Contextualised Learning for Student Success
Supporting the educational attainment of students from traditionally underserved backgrounds

High-quality Open Educational Resources (OERs) have the power to transform education by:

- Decreasing financial barriers such as textbook and materials costs for students
- Decreasing the amount of time instructors need to prepare lessons and course materials
- Supporting the educational attainment of students from traditionally underserved backgrounds

University libraries are uniquely positioned to function as hubs of student support in service of educational equity.

In 2022, the Digital Learning Team at the RMIT University Library received funding through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program equity initiative to develop resources supporting students from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in higher education, specifically those from:
- Regional and remote Australia
- Low socio-economic households
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds

The resulting project consists of a realistic story and related activities that contextualise skills from the Library’s Learning Lab, a collection of online materials designed to support students in the foundation-level skills needed for success at university.

Learning Lab Contextualised Content: A suite of OERs

### Content Development Pillars

- **Representation**
  Learners should be able to see themselves represented in the content.
- **Relevance**
  Content must be realistic and relevant to learners and their lifestyle.
- **Reassurance**
  Content should assure learners that higher education is a valid choice for them and that they will be given support.
- **Reliability**
  Content should demonstrate to learners that it is a source they can trust.

### Content Scenario

Sammie and Hayden, university students from the fictional rural town of Salty Creek, are organising a community festival focused on sustainability and the future of the town. Follow Sammie, Hayden, and the rest of the planning team as they utilise real-world skills to undertake tasks in the following festival-preparation areas:

- Team and Event Management
- Setting up the Festival Site
- Working with Volunteers and Contributors
- Running a Sustainable Festival
- Organising the Industry Booths

Subjects and Skill Areas

- Art & Design
- Collaboration
- Careers
- Colour Theory
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Economics
- Online Skills
- Engineering
- Physics
- Event Management
- Presenting
- Health
- Reading
- Social Studies
- Research Skills
- Marketing
- Study Skills
- Social Studies
- Sustainability
- Time Management
- Writing

**Student Feedback**

Feedback shared by students in the target audience cohorts during focus groups:

“Twell seen a lot of my interests represented in a bunch of the different characters as well as my friends’ interests... so I really like that.”

“I want to recommend this to everyone in my classes.”

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![Sammie and Hayden, festival organiser co-leads](image1)

![Mia and James, engineering and safety advisor and on-site GP and health advisor](image2)

![Bo and Cara, budget and marketing advisor and community engagement advisor](image3)

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![Visualising survey data with charts and graphs](image4)

![Mind-mapping an artist statement](image5)

![Moving heavy equipment safely](image6)

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As of July 2023:
16,1K page views
2,714 visitors

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