

Rebus Textbook Success Program Evaluation Report

AUGUST 2023

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ABOUT THE REBUS FOUNDATION

The Rebus Foundation is a global non-profit and Canadian registered charity, established in April of 2016 with the mandate to reimagine the publishing ecosystem by making knowledge freely available in the pursuit of equity, understanding, and the common good. As an organization, Rebus is dedicated to building a collaborative model that centers student experience and a movement of leaders leveraging OER to transform higher education. Rebus' focus on collaboration and equity within the higher education community is in service of developing an inclusive field that is responsive to diverse educators and learners.

As an organization, Rebus has always been dedicated to building a new, collaborative model for open resource creation in partnership with the OER community. Infused in this model are their core values around collaboration, community, equity, care, and respect. By keeping these core values in mind throughout all their approaches, Rebus strives to promote a supportive culture and education system that centers student experience and learning. Rebus believes this focus is critical to creating & implementing valuable resources, and can have impacts beyond a single resource, individual, classroom, or institution. They hope you will join them in building this future!

Table of Contents

I Executive Summary 4

II Overview 9

Participating Systems 10

Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS) 10

Massachusetts 12

III Evaluation Objectives and Approach 14

IV Findings 15

Facilitator Interviews 15

Grant Lead Interviews 16

Rebus Staff Interviews 18

Participant Surveys 19

End of Program Feedback 22

DEI: Review of LOUIS Published Materials 25

V Summary & Recommendations 27

VI Conclusion 30

VII Appendix 33

Appendix A: Evaluation Rubric 33

Appendix B: Equity Review of LOUIS Published Materials 35

Executive Summary

Rebus Community, the open education and professional development arm of The Rebus Foundation, engaged edBridge Partners to evaluate their Textbook Success Program (TSP), a year-long cohort-based program providing information and guidance on the creation and publishing of Open Education Resources (OER), and the experiences of participating cohorts across two distinct U.S. Department of Education funded projects in two states - Louisiana and Massachusetts. The following research questions guided the evaluation:

1. What elements, or combinations of elements, of the participating teams contribute to the most successful outcomes for the Textbook Success Program (i.e. team composition, roles/responsibilities; team structure; team demographics; prior participant knowledge; initial expectations of the TSP; support structures within states; goals for participation; incentive structures; participation frequency and concentration, etc.)?
2. Which elements specifically help to promote the development of resources that are reflective of the core equity and efficacy principles Rebus seeks to teach to educators via the TSP?

TEXTBOOK SUCCESS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Textbook Success Program is a professional development program that equips faculty, librarians, administrators, and managers with the tools they need to make great OER (i.e., textbooks and other formats). The program is one year long and comprises two phases:

- + Phase 1: Planning Phase (12 weeks): Every week, participants will familiarize themselves with a different aspect of open publishing and thereby get a complete overview of the open publishing process. In the first 3 months, they will mostly be setting their projects up for completion throughout the rest of the year.
- + Phase 2: Practical Application (9 months): This is the actual hands-on stage where teams work more closely on their OER projects, with monthly meetings involving a mix of group check-ins with their cohort and 1:1 support sessions between project teams and the assigned TSP facilitator.

Rebus engages TSP alumni who had successfully graduated from the program to function as facilitators for the cohorts. Each cohort comprises 4-5 teams, and Rebus recommends including four individuals per team to participate in the program.

PARTICIPATING SYSTEMS

Louisiana Library Network

The Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS) is a library consortium that works to level the playing field for all students and faculty by providing equitable access to resources, services, and technologies. LOUIS partnered with Rebus Community to provide professional development on open publishing in support of a 3-year U.S. Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot grant, which encompasses the development of LOUIS' Interactive OER for Dual Enrollment Project. This project

supports the extension of access to high-quality postsecondary opportunities to high school students across Louisiana and beyond.

A total of 154 participants engaged in the TSP rounds in Louisiana, with the LOUIS Round 1 starting in June 2021 and LOUIS Round 2 in October 2022. Twenty-five (25) dual enrollment courses were divided into 5 cohorts and grouped by discipline— Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM); History; Composition and Arts; Business and Communication; and Languages and Social Science—to facilitate collaboration across teams and reduce duplication of efforts. Every cohort comprised five projects, each with one librarian leader serving as a project manager and five teaching faculty who served as content creators. An alternative to the original TSP schedule, described in the overview, was implemented by LOUIS by taking the 12-week course and spreading that out over the year, with Rebus delivering eight sessions to each of their five cohorts, and four sessions specifically to their library leaders. Rebus engaged TSP alumni who had successfully graduated from the program to function as facilitators for the cohorts.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts system consisted of a consortium of six colleges led by Framingham State University, as well as the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. They engaged with Rebus on a grant from the U.S. Department of Education aimed at increasing the number of college courses utilizing free Open Educational Resources (OER) rather than costly textbooks. The purpose of the grant project, Remixing Open Textbooks through an Equity Lens (ROTEL): Culturally Relevant Open Textbooks for High Enrollment General Education Courses and Career and Professional Courses at Six Public Massachusetts Colleges, was to test the hypothesis that underrepresented students will achieve higher academic outcomes if free, culturally relevant course materials that reflect their experiences are utilized.

A total of twenty-five projects and nearly seventy participants in Massachusetts participated in two rounds of the TSP, with the first round starting in February 2022 and the second round in July 2022. Each round followed the original TSP schedule where participants are engaged in a 12-session weekly course which is then followed by regular monthly check-ins. The projects were grouped into two cohorts, Adapt and Create, which consisted of courses across STEM and Social Science disciplines. Each cohort had at least one faculty member and up to three support staff (who could be shared across projects). Rebus engaged TSP alumni who had successfully graduated from the program to function as facilitators for the cohorts.

EVALUATION APPROACH

edBridge utilized several research methods to capture data and feedback from key stakeholders and program participants across both states to understand the ways in which the TSP was working well and identify areas of improvement. The first phase of this work consisted of a kickoff meeting with the Rebus program administrators and grant teams from both states participating in the TSP, and an internal scan of documents and background information on the composition and structure of the TSP including information on the curriculum, professional development and resources provided to program leads and participants. This review provided context for a series of interviews with project leads from Louisiana

and Massachusetts, facilitators of the cohorts from both states, and Rebus staff who support the TSP. In addition, surveys were distributed to participants at the beginning and end of each cohort to measure growth in their knowledge of the core equity and efficacy principles taught by Rebus in the TSP. The second phase of this evaluation was the creation of a rubric to review 10 OERs created by the Louisiana cohort and determine the degree to which the core strategies for developing equitable and inclusive OER taught through the TSP were embedded in the published materials.¹

FINDINGS

The outcomes and perspectives across groups from both state teams shed light on the success factors and areas of improvement of the TSP. While participants of the TSP reported that they gained a deeper understanding of what it takes to create, design, and publish engaging and accessible content for students, and that they valued learning about DEI and inclusive pedagogy in open education, they also suggested improvements in the sequencing of content within the curriculum, and introducing more interactivity over lectures in the first phase of the program. Facilitators appreciated having access to quality resources, a community of learners and experts in the field, and a clear understanding of the expectations within their roles and how they aligned with overall program goals. They also suggested modifications be made to the training schedule so that participants are learning about certain topics as they work on aspects of their projects in real time. Grant leads appreciated the foundational curriculum of the TSP and the expertise, accessibility and responsiveness afforded by the Rebus staff, and they also made suggestions around improving the setting of expectations, developing a communication strategy, providing more training for facilitators, and tailoring the schedule to meet their state team's needs. Many of these suggestions were woven into the program throughout the year. These changes had definite positive results for all participating groups: organizers at the systems, TSP participants, TSP facilitators, and Rebus staff.

States took their own approaches to the TSP model and Rebus worked closely with each state to provide the necessary guidance and support to aid in their success and gather insights to make active changes to the TSP model. These changes included making a conscious effort to clearly communicate the value of the collaborative open publishing approach and DEI within the Textbook Success Program; working more closely with grant partners to set clear expectations around the roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures in place for all groups involved in the TSP; and reorganizing the curriculum to ensure that the goals for the full program and outcomes for each session are clearly outlined.

In addition, this evaluation uncovered that the extent to which the published materials reflect the principles of equity taught by Rebus varied across and within disciplines. This demonstrated an opportunity to provide participants with a set of standards to refer to as they create and/or adapt OERs.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, it was determined that the following elements (1) contribute to the most successful outcomes for the TSP and (2) help promote the development of resources that are reflective of the core equity and efficacy principles Rebus seeks to teach to educators:

¹ A review of Massachusetts' published OER was not possible due to timeline constraints.

- + *Team-Based Approach*: This approach supports collaboration and network opportunities among distinct groups involved in the TSP, such as subject matter experts authoring content and those supporting the publishing process, such as librarians and instructional design staff.
- + *Communication*: Active and consistent communication between Rebus staff and facilitators, system leaders, and participants.
- + *Flexibility*: Negotiation around the flexible elements of the TSP, such as schedule, based on feedback to best serve partner needs.
- + *Monitoring and Evaluation*: Timely integration of feedback and the frequent use of evaluation tools to monitor and adjust throughout the year.
- + *Explicit integration of principles to promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*: Incorporation of DEI across all TSP curriculum materials, facilitator/cohort interactions, and in Rebus and grant organizer/client relationships.

edBridge synthesized and compared the data, information, and research collected on the experiences and published artifacts from the two distinct systems participating in the TSP and applied their observations to arrive at the following recommendations. These insights can guide statewide systems or consortiums with goals of establishing sustainable and inclusive open educational resources (OER) publishing initiatives in collaboration with Rebus.

Recommendation 1: Implement a level-setting conversation between leaders of the TSP before engaging with participants.

It is recommended that TSP leaders (Rebus staff, system organizers, and TSP facilitators) meet prior to the start of the program to build community, find common ground, and clearly outline program expectations and goals upfront.

Recommendation 2: Develop a communication plan to reinforce learning objectives and expected outcomes.

A thorough communication plan will keep all groups involved in the TSP focused, aligned, and aware of the purpose behind every aspect of the program. It will also improve participant outcomes by delineating the communication channels, resources, and feedback methods to measure results.

Recommendation 3: Establish an infrastructure to support open publishing at the system/state level to complement the support offered through the Rebus TSP. Participating systems established centralized support structures to facilitate the open publishing activities at their institutions. It is recommended that any future state-level engagements also consider what kind of centralized support model would work best for their state/system's context. Support at the state-level that complements guidance and support offered through Rebus' programming pathways can further catalyze efforts.

Recommendation 4: Utilize the BranchEd Equity Rubric for OER as a tool to illustrate a set of core values and standards for DEI that should be present in published materials. An equity rubric can serve as a tool to inform expectations for participants and a guide on the standards to consider in the creation, adaptation, and evaluation of OER. It can also support self-directed learning for participants and reflection for program administrators on the relationship between the standards and outcomes outlined for participants. Further, this particular rubric can offer guidance on pedagogical approaches that will leverage the published OER content to create a successful classroom experience for students.

Recommendation 5: Establish feedback mechanisms to inform continuous improvement. Creating systems for state leaders to openly share feedback on the modifications and successful approaches to the TSP model can help with implementing and supporting open publishing at scale.

CONCLUSION

This evaluation of the Textbook Success Program provided considerable insight on the perspectives and outcomes of the teams from Massachusetts and Louisiana, the improvements implemented by Rebus, as well as an analysis of the newly created course materials. Although observations and suggestions by state teams may have varied, there were similar themes that often fell into each of the major areas identified to continue to enhance future participants' experience — program structure and approach, expectations and goal setting, communication, flexibility, and monitoring and evaluation. With each of those areas in mind, it was observed that the elements highlighted previously have and will continue to contribute to the most successful outcomes for the TSP, the development of equitable and inclusive resources, and effective scaling of the program.

Overview

Rebus Community is the open education and professional development arm of The Rebus Foundation, a global non-profit charity working to make knowledge freely available in the pursuit of equity, understanding, and the common good. Rebus Community centers its work around developing and cultivating a movement of leaders by leveraging OER to transform higher education. Its focus on collaboration, community and equity within the higher education community is in service of developing an inclusive field that is responsive to diverse educators and learners, and promoting a collaborative culture and education system that centers student experience and learning.

The Textbook Success Program (TSP) is a year-long, cohort based professional development program, facilitated by Rebus Community, divided into two phases which provide faculty, librarians, administrators, and managers, with open education resources, information about the OER publishing processes, and guidance for the creation of open education courses. TSP alumni facilitate sessions, and help to build open education capacity, support collaboration and engagement between project team members, OER creators, and OER professionals, and impart core equity and efficacy principles to participants.

Phase 1 is the planning stage of the program focused on knowledge introduction. This phase consists of 12 weeks worth of training with 1.5-hour sessions. The goals in this phase are to familiarize participants with the publishing process, for teams to complete their scope and timeline, and to establish a connection and dynamic with the cohort so that they can support one another throughout the program. Phase 2 is 9 months long and consists of alternating monthly meetings, which usually include 1.5-hour group check-ins, and 15 minute 1:1 sessions between teams and facilitators. The monthly sessions serve as a checkpoint for participants to monitor progress, brainstorm, and share resources, and keep themselves accountable to their goals and timeline.

There are seven program learning outcomes:

- + Get to know Rebus' collaborative open publishing approach with open education peers in a supportive learning environment.
- + Connect and contribute to the OER community (e.g.: process of being in TSP, learning and OER that comes out of it, relationships).
- + Reflect on your current pedagogical practices with the goal of creating your OER with learning experiences that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive.
- + Create an efficient workflow and apply best practices that help your project progress in due time, with guidance from your Rebus facilitator and other cohort members.
- + Gain confidence using open approaches and tools to advance your project and grow its user community.
- + Build and strengthen institutional capacity for current and future open publishing projects.
- + Recognize and grow your open education leadership skills.

PARTICIPATING SYSTEMS

Rebus Community partnered with two U.S. Department of Education funded projects to support their open education initiatives through its Textbook Success Program (TSP). From 2021-2023, approximately 250 educators across two states in different regions of the U.S. – Louisiana and Massachusetts – worked on a total of 50 OER projects for dual-enrollment and introductory level high-enrollment courses while participating in both rounds of the TSP. Each state leveraged the TSP as a model and customized their approach to meet their needs given the constraints of their respective grants (scope, goals, financial resources, personnel limits, etc.).

Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS)

LOUIS is a consortium of Louisiana academic libraries united to harness and leverage the strength of their collective power to provide cost-effective information resources, services and technology that support the teaching, learning, and research missions of its members' institutions. LOUIS received a 3-year U.S. Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot grant to fund large-scale OER implementation across Louisiana. The grant encompasses the development of OER for twenty-five courses offered at multiple institutions and in dual enrollment high school settings. To support their work on this grant, they have partnered with Rebus Community to supply professional development on open publishing and meet the following goals:

1. Eliminate textbook costs for the priority twenty-five dual enrollment courses to remove a barrier to participation.
2. Ensure that OER master courses are developed to meet the needs of diverse learners and institutional contexts.
3. Create a replicable model of interactive OER that can be adopted across institutions to reduce the time to build OER sections.

Demographics & Roles

63% of participants in the TSP identified as White/Caucasian females. There was a bit more racial diversity in their cohorts compared to other participating states with around 19% of participants identifying as African American, followed by 10% identifying as Hispanic/Latinx. As far as roles, 86% of respondents held positions as Faculty/Adjunct/Lecturer, and 48% of respondents had more than 10 years of experience in their current role.

Structure & Schedule

LOUIS Round 1 started in June 2021 and LOUIS Round 2 in October 2022. During LOUIS Round 1, there were twenty-five dual enrollment courses that were divided into five cohorts, which were grouped by discipline, to enable collaboration across teams and reduce duplication of efforts. The disciplines were STEM, History, Composition and Arts, Business and Communication, and Languages and Social Science. The Louisiana team requested an alternative structure, taking the 12-week course and spreading that out over the year, with Rebus delivering eight sessions to each of their five cohorts, and four sessions to their library leaders. Each course had a project team of five teaching faculty who served as content creators and subject-matter experts and one librarian

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lead serving as a project manager. Teaching faculty created and adapted the OER to meet the needs of students in Louisiana. The librarian lead served as the project manager and the primary point of contact for the teaching faculty, and engaged in the following activities across four sessions for rounds 1 and 2:

- + Project Scoping
- + Team Building and Management
- + Editing
- + Adoptions and Post-Release

Overall, there were a total of 154 participants who engaged in and supported the following activities across eight sessions for both rounds:

JUNE 2021 SCHEDULE (LOUIS ROUND 1)	
AUGUST 2021	Project Scoping and Textbook Design
SEPTEMBER 2021	2021: Accessibility and DEI: Part 1
OCTOBER 2021	Assessment Design and Content Creation
NOVEMBER 2021	H5P & Pressbooks
JANUARY 2022	Accessibility and DEI: Part 2
FEBRUARY 2022	Peer Review and Other Feedback
MARCH 2022	Formatting and Layout
APRIL 2022	Release Preparation
OCTOBER 2022 SCHEDULE (LOUIS ROUND 2)	
OCTOBER 2022	Project Scoping
NOVEMBER 2022	+ Storytelling and Communications + Growing and Managing Teams + Team Check-in with Facilitator
DECEMBER 2022	+ Accessibility and Inclusive Design + Content Creation + Authoring and Editing Logistics + Review and Feedback

II

JANUARY 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Formatting and Release Preparation+ Post-release and Adoptions+ Curriculum Wrap-up
FEBRUARY 2023 – OCTOBER 2023	Alternating monthly between group check-ins and 1:1 sessions with facilitator

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts team consisted of a consortium of six colleges² led by Framingham State University in Massachusetts, as well as the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. They engaged with Rebus on a grant from the U.S. Department of Education aimed at increasing the number of college courses utilizing free Open Educational Resources (OER) rather than costly textbooks. The grant, *Remixing Open Textbooks through an Equity Lens (ROTEL): Culturally Relevant Open Textbooks for High Enrollment General Education Courses and Career and Professional Courses at Six Public Massachusetts Colleges*, has two main goals:

1. Remix and develop accessible, intentionally inclusive OER that reflects students' local and lived experiences to improve student outcomes, particularly from underserved communities.
2. Ensure scalability, longevity, and expanded use throughout the state through promotion at MA OER Council composed of all public higher education institutions (which includes the Open Textbook Coordinating Council (OTCC)).

Demographics & Roles

Seventy percent of participants from Massachusetts in the TSP identified as White/Caucasian females. As far as roles, nearly 50% of TSP participants from Massachusetts identified as Faculty/Adjunct/Lecturer, 36% had more than 10 years of experience in their current role, and 50% reported being support personnel for their project team.

Structure & Schedule

There were a total of twenty-five projects and nearly seventy participants in Massachusetts cohorts participating in both rounds of the TSP. The projects were grouped into two cohorts: Adapt and Create and consisted of courses across the STEM and Social Science disciplines. Each cohort had at least one faculty member and up to three support staff (who could be shared across projects). Rebus engaged TSP alumni who had successfully graduated from the program to function as facilitators for the cohorts. The first round began in February 2022 and the second round started in July 2022.

² The six institutions involved are Framingham State University (lead institution), Salem State University, Northern Essex Community College, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Fitchburg State University and Holyoke Community College.

II

FEBRUARY 2022 SCHEDULE (MASSACHUSETTS ROUND 1)	
FEBRUARY 2022	Project Scoping & Storytelling and Communications
MARCH 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Growing and Managing Teams + Team Check-in with Facilitator + Accessibility and Inclusive Design + Content Creation
APRIL 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Authoring and Editing Logistics + Review and Feedback + Formatting and Release Preparation + Post-release and Adoptions + Curriculum Wrap-Up
MAY 2022 - JANUARY 2023	Alternating monthly between group check-ins and 1:1 sessions with facilitator
JULY 2022 SCHEDULE (MASSACHUSETTS ROUND 2)	
AUGUST 2022	Project Scoping
SEPTEMBER 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Storytelling and Communications + Growing and Managing Teams + Team Check-in with Facilitator
OCTOBER 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Accessibility and Inclusive Design + Content Creation + Authoring and Editing Logistics
NOVEMBER 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Review and Feedback + Formatting and Release Preparation + Post-release and Adoptions
DECEMBER 2022	Curriculum Wrap-Up
DECEMBER 2022 – AUGUST 2023	Alternating monthly between group check-ins and 1:1 sessions with facilitator

Evaluation Objectives and Approach

At the request of Rebus Community, edBridge Partners conducted an evaluation to identify the elements, or combination of elements, of the participating teams that contribute to the most successful outcomes for the Textbook Success Program and the elements that specifically help promote the development of resources that are reflective of the core equity and efficacy principles Rebus seeks to teach to educators via the TSP.

edBridge utilized several research methods to capture data and feedback from key stakeholders and program participants, and to evaluate the current state of programming and outcomes within the TSP:

- + *Interviews with Key Leaders:* edBridge interviewed a total of three grant team leads and four facilitators across the two systems throughout varying phases of the program to gauge their perspectives and goals around the TSP. edBridge also held two focus group sessions with the Rebus staff.
- + *Surveys & Data Collection:* Baseline and end of program surveys were sent to all participants to assess their knowledge of the core equity and efficacy principles taught by Rebus Foundation and measure growth in those areas based on instruction in the TSP. A total of 114 participants completed the surveys including faculty/lecturers, librarians, instructional designers, and administrators.
- + *Analysis & Insights:* Through these interviews and surveys, as well as conversations with Rebus staff and data shared from internal surveys conducted by Rebus, edBridge gained insights on the following aspects of the structure of the TSP:
 - Team roles/responsibilities.
 - Program structure, including the frequency and length of sessions.
 - Content and Curriculum - including specific equity and efficacy principles, and the pedagogical strategies employed to each of those principles to successfully create and publish OER.

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I was afraid to facilitate at first, which became a personal challenge for me. Thankfully, I never felt too in the wind because of the constant support from the Rebus team. I incorporated advice and other lessons learned from having gone through the TSP and teaching with OER. Overall, it has been a great professional development opportunity for me, and I would do it again.”

LOUIS Facilitator

Findings

FACILITATOR INTERVIEWS

edBridge Partners interviewed facilitators from the Massachusetts and LOUIS cohorts at the beginning of the Textbook Success Program to better understand the combination of factors that have helped them be most successful in the program and ensure that the principles that Rebus promotes such as diversity, equity, and inclusion were seen in the final work products published by program graduates.

The key takeaways that were shared by facilitators were overwhelmingly positive and outlined areas of strength and/or opportunity within the following areas.

Goals and Objectives

It was evident in conversations with facilitators that having a clear understanding of the expectations within their roles and how it aligned with the overall objectives and goals for the Textbook Success Program was a key factor in their overall experience. The TSP facilitator acts as a teacher and guide for participants in their assigned TSP cohort. The role is also designed to be part of a professional development pathway where individuals can accelerate their OER leadership journey through the facilitation opportunity. The main criteria for being a facilitator is someone who has previously graduated from the program — due to their understanding of the structure, approach, and impact, — as well as someone who is enthusiastic about OER and is already finding ways to champion OER efforts within their institutions.

Facilitators expressed that they valued the structure of the lesson plans and content because it encouraged them to dive deeper into the material and look for ways to apply the knowledge they gained to strengthen their own pedagogical skills. It also provided opportunities for them to engage in fruitful conversations with participants throughout the sessions, which helped to increase their confidence in the role.

Collaboration

Facilitators expressed that they felt supported when preparing to take on their role. Rebus provided a detailed TSP Facilitator Guide which outlined the onboarding process for facilitators consisting of three training sessions covering the curriculum, guidance around effective facilitation, and ongoing support available to them throughout the course of the program. Quality resources such as handouts, scripted lesson plans, and lecture slides to guide discussions were also provided, and facilitators were encouraged to use their own voices to promote authenticity and active engagement with participants.

Facilitators valued having access to experts within the Rebus staff to field any questions and be able to communicate participant feedback on an ongoing basis, resulting in real time program updates by the Rebus staff. Facilitators also shared that being a part of a community of learners was beneficial because it exposed them to different approaches to facilitation, particularly when it came to making sure elements of DEI were woven into the content.

IV



Reflecting on my experience as a TSP participant and comparing it to my experience as a facilitator [and what the program has become], I can genuinely say how impressed I am by the volume of information that is covered - it is a jam-packed program! I appreciate the resources given to us and how I can take the time to deeply read them in preparation for my sessions. Rebus models that approach for us in the way they have taken the time to think through what is being taught in the TSP and are making improvements as they move forward, such as having much more emphasis on DEI across the curriculum.”

Massachusetts Facilitator

Communication

Many facilitators expressed that regular check-ins with project leads were valuable as they helped with connecting the statewide objectives and programmatic updates to the work of the TSP happening in real time. They shared that more structured communication between varying groups involved in the program - the project leads, grant-funded participants, the facilitators, and the Rebus team - helps to ensure that the purpose around each phase of the program is clear and necessary program adjustments are made based on feedback.

Structure

Facilitators valued various aspects of both the planning and implementation phases of the program. The planning phase of the program encouraged them to go in depth with the materials and be more intentional about how they highlighted principles of equity and inclusivity that were integrated across the curriculum. However, some of the discussions around design and publishing within that initial phase were often front-loaded, which meant facilitators were covering topics that participants would not get to for months. This resulted in facilitators experiencing difficulties with guiding participants on how to apply the content as they were learning it and helping them understand the real-time relevance between topics. In the implementation phase of the program where participants were working on their projects, facilitators communicated the value of having time with other facilitators to build community and problem solve together.

GRANT LEAD INTERVIEWS

edBridgE Partners conducted interviews with the grant team leads for Massachusetts and the LOUIS programs to get their feedback on the Textbook Success Program (TSP) and the partnership with Rebus. Since Massachusetts met weekly and LOUIS convened monthly, the interviews were conducted when they were in distinct phases of the program - Massachusetts was about 4 weeks into the program and LOUIS had about 2 weeks left.

Themes that emerged from the discussions were success factors and opportunities for improvement related to expectation and goal setting, and the program structure, and approach.

Expectation and Goal Setting

Both programs participating in the TSP expressed that there is an opportunity to improve the setting of expectations, specifically how the knowledge instruction sessions in the first phase and the overall framework of the program come together. As far as goals for the TSP, interviewees from each program had a goal of supporting publishing projects through a complete lifecycle from start to finish, and to get to the point where a project is published successfully. Grant leads gathered early on in the program that participants also looked forward to the accountability and support structures the TSP provides so that they can monitor progress and complete their projects in a timely manner.

The Rebus team, however, has designed their program to provide many additional benefits for participants, foremost of which are:

IV



The structure of the TSP helps participants stay focused as it lays the foundation and ensures that they are reflective throughout each stage in the process instead of just diving into the work. This pace has not only helped projects continue to move along, but it has also allowed us on the grant team to work closely with the Rebus program team to escalate any concerns as they come up in real time.”

Massachusetts Project Leader

- + Producing student-centered, accessible, equitable, and inclusive OER that will have an impact on the field of education.
- + Building an active community for their open projects, centered around trust and respect.
- + Growing and transforming participants' skills throughout their experience to become better leaders at their institutions by equipping them with the skills they need to sustain long-term OER initiatives.

Rebus has intentionally designed the program to ensure these benefits, in addition to their expertise on open publishing. This resulted in a misalignment between what the grant leads hoped to achieve and what Rebus was trying to impart.

Structure

Rebus staff were very accessible and open to feedback from program leads and participants. Both state systems shared that collaboration helped them work through any challenges they faced throughout the course of the program. The 'team approach' within the TSP model was also helpful for participants as it encouraged networking and facilitated the ability to track and monitor progress. The structure of the program helped them complete deliverables and meet deadlines set by incorporating a sense of accountability among participants.

Communication

MA grant leads noted that there was an opportunity to develop a communication strategy between the grant team and Rebus. Identifying a single point of contact among these groups and having communications flow through that person would be helpful in actively making improvements to the program and avoiding any potential points of confusion. Rebus has been responsive to these concerns and worked closely with project leads across participating states to carve out time for syllabus review in future rounds to address any sequencing concerns and communicate learning outcomes to ensure that participants are effectively engaged.

Training

Leads from both programs reported that facilitators could have benefited from further training, both in the content of the program and in delivery. Participants of the program had expressed that it was challenging for those who self-identified as experts in the field to follow a training being led by someone who is learning and strengthening their facilitation skills. These comments indicate that presumed authority of the facilitator by the cohort and demonstrative proof of their facilitation skills in the early weeks of the program can be critical to setting up trust between cohort and facilitator and sustaining supportive, positive interactions throughout the remainder of the program. Participants did note that the quality of facilitation improved over the course of the program, in part due to additional training for facilitators conducted by Rebus staff, more familiarity built once the 1:1 sessions with the teams and facilitator had been implemented, and perhaps as teams embraced the continuous learning idea modelled throughout the program.

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The fact that we were able to tailor the schedule of the program to meet the needs of our teams was very beneficial. It helped us work towards finding the right balance and assess ways to scale back, find better timing, address meeting and training fatigue, and incorporate individualized attention into the model.”

LOUIS Project Leader

Flexibility

Both programs tailored the TSP in a way that worked for them when it came to the schedule of sessions and who oversees project management — while some customizations were immediately included in both LOUIS and Massachusetts Round 1 cohorts, other changes including suggestions from Round 1 cohorts were incorporated into LOUIS and Massachusetts Round 2 cohorts. For both cohorts, LOUIS shortened professional development sessions from 90 minutes to 60 minutes to address feedback on participant fatigue, and librarians managed the individual projects. LOUIS Round 1 and Round 2 projects followed a slightly different structure, as outlined in the overview earlier. Massachusetts decided to adhere to the length of sessions in the regular TSP, and faculty handled project management, in their Round 1 cohorts. Massachusetts Round 2 cohorts followed the same structure, while benefiting from additional assistance of a newly-establishing Publishing Support Team (PST) that handled formatting and editing phases of the production process.

REBUS STAFF INTERVIEWS

edBridge engaged in discussions with Rebus staff while the teams across both states participated in the Textbook Success Program. These conversations highlighted success factors, ways that they can build off the aspects of the program that work well, as well as things they have already incorporated into the program based on feedback. Each of these pieces fell into the categories of structure and approach, facilitation, and curriculum.

Structure

The Rebus team made a conscious effort to communicate the value of the collaborative open publishing approach within the Textbook Success Program to participants, project leads and faculty. They would like to continue to do this, as well as focus more on highlighting the important benefits of building a community centered around trust and respect, producing accessible, equitable and inclusive OER that will have an impact on the field of education, and growing and transforming participants' skills throughout their experience. Rebus staff observed that partners and participants often struggled to balance urgency for deliverables with the time necessary to take a deep look at pedagogical priorities and orientation, goal setting, and reflecting on the practices required to do transformative work within the framework of the current program model. Participants, faculty, and project leads have communicated concerns about the amount of labor required to do this well and the ability to build systemic capacity at the same time without burnout.

Rebus has begun to engage, collaborate, and plan more closely with grant partners to set clear expectations around the roles and responsibilities of program administrators in helping participants work through some of those loftier concepts and where grant partners should be prepared to support (i.e., project management and setting deliverables). In addition to strengthening collaboration at that level, Rebus has also explored ways to increase accountability throughout the program by collecting feedback through polls on an ongoing basis (adding a baseline survey prior to program launch to supplement their existing end of Phase 1 and end of Phase 2 feedback surveys), incorporating more formal opportunities for participants to report out

IV



I think for us, we've always been looking for ways to bring in different aspects of DEI into the TSP. The intention is that by the end of the program, participants have had opportunities to reflect on their current pedagogical practices with the goal of creating OER with learning experiences that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive."

Rebus Program Leader

in sessions on progress made, encouraging suggestions from participants and faculty, and adding on 1-on-1 meetings throughout phases 1 and 2 to allow for more personalized feedback and relationship building.

Facilitation

A carefully crafted onboarding process for facilitators that establishes where facilitators come in and what they need to learn before they are deemed prepared to facilitate has proven to be a successful tool in the TSP model. The guided observations, practice sessions, training and direct feedback from the Rebus team are built into the program to help facilitators develop their confidence and remind them that the role serves as a pathway for professional development as an OER leader. In addition to training and direct support, Rebus also curates a forum for facilitators to be able to consistently connect and share insights. This powerful approach not only helps disseminate best practices in the field, but it also helps reinforce mentorship opportunities within the program.

To strengthen the quality of support provided to facilitators, Rebus staff has identified the need to articulate the role of a facilitator with more clarity and further prompt reflection and sharing among facilitators and grant leads so that questions and concerns can be brought up earlier in the program. Incorporating sessions at the beginning of the program where seasoned facilitators meet new facilitators, developing an onboarding plan that includes meetings, values, management tips, specific information on cohorts, and creating a facilitator guide on technical pieces or logistics are all ways in which the TSP model will continue to effectively support facilitators.

Curriculum

Rebus continues to be intentional about the organization of the curriculum to ensure that the goals for the full program and outcomes for each session are clearly outlined, and that each activity is mapped to the intended outcomes for participants of varying levels of experience and their sponsors. DEI is an example of something that Rebus has strategically interwoven throughout the entire curriculum because they truly believe that it is not just about the resources themselves but about the individual teaching, the students being taught, and the interactions between faculty and students. This approach supports their stance on the importance of having faculty move beyond thinking about the resources in isolation and connecting them with inclusive pedagogical practices and classroom culture. This not only carries over into the teaching and modeling of best practices in accessibility, representation, and inclusion, it also helps faculty and participants explore connectivity between roles and interpersonal dynamics in work/personal life as a way to have the right pedagogy be paired with classroom management.

PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

edBridge developed baseline survey instruments for participants in both the Louisiana and Massachusetts cohorts to assess motivations, and goals as participants of the program, their familiarity with OER, accessibility, design, and the publishing process, and whether they have received any professional development/training around OER and DEI prior to the program.

IV

Massachusetts

A total of thirty-five participants across both TSP rounds in February and July completed the baseline surveys administered by Rebus. Most respondents described themselves as committed to OER and having used or created OER in some capacity, being at least somewhat familiar with accessibility practices, and at least somewhat familiar with the principles of universal and student-centered design. 80% of participants reported being somewhat familiar with strategies to center DEI in their course materials. Over 70% reported not being as familiar with open approaches and the open publishing process and requested additional training around those topics.

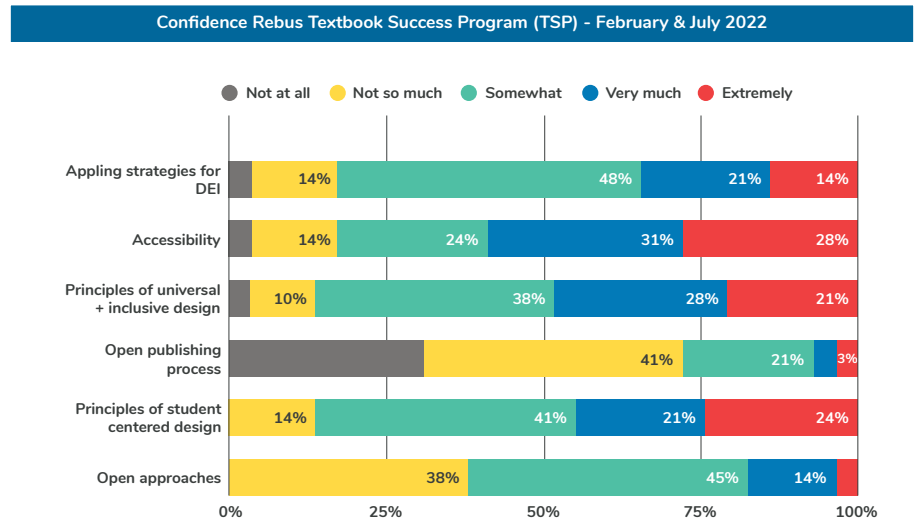


Figure 1: Baseline Survey Results Massachusetts Round 1 Cohort (February 2022) & Massachusetts Round 2 Cohorts (July 2022)

In addition to their confidence levels across multiple indicators, participants shared insights related to what they hoped to learn, the intended impact of their work, and how they hoped to use or apply what they learn from the program in their future work. They expressed a desire to create and design engaging content, better understand the publishing process, and support faculty with projects centered on OER. They wished to publish and openly license a new resource to address the need for more accessible and adaptable open resources, provide content that is beneficial and offers a unique perspective, and support faculty in their institution. Lastly, they planned to use the resources developed during the TSP to inform their pedagogy, share with faculty in their respective disciplines across institutions, and support faculty managing OER projects.

IV

LOUIS

A total of forty-four participants entering the second round of the TSP completed the survey administered in October 2022.³ Most of the respondents had used or created OER in some capacity but expressed an interest in learning more about the publishing process. Nearly 90% of respondents acknowledged the value of DEI, accessibility practices, and inclusive design and had incorporated it in their course materials. They also reported being at least somewhat familiar with student centered design and how to create new resources in open education.

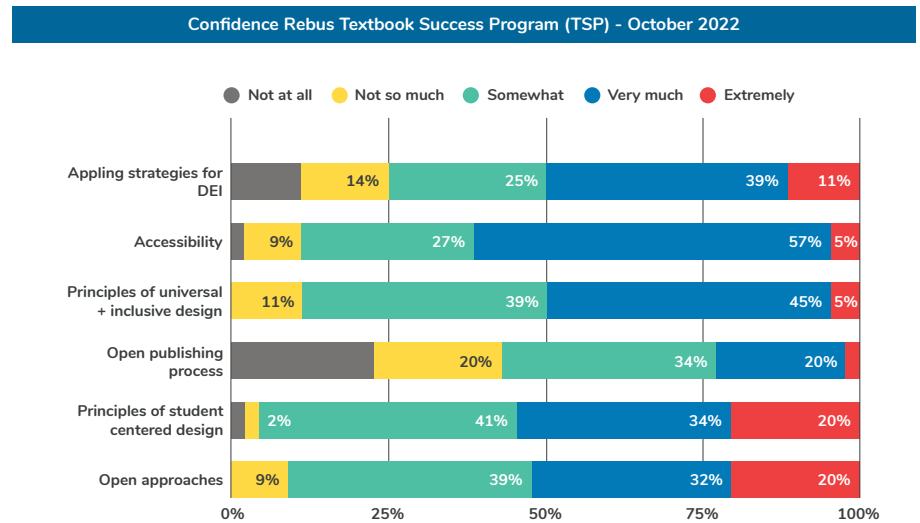


Figure 2: Baseline Survey Results LOUIS Round 2 Cohorts (October 2022)

Participants shared what they hoped to gain from the program, the impact they would like to make through their work and how they hope to apply what they learn in their work. They expressed an interest in reducing costs and providing equitable access to educational materials, improving teaching and learning for students, and using the knowledge they gained through this program in application to a specific OER project. They most wished to learn how to create and publish OER, learn best practices in OER course development, and how to incorporate DEI content into materials. They stated that they planned to incorporate the skills and insights gained through the TSP into their current and future courses and to encourage and advocate for the use of OER with their colleagues.

³ A baseline survey was not administered to the first round of LOUIS TSP participants because they had already started the program when this evaluation began.

IV

END OF PROGRAM FEEDBACK

edBridge Partners met with grant leads from both programs in March 2023 to reflect on their experiences during the Textbook Success Program and learn about the components of the program that were successful, elements that were modified to fit each cohort's needs, and considerations for future teams participating in the TSP to strengthen participant outcomes.

Massachusetts

The consistent communication and strong partnership with the Rebus team was an area of success for MA grant team leads as they reflected on their experience with the TSP. Team leads reported that any feedback on changes to be made were quickly implemented by the Rebus team. These modifications consisted of hosting regularly scheduled check-ins between leads, managers, and facilitators to provide suggestions on processes and gather insights on what is working well and what can be improved. This approach to addressing any challenges further demonstrated to grant team leads that Rebus was deeply committed to being responsive and collaborative partners and resulted in a much smoother second round for TSP participants.

The Massachusetts grant leads made the following suggestions related to program structure and additional resources in place to support participants and facilitators:

1. *Clearly outline deadlines and participation expectations upfront.*
Grant leads from Massachusetts expressed that there was an opportunity for them, as grant organizers, to better support faculty and outline expectations, specifically the team approach that Rebus promotes, and the additional outcomes for professional learning, developing student-centered, accessible, equitable, and inclusive OER, and personal skill development.
2. *Tailor the curriculum to ensure the content is aligned with what participants are actively working on.*
Grant leads noted that the content of the curriculum is so rich that it can be overwhelming to deliver all of it in 12 weeks, despite revisiting this key information in the second phase of the program. They also expressed concern about the pacing of the delivery, with topics such as marketing and publication, which happen at the end of the year, covered too early on to be useful to the participants. Grant leads suggested that 2 weeks between sessions would be a better pace of delivery and would allow for additional time for participants to work on the projects.
3. *Incorporate more interaction throughout the professional development sessions.*
Participants valued a more hands-on approach and expressed they would like to see more of that in the beginning rather than lecture-based delivery. Participants reported favorable feedback on facilitators when they encouraged interactivity and were able to field questions as opposed to depending heavily on the scripted lesson plans and handouts to guide the conversations. Grant leads reported that more training and preparation for facilitators is necessary.

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Having the training and foundational curriculum provided through the TSP is necessary. However, the model can be strengthened by incorporating additional supports around setting the stage, project management, and having a designated publishing team.”

Massachusetts Project Leader

IV

In Massachusetts, the grant team initially provided a program management structure, meeting monthly, but found it to be insufficient. In their second cohort, they added a publishing team, which includes a project manager who serves as the faculty advocate and advisor, a content editor, a technical writer, and an instructional technologist. Their role is largely to allow the faculty to focus on being the content subject matter experts, and to help to keep them on track with their individual projects, and once the faculty have written a chapter, take their work, edit it, and design it for publication (included adding assessments and interactive content like video and H5P) in Pressbooks.

[End of Program Survey Results: Massachusetts Round 1 Cohorts](#)

Unfortunately, there were insufficient responses to the end of program survey administered in March 2023 to present meaningful data and analyses. However, a few respondents did leave some feedback on strengths and areas for improvement within the TSP. Respondents expressed a desire to make their OER materials readily available to students at low/no cost. They also reported high levels of confidence with accessibility best practices, and the principles of universal design and student-centered design after participating in the TSP. Participants noted that they would like to see improvements in the sequencing of content within the curriculum, and more interactivity over lectures.

LOUIS

The grant team expressed that they chose to work with Rebus due to the structured approach to open publishing they provide, and the expertise they have with working on OER projects on a large scale. As they evaluated their experience with the TSP, they emphasized the value behind having the Rebus team oversee the project management and logistical aspects of running the program. This level of support not only contributed to the fact that projects were able to be completed by the end of the program, but it also helped broaden the definition of success to include professional and personal growth and relationship building.

The LOUIS rounds also presented a unique opportunity to assess how aspects of the TSP could be leveraged to enhance an existing professional development program. They implemented changes to the traditional TSP based on participant needs and requests. One of the modifications made was within the professional development phase of the program where LOUIS shortened the sessions from 90 minutes to 60 minutes. This updated time frame per session was more feasible and less fatigue-inducing for participants and allowed them to find a balance between efficiency and effectiveness. For LOUIS Round 2 cohorts, LOUIS also incorporated breakout room times to ensure that participants had an opportunity to collaborate and interact with one another and receive feedback on their work.

Although these changes brought forth positive outcomes, they also came with lessons to be incorporated into future cohorts. The shortened sessions often felt more lecture-heavy since the more interactive components had to be cut down, and facilitating breakout sessions was often a challenge because of everyone's varying schedules. In addition, LOUIS leads reported that there was a need to contextualize and connect the dots between what is being covered in the professional development phase and when these tasks

IV

will be accomplished in the publishing lifecycle. They stated that adequately communicating the value of the Rebus activities and sessions would help with participant engagement and retention.

End of Program Survey Results: LOUIS Round 1 Cohorts

A total of thirty-three participants who were enrolled in the first round of the TSP completed the end of program survey administered in May 2022.⁴



One of the values of participating in the TSP is the lightening of our load - someone else doing the work. The Rebus team is tremendously generous which is clear in their approach. They really want projects to succeed, and they view success in a lot of different ways. Creating a textbook is not the only measure of success. Learning, growth, and camaraderie are too.”

LOUIS Project Leader

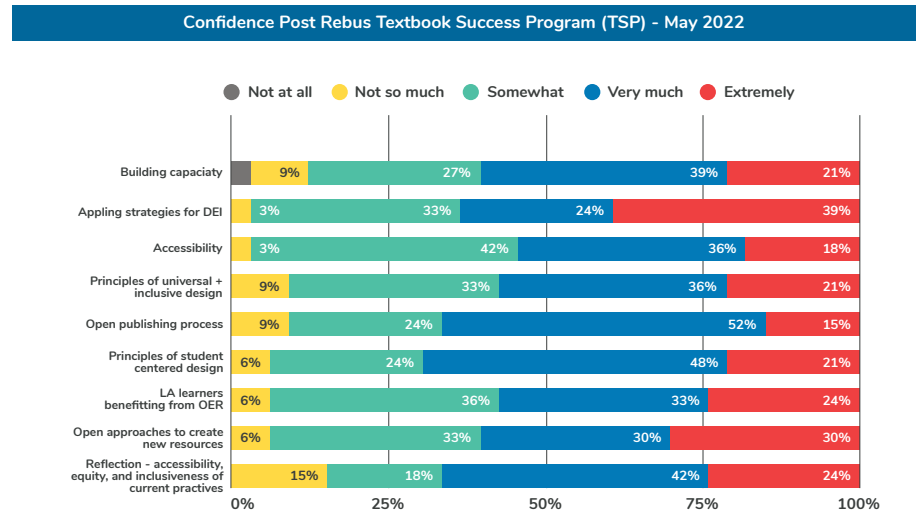


Figure 3: End of Program Survey Results LOUIS Round 1 Cohorts (May 2022)

As noted in the chart above, respondents were pleased with the program and reported high rates of confidence in all the Rebus TSP target areas upon program completion, including the open publishing process. 81% of respondents agreed that they learned what they hoped to learn through the program. Most respondents also expressed that they were not expecting to learn as much as they did about DEI and inclusive pedagogy in open education and plan to apply what they have learned in their future work. Participants who completed the survey noted improvements could be made in providing more interactive training, modifying the schedule and structure of the program, and effectively setting expectations at the start of the program.

Summary of Results

Overall, increases in confidence levels were reported across both states' teams, particularly with regards to accessibility practices, principles of universal design and student-centered design, and the publishing process. In addition, participants were pleased with the skills they gained while in the program, including expanding their knowledge base in OER to support with developing and completing an OER text. They reported that they not only developed these skills further through the TSP, but they also learned about the value of DEI in OER, which was something they did not anticipate learning about at such a comprehensive level.

Both states' teams were aligned on the elements of the TSP training that added to their experience as well as what can be improved. The project management

⁴ End of program data was not collected for the second round of TSP participants for LOUIS because this evaluation concluded before the program ended.

IV

support, teamwork approach and the resources provided throughout all phases of the program were the aspects of the program that enhanced their experience as participants in the program. The components of the program that could be improved included modifying the lecture-based style of the training sessions to be more interactive, setting clearer guidelines around expectations from the beginning, and adjusting the program schedule to meet participant needs.

DEI: REVIEW OF LOUIS PUBLISHED MATERIALS

In addition to the program interviews and surveys, edBridge reviewed ten resources created by the LOUIS project teams against the [Equity Rubric for OER](#) developed by the BranchEd OER Brain Trust and a modified version of the OpenStax guide [for Improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Course Materials](#). This customized rubric served as a tool to determine the extent to which the core principles that Rebus offers in the TSP curriculum on equity and inclusivity are embedded in the published texts. Refer to Appendix A for links to a copy of the evaluation rubric.

Summary of Findings

The extent to which the published materials reflect the principles of equity taught by Rebus vary across and within disciplines. The texts within the social sciences and humanities disciplines consistently incorporate the learner's voice in the activities throughout the chapters, and ask for viewpoints, ideas and lived experiences throughout the exercises in each section. They make attempts to outline learning objectives at the onset of modules and include elements of a culturally responsive pedagogy with a particular emphasis on being inclusive and cognizant of the experiences of those who have been marginalized. They also allow readers to use their prior knowledge to actively engage with the content included across modules through end-of-section exercises that draw on the reader's experiences. Assignments and reflection questions supported developing 'real world' work that asks students to use skills they will continually utilize beyond the classroom. There were opportunities throughout the materials to take things a step further and provide challenges to the status quo and issues around equity and inclusion. Although they provide valuable insight into diverse cultures and identities, they often analyze context through one identity marker rather than through the lens of intersectionality. The texts included checklists for accessibility to ensure that images include alternative text descriptions, graphs and charts include contextual or supporting details in the text surrounding the image, and H5P interactives are included via videos and quizzes.

Texts within the STEM discipline implement principles of universal design and some elements of culturally responsive pedagogy. As far as accessibility and design, the materials provide different options for engaging with the text using videos with captions, graphics and visuals with labels, links for additional insight and key terms sections which help clarify vocabulary. They include clear statements of relevant goals and learning objectives within each module as well as guides and prompts for completing activities, sharing ideas and findings, and accessing alternative scaffolds (charts, tables). The lab activities promote active learning and agency and include pre-assessments to activate funds of knowledge. Although the texts did incorporate images of racial and gender diversity in some cases, the practice problems did not include cultural

IV

diversity as all names were traditional English names in the examples. The texts are fact-based and objective, which can make it challenging for learners to form connections, customize their learning or create opportunities for their voices to be heard. There is an opportunity to incorporate interests or identities within the course text materials, and more diverse perspectives including those of underrepresented groups. While these suggestions and principles are asserted throughout the Rebus TSP, as noted in these findings, there is a degree of variance in how they are applied to final materials (owing to the time and resources available to individual teams during the creation process).

See Appendix B for a more detailed equity review of the LOUIS published materials.⁵

⁵ This evaluation only reviewed materials as stand-alone artifacts, not paired with a particular pedagogical style or in an active use context in a college or university classroom.

Summary & Recommendations

Rebus has taken a comprehensive approach to managing its Textbook Success Program (TSP) by centering community, collaboration, and engagement to achieve its goals of making knowledge openly available and mobilizing leaders in the field to leverage OER in revolutionizing higher education. Participants of the TSP reported that they gained a deeper understanding of what it takes to create, design, and publish engaging and accessible content for students, and that they valued learning about DEI and inclusive pedagogy in open education. It is evident that the feedback and outcomes collected from these two programs participating in the TSP support Rebus' stance that there is power in bringing creators together in a structured framework to develop an inclusive field that is responsive to diverse educators and learners.

Based on this evaluation, the following elements (1) contribute to the most successful outcomes for the TSP and (2) help promote the development of resources that are reflective of the core equity and efficacy principles Rebus seeks to teach to educators:

- + *Team-Based Approach*: This approach supports collaboration and network opportunities among distinct groups involved in the TSP, such as those creating content and those publishing content. It also encourages individuals to share their diverse skills and expertise to accomplish their goals.
- + *Communication*: Active and consistent communication between Rebus, project leadership, and participants to increase participant engagement, and ensure that they understand roles, goals, and expectations for outcomes.
- + *Flexibility*: Negotiation around the flexible elements of the TSP based on feedback to best serve partner needs, increase participant satisfaction, and program effectiveness.
- + *Monitoring and Evaluation*: Timely integration of feedback and the frequent use of evaluation tools to monitor and adjust expectations, performance, and progress towards outcomes for all parties throughout the year.
- + *Explicit integration of principles to promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*: Incorporation of DEI across all TSP curriculum materials, facilitator/cohort interactions, and in Rebus and grant organizer/client relationships to emphasize the value of DEI in daily practices and help with incorporating these principles into their OER publishing projects.

edBridge synthesized and compared the data, information, and research collected on the experiences and published artifacts from the two distinct systems participating in the TSP and applied their observations to arrive at the following recommendations. These insights can guide statewide systems or consortiums with goals of establishing sustainable and inclusive open educational resources (OER) publishing initiatives in collaboration with Rebus.

Recommendation 1: Implement a level-setting conversation between leaders of the TSP before engaging with participants. Key stakeholders should meet prior to the start of the program to find common ground and clearly outline program expectations and goals. In turn, this can help to ensure participants have a full understanding of what is expected of them to get the most out of their experience and successfully complete their projects. This conversation can also serve as an opportunity to decide which elements of the program are flexible so that program administrators and grant leads are prepared to turnkey this information to facilitators and participants. Grant team leads from Massachusetts suggested that hosting a mandatory kickoff meeting with the program administrators and facilitators prior to the start of the program can be an effective way to build community, establish common goals, and support with effectively framing expectations for participants. This idea was influenced by the impact the increase in regular check-ins had on participant motivation because facilitators were frequently meeting with program administrators to share their feedback and insights from participants.

Recommendation 2: Develop a communication plan to reinforce learning objectives and expected outcomes. A well-established communication plan will help with keeping all groups involved in the TSP focused and aligned and will result in more effective messaging around the purpose of every aspect of the program. In addition, it will significantly improve student outcomes by outlining the messages, communication channels, resources required and the feedback methods to measure results. Leaders and participants of the two state projects expressed that structured communication would have helped with making connections between topics introduced early in the curriculum and the resources and/or instruction participants explored later as they reached those steps in the process.

Recommendation 3: Establish an infrastructure to support open publishing at the system/state level to complement the support offered through the Rebus TSP. Both LOUIS and Massachusetts reported the value behind being able to build off TSP's existing team/collaborative model to establish centralized support structures to facilitate the open publishing activities at their institutions. The successful approaches from the Rebus TSP model that were identified by the participating state teams serve as a starting point to ensure more sustainability for open publishing initiatives as they get off the ground and once formal program/grant structures end. Having a team at the state/system level to organize, support, and facilitate conversations between library leaders (LOUIS) or having a publishing team to get faculty authors over the finish line and ensure the production of professional and accessible materials (Massachusetts) both contributed to the success of the engagement. It is recommended that any future state-level engagements also consider what kind of centralized support model would work best for their state/system's context.

Recommendation 4: Utilize the BranchEd Equity Rubric for OER as a tool to illustrate a set of core values and standards for DEI that should be present in published materials. An equity rubric can serve as a tool for Rebus to articulate the expectations for published materials, and a guide for participants on standards to consider in the creation, adaptation, and evaluation of OERs. It provides a clear and comprehensive approach to evaluating OER that can help with self-directed learning for participants and allow for reflection as program

V

administrators think about the standards and outcomes outlined for participants. More importantly, it provides a level of consistency around the core principles of equity found in published materials and helps to tie together the myriad ways DEI is embedded in the Rebus TSP curriculum.

Recommendation 5: Establish feedback mechanisms to inform continuous improvement. State leaders expressed the value of being able to modify components of the TSP to meet faculty and participant needs, demonstrating the flexibility of the TSP as a model. Creating a community of these state leaders would be an opportunity to openly share successful approaches to implementing and supporting open publishing at scale. This community, in turn, could serve as an advisory body for Rebus to help them to continuously improve the TSP and ensure its relevance for state leaders of large scale OER programs.

Conclusion

This evaluation of the Textbook Success Program provided considerable insight on the perspectives and outcomes of the teams from Massachusetts and Louisiana, the improvements implemented by Rebus, as well as an analysis of the newly created course materials. During the evaluation, key stakeholders of the Textbook Success Program were thoughtful and transparent around aspects of the program that are working well and areas that could benefit from improvement.

Although observations and suggestions by state teams may have varied, there were similar themes that often fell into each of the major areas identified to continue to enhance future participants' experience — program structure and approach, expectations and goal setting, communication, flexibility, and monitoring and evaluation. With each of those areas in mind, the following takeaways were highlighted among the elements that contributed to the most successful outcomes for the TSP and the development of equitable and inclusive resources.



	Elements that contribute to success and equitable and inclusive resources
TEAM BASED APPROACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Having participants work in teams promotes collaboration and knowledge sharing, which has a positive effect on motivation and overall morale while working on projects. + Facilitators meeting with other facilitators to share best practices among one another in preparation for their sessions and problem-solve as any challenges arise. + Grant leads collaborating with the Rebus staff and receiving consistent support throughout each stage in the program.
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Facilitators engaging in regular check-ins with project leads to help connect the statewide objectives and programmatic updates to the work of the TSP happening in real time. + Developing a communication strategy between the grant team and Rebus, including identifying a single point of contact among groups and engaging in conversations around expectations.
FLEXIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Modifying some components of the TSP in a way that worked best for their teams (i.e., adjusting the training schedule to space out the sessions; restructuring roles within teams to alter who oversees project management). + Tailoring the content delivery schedule to ensure the portions of the curriculum that are shared are aligned with what participants are actively working on can help with addressing challenges with sequencing.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Distributing surveys to participants at the beginning and end of each cohort to measure growth in their knowledge of the core equity and efficacy principles taught by Rebus in the TSP. + Scheduling regular check-ins between leads, managers, and facilitators to share suggestions on processes and gather insights on what is working well and what can be improved.
DEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Continuing to weave DEI into the curriculum to help faculty move beyond thinking about the resources in isolation and connect them with inclusive pedagogical practices and classroom culture. + Encouraging teams to consider their implementation plans for the newly created OER to ensure that the resources are used with sound teaching methods.

VI



The Rebus Textbook Success Program is a masterpiece of open education content, organization, and community-building.... Absolutely a tremendously worthwhile program to help build capacity for OER creation projects and equip participants to skillfully tackle the many issues which will inevitably come up in a big (valuable!) OER project.”

Massachusetts Facilitator

The recommendations outlined in this report build off the elements that are successful in the TSP model, address opportunities based on the findings of this evaluation, and serve as a key step towards effectively scaling the Textbook Success Program. Some of these suggestions were shared with Rebus during the evaluation. Since then, Rebus has already made the following changes in the TSP model in response to feedback, including: updates to their orientation package to include a kickoff webinar and syllabus review in the initial phases of the program, and an increase in scheduled client meetings and 1:1 check-ins to have multiple touchpoints throughout the course of the program, incorporating more elements of DEI into the curriculum to create dialogue and interactive in-session activities, and updating the training materials for facilitator onboarding and improving the subsequent check-in process with facilitators. These changes have resulted in increased satisfaction for all stakeholders involved in the TSP.

The TSP is a valuable professional development pathway to equip faculty, librarians, administrators, and managers with the knowledge and tools they need to continue to make equitable OER. By offering this program, Rebus solidifies its role as a key partner and collaborator for state-systems focused on improving student success and creating meaningful change through education.

Appendix

APPENDIX A: EVALUATION RUBRIC

Reviewing OER Created by LOUIS under the TSP

The process for reviewing Rebus TSP OERs consisted of two parts.

Part 1: Reviewers utilized the [BranchEd Rubric framework](#), assessing texts based on four broad dimensions of equity on a scale of 0 to 3. Reviewers added the four earned dimension-level scores to obtain an overall equity score. This rubric was used without modification.

Part 2: Reviewers utilized portions of the [OpenStax Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Development Guidelines](#) and responded to a simple yes/no rubric to indicate if those elements were present.

OpenStax Modified Rubric

Component/ Item	Development Description and Requirement	Review/Editing Process	Y/N
ILLUSTRATIONS, PHOTOS, GRAPHICS, AND ALTERNATIVE TEXT	<p>Ensure they reflect diversity, and that we consider the intersectionality and context of the depiction (e.g., is anything perpetuating a stereotype, are all populations equally “active” in the art program, does the context or setting of the image indicate anything negative, etc.).</p> <p>Note: Because it is impossible to represent every population in every piece of art, consider illustration/artwork diversity on a holistic</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the quantity of images and illustrations, and the individuals and populations represented therein. 2. Consider the role, depiction, connotation, and purpose of the people represented and the image itself. 3. Ensure alternative text makes no incorrect assumptions. 	
EXAMPLE NAMES	<p>Ensure that people’s names used in examples, exercises, and scenarios representing various countries of origin, ethnicities, genders, and races.</p> <p>Ensure that names with particular ethnic or origin associations are portrayed properly; avoid negative comparisons or stereotypes associated with particular national origins or ethnicities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the diversity and representation overall on a quantitative and qualitative basis. 2. Consider – and seek other opinions -- whether names indicative of a particular race, ethnicity, or national origin associated with negative concepts. 	

VII

Component/ Item	Development Description and Requirement	Review/Editing Process	Y/N
<p>MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS, PIONEERS, NAMED RESEARCHERS/ THEORISTS, AND CREATORS OF WORKS FEATURED IN THE MATERIAL</p>	<p>Ensuring that we recognize key contributors from all backgrounds, and that our real-world examples are also diverse.</p> <p>When historical figures in a field lack diversity, we must balance their inclusion with more current and diverse contributors.</p> <p>If still no direct contributors can be logically included, consider people impacted by the topic at hand, or contributors from related disciplines.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the included figures in the field and suggest additional contributors or groups. 2. Identify and suggest current researchers – demonstrating diversity – related to historical work. 3. Undertake this effort <i>opportunistically and creatively</i>. Do your best to find the places where people can be added. 	
<p>REFERENCES/ BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND CREDITS TO RESEARCH ABOUT OR BY DIVERSE RESEARCHERS/ AUTHORS</p>	<p>Determine if referenced papers or data have been sourced from diverse authors, researchers, and organizations.</p> <p>Note that diversity may not be perceptible when looking at a study, its authors, and other characteristics. And any inquiries should be undertaken sensitively.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where diversity is perceptible, suggest more diverse references, papers, and data sources. 2. Seek out specific efforts and programs to drive inclusive citation, such as Cite Black Women. 	
<p>KEYWORD, GLOSSARY, AND METADATA REPRESENTATION</p>	<p>While the content itself is the primary element to consider, the keywords do signal priorities and importance; they can show how important a particular topic/issue is. Without creating any superficial or misleading sense of coverage, consider the relevance and connection of these elements in relation to inclusivity.</p> <p>(Note that a book index is usually not fully representative of book content; they are often built by software, and search capabilities change their priority and comprehensiveness.)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze keyword lists and/or glossaries identify core terms that are not represented or highlighted. 2. Consider alternative phrasings and terminology. 3. Consider adding keywords that specifically highlight issues important to underrepresented groups. 4. Ensure that definitions do not utilize inappropriate language or promote negative stereotypes. 	

APPENDIX B: EQUITY REVIEW OF LOUIS PUBLISHED MATERIALS

In addition to the program interviews and surveys, edBridge reviewed ten resources created by the LOUIS project teams against the [Equity Rubric for OER](#) developed by the BranchEd OER Brain Trust and a modified version of the OpenStax guide [for Improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Course Materials](#). This customized rubric served as a tool to determine the extent to which the core principles that Rebus offers in the TSP curriculum on equity and inclusivity are embedded in the published texts. There were a total of four reviewers, and each text was assessed by two reviewers and their scores were entered into a SurveyMonkey form for analysis. The reviewers met prior to completing the reviews to ensure that they had a mutual understanding of the rubric including terms used and ratings. The reviewers also met after completing their reviews to discuss findings and examine any discrepancies between their assessments via Cronbach's Alpha inter-rater reliability test, which measures internal consistency and scale reliability.

The texts were organized by disciplines/cohorts, which aligned to their grouping during sessions in the TSP. The cohorts were History, Business and Communications, Composition and Arts, Languages and Social Sciences, and STEM.

The rubric included the following equity dimensions within the BranchEd Equity Rubric for OER, which were broken down further into criteria and then measured through leveled indicators. See Appendix for links to a copy of the evaluation rubric.

- + Learner-centered: The content, activities, and assessments center learners by providing more than one way to access the resource, making connections to learners' intersectional identities and lived experiences, and building upon learners' funds of knowledge and assets.
- + Critical: The resource helps learners challenge perspectives within instructional materials, address equity and inclusion as well as barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and utilize assets-based narratives.
- + Culturally sustaining: The resource content draws from a variety of cultures, contexts, and groups inclusive of race, ethnicity, language, gender, age, ability, socioeconomic status, etc. and is free of or openly acknowledges bias.
- + Universal design for learning: The resource activates internalization options for comprehension through the supplying of background knowledge, and highlighting of patterns and relationships, internalization options for guiding appropriate goal setting, strategy development and progress monitoring, and internalization options for self-regulation by promoting expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation, personal coping skills, self-assessment, and reflection.

VII

Findings by Cohort


Business and Communications

Texts within this discipline scored highest in all four equity dimensions - learner centered, critical, culturally sustaining, and universal design for learning. It was observed that the authors did a thorough job of incorporating the learner's voice in the activities throughout the chapters, and asking for their viewpoints, ideas, and lived experiences throughout the exercises in each section. The learning objectives were clearly outlined at the onset of each module; diverse cultures, backgrounds, beliefs, races, genders, and orientations were acknowledged; and learners were asked to reflect on how their identities and lived experiences might influence their perceptions, priorities, and how they communicate and interact with others.


The texts were also designed in ways that allow students to interact in multiple formats and instructors to adapt the books as needed to fit their contexts. Instructors adopting/adapting the materials can add new sections, link to other resources, create discussion questions and more.

The following serve as examples of the ways in which the texts in this discipline effectively engage learners by clearly communicating the value behind the material being covered, incorporating opportunities for points of reflection, and embedding links to resources in order to facilitate learning.

Key Takeaway


 Employers value employees who excel in communication skills rather than just technical skills because, by ensuring better workplace and client relations, they contribute directly to the viability of the organization.

Exercises




1. Go to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics site and find your chosen profession (i.e., the job your program will lead to) via the [Occupation Finder](#) page. List the particular document types you will be responsible for communicating with in a professional capacity by reading closely through the drop-downs.
2. Prepare a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis of your current communication norms by interviewing 2-3 close friends, relatives, and academic peers about their perceptions of you.

KEY TAKEAWAY

 By teaching you the communications conventions for dealing with a variety of stakeholders, a course in Communications has different goals from your high school English course and is a vitally important step towards professionalizing you for entry or re-entry into the workforce.

EXERCISE

 List your communication strengths and weaknesses. Next, explain what you hope to get out of this Communications course now that you know a little more about what it involves. Before you answer, however, read ahead through the rest of this chapter to get a further sense of why this course is so vital to your career success.

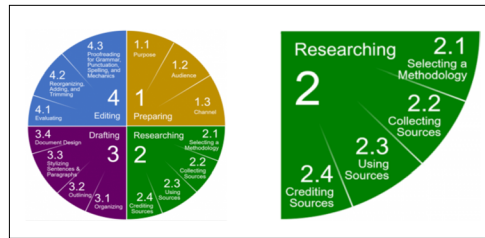
Below is an example of how the author illustrates communications across various levels of formality to help readers better understand this distinction:

Table 2.1.3: Word Choices along the Formality Spectrum

Informal / Slang	Semi-formal / Common	Formal / Fancy
kick off	begin / start	commence
cut off	end	terminate
put off	delay	postpone
awesome / dope	good	positive
crappy / shoddy	bad	negative
flaunt	show	demonstrate
find out	discover	ascertain
go up	rise	increase
fess up / come clean	admit	confess

VII

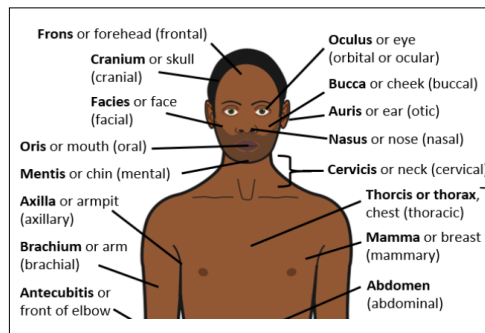
The author also uses visuals and infographics throughout to help demonstrate concepts and ideas through how information is displayed around universal design for learning:



STEM

Texts within the STEM discipline implemented principles of universal design by providing different options for engaging with the text using videos with captions, graphics and visuals with labels, links for additional insight (see below for examples) and key terms sections which help clarify vocabulary. They included clear statements of relevant goals and learning objectives within each module as well as guides and prompts for completing activities, sharing ideas and findings, and accessing alternative scaffolds (charts, tables). The lab activities promote active learning and agency and include pre-assessments to activate funds of knowledge.

In terms of being culturally sustaining, the text did incorporate images of racial and gender diversity in some cases, however the practice problems seemed not to include cultural diversity as all names were traditional English names in the examples.



The texts are fact-based and objective, which can make it challenging for learners to form connections, customize their learning or create opportunities for their voices to be heard. There is an opportunity to incorporate interests or identities within the course text materials, and diverse perspectives including those of underrepresented groups.

VII

Learn the parts of the microscope (activity)

- Visit the [BioNetwork's Virtual Microscope](#)
- Click on "Explore"
- Click on parts "?" to learn their name and function

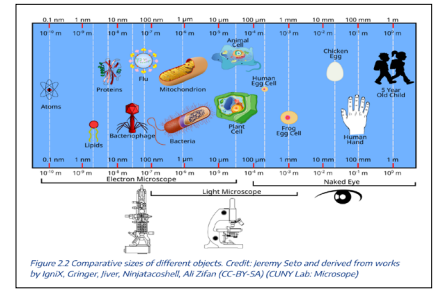
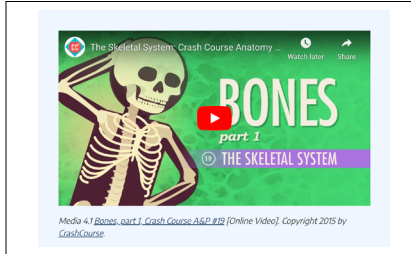


Figure 2.2 Comparative sizes of different objects. Credit: Jeremy Seto and derived from works by Ignik, Ganger, Jvan, Ningsitacsohi, Ali Zifan (CC-BY-SA) [CUNY Lab: Microscope]

History

The texts published by the History cohort differed in the ratings for equity dimensions, particularly when looking at ways in which the texts connect to learner's identities and draw from a variety of cultures, contexts, and groups. There were instances where the texts incorporated learners' views within 'Critical Questions' sections by asking them to reflect on how they would manage situations differently if they were experiencing events described. These sections allow for more open-ended discussions among learners, particularly when they are partnered together for specific activities.

When assessing texts from this cohort, it was evident that they provide a balanced approach to the depiction of historical events, considering the people, events and ideas that have made an impact and have shaped the country, with particular attention to issues of race, class, and gender. They included elements of a culturally responsive pedagogy with a particular emphasis on being inclusive and cognizant of the experiences of those who have been marginalized. Although the texts were accessible via multiple formats and are presented in ways that allow readers to better understand symbols and syntax by providing supplementary knowledge, there is an opportunity to highlight patterns and relationships throughout the text as well as provide areas for mastery-oriented feedback.

The following examples serve as evidence in how the texts in this discipline help learners better understand the material by embedding definitions for terms and include opportunities to increase student engagement and the presence of their voices by asking thoughtful questions.

The most important regions for the development of Western Civilization were Mesopotamia and Egypt because it was from those regions that the different technologies, empires, and ideas that came together in Western Civilization were forged. Thus, it is important to emphasize that the original heartland of Western Civilization was not in Greece or anywhere else in Europe; it was in the Middle East and North Africa. Many of the different elements of Western Civilization, things like scientific inquiry, the religions of the book (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), engineering, and mathematics, were originally conceived in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

VII

Note on nomenclature: The term "pharaoh" means "great house," the term used for the royal palace and its vast supporting bureaucracy. It came to be used to refer to the king himself starting in the 18th century. It could be as if the American president was called "the White House" or "the Oval Office." This chapter will use the term "king" for the kings of Egypt leading up to the New Kingdom, then "pharaoh" for the New Kingdom rulers to reflect the accurate use of the term.

16. Consider social, political, and economic equality. In what ways did Radical Reconstruction address and secure these forms of equality? Where did it fall short?
17. Consider the problem of terrorism during Radical Reconstruction. If you had been an adviser to President Grant, how would you propose to deal with the problem?

Composition and Arts

The structure of the texts in the Composition and Arts cohort promoted the centering of reader identities and provided multiple formats for readers to interact with the material. The texts related to readers' experiences through example pieces including works from diverse cultures that elaborate on homelife and varying customs. They also allow readers to use their prior knowledge to actively engage with the content included across modules through end-of-section exercises that draw on the readers experiences. Assignments and reflection questions supported developing 'real world' work which asks students to use skills they will continually utilize beyond the classroom. In addition, they allow readers to receive feedback in meaningful ways while actively applying the knowledge they are gaining from the text.

Your Turn

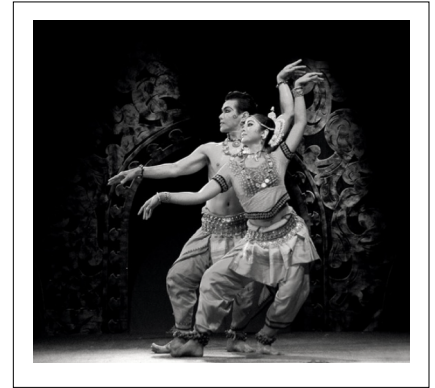
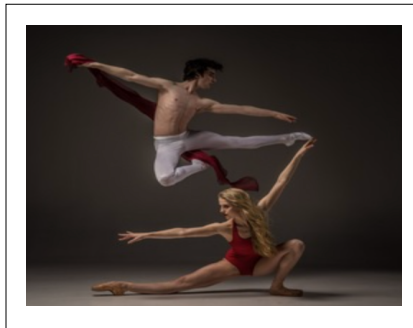
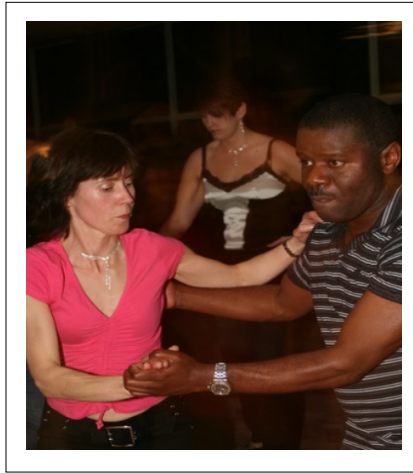
Here are some activities to work through different kinds of drafting. Remember, drafts are not about perfection but practice and process/production. In the same vein, you might need to practice several different strategies and tactics in order to find the best way to reach that draft that is ready for peer review and revision.

1. Prepare for writing a 75-minute fast draft by doing several prewriting activities including brainstorming, focused writing, outlining, and perhaps reading and researching, depending on the assignment. Then, in an intense, 75-minute time span, write your entire essay as quickly as possible including the introduction and conclusion. Don't stop to concern yourself with word choice, citations, or grammar. Just get into the flow of ideas and write your essay all the way to the end. Remember: You can go back and revise and edit all you want, but that is much easier to do once you have a draft.
2. What kind of Writer Are You? Look at the following list, thinking about your past writing experiences, pick out both what kind of writer you think you are and what kind you want to be—how are the draft processes similar to and different from these two choices of writers (try to choose two different kinds of writers!)
 - ☞ Are you a sprinter?
Do you have lots of ideas and want to get to them quickly?

There is an opportunity to take things a step further and provide challenges to the status quo and issues around equity and inclusion across these texts. Although they provide valuable insight into diverse cultures and identities, they often analyze context through one identity marker rather than through the lens of intersectionality.

The following examples illustrate the ways in which some of the texts in this discipline ensured that diversity is reflected in their images and made a conscious effort to talk about how important it is to uplift diverse cultures and address issues around bias.

VII



Culture is shared values, beliefs, and customs shared amongst a group of people that contribute to a person's dance aesthetic. The rhythms of West Africa or Argentina that you grew up listening to can also play a part in shaping rhythmic tastes. Dance is an important way that the lore and traditions of a culture are preserved over time as it is passed down from generation to generation.

As an observer of dance, it can be easy to allow our biases to influence how we perceive dance. By using dance vocabulary and stating what we observe, we can be more objective in our discussions of dance. Using the Elements of Dance, we can view dance through an unbiased lens to consider its structural elements to deepen our understanding and appreciation of dance as an art form.

Before moving on to Chapter 3, reflect upon what you can do with the language. Check off all of the things on the list below that you can do and provide evidence. For any actions you cannot yet do, review the topic and seek out additional resources such as tutoring, extra help from your instructor, online materials, etc. Could you also do it orally?

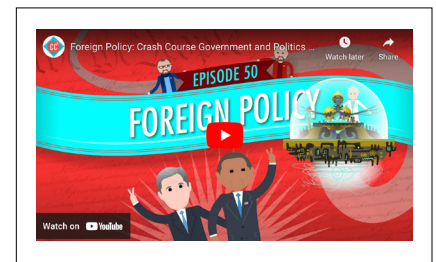
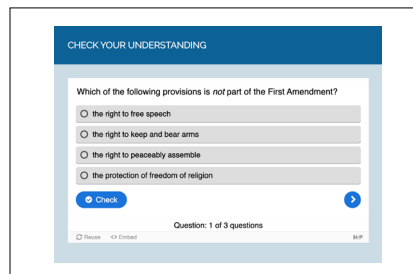
Languages and Social Sciences

The texts in the Languages and Social Sciences cohort had different approaches to including dimensions of equity. When looking at whether elements of learner centered strategies are incorporated in these texts, there are instances where the texts promoted agency and empowered students by reminding them that they have the power to take ownership of their learning.

VII

Some of the texts included checks for understanding (see below) and a few critical thinking questions but did not necessarily promote personalization or agency, though this could be incorporated as part of the teaching plan as these texts are implemented in classrooms. This is also evident when assessing whether various kinds of cultures and perspectives are included in texts. Some of the texts include references to more diverse perspectives and address issues with inclusivity, while others have opportunities to dive deeper into bias and encourage divergent thinking. Overall, the texts allow students to engage in distinct levels of goal setting and build on their experiences through reflection and activities with a classmate. Some also included checklists for accessibility to ensure that images include alternative text descriptions, graphs and charts include contextual or supporting details in the text surrounding the image, and H5P interactives are included via videos and quizzes (see below).

Before moving on to Chapter 3, reflect upon what you can do with the language. Check off all of the things on the list below that you can do and provide evidence. For any actions you cannot yet do, review the topic and seek out additional resources such as tutoring, extra help from your instructor, online materials, etc. Could you also do it orally?



What do you currently feel is your greatest strength with Spanish? What do you attribute this success to? Is there something you are doing in this area that you could apply to weaker areas?



Rebus FOUNDATION

