

Success Story: Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD)

Expanding the impact of a trail-blazing program to lower the cost of education and improve the quality of learning materials

Quick facts

- Consortium of 10 community colleges in Arizona
- Over 80,000 students
- Pressbooks client since January, 2020
- 400+ books published with Pressbooks as of July, 2023

The challenge

Part 1: Make education more affordable by empowering highly engaged faculty from 10 community colleges to publish and share low or no-cost learning materials.

Part 2: Attract more faculty to create and adapt high quality open educational resources (OER) and ebooks for publication and classroom use.

The solution

MCCCD launched the Maricopa Millions initiative in 2013 (now Open Maricopa), aiming to promote textbook affordability through the use of OER. Its success made MCCCD a leader in creating more affordable and inclusive learning environments.

MCCCD next introduced Maricopa Open Digital Press and published hundreds of high quality, open access digital books. Choosing Pressbooks to help realize this next-level vision, MCCCD gained a user-friendly platform to create and share no-cost learning materials. Quality books encouraged more instructors to

use and adapt peer-created course materials and collaborate on new projects. To date, MCCCD's community of creators has grown to over 2700.

The impact

MCCCD's no-cost books have been downloaded 96,000+ times, representing millions in textbook cost savings.

Over a quarter of MCCCD's 400+ books include interactivity to increase learning effectiveness such as accessible quizzes, interactive video, and more. MCCCD recognizes the power of digital books to engage students through practice and feedback.

"I'm proud of anything that improves student learning. Helping students succeed with better and more accessible learning materials is something our faculty can be proud of too," says Debbie Baker, MCCCD OER Coordinator, Instructional Designer, and Pressbooks Network Manager.

content that engages students and creates a more immersive learning environment.

Projects have transcended textbooks to include student-led open pedagogy projects, design portfolios, and other innovative ways to demonstrate learning.

Pressbooks' extensive accessibility features mean course materials better serve students who require assistive devices or other accommodations.

Introducing Pressbooks to increase participation

MCCCDC leaders recognized huge untapped potential for collaboration across multiple colleges to develop and share learning materials tailored to their students and programs. Pressbooks provided a central, user-friendly platform for collaboration on scholarly and academic publishing projects. As publishing got under way, the Pressbooks Directory made it easy to introduce faculty across all MCCCDC colleges to what's possible with Pressbooks and how easy it is to discover open access material. Baker and her team demonstrated how, with just a few clicks, instructors can clone a book in Pressbooks and make it their own. Ease-of-use and book quality were vital to early adoption.

Facilitating cross-college collaboration

MCCCDC is made up of 10 colleges, each with its own motivations, resource allotment, and technical know-how. To organize these colleges around Open Maricopa's publishing goals, MCCCDC took a train-the-trainer approach. Each college has its own Pressbooks network manager, trained by district staff to build awareness, support creators and departments, and facilitate collaboration opportunities within or between colleges and the district.

According to MCCCDC leaders, one of the greatest benefits of Pressbooks for a multi-institution system like theirs is in how it provides a common digital space to house and showcase scholarly collaborations. Among Open Maricopa's best works are books developed with cross-institutional input to incorporate diverse expertise and perspectives. "When multiple people come together to create the work, multiple people are invested in it, are proud of it, and want to continue to improve it," said Baker, speaking about the creative synergy between MCCCDC colleges.

Growing a productive MCCCDC-Pressbooks partnership

MCCCDC and Pressbooks began their relationship in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, but despite adversity they have achieved great things. MCCCDC seized the opportunity early to introduce Pressbooks to faculty interested in improving the online learning experience. The proliferation of Open Maricopa's high quality digital books positions them well to continue expanding their reach and demonstrating leadership in open education. Although Pressbooks use has grown, there is still more to do. Next, Baker hopes to see more college staff, such as instructional designers, developers, communications specialists, and others, use this tool to meet a variety of digital publishing needs for teaching, learning, and beyond.

For more information about how Pressbooks can help you grow your educational publishing efforts, contact sales@pressbooks.com