

# Open Textbooks? UGH.

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## Editor's Note

This was originally posted to [Robin DeRosa's blog \[https://edtechbooks.org/-HFz\]](https://edtechbooks.org/-HFz) on November 20, 2015.



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I am writing this from [OpenEd15 \[https://edtechbooks.org/-enZ\]](https://edtechbooks.org/-enZ) in Vancouver. And this is a call to my like-minded compatriots spread across our conference rooms here, but also to the tweeps and digitalactivists I've worked with online over the last two years. After three days of sessions focused on reducing textbook costs, creating all-OER degree programs,



## EdTech in the Wild

it's the open *license* that matters here.

3. Consider public funding models for open education (OER, open pedagogy, open access). "Philanthropy" is the wrong word for a model in which the public pays itself for what it needs and can generate on its own. And I am not buying that private, for-profit companies- while capable of being good community partners- are the only way we can build a public infrastructure for publishing and organizing and economically supporting open work.
4. Build a better mission statement for why we work in the open. I took a stab [here](https://edtechbooks.org/-Zbk) [https://edtechbooks.org/-Zbk], but it was just one tiny specific start. I need help explaining this why. We need the why before we can develop the what (who cares about our open tools and apps and platforms? that's the easy stuff, so let's do it second). We need the *why* before we can assess whether or not we achieved success. Will working in the open serve a social justice vision? improve retention and enrollment? increase interdisciplinary collaboration and improve the quality of our scholarship? Yes? Why? How? And what will it look like if our vision succeeds?

I don't think that advocating for a pedagogical approach to OER makes me radical or an outlier. But my sense is that the movement is cohering around the "gateway" of open textbook adoption. But don't worry, I am told, once we hook 'em, we can slip in the pedagogy!

**No. No!**



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That hook is going to puncture our foundational beliefs about the power of open.

I am calling for a (radical?) pedagogy caucus, a core, self-identified group committed to placing pedagogy at the center of the OpenEd movement. I am going to stop apologizing for my sense that textbooks are the wrong way to pitch open.

Open doesn't need a pitch because open is not for sale.

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