



This is a short, simple tutorial that introduces the concept of Openness within an educational context and how this relates to the responsibilities of academic librarians.

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Openness and Open Knowledge Systems

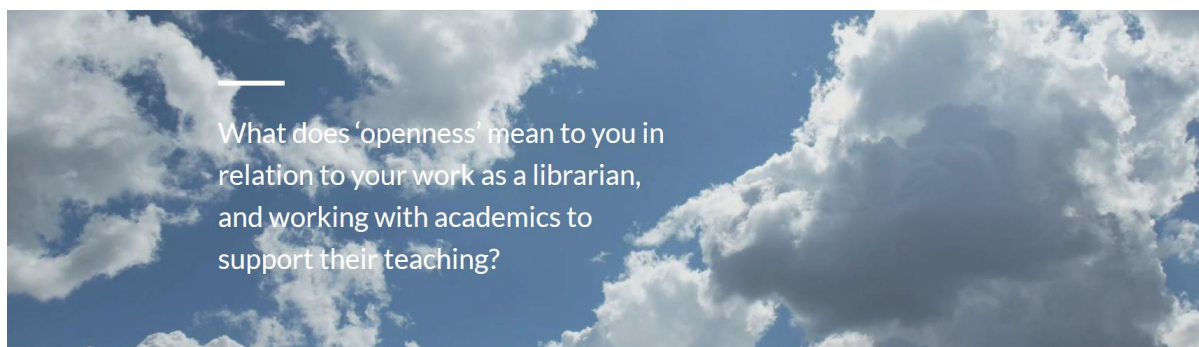
Introduction

The purpose of this module is to encourage you, as a Librarian, to consider how you can promote 'openness' in the wider education community particularly in terms of access, content, pedagogy, recognition, technology, research and quality.

To do this you will:

- consider the meaning of 'openness' within open knowledge systems
- explore the ten dimensions of the OpenEdu framework
- analyse your (collaborative) role in relation to seven areas of the OpenEdu framework
- create a plan for engaging academics on open education concepts

To begin, think about this question:



Reflection

The last decade has seen changes in the way people understand openness. New technologies have emerged, and more voices contribute to a broader idea of 'openness' based on new perspectives and realities. It is now possible for people across the globe to create (singly and collaboratively), share, access, modify and store knowledge that was previously locked up in different corners of the world.

Openness is an inclusive principle that brings together branches of open knowledge into something bigger.

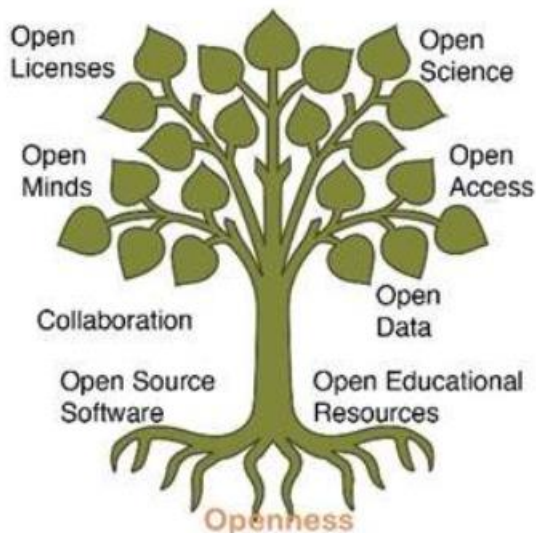


“Openness within the educational context is the encompassing (inclusive, broad) philosophy that undergirds (supports) collaboration, transparency, and access in creating, processing, and sharing of knowledge, information and data.

(Recommendations, pg 11)

Open Knowledge Systems

In *Open Knowledge Primer for African Universities, Revised and Updated Edition*, May 2023, Liz Levy discusses the idea of openness in education as part of what she calls Open Knowledge Systems.



The illustration alongside shows a representation of Open Knowledge Systems represented as a tree. Openness is at the roots of the tree, with components of the systems stemming from the roots as interconnected branches.

Stop and think

When you think about openness in your work as a librarian do you think about all of the components in the tree diagram? Think of specific examples of each component.

1. Are there components in your work that are missing from the tree diagram?
2. What do you think about the components of Open Minds, and Collaboration?

Reflect: Feedback

The idea of openness in education has expanded beyond Open Licenses, Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Access to include ideas about Open Science, Open Data, Open Software.

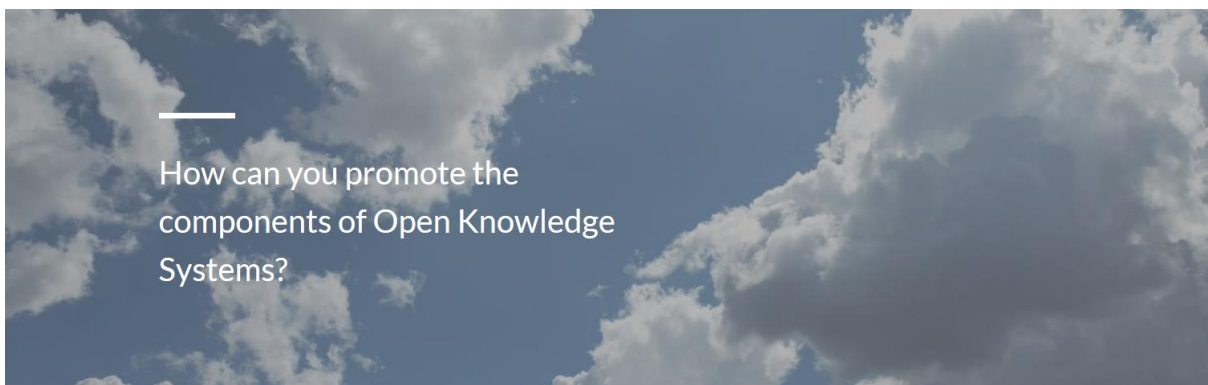
Your work, no doubt, includes creating, sharing and providing access to knowledge and information that is stored, and facilitating the adaptation of different kinds of new and existing knowledge.

In your work you may also have noticed barriers to accessing knowledge, such as the high cost of subscribing to many academic journals, and the lack of open access journals.

As you continue in this module you will explore what some of these components mean and what your role as a librarian can be in promoting the ideas and strengthening your own, and others', open practices.

OpenEdu Framework

So, now the question is:



Reflection

If you have a good understanding of what each of the components means you will more easily be able to promote them.

This is not work done separately, but rather through your daily work and interactions with academics and other staff.

We think the OpenEdu framework helps to provide a good understanding of the components of Open Knowledge Systems. There are also other modules in this course which will look more closely at concepts like Open Licences, Open Access and Open Data.

What is the OpenEdu Framework?

The OpenEdu Framework “is proposed as a foundation for developing insight and inspiring vision. It can also be used as a tool for developing a position on open education, by adapting the frameworks' propositions whenever needed. It was designed to help higher education institutions in Europe to make strategic decisions on open education.”

You can use OpenEdu framework to think more deeply about some of the components of Open Knowledge Systems, and others. For now, let us focus on seven of the 10 dimensions:

1. Access
2. Open content
3. Pedagogy
4. Recognition
5. Open technology
6. Open research
7. Quality in open education

Stop and think

1. In the diagram below which depicts the OpenEdu Framework, view the dimensions of open education numbered 1-7.
2. Read each one. While you are reading think about:
 1. What work do you do as a librarian in each dimension of the framework?
 2. Write down a list of each dimension in which you work, and a key word or phrase which describes your work.



The OpenEDU framework

Source: https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/what-open-education/openedu-framework_en

- 1) **Access:** Access in open education relates to all practices that remove or reduce economic, technological, physical and other barriers to knowledge. Open educational practices give learners access to educational content, networks and formal and non-formal knowledge sharing spaces. Access is also about recognition of learning. Access is one of the main goals of open education, and means access to all educational services (including libraries) offered by the institution, as well as access to teachers and other learners.
Source: OpenEdu Framework (2016)
- 2) **Content:** Content in open education refers to materials for teaching and learning, and research outputs, which are free of charge (preferably openly licensed) and available to all. Content includes textbooks, course materials, pictures and videos, games, software, data, research papers and outputs. It can be open licensed, in the public domain or copyrighted but should be 'gratis' and accessible by everyone without restrictions.
Source: OpenEdu Framework (2016)
- 3) **Pedagogy:** Openness in pedagogy refers to (the use of technologies to) making teaching and learning practices more transparent, sharable and visible. Open pedagogy enriches the learning design and increases students' involvement and collaboration. (OpenEdu Framework, 2016)
Open pedagogical practice supports students to access active learning, to reflect, think critically and solve problems. Open pedagogy, allows a

conversation between and amongst the students and the teacher, supporting students to succeed.

- 4) **Recognition:** Recognition in open education means issuing a certificate, diploma or title which has formal value, and formally acknowledging and accepting credentials, such as a badge or certificate, issued by a third-party institution. (OpenEdu Framework, 2016)

Open recognition enables students to move from non-formal to formal education, to complete a programme in a more flexible way, or to get recruited / promoted at work. Different aspects of recognition include assessment, identity validation, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and social recognition.

- 5) **Research:** The main idea of openness in research is to advance science by sharing and collaborating, rather than trying to publish first in order to secure intellectual property rights. International collaboration, for example, plays an increasingly important role both in improving the competitiveness of research and innovation systems and in fostering new knowledge production worldwide (Research and Innovation, European Commission, 2016). Open research also embraces Open Access, Open Data and Open Publishing.

- 6) **Technology:** Technology in open education refers to open standards and open source technologies which are interoperable with other platforms. Institutions which are committed to openness will build or use platforms which allow learners to interact with one another, upload and share content, download, peer-review and modify existing content.

Openness in technology facilitates inter- and intra-institutional collaboration in the development of technological solutions for open education.

- 7) **Quality:** Quality in open education applies to all activities within a continuous improvement cycle. These activities ensure compliance and the achievement of quality standards and practice against standards and guidelines such as the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) (2015), Brussels, Belgium

Source: OpenEdu Framework (2016)

Reflection

As a librarian a key part of your work involves supporting academics and students to get access to information, knowledge and resources, but also to make the research and teaching and learning work accessible to others.

In some of the domains you may not have a direct role, such as in recognising learning, or quality assurance of information. But indirectly you have a role in providing advice and supporting others who make decisions and policies about openness.

What other roles did you think about that we have not mentioned here?

In many ways you are at the coal face of openness in education.

You can see we haven't covered every dimension of the framework. We will move onto that now

Let's begin with Leadership and Strategy.

Leadership and Strategy

Leadership and strategy are both important domains in the OpenEdu Framework. As a librarian you may think you do not have much to do with leadership and strategy in your institution. Let's explore whether you may have more of a role than you realise, and what that might be.

Stop and think



Strategy: Including openness in an institution's education strategy can enhance and enrich the conceptual, operational and financial aspects of the educational offer. Openness is a vital component of an institution's policy, and is integral to the institution's mission. An Openness Policy should describe the institution's position on openness, and clearly articulate with wider institutional policies.



Leadership: Leadership in open education promotes sustainable open education activities and initiatives from the top-down and the bottom-up, inspiring and empowering people. Open education leadership goes beyond strategic decisions at the executive level. It identifies champions at all levels, across a range of stakeholders, including learners, who will take the lead in the different strands of open education.

If you believe you have a role in open leadership or open strategy add them to the list of dimensions you created earlier that form part of your work.

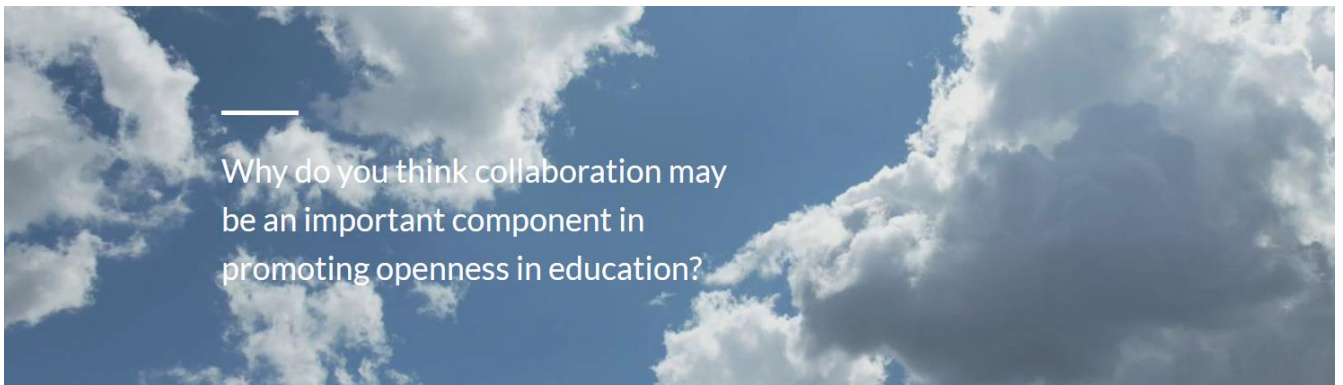
Reflection: Outstanding

By now you can see that your work as a librarian incorporates many of the dimensions of open knowledge systems and the OpenEdu framework. But what does that mean in practice?

Let's move to the next section to explore your role in promoting openness.

Collaboration

Let's ask another question:



Collaboration in open education is about connecting individuals and institutions and facilitating the exchange of practices and resources with a view to improving education. Through collaboration universities can move beyond the typical institutional collaboration patterns, and engage individuals and communities to bridge informal, non-formal and formal learning. It is a live and evolving practice which is shaped by individuals according to context, goals, resources and possibilities, contributing to the lowering of barriers to education.

OpenEdu Framework (2016)



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according to context, goals, resources and possibilities, contributing to the lowering of barriers to education.

Source: OpenEdu Framework (2016)

Stop and think

1. Go back to the list you have made in the previous section, of dimensions that incorporate and influence your work.
2. Who are the people you are most likely to collaborate with in relation to those dimensions of the OpenEdu Framework?
3. Which dimensions are these people likely to be willing to engage with you about?
4. You might find it helpful to use a table similar to the one below:

Dimension of Openness	My work and role	Name and/or position of colleague to collaborate with
Access		
Content		
Pedagogy		
Recognition		
Technology		
Research		
Quality		
Leadership		
Strategy		

Reflection

So, this is collaboration in practice in the dimension of the OpenEdu framework.

Since the library and knowledge management services in your institution play such an important role in promoting openness, you will probably want to lobby for an integrated institutional policy on openness that aligns with the mission and goals of the library, and includes funding to support the library services. This means you will benefit from engaging with certain Senior Management at your institution on those issues. This might even include engaging around issues of recognition and quality.

Of course the students and academics are probably the people you will mostly engage with around openness, concerning issues of access, content, pedagogy, technology and quality.

For most academics research is a key performance target, so you will be able to engage and support them around issues of open research, including open data and open publishing.

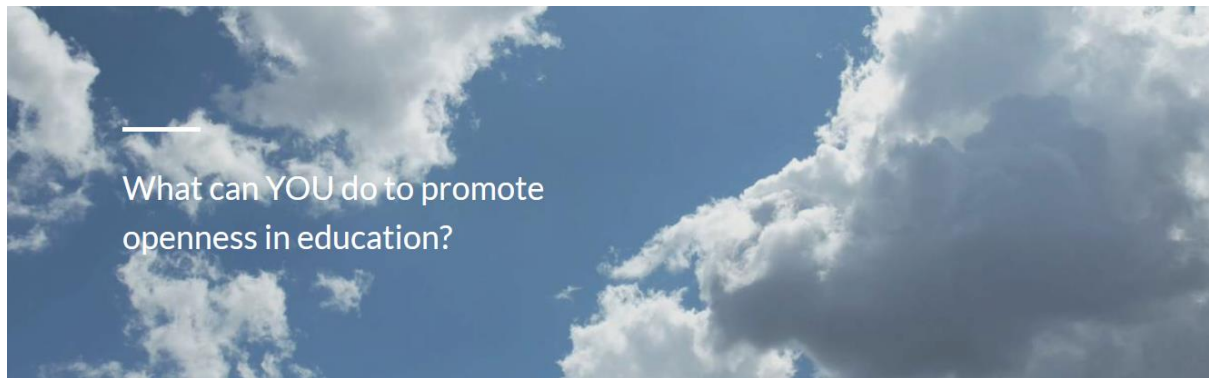
Your table might begin to look something like this:

Dimension of Openness	My work and role	Name and/or position of colleague to collaborate with
Access		
Content	Find open content	Academics, students
Pedagogy		Academics
Recognition		
Technology	Up to date and relevant	Academics
Research	Searching, publishing	Academics, students
Quality		
Leadership		
Strategy	Lobbying for policy, funding	Senior management

Let's take a look at some recommendations for promoting openness in education.

Advocating for Openness

And so, one final question:



The OER Recommendation is a toolkit developed by NBA and AfLIA which aims to inspect each aspect of openness as it relates to the different library types in Africa and the user communities the libraries represent. It supports librarians to understand the core of the practice of openness, which is equitable, suitable, and truly open for easy sharing and interoperability of knowledge within Africa.”

(Recommendations, pg. 11)

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Read this summary of how libraries can support implementation of the OER Recommendation:

- 1 African librarians continue learning about openness and how the concept provides for quality and inclusive education and the decolonization of learning content
- 2 Libraries of all types play a leading role in training their user communities to have a balanced understanding of open licenses and OERs
- 3 African libraries use the UNESCO OER Recommendation to advocate for, and work with, other stakeholders to draw up policies that will create an environment for the creation, adoption, use, reuse of OER
- 4 African library professionals understand how to ensure quality assurance for OER
- 5 African librarians acquire skills to be more effective scholarly communication librarians, to communicate with stakeholders on the importance of open education, and to lobby for appropriate administrative infrastructures
- 6 African librarians work with AfLIA to continue conversations on the state of OER implementation in their institution/user communities, including challenges, best practices and recommendations

- 7 African library associations are members of AfLIA, and are included in all conversations and discussions about OER and open learning
- 8 AfLIA work with its membership to gather information on OER in their user communities
- 9 AfLIA open high level dialogues with the African Union and governments at the national level on the implementation of the UNESCO OER Recommendation

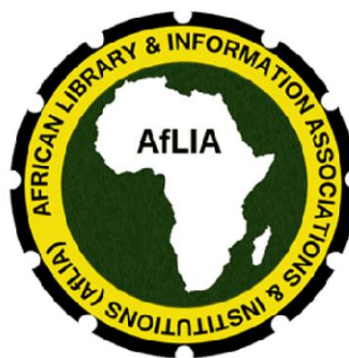
Stop and think

- What roles can you identify for yourself from the above recommendations?
- Who can you collaborate with to begin to implement these roles?
- What is your view on the suggested roles for AfLIA recommendations 6, 7, 8 & 9?
- Get together with one or two of your colleagues and discuss your ideas with them

What's next?

To round off this learning opportunity, consider doing the assignment in Moodle. This assignment is designed to help you develop a concrete plan to embark on your advocacy work for openness in education.

You could even do the assignment together with some colleagues as a first step in your advocacy work.



Attributions, references and licences

The following OER were consulted and/or adapted to create this learning pathway:

- You can read the whole OER Recommendation document by accessing the PDF file attached below
- The OpenEDU framework: https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/what-open-education/openedu-framework_en
- open knowledge primer May 2023
- Openness in Education as a Praxis oro_open_ac_uk
- Inamorato dos Santos, A., Punie, Y., Munoz, J C. 2016. Opening up Education: A support framework for Higher Education Institutions, JRC Science for policy report, Joint Research Centre, European Commission