

CARL Statement on Open Education

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) endorses open education in view of the clear social and economic benefits it brings to the higher education sector and to society. CARL believes that the mission of universities is to create and disseminate knowledge, and that an open scholarship system that is accessible to all readers offers the surest path towards positively impacting human life on all parts of the globe. CARL further believes that opening all forms of scholarship to wide scrutiny enhances quality, increases accountability and promotes collaboration – thus leading to higher visibility and impact. Open education practices align well with these principles, as they reduce barriers to education, leverage technology to improve teaching and learning, and can result in high quality learning experiences.

There can be no open educational resources without the commitment and contributions of content creators who are willing to draft, update, and peer review these resources, and share their knowledge widely via the public domain. But open education also relies heavily on the participation of a variety of important players, including instructional designers, web developers, graphic designers, librarians, and other professionals within libraries and teaching and learning centres. Consistent with its mission¹ and strategic directions², CARL asserts the value of open education and recognizes the important contributions of libraries in this arena.³ Academic library workers' expertise in areas including digital production, scholarly publishing, copyright and licensing, and information discovery and appraisal make them well positioned to play a pivotal role in the adoption of open education approaches, particularly in the creation, use and management of open educational resources.

Open Education and Open Educational Resources Defined

The term “open education” is rapidly evolving and encompasses a number of educational practises, activities, and technologies. The following definitions, while fluid, represents the current experiences of Canadian librarians working in this area.

Open education (OE) removes barriers to learning by engaging in open education practices (OEP) in the classroom and through the development and use of open educational resources (OER).

OEP, also known as open pedagogy,⁴ are “teaching and learning practices where openness is enacted within all aspects of instructional practice; including the design of learning outcomes, the selection of teaching resources, and the planning of activities and

¹ CARL provides leadership on behalf of Canada's research libraries and enhances capacity to advance research and higher education. It promotes effective and sustainable knowledge creation, dissemination, and preservation, and public policy that enables broad access to scholarly information.

² CARL Strategic Directions May 2019 to May 2022, 1.3: Advance open pedagogy collaborations and the development and use of open educational resources.

³ Examples of librarian roles supporting open education: [University of Guelph](#), [BCIT](#), [Douglas College](#)

⁴ BCcampus. (2019). What is Open Pedagogy? – BCcampus OpenEd Resources. Retrieved 4 October 2019, from <https://open.bccampus.ca/what-is-open-education/what-is-open-pedagogy/>

assessment.”⁵ Leveraging networked technologies, OEP engages faculty and students in collaborative knowledge creation while empowering students to be full participants and partners in learning communities.

OER are free to use and openly licensed⁶ teaching and learning materials. As stated by leading open education proponent David Wiley, “‘open content’ describes a copyrightable work that is licensed in a way that ‘provides users with free and perpetual permission to engage in the 5R activities which are retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute.’”⁷

Current OE Landscape

Recognizing that the cost of textbooks impacts education affordability and increases student debt, student governments and advocacy groups in Canada have for several years pressed all levels of government to invest in collaborative and affordable learning models in higher education.

In Canada, the creation of eCampusOntario and BCcampus, two government-funded technology-enabled learning projects (as well as substantial investments in this area in other provinces), highlights how provincial governments are supporting 21st-century learning by supporting the use of OEP and OER. In the U.S., open education has gained substantial traction at the state level, and has resulted in federal funding of \$5M in OER creation grants two years running.

CARL encourages continued financial investment at the provincial and federal government levels to encourage the creation of OER and OEP learning environments, as the Government of Canada’s own Standing Committee on Finance recommended in its December 2017 report.⁸

Contributions by Research Libraries

The OE landscape owes much of its thriving growth to the rich collaborative relationship between the different stakeholder groups who play a central part in developing and promoting these tools. With their unique expertise, academic library staff and librarians are well positioned within this community to be drivers of OE through responsive

⁵ Paskevicius, M. (2017). [Conceptualizing open educational practices through the lens of constructive alignment](#). *Open Praxis*, 9(2), 125-140.

⁶ For example, Creative Commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

⁷ Wiley, David. *An Open Education Reader*. Retrieved June 17, 2019, from <https://openedreader.org/chapter/open-content/>

⁸ Recommendation 19 from this report: “Support a pilot grant through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research

Council of Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Canadian Institutes

of Health Research that would provide students and faculty with an incentive to develop open educational resources”

<http://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FINA/Reports/RP9312006/finarp21/finarp21-e.pdf> (p.46)

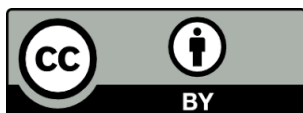
services to faculty and students that can impact issues of retention, equity, and financial vulnerability.⁹ However, while OE offers those working in academic libraries unique and promising opportunities for campus engagement, there will be “...an impact on staffing models and what is considered to be library work, with implications for the whole department and its relationship to the rest of the organization.”¹⁰

CARL encourages academic institutions to consider the positive impacts the library can offer to this relevant and emerging area and the needs of the library in supporting positions and services to develop OE on campuses across Canada.

As with other open initiatives, certain aspects of engagement and sustainability remain uncertain. In the case of OEP, training and support is often needed to develop learning environments where openness is a fundamental principle. In the case of OER, incentives are often needed to encourage faculty to produce and review open content. OE activities need to be recognized as part of tenure and promotion structures in order for OE to be sustainable.

CARL is committed to supporting library staff and librarians in developing their knowledge and skills in OE as they advocate on their own campuses for an increased understanding and acknowledgement of this work and expertise.

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⁹ Accessible Course Content and Open Educational Resources Task Force. (2017). University of Guelph Student Textbook Survey
https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/sites/default/files/uofg_student_textbooksurvey_report.pdf

¹⁰ West, Q. (2017, December 8). Librarians as Open Education Leaders: Responsibilities and Possibilities. Retrieved August 9, 2019, from <https://openoregon.org/librarians-as-open-education-leaders-responsibilities-and-possibilities/>