. Whatever happens, the inherent value of creating community and the benefits of a uniquely tailored textbook will shine through.

STRING THEORY (AND PRACTICE!)

CHELSEA GREEN AND NADINE ABOULMAGD HARMONIZE ON *GUITAR*

Not everyone who creates an open textbook has previous expertise or background in using digital technology. Some folks courageously take on the challenge with little to no experience working in the online realm. Chelsea Green is one of those brave people. A musician and professor of music at the American University in Cairo (AUC), Chelsea has a background in both performance practice and theory. She has also previously worked as a guitar teacher for students of all ages and abilities. Her love of teaching has now extended to her career at AUC, where she founded the Bachelor of Musical Arts Major in Guitar, the first ever degree in guitar performance in Egypt.

Chelsea's dedication to music and pedagogy were central to her interest in creating *Sight Reading for Guitar: The Keep Going Method,* an OER that supports students as they are learning to play. Chelsea identified a particular need for a tool to help learners develop skills in sight reading—the ability to see, interpret, and immediately play musical notations on the page. Having once been a sight-reading novice herself, Chelsea knows that it is difficult to learn guitar without that ability. Although there are

many YouTube tutorial videos on playing guitar, few of them focus on learning how to sight read, and none that Chelsea could find provided the mix of theory and practical learning that was needed for the classroom. Over the years, Chelsea had developed an effective method that did just that, and now she wanted to be able to formalize it in a textbook for her students.

At first, Chelsea considered writing the book as a commercial product, but the business details of conventional publishing started to bore her. She found herself zoning out during these discussions, and losing focus on the content itself, as well as the reason she wanted to create the book in the first place. It was not the way she wanted to expend her energy, even if she ended up making money from it. She soon decided to create the book as an open resource, but needed help with the technical elements of doing so.

At the AUC's Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT), Chelsea met with Associate Professor of Practice, Maha Bali. The two originally discussed the idea of creating a short online course, a MOOC (a massive open online course), or a SPOC (small private online course). Through Maha, Chelsea was introduced to Senior Instructional Designer, Nadine Aboulmagd, also within the CLT. Nadine has a great deal of experience creating online content for blended and online courses, and also teaches a course on multimedia and technology for the Professional Educators' Diploma at the Graduate School of Education at AUC. She and Maha recommended developing *Sight Reading* as an open textbook, and together, the three agreed to do so, working with the support of Rebus Community. An additional hope was that this might also lead to opportunities for translating the textbook into other languages.

With Chelsea leading the project as content editor, Nadine played a pivotal role as project manager, keeping everyone in communication and helping Chelsea to port her content into the Pressbooks environment. As involvement from Rebus Community grew, Maha stepped into an advisory role on the project, and handed over project management responsibility to Nadine. She, meanwhile, came to understand and appreciate Chelsea's goals and motivations, and as the trust between them grew, Nadine became a key facilitator in bringing the book to fruition.

On the content side, Chelsea drew from her own experiences as a teacher and musician. A video production team made up of Ahmad El Zorkani and Hassan Labib created the all-important multimedia content, while a student technology assistant, Farida El Harouni, worked on layout editing. As is the case with so many academic writing projects, Chelsea also received help from her partner, Frank, who provided advice and technological support.

Sight Reading distinguishes itself because it contains so much multimedia content, including embedded graphics, videos, musical scores, and MP3 audio exercises. In a future revision, the book will also include videos with scrolling scores so that learners can play along. Chelsea's vision is that the theoretical and practical to go hand in hand as students learn, while still making sure that the practical tools are at the heart of the method. As students follow the pieces in the practical section, there is also guidance about attitude, behaviours, and approaches to sight reading. Play-along segments and self-assessment components allow students to gauge how much they have learned from each chapter, giving an indication of whether or not they should continue on to the next one. The self-assessment methods are designed for committed

self-learners, but can also be a resource for teachers to use in class. Overall, the book's format demands that the learner remain engaged and active during the learning process.

For its part, Rebus Community played a key role by facilitating the peer review process and supporting beta-testers. Importantly, Zoe Wake Hyde and Apurva Ashok were particularly helpful when it came to deciding on licensing. Though Maha and Nadine were already very familiar with Creative Commons licensing, the textbook posed a distinct challenge in that some of the included compositions could not be openly licensed. With Rebus's help, the team reached a hybrid solution. As a whole, the book is licensed CC-BY, while the individual musical pieces (some 30 original compositions) are licensed CC-BY NC (non-commercial). This allows them to be part of the OER while also insulating the work of the composers.

Their biggest challenge for Chelsea was navigating the layout limitations of Pressbooks and making sure that the multimedia demands of their project were met. Certain challenges included issues with changing the CSS styling, various layout elements, and formatting the book to their needs. Fortunately, the whole team took it as a learning opportunity, and they were able to work together to over-come most constraints. Most recently, another member of AUC's Center for Learning and Teaching has joined the project team to work on the layout. Maha Shawki is a computer science graduate and is helping with HTML and CSS on the backend to ensure things run smoothly both in the web and mobile versions of the book.

While the technology hurdles were especially challeng-ing for Chelsea, the net result was great satisfaction from the sense of community and collaboration that the project engendered. "I constantly remember this is a once in a

lifetime opportunity," Chelsea recalls. And still, that opportunity isn't over. After almost two years of working on this project, and with most of the loose ends wrapped up, Chelsea's team at the CLT have moved on to helping other faculty projects. (Maybe now it is time for those hoped-for translations to start up.)

Though she perhaps entered this project as a technological neophyte, Chelsea's passion and curiosity motivated her to learn even as she was trying to share what she already knew with her students. The accomplished musician and teacher now feels like she is at the beginning of a movement, a new start in a new direction. Where that movement goes in the next five or ten years remains to be seen, but in the meantime, it's the smooth movements of fingers on guitar strings that Chelsea can be proud of.

PROUDLY PUBLISHING

DEBORAH AMORY, SEAN MASSEY, AND ALLISON BROWN OPEN UP LGBTQ+ DISCOURSE

In some parts of the world, sexuality and gender diversity are becoming increasingly recognized, celebrated, and protected, aligning with the importance of individual self-expression and human rights. In other places, however, governments and societies have moved to limit rights, protections, and respect for people who do not identify as heteronormative. Being open about sexual and gender identities is far from a universal liberty.

Introduction to LGBTQ+ Studies: An Open Textbook is therefore a timely and valuable addition to the literature. Both open and accessible, it contributes critical academic perspectives, and it also might make a difference in those places where discourse and openness are limited. As the project rolls along, numerous authors and editors have joined the team. Beyond just having the extra hands to bring the textbook to release, this also means a wide variety of voices are addressing the book's key themes. And if there's anything that needs a diversity of perspectives, it's the issue of human sexual and gender diversity.

The project is being led by Deborah Amory (SUNY Empire State College) and co-editor Sean Massey (Binghamton University). Allison Brown, the digital publishing services manager at SUNY Geneseo, serves as project

manager. The team received SUNY OER Creation Funding for the project, and the textbook will be published in collaboration with SUNY Press.

Beyond this very solid core, there are also many volunteer participants involved, supported by the resources, tools, and reach of the Rebus Community. Gratifyingly, within two days of posting the call for contributors, nearly 30 people were in contact with Deb and Sean, offering their interest and skills to the project. In so many ways, it exemplifies the shift in Rebus is bringing to the meaning of "publisher"—that is, from a distinct company to a diffuse community.

This progressive group includes extensive engagement with learners as well. Deb and Sean have asked their students to develop short media clips about concepts that should be included in the textbook. Adding these voices—through the familiar tool of video and audio—ensures that the content will be grounded in lived experience, and therefore relevant to eventual readers. Deb will also test out parts of the textbook in her online LGBTQ+ studies course, gathering feedback from an even wider cross-section of students. Deb and Sean will then incorporate the in-class experience of using the textbook into the version that is eventually released.

Students are also helping Allison format the book and make sure that it meets accessibility requirements. These positions are paid work-study opportunities and allow students to gain experience using Pressbooks. In addition to gaining close contact with the textbook's themes, they learn basic HTML skills, a range of web-related tools, and the range of organizational abilities that multi-person projects require.

For her part, Allison's experience as project manager has proven different from previous publishing ventures. Working with Rebus, and having access to the documentation that the platform and people provide, has broadened her sense of how textbooks can be created. This has added momentum to the larger conversations she has been having about OER, and enables Allison to support more creation projects at SUNY.

After they received funding, the team shared the call for participation through a number of channels: SUNY, CUNY, Library Publishing Forum, SPARC, Creative Commons, and the Rebus Community newsletter. They weren't only looking for authors, but more broadly for anyone who wanted to get involved. This gave people the option to take on a variety of roles. A particularly large response came from librarians who were interested in supporting the project with references and additional resources. As a result, there is now a chapter dedicated to finding LGBTQ+ resources, authored by Rachel Wexelbaum (an associate professor and collection management librarian at St. Cloud State University) and Gesina Phillips (a digital scholarship librarian at the University of Pittsburgh).

Although the upside of having received funding is that editorial labor can be compensated, the downside is deciding how much of that money to allocate to each person. With so many contributors, it means a lot of math, plus mountains of paperwork.

One of the challenges with writing any textbook that deals with a rapidly evolving topic is continued relevancy. As our collective understandings of LGBTQ+ issues and stories evolve, an open textbook about LGBTQ+ issues must be revised and updated. This is particularly important for students who identify as queer, non-binary, trans,

gender fluid, and non-hetero: learning is more mean-
ingful when a textbook reflects the subtleties that they
themselves live on a daily basis. Moreover, because digital
publishing allows for a variety of media formats, the text-
book can also engage students through its interactive
nature—something that print books cannot do.

To help students connect to the more theoretical
aspects of the book, the authors are incorporating profiles
of activist organizations into each section. These profiles
address scenarios from day-to-day LGBTQ+ experiences,
which helps students imagine what individual people
encounter in their own lives. The textbook also includes
profiles of each of the writers, allowing students to put
faces to the content creators.

Again, the advantages of electronic publishing also
raise a set of questions. Once a textbook is created using a
given platform and set of standards, what guarantees are
in place for the resource to be maintained and supported?
Will there always be a website to host and serve them?
As technology innovations are developed, and legacy sys-
tems are eventually replaced, who will think about data
storage and transfer? Deb recalls one particular case, in
which a website on teaching Swahili was created with a
student. Sadly, the university changed servers and the site
was never seen again.

Despite and perhaps because of the new issues that
open publishing and web-based platforms implicate, the
team has high hopes for what *Introduction to LGBTQ+
Studies* will accomplish: a sense of community, a conver-
sation about supporting students, and an open under-
standing of what it means to be part of a diverse spectrum
of identity, sexuality, and gender.

Textbooks like this one change people's perspectives just by existing. In many parts of the world, it is illegal to be gay. By making this resource openly and freely available, individuals around the world will have access to information that will change their lives. Lesbian and gay people in the U.S. used to furtively explore a library in the hopes of finding information about what it meant to be gay and lesbian. Today many people explore the internet with the same questions. This textbook will provide critically important information to many people—professors, students, and members of the general public. This is where OER leaps beyond the issue of saving students money—this is also about saving people's lives, by helping to change discourse at a global level.

MINDING THE GAPS

THE EVOLUTION OF LINDA FREDERIKSEN'S AND SUE PHELPS' *LITERATURE REVIEWS*

The open textbooks that Rebus Community supports are generally targeted at introductory-level courses and at students who are early in their educational careers. But sometimes, for those doing graduate studies, a need emerges that gets lost in the gap between a first and second university degree. This need was the case when it came to *Literature Reviews for Education and Nursing Graduate Students,* an OER created by librarians Linda Frederiksen and Sue Phelps.

Now retired, Linda was an education liaison librarian at Washington State University (WSU) when the idea for this textbook first emerged. With over twenty years experience, she had witnessed a good deal of change in the way textbooks are conceived, published, distributed, and used. (She also knows that they are often *not* used, particularly when the price tops $200 and students need to decide between feeding themselves and buying their course materials.) Toward the latter part of her career, Linda started focusing on OER, all too aware of the limitations of conventionally published textbooks, due to both cost and accessibility. Working at her institution's reference desk, she had many encounters with students looking for course textbooks. But because most libraries

don't buy every textbook for every class, every semester, students often have to head off to the bookstore and make the choice to lay down a lot of cash—or go without required or supplemental readings. Over the last three-to-five years, Linda noted that students were more and more choosing simply not to buy.

This experience drew her attention toward open access materials. Although community colleges in her area were becoming more active in the use of OER, she was aware of resistance within larger universities, including those more focused on research. Her interpretation is that those institutions continue to believe that open textbooks are less rigorously produced. The same sentiment was notable within graduate programs.

The idea for an OER on conducting literature reviews also came from Linda's experience as an education liaison librarian. She was often asked to deliver information literacy workshops for education graduate students, particularly for a first-year research methods course. Her sense from this experience was that professors were under the assumption that graduate students already knew how to conduct a literature review. The workshops she gave seemed to indicate otherwise, and that somehow, in the transition between the first and second degree, students were missing a critical piece of education. Linda shared this insight with her colleague Sue Phelps, a nursing liaison librarian. Together, they decided to create a LibGuide about literature reviews, one that students could refer to after the one-shot workshop. LibGuides are online, subject-specific resources that bring together many different elements and references, and are generally created by librarians and hosted on a library's website. In this

case, however, the LibGuide format didn't suit the content well. There were too many links overall, and Linda and Sue thought that the guide was too static.

At this point, the two librarians decided to try to transform what they had—a well-developed workshop and a robust set of online resources—into a full-fledged course. This would allow them to re-organize their content into specific modules, adding more structure to the material. Much work ensued, and when it was finished, they uploaded it all to Blackboard, a learning management system (LMS). Still, however, the platform wasn't really working. The Blackboard format didn't support the information well, as it was geared to conventional classroom content. There were other challenges, related to LMS bureaucracies and organizational models, and Blackboard wasn't as effective as they wanted when it came to supporting multimedia. What had started as a simple motivation to provide students with a useful tool had become an exercise in frustration with presentation formats.

At roughly the same time that Linda and Sue reached the conclusion that they should be creating an OER from their material, Rebus Community put out the call for pilot projects. From the start, the open textbook platform seemed to be a good fit, and served as the next step in their evolutionary process of trying to find the right delivery mechanism for their information.

By now, the two women had created a substantial amount of content, but it was not in the form of book chapters. With a six-month sabbatical approaching, Linda decided to dedicate the time to working with Rebus and turning the content into an open textbook. The support she received was invaluable, and she notes that while the

online resources and infrastructure made the process possible, it was the regular check-ins from Zoe Wake Hyde and Apurva Ashok that kept her on track.

A self-professed procrastinator, Linda needed Rebus's technical *and* social support. "It takes a long time to turn a Powerpoint slide into a chapter," she notes, but having the external prompts from a larger community made publishing her OER an easier and more enjoyable process. A previous publishing experience with a conventional company had not been as productive, nor was there regular, author-editor communication. The Rebus Community team was supportive and delivered clear, useful advice. They also helped Linda transfer the content to Pressbooks, a platform with which she was not familiar.

Before leaving WSU for her retirement, Linda was able to share the book with students in her information literacy workshops. She also encountered an education instructor who adopted it for use it in her class, and because it is available in both electronic and print-on-demand versions, the book has a strong future ahead.

The path to creating *Literature Reviews* involved many learning experiences for its creators. Linda's role as a librarian both prompted the book's creation and transformed Linda herself along the way. She became more aware of the resources available for creating and housing content, but also of the strengths and limitations of different digital platforms. She also learned much more about dealing with copyright issues, and that in turn translated back to her work at the reference desk. For her part, Sue is approaching retirement as well, but for now continues to work with nursing instructors, who she encourages to use the book. As is so often true of the work that librarians do, this project was about seeing a gap in what was available to students and then putting

together a set of existing resources in a format that made sense. It wasn't about reinventing the wheel, just making one that rolls along better on the road in front of you.

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO OER

THE *ENTREPRENEURSHIP* OF MICHELLE FERRIER AND LIZ MAYS

Like their open textbook, *Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship,* Michelle Ferrier and Liz Mays are all about being responsive and creative in the face of a changing digital landscape. The book is a valuable resource for communications and journalism students, addressing both the mindset and practices that are needed for success in today's media markets. What is more, the process of publishing the textbook—and continually updating it—exemplifies what is both possible and necessary when it comes to online content creation.

All those who have worked in journalism and communications over the last decades are aware of the disruptive influences of the internet—in both positive and negative senses. The media industries must continue to innovate, as do the people who work in and around them. Today, "media" is often synonymous with innovation and entrepreneurship, and because of this constant change, educational tools must also keep up. This is one of the key benefits of creating an open textbook for the field, and perhaps a factor in the success of *Media Innovation and*

Entrepreneurship. As new ideas and scholarship emerge, the open, digital format allows the authors to refine their content.

As a former managing editor for multiple publications, as well as an educator and marketing professional, Liz Mays is a "get-stuff-done" type of person. She is the former marketing manager for Rebus Foundation and currently works in sales and marketing for Pressbooks (largely because she loved using the platform so much herself). In 2016, in her adjunct professor role at Arizona State University (ASU), Liz was asked to reshape a journalism course to focus it more on media and entrepreneurship. The difficulty of finding the right textbook for the class, and her prior involvement with the Scripps Howard Journalism Entrepreneurship Institute at ASU, helped her realize that there was a dearth of high-quality teaching resources that could be used for the growing number of courses related to journalism entrepreneurship, the business of journalism, and media innovation.

Like many things entrepreneurial, the timing worked out well in several ways. Rebus Community was gearing up around the same time, creating an ideal platform on which to develop open textbooks. Michelle Ferrier managed a Facebook group with educators teaching media entrepreneurship and had posted that she was interested in creating a similar resource. Michelle had been been a participant in the inaugural Scripps Howard Journalism Entrepreneurship Institute at ASU and had been conducting research on the skills and knowledge necessary to teach as part of the emerging media entrepreneurship curriculum. She had also worked for several years teaching media entrepreneurship as part of the now defunct NewU entrepreneurship fellows program. Now Dean of the School of Journalism and Graphic Communications

at Florida A&M University (FAMU), Michelle is very well known in the field and co-hosts the annual Scripps Howard Journalism Entrepreneurship Institute (alongside project lead Dan Gillmor). Having met at the first Scripps Howard event, the two eventually decided to collaborate on an open-source, editorial project. They shared the labour (along with numerous community members), divvying up tasks that played to their individual strengths.

As lead editor, Michelle acted as content editor and subject matter expert. Liz took on the more operational roles of editorial management and proofreading. For both, the aspect of collaboration was key, not just with each other, but with what would become a much more extensive and diverse group of contributors and participants. That group ultimately included 28 other authors, 12 faculty beta-testers, countless student beta-testers, and more than a dozen peer reviewers.

The two had meetings with a wider group of stakeholders at the beginning of the project, which included journalism educators, media entrepreneurs, student entrepreneurs, business educators, and others. They co-created a table of contents and framework for the book that would serve both their needs in the short term and those of other instructors teaching related subjects over the longer term. Ultimately, they structured the textbook for a 15-week course, but in such a way as to make it highly modular. This allows faculty in a variety of courses and contexts to use individual chapters as needed. It also allows students to refer to chapters, as needed, in the development of their startup ventures. Importantly, the structure provides more flexibility when modifying the content over time, given the rapidly changing realities of digital media and the potential for entrepreneurship.

As they developed the table of contents and identified potential authors, Michelle and Liz kept collaboration and inclusion front and centre. It was important to both that the people who would be using the textbook were the ones making the decisions about the content.

In keeping with the spirit and practice of co-creation, they also made sure to leave space for including plenty of sidebars in which entrepreneurs and others might share their first-hand experience. In order to enable student entrepreneurs to visualize themselves in future business ventures, they kept these essays in the first-person voice. These sidebars allowed the editors to introduce concepts such as freelance journalism, while featuring voices from recent graduates who had become entrepreneurs, as well as others with diverse experience in the field. They also kept a watchful eye on style and tone (less formal and more conversational), so as to make the textbook an accessible workbook and reference tool.

Beyond good timing and an ethos of collaboration, there was another fundamentally entrepreneurial characteristic that Michelle and Liz brought to the process: lots of hard work. The two facilitated a weekly call with all of the contributors to beta-test the first version of the textbook. These meetings—running from February to November 2017—included educators who were using the book in their classes for the first time. During the first part of the call, authors and editors provided feedback on a given chapter; during the second part, contributors brought up teaching-related questions. Michelle and other faculty provided answers, as well as suggestions for creating effective deliverables and other pedagogic innovation. Participants also offered coaching and advice to other instructors who were beta-testing the book-in-progress in their classroom. This real-time testing and

feedback cycle significantly enhanced the usability and success of the resource, so that by the time it was released for the first time, it had proven its effectiveness as a teaching tool. On top of all this feedback from faculty, the book had been beta-tested by students in 12 classrooms across the United States, with feedback delivered via the markup tool Hypothes.is, through a Google form, and during the weekly calls. Almost 200 significant changes were incorporated (all meticulously tracked in a shared spreadsheet).

As with nearly all OER produced with Rebus Community, Michelle's and Liz's open textbook underwent multiple forms of peer review, beyond the classroom-based beta-testing and weekly feedback sessions. A whole set of industry experts and dedicated peer editors provided input and critique on each chapter and the full book, and the book underwent an additional round of peer review when it was launched on the Open Textbook Network. MERLOT also reviewed the book and provided feedback.

Eventually, *Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship* was released on the Rebus Press in January 2018. Since then, an updated version was released in summer 2018, which included a chapter on product management, sidebars on process engineering and student media innovation, and an expanded chapter on entrepreneurship abroad. The book was updated again in summer 2019 to include sidebars on 'slow news', recent media industry developments, formative quizzes, and improved glossary functionality. Still, in order to avoid being *too* disruptive, Michelle and Liz have been sure to implement editorial changes only at the end of each semester.

Given the editors' own immersion in their field, it is perhaps not surprising that their open textbook was created in a way that is consistent with its very subject. What is exemplary about this case, however, is that it illustrates

the importance of process when it comes to open publishing. Openness is not just about cost and accessibility. To be open about innovation and entrepreneurship means taking what is best about creativity, problem-solving, self-motivation, co-creation, and inspiring others, and then building on that with a great spirit of community, collaboration, and coherence.

MAKING *MARKING*

THE OER ABOUT OER FROM MICHELLE REED, SARAH HARE, AND JESSICA KIRSCHNER

When educators make the decision to transition to open educational resources (OER) instead of using high-priced commercial materials, the benefits to students are immediate. Cost and barriers to access are reduced, learning is streamlined. Yet on the administrative side of things, additional work is incurred, specifically when it comes to making it known which courses use open and affordable educational materials. "Marking" a course's resources as open or affordable means tagging and displaying this information, online and in print materials, so that students can easily understand the resource costs associated with the course.

Fortunately for all those going through this process, the open-access book *Marking Open & Affordable Courses: Best Practices and Case Studies* provides many examples and suggestions for doing so. And the way that the project came about and has evolved is also an example of the responsiveness and flexibility of open publishing.

In 2017, the Texas legislature enacted law SB810, a component of which requires universities to indicate on course registration systems which courses use OER. The law is intended to help students make decisions about registering for courses by having clear information about

the cost of required materials. However, because the timeline for complying with the new law was brief, numerous institutions of higher education quickly had to learn how to implement the necessary changes.

As Director of Open Educational Resources at the University of Texas Arlington (UTA) Libraries, Michelle Reed knew the law would have significant implications for both librarians and educators, and assumed responsibility for leading UTA's course marking implementation. This would mean working with campus partners to ensure compliance with the law, before the state's implementation deadline. At the time, Michelle was enrolled in the SPARC Open Education Leadership Program, so she decided to focus her capstone project on the implementation process. That project, the *Texas Toolkit for OER Course Markings,* has now become an open access book project called *Marking Open & Affordable Courses: Best Practices and Case Studies.* The original *Toolkit* was structured as a LibGuide (a tool for organizing and showcasing library resources on a given subject); the new OER will be more robust, including practical advice and individually written case studies.

Marking Open & Affordable Courses is therefore an OER about OER, and differs from other projects within the Rebus Community because of its hybrid nature and the audiences at which it is directed. The book is still in the drafting phase and comprises multiple case studies as well as six topical sections. These cover legislation, institutional policy, stakeholders, platforms and processes, branding, communication, and impact. For those looking to mark open and affordable courses at their own institutions, the book is both a practical guide and an overview of the bigger picture.

Transforming the original *Texas Toolkit* into its new incarnation has been possible through the help that Michelle receives from co-editors Sarah Hare and Jessica Kirschner. Sarah, a scholarly communication librarian at Indiana University, and Jessica an OER librarian at Virginia Commonwealth University, originally served as peer reviewers for the *Texas Toolkit*. When Michelle wanted to expand it into a book, the two agreed to co-lead the project with her.

As the new project unfurls, the three women work to remain flexible in their designated and more informal roles, dividing the editorial review process and other tasks. Michelle serves as project manager and all three share the title (and responsibilities) of co-editor. Five other team members act as section leaders. These people serve as point people for the three to four contributing authors per section. Each section leader works with their assigned co-editor, who helps them meet deadlines and respond to comments. As the book develops, the team will bring on more collaborators to help with peer review and copyediting. They currently include librarians, instructors, and even a bookstore manager, all of whom meet regularly to discuss progress and challenges.

For Sarah, this project is a valuable "meta-experiment" in walking her talk as a librarian and openness advocate. It is an opportunity to practice what she recommends to instructors: "Work with Rebus Community, use Pressbooks, and deploy existing OER infrastructures."

Participating in this experiment has been both exciting and invigorating, as well as an important occasion to understand first-hand the challenges of making OER. There are some sections of the book for which existing literature is minimal or non-existent. In these cases, the co-editors have to guide their authors through creating

new content, rather than adapting or expanding on previously written material. Sometimes that means drawing on case studies for details, sometimes it means looking to informal communications with colleagues, such as conference presentations. Seeking out information that exists outside the conventional academic record has revealed insights that might otherwise go undocumented. It also means a certain amount of extra work for both the co-editors and authors.

To make sure that the book as a whole remains coherent, the co-editors encouraged all the contributors to read both the case studies and the other topical sections of the book. This has given them all a sense of what they are collectively trying to accomplish. Rather than the somewhat anonymous and isolated experience of authoring a chapter for a conventionally published volume, the making of *Marking* has been more cross-communicative. Case studies and topical content 'speak to each other', just as the various contributors have.

For her part, Michelle has learned just how much labour is involved in publishing open textbooks. It's a good reminder, especially when it comes to reaching out to the university community, to convince people to become OER contributors. The need to seek out shared values and a willingness to "embrace imperfection" are other key lessons. Despite many authors' tendencies to be perfectionists, openly published resources provide a safety net: you can always go back to the text, revise content, and fix errors.

Michelle, Sarah, and Jessica have already made many marks with *Marking Open & Affordable Courses*—on themselves, their contributors and communities, and within the world of OER more broadly. As this new book finds its way into the hands of other OER advocates (in Texas

and everywhere), that impact will expand and grow. And if the local or national legislation changes course marking requirements again, no problem. They'll just revise and re-release the book, openly.

THE COLLECTIVE WORK OF COLLECTED WORKS

CREATING TIM ROBBINS' *OPEN ANTHOLOGY*

The anthology is hardly a new concept when it comes to literature survey courses. The term itself derives from the Greek ἀνθολογία (*anthologia),* meaning "a collection of words." Generally, however, that collecting process is carried out under a singular vision, focused on bringing together specific cross-section of texts. But what happens when an effort to create a *collected works* becomes more a matter of coordinating *collective work?*

Tim Robbins is the lead editor of the *Open Anthology of Earlier American Literature,* a project he started in 2017 with Rebus. As an assistant professor of English at Grace-land University, he teaches an American literature survey course every year, and knows the value of an anthology as a teaching tool. Yet the *Open Anthology* is more than just a collection of canonical writings—it is also a learning exercise, a collaborative initiative that engages students in both sourcing and synthesizing literary works. Tim assigns the textbook as reading material for his course, but also tasks students with writing introductions to the new pieces they recommend for inclusion.

Early on, the students focused on making sure that the book included the classics of American literature. More recently, however, the assignment has been to seek out lesser-known and more marginalized authors. Students are required to find literature in the public domain using a variety of open archives and repositories, including the Internet Archive and Project Gutenberg. Each recommendation is accompanied by an introduction, written by the student, that contextualizes the piece within its historical moment and provides biographical information about the author. During this process, Tim meets with students regularly, advising them on finding written works and prioritizing what to include in the introductory texts. Matt Moore, a student assistant who has now graduated from Graceland, was one of the first to complete the assignment. He then went to work with Tim on the project, including acting as liaison with Rebus and the student writers.

Early on, Tim's students didn't think they were themselves qualified enough for this assignment. Over time, Tim learned how to instill confidence in them, providing clearer guidelines as well as the editorial support that emerging writers often need. This has created more successful outcomes from the assignment and has generated greater student appreciation for the project as a whole. And, as new cohorts use the *Open Anthology* in class, the previous contributors have gained the satisfaction of seeing their work being used by subsequent students. Added to that, they get to see their names in print, a small but important bit of positive reinforcement.

Occasionally, students' work does not meet Tim's standards for the textbook, requiring additional work on those chapters. This has been one of the more challenging aspects of this project, and one of the reasons Tim is

grateful to be working with Rebus Community. For future additions to the anthology, he will likely put out a call for reviewers and editors through the Contributor Marketplace. Despite the collective work needed to make this OER succeed in the classroom, Tim has found the open community to be generous with their time. He recognizes that people working in higher education already have unusually heavy workloads, but perhaps this is precisely why they are more willing to make unpaid, volunteer contributions. Unlike other scholarly communities that may see each other once or twice a year at a conference, the open community keeps in touch more regularly—it is a lively network. Twitter, in particular, has been an important communication and learning platform for Tim, who credits it with being a source of insights about OER as well as a means to connect.

Like all open textbooks, the anthology is easy to revise and update, but it seems that its success is also due to its modularity. Because other users are able to pick and choose the parts of the book they want to include in their lectures, it adapts well to different classrooms and becomes more useful for students. Unlike a printed copy of, for example, a Norton Anthology of literature, nothing is wasted if a teacher decides to lop off a few chapters. The digital book also allows for augmenting the reading experience, such as annotating passages. Tim has witnessed that students find a lot of value in starting conversations in the margin of the text. Similarly, when he made it an assignment to annotate lines from a given poem, students responded positively. These sorts of peer-to-peer interactions appear to have created more pedagogic traction than using the forum feature in standard learning management systems.

Through the process of collectivizing the collection of his anthology, Tim has become a strong advocate for OER on his campus. Students demonstrate real gratitude for his efforts in making textbooks affordable and accessible, and this has helped him persuade other colleagues to adopt open resources in their own courses. He does, however, caution them to be more reliant on the open community than he originally was—specifically in the use of a communication platform like Rebus, which help project leads reach out to a large network of collaborators from the beginning. By doing so, experiences with open publishing can become energizing, rather than draining, a feeling that isn't generally produced in the lives of the average academic.

WHEN MAKING OER MAKES E MORE O

JULIE WARD ENGAGES STUDENTS IN CREATING THE *ANTOLOGÍA ABIERTA*

Thanks to the relative ease of updating and revising an open textbook, they make excellent tools for classroom use. This is not just because they stay relevant when the course subject is one that evolves rapidly, but because *making* those updates and revisions can be a powerful way for students to learn through doing.

Julie Ward, an assistant professor of Spanish and Latin American literature at the University of Oklahoma (OU), has leveraged just that value. One of the assignments for her third-year students is to create a critical edition of a Hispanic literary text. Each year, they learn about literature and literary critique by engaging in the process directly, and each year the *Antología abierta de literatura hispana* grows as these contributions are compiled. It is a clear example of how making OER is a way to make education itself more open. Moreover, as other professors use the *Antología* in their own classrooms, it has become a stellar illustration of how open textbooks can grow beyond the boundaries in which they were originally imagined.

The motivation to create this textbook first arose when OU launched a set of alternative textbook grants to encourage faculty members to assign open educational resources. While the university's intention was to save students money, the funding was just the catalyst that Julie needed. She didn't much like the current textbook that she was using—it was expensive, overused, and too much to get through in a single semester. And because most of the texts in it were already in the public domain, Julie realized that it was time to create her own OER.

Despite the forward momentum Julie felt, her decision to create an open textbook was met with resistance. Her colleagues warned her that it would not count towards her tenure dossier, a legitimate enough concern, given that it might mean doing the work on her own time. When institutions do not recognize open projects as tenure-worthy, there's no support for making time or space within a faculty member's already overloaded work schedule. Although she listened to what was said, Julie never let it concern her unduly. When she then came across Robin DeRosa's *Anthology of American Literature*, it clinched the deal, and she realized that it was exactly what she wanted to do.

The opportunity for students to contribute to the textbook ultimately reinforced her decision. She was confident that it would make her students' in-class experience better. Direct experience conducting literary research and going through the editing and publishing process would allow her students to learn in a way that was innovative and, she hoped, more satisfying. Julie sensed that it would also make her own life easier, as well as support her research. There were plenty of reasons to move forward.

One challenge with assigning a team-based project, however, is students' varying schedules. Julie therefore divided her students into working groups based on their shared availability. Within these groups, they had to choose a text from a list that Julie provided—a measure of control that she retained in order to ensure diversity within the book. This was also driven by her desire to change the canon. She has been very careful to include a lot of authors who are women on the list, which has been a bit difficult since all the texts have to be in the public domain. There just weren't as many women being published in the past, and their work isn't being digitized as much.

Once the students have selected their text, they have to prepare the critical material around it for inclusion in the *Antología.* This includes writing an introduction covering the biographical background of the author, information about the literary and sociopolitical context during the time when the author was writing, an image that is relevant to the text, and at least ten footnotes. The footnotes need to include at least one of the following: a definition, supplementary contextual information, explanatory details, and literary analysis. The students must also write up a bibliography and a set of discussion questions. Julie then asks them to review and workshop each other's drafts at different moments in the semester. At the end of the course, the groups share their work as an oral presentation, and each student writes an individual paper on their own interpretation of the same text.

Once a first edition of the book had been released, Julie assigned it as the textbook in her subsequent classes. This has reaffirmed the original notion that doing the work themselves would be a good experience for students, but that it would also be valuable for Julie herself. Impor-

tantly, she has learned to trust that her students are more than capable of creating content from which other people can learn. Gratifyingly, the textbook (both as process and product) seems to have affected her students' classroom experience: since implementing it, Julie has seen fewer students dropping her course. Students have the readings at the beginning of the semester, which lets Julie focus on key teachings right from the start. This also helps her build stronger relationships in class and maintain student attention and trust.

Initially, Julie was anxious that if students were focused on just one text, it might mean that they weren't having a comprehensive enough experience with literary research and critique. Moreover, since it was an introductory survey course, she wasn't confident about students' capacity to do what she was asking of them. These feelings rapidly subsided after the first semester. At the end of the course, she organized a poster session in which each student presented the work they had done their text. The university's librarians were invited to the session as well, given that the project had been funded by the library. One of the highlights from the session was seeing the students speak so authoritatively and confidently about their work, from the author's background to the literary movement at the time to the text itself.

The support team helping Julie and her students create this textbook has been instrumental. Jen Waller, OU's director of open initiatives and scholarly communication, has helped by giving presentations and workshops to Julie's students about how to cite properly and how to license their own work, including the use of Creative Commons licenses. It has been a crucial part of the process. The Rebus Community platform and Pressbooks have also had a significant role, enabling students to

upload their assignments directly into Pressbooks without formal guidance. And through Rebus's wide community of connections, Julie has benefited from contact with others working on similar projects, as well as the invaluable contributions of a native Spanish speaker who has done the copyediting. Moving forward, Julie will be securing the help of a graduate student research assistant, who will edit future student submissions.

Since the textbook is continually growing, the work tends to pile up, particularly because of the need for constant updates. To make these updates, Julie draws on the enthusiasm she herself gains from the collaborative energy within the community that creates open textbooks. While the work is indeed immense, that momentum continually refreshes her.

Self-sustaining energy seems to be a fundamental characteristic of work on open textbooks. Research readily demonstrates the positive impact that OER has on students, and that can spur teachers to build openness into the rest of the work they do. Over time, broader and broader connections feed back the positive words that open textbook teams so need, and this in turn gives value to OER adopters and users. Somewhere in there, organizations like Rebus help out, facilitating connections and supplying infrastructure. In the end, the outcomes benefit everyone in the ecology.

What was critical in the case of the *Antología abierta de literatura hispana* was that Julie remembered to rely on and trust her students. By creating the opportunity for them to feel empowered in the classroom, everyone benefited. As Julie recalls the warnings about starting up an open textbook project—and doing it with student contributions, no less!—she also remembers thinking to herself, *Why not?* The numerous professors throughout the

United States who have adopted this book are the answer to that question, and testimony to what happens when you have confidence in OER and opening up possibilities for student learning.

FOUND IN TRANSLATION

WERNER WESTERMANN'S TRAVELS THROUGH CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND *CITIZENSHIP*

As anyone who is bilingual can tell you, converting a text from one language to another generally involves more than just translating the words. The conventions of culture bring their own distinct influences to written language. Conventions and expectations around making OER can also vary internationally, so when Werner Westerman embarked on an OER-in-translation project, the process was sure to be layered with complexity.

As a history teacher who also runs a civic education program at the Library of Congress in Chile, Werner's focus is on engaging citizens with their democratic institutions. Although he has been involved with open publishing since 2003, his great interest lies more in the processes of pedagogy than in the production of finished books. Of course the two go hand in hand, but when it came to his first project with Rebus Community, Werner was most curious to learn about the collaboration aspect.

After having received a small grant to develop a digital textbook for students in grades one and two, Werner became interested in textbooks for higher education. He was able to convince administrators at la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile to work on an open textbook

project; funding from the U.S. Embassy (in the amount of $20,000) would allow them to explore the development of infrastructure for open publishing. Part of Werner's aim was to start up discussion on the pedagogical use of open textbooks, rather than commercial ones.

In Toronto for the 2018 Creative Commons Global Summit, Werner met Hugh McGuire and learned about the existence of the Rebus Community projects platform. He was particularly drawn to Rebus because of the community-centred approach to creating textbooks, and soon offered to translate the in-progress *Digital Citizenship Toolkit*. The English-language project, led by Michelle Schwartz at Ryerson University in Toronto, intrigued him because of his background in civic engagement. But he was also drawn to the book for the opportunity it afforded in exploring crowdsourcing methodologies in digital publishing. Because translation involves not only words, but broader interpretations of meaning as well, the diversity of perspectives that the Rebus Community comprises was very attractive. In the *Digital Citizenship Toolkit,* chapters address various legal issues, as well as intellectual property rights and digital literacy. The Canadian and Chilean contexts can vary significantly when it comes to these themes, so many different adaptations—'cultural translations'—would be necessary.

Originally, Werner's plan was to collaborate with a university instructor in Chile, using the translation of the *Toolkit* as an in-class project. By translating both language and more abstract themes related to digital citizenship, students would learn by doing. Pedagogy would meet publishing.

Previously, Werner had seen how students can feel a sense of empowerment when their contributions—to a textbook or other projects—are eventually used by sub-

sequent students. Moreover, it counters what might be called a "culture of waste" in education, that is, when students' assignments are simply thrown away after being graded. By putting the students' time and the resources they generate into an open textbook, a cycle of incentivization is created. The value produced by one set of students prompts the next set to do the same.

Unfortunately, in the case of the *Digital Citizenship Toolkit*, Werner encountered a certain amount of resistance, in part due to the nature of the project's logistics, but also because of legal complications involving copyright. Ultimately, he concluded that he tried to do too much too fast, and that the initiative was more novel that his colleagues and collaborators were ready for. The lesson learned was that he needed to convince potential partners of the value of the work up front—as well as the longer-term benefits to the individuals involved. Although some of the translation was completed by students, the remaining chapters were eventually given to a professional translator.

Another roadblock arose in the project because of a technology choice. Werner was eager to use Pressbooks, but despite the platform's overall ease of use and international reach, some members of the university's librarian community pushed back. WordPress, and thus Pressbooks, were considered to be problematic. The team ended up using Google Docs and GitBook as a 'simpler' option, but that meant that they weren't able to integrate media elements like YouTube videos. This resistance to more dynamic, open publishing technologies can be common, and for Werner it created missed opportunities to explore intriguing directions in pedagogy. Nonetheless,

there was something to be learned through this experi-
ence, and learning about learning is what drives him for-
ward.

Overall, the experience so far with *Toolkit* has shown
Werner that the biggest issue around building open text-
books is changing mindsets, both about what textbooks
are and how they are made, as well as what they should be
in future. Keeping the focus on the process—and how it
engages and motivates people—needs to be central. After
that, it becomes time to think about the platform and the
products it can create.

A MAN, A PLAN, AND LOTS OF FANS

DAVE DILLON'S *SUCCESS* STORY

Like many major project plans, Dave Dillon's *Blueprint for Success in College and Career* has seen a number of iterations along its lifeline. Today, *Blueprint for Success* is itself a striking triumph, with multiple adopters and users, and a great deal of value delivered to innumerable students. The idea for the textbook emerged out of a spectrum of needs—those of both teachers and learners, as well as the author's own desire for a highly functional text. In early 2019, it won a Textbook Excellence Award from the Textbook & Academic Authors Association, and the accolades continue to flow in, including an Open Textbook Award for Excellence from the Open Education Consortium.

Back in 2005, Dave was working as an adjunct counsellor and instructor at five different community colleges in four different districts in Southern California. Working at multiple institutions made choosing a textbook complicated. Students had different needs, bureaucracies had different procedures. He began thinking that, once he became full-time, he would just write his own textbook. With the diversity of his teaching and counselling experience, he had a very clear idea about the kinds of learning materials that he wanted for his students.

At the time, Dave wasn't particularly familiar with the concept of openness, but he was starting to feel the needs that openly published textbooks fill so well. He knew he wanted control over the educational content he included in his lessons, and he knew a lot of that content existed in the world in different publications and formats. He also knew that the student experience is constantly changing, and that, over time, whatever he put together would need to be adapted and revised. Two years after reaching the conclusion that he was eventually going to create his own textbook, Dave became a full-time faculty member at Grossmont College in El Cajon, California. And so began his plan to start construction on *Blueprint.*

It wouldn't be until 2009 that Dave actually got going, however, focusing on creating a textbook for a one-unit study skills and time management course. He gave himself two years to make it happen. In all, it took five years and was, as he describes it, "a wonderful learning process" about all the things that go into putting a book together.

A couple of national publishing offers came in, but Dave wasn't confident about the attention and promotion that his book would receive. In the end, somewhat by accident, he discovered Montezuma Publishing, on the San Diego State University campus, located not far from his home institution. They did the formatting and printing, although Dave had to pay for his own editor. They negotiated a price of $29.00 for the 100-page-book, and it was published in 2014.

Overall, Dave was happy with this experience, and in particular that the book would be more affordable for students. In his work as a counsellor, Dave had already witnessed first-hand how the high prices of textbooks—as well as problems with distribution and availability—frequently have a negative impact on student

lives and learning. He recalls one particular student who admitted that they couldn't afford all their textbooks. Instead, they decided to drop certain classes and re-register in others—those for which the instructor had selected a cheaper textbook. In this case, the student was also living with homelessness. Dave knew that situations like this existed, but it wasn't until the student was in his office, recounting the painful details of that cold truth, that it really hit him. Suddenly the connections between affordability, customized content, learning outcomes, and holistic student success *all* came together. It was a powerful moment.

Dave was already familiar with the term *open educational resources*, as well as the potential that OER offer in terms of meeting both student and teacher needs. However, like many others who are new to the concept and processes of making OER, he had a lot of questions. How does the quality of open educational resources stack up to conventionally published books? Are they accessible to everyone, and if so, how is this achieved? Are they more or less sustainable than other textbooks? Are they academically rigorous enough? If he were to produce one, would it stand up to the scrutiny of his peers and, importantly, his students?

Over time, as he sought the answers to these questions, Dave discovered other issues related to conventional publishing, specifically about availability. For a number of semesters, students had been telling Dave that they couldn't buy his textbook in the bookstore because it wasn't there. It seemed unlikely to him at first, but after hearing about this issue from multiple students in different courses, he decided to investigate. He visited the bookstore at several intervals before and after his course had begun. True enough, he was surprised to discover

that the bookstore didn't have the book in stock at different points in the semester. Common bookstore practice is to understock textbooks, in order to save money by not having to carry the cost of inventory. Clearly, however, this causes real problems for students, especially for those with cash-flow problems: if you have to wait for loan disbursements or a monthly pay check, you can't always come up with the cash when a book is in stock. Moreover, if you have to wait to purchase your textbook, you might find yourself weeks into the start of the semester, already behind in your readings. If you have to have the bookstore order the textbook from the publisher, the delay can also be substantial. Dave really wanted to do something to prevent this from happening to his students, and the solution seemed to be to create an open textbook.

Dave's first move was to look for open content on successfully navigating the college experience. He knew that a lot already existed, and that he could keep all the material openly licensed, using the CC-BY attribution. One text that he found and wanted to use, however, had been licensed share-alike non-commercial by the authors. He decided to contact them and ask if they would consider a license change. Because of the intent with which he was undertaking this new project, the authors agreed to the change, and Dave was able to include the material in his new book. He also had the same 'conversation' with himself, and re-licensed chapters from his previous textbook as CC-BY, which he then incorporated into the new OER. (Fortunately, the original publisher, Montezuma, had allowed Dave to retain his own copyright on the content.)

Much editorial and revision work ensued, including the peer-review process for the 'finished' work. Dave admits that it was an anxiety-inducing period, but in the

end, most of the reviewers' feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The critiques made the content better, and quite a few errors were identified and fixed through these reviews. The overwhelming feeling, after all the work, was gratitude for all those who had volunteered to look at the book with both an open mind and a sharp eye.

Dave went on to pilot the book in class, prior to 'official' publication. Again, the response was great, and a few more revisions followed. Having been made available online, for free, and in time for the start of the semester, the textbook went on to receive cheers from students, and positive word of mouth started to spread. Since its release, Dave has heard from numerous instructors who are adopting it for their own classroom use.

As happens with many open textbooks, the popularity of *Blueprint for Success* has prompted interest in ancillary materials. Though Dave had not anticipated such an excited reception, or the need to create more content so quickly, he had has ancillaries in mind along the way. His colleague Roico Terry has created a set of PowerPoint slides, and quiz banks have been developed that support the textbook's learning outcomes. Dave has also released a new version of *Blueprint for Success*, augmented with a cultural competency chapter that was developed in collaboration with Stanford University's Global Studies Division. The team is also working on an audio version, led by Lee Pierce, an assistant professor of rhetoric in the Communication Department at SUNY Geneseo. Narration for the audio is being recorded by SUNY students.

To date, the book has been adopted at thirteen California community colleges, and is being used in at least one school in Oregon, New Jersey, New Hampshire, and Ten-

nessee. Another institution in Michigan is in the process of adapting the textbook, and the New Jersey–based instructor has already created their own adaption.

Blueprint for Success has become, in many ways, a blueprint in itself. Dave Dillon's experience was one that started with a combination of needs that weren't being met by the publishing processes he already knew about. By looking for alternatives, asking for help, and not trying to reinvent the wheel, he did in fact reach an innovative outcome. Moreover, through this success, Dave has demonstrated another example of how publishing can be truly a community-based process. In his own words: "There are other faculty out there recognizing and looking for solutions to the same challenges. It is well worth spending the time to try to identify them and collaborate with them. There is no need to go it alone. I'm hopeful that the open community continues to evolve, and that there are more collaborative opportunities for people. I think people are really willing to volunteer in an altruistic way when there's not a 'publisher' (or sometimes an author) who's making a profit off of the book."

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

Following the accessibility standards that Rebus Community is establishing for the creation of open textbooks and other OER, *Rebus Community Reports* has been produced in accordance with this ethos in mind.

Below is a summary of the key areas that have been assessed for accessibility during the production process. The checklist has been drawn from the BCcampus Open Education Accessibility Toolkit. While a checklist such as this is just one part of a holistic approach to accessibility, it is one way to begin our work on embedded good accessibility practices in the books we support.

ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST

Checklist for Accessibility in Webbook

Area of Focus	Requirements	Pass?
Organizing Content	Content is organized under headings and subheadings	yes
Organizing Content	Headings and subheadings are used sequentially (e.g. Heading 1. Heading 2, etc.) as well as logically (if the title is Heading 1 then there should be no other Heading 1 styles as the title is the uppermost level)	yes
Images	Images that convey information include Alternative Text (alt-text) descriptions of the image's content or function	not applicable
Images	Graphs, charts, and maps also include contextual or supporting details in the text surrounding the image	not applicable
Images	Images do not rely on colour to convey information	not applicable
Images	Images that are purely decorative contain empty alternative text descriptions. (Descriptive text is unnecessary if the image doesn't convey contextual content information)	not applicable
Tables	Tables include row and column headers	yes

Tables	Tables include a title or caption	yes
Tables	Tables do not have merged or split cells	yes
Tables	Tables have adequate cell padding	yes
Weblinks	The weblink is meaningful in context, and does not use generic text such as "click here" or "read more"	yes
Weblinks	Weblinks do not open new windows or tabs	yes
Weblinks	If weblinks must open in a new window, a textual reference is included in the link information	not applicable
Embedded Multimedia	A transcript has been made available for a multimedia resource that includes audio narration or instruction	not applicable
Embedded Multimedia	Captions of all speech content and relevant non-speech content are included in the multimedia resource that includes audio synchronized with a video presentation	not applicable
Embedded Multimedia	Audio descriptions of contextual visuals (graphs, charts, etc.) are included in the multimedia resource	not applicable
Formulas	Formulas have been created using MathML	not applicable

Formulas	Formulas are images with alternative text descriptions, if MathML is not an option	not applicable
Font Size	Font size is 12 point or higher for body text	yes
Font Size	Font size is 9 point for footnotes or endnotes	yes
Font Size	Font size can be zoomed to 200%	yes

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Individual chapters or pieces:

VERSION HISTORY

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.1. If the edits involve substantial updates, the edition number increases to the next whole number.

The files posted alongside this book always reflect the most recent version. If you find an error in this book, please let us know in the Rebus Community project homepage.

Version History

Version	Date	Change	Affected Web Page
1.0	30 September 2019	Original	