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# OER BEYOND TEXTBOOKS

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There are three key objectives that motivate people to participate in the promotion of OERs: to reduce student costs, to increase quality of teaching materials, and to make educational material more accessible and discoverable. Within the AB OER community, those interested in increasing awareness of OER and encouraging their adoption often fall into one of the following six stakeholder groups: students, government, educational institution leadership, faculty, teaching and learning units, and libraries. However, it is clear that each of these groups has a different relationship with the three key motivators listed above.

## Cost

Students, government, and educational institution leadership are interested in the student savings achieved as a result of replacing a paid textbook and/or other fee-based learning resource with a free resource. These savings can be significant, particularly in the case of high enrolment courses.

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**\$482,258.99 in textbook fees saved in Fall 2016**

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## Quality

The quality of a resource and its impact on teaching is of primary concern to both faculty and teaching and learning units. Research conducted on learning resource use indicates that many students avoid purchasing high price textbooks. An expensive textbook therefore has the unintended consequence of leaving students without an important learning resource and contributes to poor grades and decreased quality of learning. Thus, resource access is a key consideration for faculty selecting learning resources as it has a direct impact on student outcomes and learning quality. Input from the Alberta OER Community of Practice indicates that OER initiatives increase collaboration among faculty, libraries, and teaching and learning units and lead to better use of resources that aid in the promotion and development of effective pedagogy.

## Access and Discoverability

OERs are aligned with the mandate shared by many publicly funded educational institutions, mandates that emphasize excellence in teaching and research in service of students and society. Making high quality educational material discoverable and accessible to the broader public is a vital component of the work of libraries and teaching and learning units.



Figure 1. The converging and diverging interests of stakeholders. Adapted from McNally, Michael B. "Design vs. Pedagogical Considerations for OERs." Paper presented at IL-Palooza, Edmonton, AB, 23 April 2015.

Although each of these groups indicated that their interest in open educational resources was generated by one or all of the factors described (see fig. 1), it is perhaps the relationship between these three motivators and the various stakeholder groups that has shifted Canada's open education movement from a focus on open textbooks to a focus on open education, as in the BC Campus mandate, and open pedagogy, as in the University of Saskatchewan mission.

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## From open educational resources to open education

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An emphasis on a less specific adoption of openness allows for broader stakeholder engagement and a more accurate representation of the potential and products of the OER movement.

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## QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING: Two Case Studies

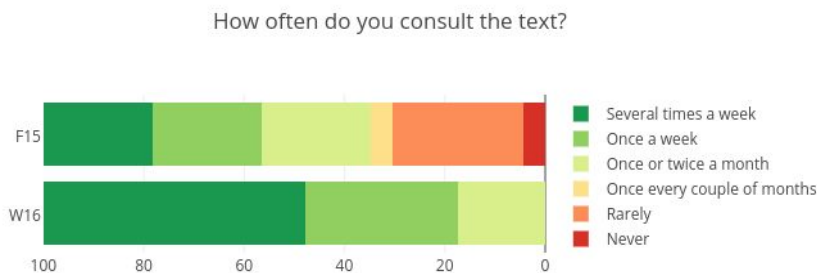
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### Open Logic at University of Calgary

“The study sessions improved immeasurably, as the accessibility of the text enabled lively and probative group discussion. The students hardly knew to whom they were indebted: this free textbook (which one student called a “lifesaver”) bore the name of no author.”

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Excerpt of student letter of support for Richard Zach, re: University of Calgary Teaching Award for Educational Leadership  
Dana Hägg, Juris Doctor Candidate (2018), University of Calgary, BSc, Pure Mathematics with minor in Philosophy



When given the opportunity to write an OER textbook for his course Logic II at University of Calgary, Richard Zach surveyed his students. Student response indicated substantial increase in the use of the zero-cost open textbook in Winter 2016 (W16) as compared to the \$40.00 commercial textbook used in previous term, Fall 2015 (F15).

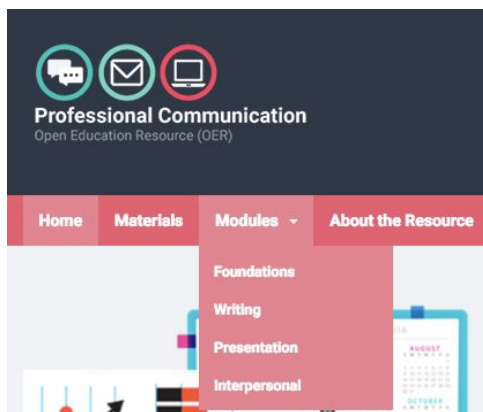
Source: Student Satisfaction Survey Results, <http://openlogicproject.org/2016/08/05/student-satisfaction-survey-results/>

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### Open Professional Communications Text at Olds College

Workplace / professional communication was the subject-matter selected for OER development due to the potential province-wide use. The OER was developed using talent from across Canada, led by the Educational Technology and Curriculum team at Olds College. The resource replaced the commercial textbook: Northey, M., and McKibbin, J. (2011). Impact: A Guide to Business Communication. Pearson in COM 1020 - Workplace Communication in 2015/16 term resulting in cost savings to students of \$22,500 in Fall 2016, projecting continued cost recovery of \$225,000 over 5 years in student savings.

The Professional Communication OER will be of use in the following courses in the future: COM 1030 - Workplace Professionalism, COM 1050 - Business Communications, COM 2020 - Advanced Communications, COM 2250 - Strategic Communications.



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“The students are very excited that the resources we are going to use for the class are free and are available online.”

“One thing I like about the OER is it provides a lot of sample materials and activities. I’ve been able to go into the OER and adapt it to my lesson or my classroom.”

Keith Friedlander, Communications Instructor, Olds College

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Quoted from Olds College promotional video for open educational resources; “OER Video 2.0”