Authoring Open Textbooks

Modifying an Open Textbook: What You Need to Know

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Hello!
How many of you are:

A. Getting ready to start writing
B. Have started writing - early days
C. More or less midway
D. Wrapping up a draft
# Our Time Together

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With a person sitting next to you:

- Introduce yourselves: name, discipline, institution
- Describe your open textbook project
- Switch
Fundamentals

What we’re talking about today
Open Textbook Library

1. All content must be openly licensed to allow for adaptation.
2. Must be a textbook available as a complete portable file.
3. Must be in use at multiple higher education institutions, or affiliated with a higher education institution, scholarly society, or professional organization.
4. Must be an original textbook (not a derivative of another textbook).
Vision
What learning and reading experience do you want students to have?

Will each chapter correspond to a week of instruction?

How do you want the textbook to look and function? File types? Integrations?

What concepts do students often get right away or often struggle with?
My Vision

- Inspire students to care about native plants and their benefits
- Coordinate each chapter with a week of instruction
- Prepare students for next level course
- Integrate quiz questions at end of each chapter
- Provide glossary of Latin plant names
- Build assignments that coordinate with local pollinator programs
Handout: Mapping Your Path Forward
What is your textbook vision?

Jot down ideas and notes

(10 minutes)
Chapters
Structuring content in your open textbook
Openers

● overviews (previews)
● introductions
● learning goals / objectives / outcomes / competences / skills
● outlines (text, bullets or graphics)
● focus questions (knowledge and comprehension questions)
● case problem
● "special features" e.g. vignettes, photos, quotations...

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Closers

- conclusions and summaries (may include diagrams)
- list of definitions
- reference boxes (e.g. computer instructions)
- review questions
- self-assessment (usually simple quizzes)
- small exercises
- substantial exercises and problem cases
- fill-in tables (for "learning-in-action" books) to prepare a real world task
- ideas for projects (academic or real world)
- bibliographies and links (that can be annotated)

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Everything in the Middle

- emphasis (bold face) of words
- marginalia that summarize paragraphs
- lists that highlight main points
- summary tables and graphics
- cross-references that link backwards (or sometimes forwards) to important concepts
- markers to identify embedded subjects (e.g. an "external" term used and that needs explanation)
- study and review questions… and more!

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My Chapters

Openers
- Start each chapter with inspiring photo
- Learning goals
- Summary snapshot of what will be covered

Throughout
- Case studies of native gardens, before and after
- Planting instructions
- Use bold for Latin names
- Graphs to show impact of native plants on pollinators

Closers
- Assessment quiz
- Connecting to action activity
- Additional reading
Handouts

—

Mapping Your Path Forward & Textbook Elements
How might you structure your chapters?

—

Jot down ideas and notes

(10 minutes)
What Does the Professor Want? Understanding the Assignment

Amy Gephard

Learning Objectives

- Understand assignment parameters
- Understand the rhetorical situation

Writing for whom? Writing for what?
The first principle of good communication is knowing your audience where writing papers for class, you kind of get it.

When you write for a teacher, you are usually attempting to communicate the essence of the main communication. The natural deed communication is to explain what you understand, and doesn’t understand from writing an essay. To be reliable, you must explain what you are still engaged to understand to someone who understands it better.

Student Advice

Don’t be scared whatever you are given an assignment. Professors know what it was like to be in college and write all kinds of papers. They aren’t trying to make your lives difficult, but it is their job to make us think and ponder about many things. Take your time and enjoy the paper. Make sure you answer the question being asked rather than rant about something that is irrelevant to the prompt. – Timothy Piatz

Another basic tenet of good communication is clarifying the purpose of the communication and letting that purpose shape your decisions. Your professor wants to see you work through complex ideas and deepen your knowledge through the process of producing the paper. Each assignment—the argumentative paper, research paper, reflective paper, lab report, discussion question, blog post, essay exam, project proposal, or what have you—is ultimately about your learning. To succeed with writing assignments (and benefit from them) you first have to understand their learning-related purposes.

At you write for the hypothetical audience of peers, junior scholars, you’re demonstrating to your professors how far you’ve gotten in analyzing your topic.
So you’ve formed (or have begun to form) your vision and chapter ideas.
Using your vision and chapter ideas, try blurbing your own book.
Blurb Prompts

- Who is the book for?
- What does your book do well?
- How is your book different from others?
- What would be the ultimate compliment?
California Gardening 101

This book is an enthusiastic and accessible introduction to gardening with California native plants. Novice gardeners will appreciate the textbook’s structure, which includes planting instructions, popular pairings and pollinator summaries. Plus the photos are spectacular!
How might you blurb your book?

—

Jot down a first draft

(10 minutes)
Blurb Prompts

- Who is the book for?
- What does your book do well?
- How is your book different from others?
- What would be the ultimate compliment?
Turn to the (same) person next to you and share your blurb

(5 minutes)
Has how you talk about your textbook changed since your intro?
Team
Who can help you?

Think in terms of what needs to be done at each stage.

**Creation and writing:** Can someone help you find openly licensed images? Select pedagogical elements? Build in accessibility from the beginning?

**Peer review:** Is there a colleague or someone in a scholarly society who would offer feedback?

**Editing, design and production:** Are their services available or will you need to find them and use your funding?
Who can help you?

faq.openoregon.org/campus-specific-help
Tools
What can help you?

Think in terms of what needs to be done at each stage.

**Creation and writing**: Lecture notes, slides, images, tables, other stuff that you may assemble to create your open textbook. Keep a spreadsheet of openly licensed images. A writing platform that is conducive to collaboration.

**Publishing and storage**: Pressbooks, or another publishing platform. Institutional repository (library).

**Editing, design and production**: Freelance professionals. Graduate students.
What do you already have?
lecture notes, drafts, slides — all the things that you may assemble and use to make your open textbook. Where are they? May be both digital and print.
Tools

—

Pressbooks
Webbook Homepage

Each book has a unique web address. Books can have different structures, themes, licenses & permissions. Each book’s homepage includes:

1. Title, author, description, license
2. Cover image
3. Download options
4. Table of contents
5. Additional book info/metadata [not shown]
Editing Interface

AT RIGHT: Pressbooks uses a standard WordPress visual/text HTML editor. Editing text & inserting media is as easy as using a word processor.

Several collaborators can work together on the same book with different roles & permissions (admin, editor, author, etc.)
EXTENDING PRESSBOOKS

Ideas for “going beyond print”

1. Add multimedia
2. Add math & formulae [LaTeX]
3. Add social annotation [Hypothesis]
4. Add interactive elements [TablePress + H5P]

Potential of PressbooksEDU, Open Education Week Webinar for eCampusOntario by Steel Wagstaff (CCBY)
Any public, openly licensed book can now be quickly & easily cloned from one Pressbooks network to another.
Learn More or Get Help

1. Detailed user guide: https://guide.pressbooks.com
2. Training videos: https://www.youtube.com/user/pressbooks
3. Open source community forum: https://pressbooks.community/
4. Follow our release plans: https://github.com/orgs/pressbooks/projects
5. Follow our EDU blog: https://pressbooks.education/news/
6. Request an account: https://openlibrary.ecampusontario.ca/create [eCampus Ontario users only]
7. Email support: ecampussupport@pressbooks.com [eCampus Ontario users only]
Continuing on Your Path
Today’s Resources

z.umn.edu/textbook-map

- Slides
- Resources Folder
  - Author Intake: Questions and prompts to consider
  - Short list of open textbook authoring and publishing guides
  - Textbook Elements: List of openers, closers and pedagogical devices
  - Mapping a Path worksheet
  - “Potential of Pressbooks” Slides
- faq.openoregon.org/campus-specific-help
Thanks! Email me once you’ve finished re: OTL

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