

Open Education at UFV: A Strategy for the Future

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UFV Library and UFV Teaching & Learning

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Acknowledging the Land



We extend our gratitude and respect to the Halq'eméylem speaking Stó:lō people, the people of the river, for their care of the land; past, present and future. We acknowledge our responsibility to tread softly and with respect as we work, teach, and learn on Stó:lō Temexw.

As open education practitioners we acknowledge that open education principles do not always align with traditional knowledge practices. We commit to respectfully engaging with Stó:lō faculty, students, and staff towards the culturally appropriate sharing of traditional knowledge through open education at UFV.

Executive Summary

Open education is an educational movement grounded in the principle that knowledge is a public good. Open education advocates for the use of open licenses, open practices, technologies, and collaboration to expand access to learning worldwide (OEGlobal, n.d.).

At UFV, conversations around open education have occurred over the past 10 years organized by Martin Warkentin (then Copyright Librarian). From 2020 onwards, the UFV Library and Teaching and Learning departments have formally supported this grassroots activity, and open education activities have gained momentum. This collaboration has increased open education awareness, facilitated an Open Education Working Group, secured internal and external sources of funding, and supported small-scale open education projects. In Fall 2025, UFV launched its Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) initiative providing students with transparency around courses not requiring the purchase of required course materials. Advocacy by UFV's Student Union Society was key for the implementation of the ZTC program.

Now that the open education culture has matured and the ZTC initiative is in place, UFV is ready to commit to open education at an institutional level. We present an Open Education Strategy that recognizes UFV's context as a regional, teaching intensive university located on Stó:lō Temexw. The development of this strategy was supported by a BCcampus Open Education Institutional Grant and UFV's Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic. Open education intersects with all areas of our institution and supports UFV's mission of engaging learners, transforming lives, and building community.

UFV's Open Education Strategy

The University of the Fraser Valley, located on Stó:lō Temexw, the traditional and contemporary lands of the Stó:lō people, commits to the principles of open education including accessibility, openness, collaboration and sharing, learner-centredness, inclusivity and equity, and flexibility and sustainability to support student learning.

UFV commits to these principles by:

1. Supporting engagement in open educational practices in academic and non-academic areas across UFV.
2. Enhancing the adoption, adaptation, and creation of high-quality open educational resources that reflect professional and disciplinary expectations.
3. Building awareness and community around open educational practices through effective communication at department, faculty, and institutional levels.
4. Recognizing open educational practices as teaching, research & scholarship, and service; and/or professional practice where they align with department and faculty standards.
5. Encouraging students as partners in open educational practices, including open educational resource creation and related experiential learning opportunities.

6. Advancing UFV's Zero Textbook Cost initiative by using open educational resources and other no cost materials to support equitable access, enhance inclusivity, and reduce financial barriers for students.
7. Identifying funding opportunities and partnerships to support a sustainable open education initiative at UFV.

Introduction

What is Open Education?

Open education is an educational movement grounded in the principle that knowledge is a public good. Open education principles promote accessibility, collaboration, and learner empowerment ensuring education is inclusive, adaptable, and sustainable (OEGlobal, n.d.; DeRosa & Jhangiani, 2017; Wiley and Hamilton, 2018; UNESCO, 2019). Open education advocates for the use of open licenses, open educational practices, open technologies, and collaboration to expand access to learning worldwide (OEGlobal, n.d.). The Cape Town Declaration (2008) highlighted key pillars of open education, such as freedom to use, customize, and redistribute educational materials without constraint. Subsequently, UNESCO (2019) released "Recommendation on open educational resources (OER)" in November 2019.

Open education is built on the following principles:

- "Every learner must have access to educational opportunities, both in and out of the classroom, to achieve their full potential.
- Both learners and educators should have the freedom to use, create, and modify resources and learning experiences.
- Collaborative community spaces are vital for educators to share and learn relevant practices.
- Technologies must support equitable access, engagement, and interaction among learners and educators." (OEGlobal, n.d.)

Open educational practices (OEP) refer to teaching and learning methods that leverage open technologies, open pedagogy, and high-quality open educational resources (OER) to foster collaborative, flexible, inclusive, and innovative learning environments (Cronin et al, 2023). These practices include the use and creation of OER; open pedagogy where learners are co-creators of knowledge and where assignments may be used collaboratively to develop course materials; open sharing of teaching practices; and the use of social and participatory technologies that encourage interaction, collaborative knowledge building, and community participation (BCcampus, n.d., Cronin et al, 2023).

Open educational resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research materials published under an open license, allowing free use and repurposing by others. UNESCO (2020) defines OER as learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that permit no-cost access, reuse, adaptation, and redistribution by others. These resources may include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools or techniques used to support access to knowledge (Hewlett Foundation, 2020).

Benefits of Open Education

Open education, particularly through use of open educational resources (OER), reduces financial and access barriers for learners (Hilton, 2020). Students often struggle with the high cost of textbooks, which can lead to delays or choosing not to purchase required course materials (Hilton, 2020). OER adoption improved student performance and decreased course withdrawals compared to traditional materials (Hilton, 2020). Studies have shown that OER use does not negatively impact learning outcomes and can improve retention rates, especially among underrepresented and financially disadvantaged students (Colvard et al, 2018).

Open education also offers educational flexibility and scalability. OER typically carry open licenses, such as Creative Commons, allowing educators to adapt, remix, and redistribute content to meet diverse learner needs (Wiley et al., 2014). They may also be adapted to reflect specific learner groups and communities ensuring that students see themselves in the resources they are using supporting inclusive and culturally relevant curriculum design (Hilton, 2020). Open education encourages global collaboration, enabling educators and learners worldwide to contribute to and refine shared resources, promoting pedagogical innovation and community-driven knowledge sharing (Wiley et al., 2014). At UFV, instructors funded through the Open Education Micro Grants (OEMG) and Open Education Faculty Fellows (OEFF) programs have adapted and created OER that address accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion, and Indigenization and reflect the Fraser Valley communities we serve. These materials are shared with UFV colleagues and external disciplinary networks reflecting the spirit of the Cape Town Declaration (2008).

Finally, open education encourages lifelong learning and institutional innovation. OER can be integrated into formal coursework or accessed independently, empowering learners to engage with educational content at their own pace (UNESCO, 2020). For faculty and institutions, publishing and revising open materials enhances visibility and reinforces their educational mission (UNESCO, 2020). The publication and revision of open resources is more nimble than conventional publishing ensuring they remain current and relevant, benefiting both educators and learners in an increasingly interconnected world (Hilton, 2020). Open educational resources created by UFV faculty are housed in UFV Library's Harvest-IR repository and can be accessed by communities without course registration or cost thereby expanding learning outside of formal education settings and providing alternative opportunities for lifelong learning.

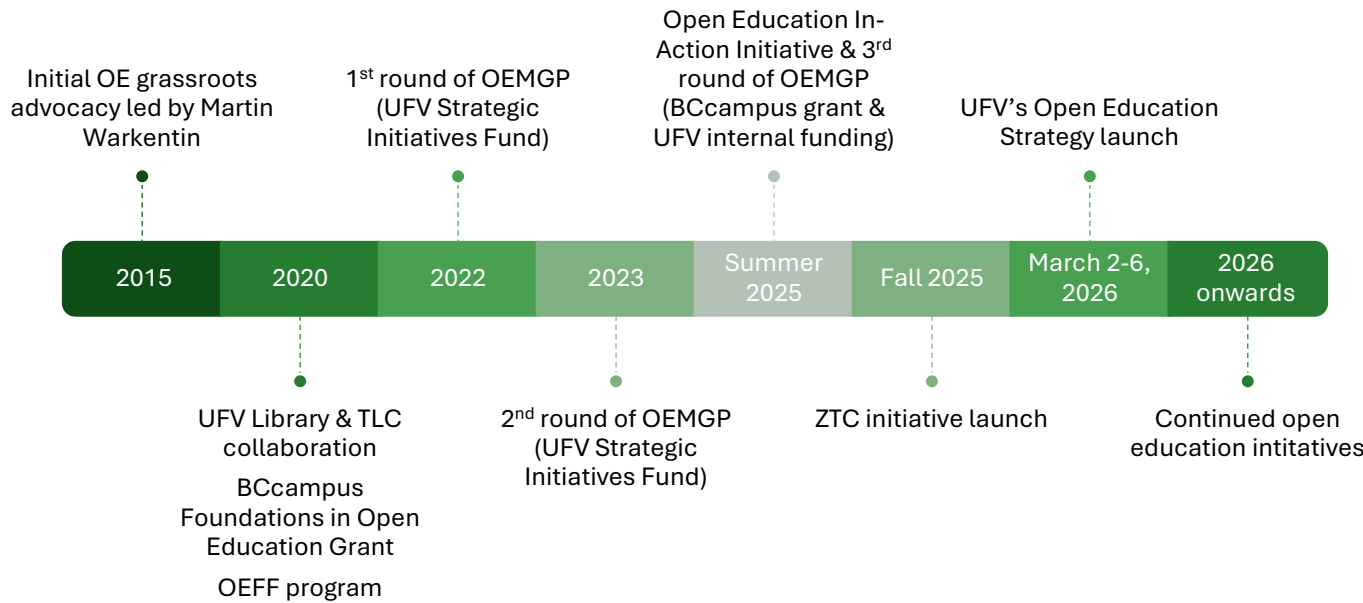
History of Open Education at UFV

Open education conversations at UFV began around 2015 led by Martin Warkentin (then UFV Copyright Librarian). Grassroots conversations in an adhoc Open Education Working Group provided a space for instructors and other interested parties to come together to discuss ways to grow open education at UFV. The conversation widened with funding from BCcampus Foundations in Open Education grant in 2020. This funding (matched by UFV) created an Open Education Faculty Fellows (OEFF) program that supported 3 faculty in creating OER in areas of calculus, statistics, and nutrition. More recently, the Open Education Micro Grants program (OEMG); created with internal funding) has supported 16 small-scale open education projects with students co-authoring OER alongside faculty.

The Open Education Working Group continues to meet to discuss ways to increase awareness on open education and provide guidance on initiatives. Conversations with UFV Student Union Society executive members have continued to strengthen advocacy for open education.

In Spring 2025, UFV received a \$33,000 institutional grant from BCcampus to support the Open Education In-Action Initiative that includes the development of an institutional open education strategy and implementation plan for the recently launched ZTC initiative. Funding was used to hire Dr. Shaun Sun as a temporary, part-time Open Education Strategist (0.5FTE for Fall 2025 and Winter 2026). Financial support for this initiative was also provided by the Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic.

Figure 1: OE activities at UFV timeline



Alignment to UFV's Strategic Plans

The principles of open education (OE) align with UFV's Vision, Mission and Values. Specifically, UFV's mission of "Engaging learners, transforming lives, building community" ("yoystexw ye totilthet, ayeqet kw'e shxwaylexws, thayt kw'e st'elt'elawtexw") and other strategic plans such as the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan as shown below.

Table 1: Connections between open education, UFV vision, mission and values, and strategic enrolment management plan

UFV Vision, Mission & Values	Strategic Enrolment Management Plan
Integrity & Inclusivity - OE supports access to post-secondary education by reducing financial barriers - Upholds honest & ethical course development by adopting resources that consider affordability, accessibility & inclusivity	Recruitment & Preparation - OE makes education more accessible by reducing financial barriers for potential students - OER can be adapted/created to reflect UFV's diverse student population and address topics important to local communities
Community - Increases access, retention, and graduation rates across the diverse communities of Stó:lō Temexw - Builds campus diversity - Creates OE communities of practice	Student Experience - OE Student Assistants gain experiential learning opportunities - OER can be adapted/created to reflect UFV student experiences - OER can support student retention & success
Excellence Inspires innovative teaching & learning practices that support student learning	Graduation & Career Transition - OER utilization can increase graduation rates - OER are available free to alumni and co-op and community partners

Funding for Open Education

Over the past 5 years, the collaboration between UFV Library and Teaching and Learning departments has been successful in receiving internal and external funding to support open education related activities. Total investment is over \$150,000.

Table 2: Funding for open education

Project	Year	Investment	Source
Open Education Faculty Fellows Program	2020	\$15,000	BCcampus Foundations for Open Education Grant
Open Education Faculty Fellows Program	2020	\$15,000 (matching funds)	Office of the Provost, UFV
Open Education Micro Grants program	2022	\$10,000	UFV Strategic Initiatives Fund
Open Education Micro Grants program	2024	\$15,000	UFV Strategic Initiatives Fund
Open Education Student Assistant (work study)	2022 to 2025	120hrs each year (total \$10,000)	UFV Work Study program
Open Education Week support	2024 & 2025	\$750 & \$500	BCcampus
Open Education In-Action Initiative	2025-26	\$33,000	BCcampus Open Education Institutional Grant
Open Education Funding	2025-26	\$30,000	Office of the Provost, UFV
ZTC Monograph project	2025-26	\$10,000	UFV Library

The Next Step: An Open Education Strategy for UFV

The Open Education In-Action Initiative, funded by BCcampus, includes the development of an institutional commitment to open education. Development of UFV's Open Education Strategy was a 9-month project that included faculty and student consultation, consultation with relevant administrative areas, and building awareness around open education. Details of faculty and student consultation can be found in the Appendices.

Figure 2: Open Education In-Action Initiative timeline



Guidance was provided by Deans Council in September 2025 on the direction of this strategy. Support from Deans Council was received in February 2026. Dr. James Mandigo (UFV President and Vice Chancellor) and Dr. Tracy Ryder Glass (Provost and Vice President, Academic) have endorsed UFV's open education strategy. UFV Student Union Society President, Bilal Faisal Faheem, has also provided support for this strategy. Institutional letters of support can be found in Appendices.

UFV's Open Education Strategy

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6. Advancing UFV's Zero Textbook Cost initiative by using open educational resources and other no cost materials to support equitable access, enhance inclusivity, and reduce financial barriers for students.
7. Identifying funding opportunities and partnerships to support a sustainable open education initiative at UFV.

UFV's Open Education Strategy will be fulfilled at individual, department, and institutional levels. These commitments may be met over the short- and long-term. Key performance indicators for each commitment will be developed and tracked by the Open Education Team who will create an annual report that summarizes open education activities.

Conclusion

UFV's Open Education Strategy provides an institutional commitment to the principles of open education including accessibility, openness, collaboration and sharing, learner-centredness, inclusivity and equity, and flexibility and sustainability to support student learning on Stó:lō Temexw. Building on grassroots and community advocacy, this Open Education Strategy provides faculty, staff, students and administrators with direction on engaging in open education across all areas of our work. The next steps involve actioning this strategy through key performance indicators and tracking their impact. We look forward to moving open education forward at UFV.

Acknowledgements

We extend our thanks to all faculty and staff who provided feedback during our consultation sessions with Faculty Councils and to the many UFV students who visited an open education tabling event and shared their ideas. We thank Kenley Neufeld (Acting University Librarian), Dr. Awneet Sivia (AVP, Teaching and Learning) and Martin Warkentin (Collections Librarian) for their support and review of this report and strategy and UFV Deans for their guidance on this strategy. Finally, we thank BCcampus via the Open Education Institutional Grant and the Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic for financial support.

AI Disclosure

Artificial Intelligence Tool: Microsoft Copilot (University of the Fraser Valley institutional instance)

Conceptualization: Microsoft Copilot was used to draft background sections on open education including definitions and benefits of open education

Information Collection: Microsoft Copilot was used to find relevant sources to support the descriptions provided

Editing & checking: the authors adapted and edited the AI-generated text, checked sources, and added additional references to the text

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Appendix A: Faculty Consultation

The Open Education team met with each of the 7 Faculty/College Councils in October 2025 consulting with over 170 faculty members:

- College of Arts Engagement Session – October 7, 2025
- Faculty of Applied and Technical Studies – October 9, 2025
- Faculty of Business and Computing – October 10, 2025
- Faculty of Education, Community, and Human Development – October 17, 2025
- Faculty of Health Sciences – October 24, 2025
- Faculty of Science – October 31, 2025

The OE team also met with:

- Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee
- Library Advisory Committee
- Research Advisory Committee

At each session, the OE team provided a short presentation and engaged in discussion. A Padlet was used to capture feedback and ideas that surfaced during discussions. These general themes were identified:

- Lack of awareness around OER at UFV including funding opportunities and completed OE projects
 - Disciplinary-focused resources are needed
- OER adopted in courses need to be peer-reviewed and of high quality
 - An evaluation checklist for adopting OER would be helpful
- Faculty are unsure about locating suitable OER for specific disciplinary areas and courses
 - Opportunities for liaison librarians to support departments around OER opportunities
- Incentives for OER adoption (switch to ZTC) to acknowledge the time and effort required for curriculum redesign and support for this process
- Support for the creation of OER – funding, technical support, review process
- Acknowledgement of OER in tenure and promotion processes that meets disciplinary expectations
- Addressing publisher dominance in academic environments
- Feedback on UFV's ZTC initiative
 - Strengths: reduces student barriers to higher education; retention tool; OER that represent local communities
 - Concerns: competition between course sections and departments; students will value cost savings over learning opportunities; and challenges in courses using a standard text

- More awareness of ZTC is needed

The OE Team also consulted with Dr. Alastair Hodges, Director for Tenure and Promotion, to discuss the ways open education may be recognized in the tenure and promotion process.

Appendix B: Feedback from Students

Written by Aashima Marwaha, Open Education Strategy Student Assistant

Student input on UFV's open education strategy is key. Aashima Marwaha engaged UFV students at 2 tabling events and an additional focus group session in Fall 2025 to discuss open education with students and capture their ideas.

Feedback collected from UFV students regarding the Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) and open education (OE) initiatives reveals that textbook affordability is not merely a financial preference but a critical determinant of academic success and course selection. Students overwhelmingly support ZTC, noting that it reduces stress, allows for immediate access to materials, and often correlates with higher engagement from instructors. The feedback indicates that for many students, high textbook costs act as a significant barrier to access and completion. Students openly admitted to skipping courses or delaying the purchase of materials due to cost, which directly hinders their ability to start the semester effectively. Consequently, ZTC should be viewed not just as a cost-saving measure, but as a vital retention strategy that eliminates the barriers preventing students from registering for or remaining in courses.

Students openly admitted to skipping courses or delaying the purchase of materials due to cost, which directly hinders their ability to start the semester effectively.

Beyond the initial sticker price, a significant source of student frustration is the requirement to purchase expensive textbooks or access codes that are rarely utilized in lectures. Students expressed dissatisfaction with paying for materials only to find them irrelevant to the curriculum or assessments, leading to a desire for stricter criteria on what constitutes "required" versus "recommended" reading. However, when instructors use Open educational resources (OER), students often perceive the instruction as superior. Feedback suggests that instructors who move away from publisher slide decks in favor of open resources are viewed as more passionate and engaged with their material. This implies that promoting OER is most effective when framed around the narrative of educational quality and customized learning, rather than focusing solely on economics.

Regarding accessibility, while there is a strong preference for free online resources, students cautioned against a digital-only approach that relies heavily on consistent internet access. Many students emphasized the value of physical copies for deep reading or studying offline, highlighting that a robust OE strategy must support OER that are available in multiple formats, ensuring digital resources are mobile-friendly and downloadable while retaining options for low-cost print on demand. Finally, to maximize

the impact of these initiatives, students identified a need for better communication. Suggestions included clearer labeling of the ZTC symbol in timetables and targeted outreach during orientation sessions, ensuring that new and transfer students are fully aware of how to identify and access these affordable learning options.

Appendix C: Letter of Support from UFV President

President and Vice-Chancellor's Support of UFV's Open Education Strategy

The University of the Fraser Valley has long been guided by its mission to engage learners, transform lives, and build community. Our new Open Education Strategy brings this mission to life in a meaningful and practical way.

I am pleased to endorse UFV's Open Education Strategy, which represents both a natural evolution of our teaching culture and an important step forward in how we share knowledge, reduce barriers, and create opportunity. Grounded in the principles of accessibility, collaboration, learner-centredness, and equity, this strategy aligns closely with UFV's identity as a regional, community-engaged, and teaching-intensive university located on Stó:lō Temexw.

Open education is fundamentally about more than textbooks or digital resources – it is about who has access to learning, who gets to contribute, and how knowledge is created and shared. By advancing open educational practices, UFV is reaffirming that knowledge is a public good, and that education should be accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the communities we serve.

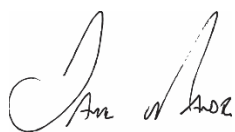
I am particularly proud of how this strategy advances UFV's Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) initiative. Reducing financial barriers to learning is a powerful equity measure that directly supports student success, retention, and belonging. Equally important is the way open education invites students to be partners in knowledge creation – an approach that reflects UFV's commitment to experiential learning.

This strategy also reflects UFV's role as an Ashoka Changemaker Campus. Open education is strongly aligned with our Changemaking ethos by fostering collaboration, shared solutions, and community impact, and by encouraging us to adopt more accessible and adaptable teaching and publishing approaches.

I commend the leadership of UFV Teaching and Learning, the UFV Library, and the Open Education Team for their thoughtful and inclusive process in developing this strategy, as well as the faculty, students, and administrators who contributed their perspectives.

As we move from strategy to action, I look forward to seeing how open education continues to enrich teaching, expand access, and strengthen UFV's impact – locally and beyond.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Mandigo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Mandigo".

Dr. James Mandigo
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of the Fraser Valley



MEMO

To: Dr. James Mandigo, President and Vice-Chancellor
From: Dr. Tracy Ryder Glass, Provost & VP Academic
CC: Claire Hay, Janelle Sztuhar
Date: 2026-03-31
Re: Provost's Support for UFV's Open Education Strategy

Located on Stó:lō Temexw, UFV seeks to engage learners, transform lives, and build community. As part of UFV's commitment to the communities of the Fraser Valley, the new Open Education Strategy commits to the principles of accessibility, collaboration, learner-centredness, and equity and supports present and future students by reducing financial barriers to education.

As Provost and Vice President, Academic I am pleased to support UFV's Open Education Strategy that builds on over 10 years of grassroots advocacy to support learners by advancing knowledge sharing, reducing barriers to learning, and creating opportunity across UFV's multiple disciplinary areas.

The commitments in this strategy, including UFV's Zero Textbook Cost initiative, reinforce UFV's place as a regional, community-engaged, and teaching-intensive university that centers student learning and teaching excellence. I look forward to seeing the next stage phase of growth in open education at UFV to support learners across all faculties, programs, and courses.

I thank the Open Education Team for their extensive consultation in developing this strategy and for their ongoing work in this area.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Ryder Glass".



Letter of Support for UFV's Open-Education Strategy

February 27, 2026

The UFV Student Union Society is proud to offer its full support for UFV's Open Education Strategy.

For students, open education is not an abstract principle. It affects them in numerous ways directly impacting their learning, academic success and overall well-being. The cost of textbooks and required materials remains a significant barrier for many students, influencing course selection, retention, and the ability to fully engage from the first day of class.

The Student Union Society has consistently advocated for reducing financial barriers and increasing transparency in course material costs. The advancement of open educational resources and the institutional commitment outlined in UFV's Open Education Strategy represent meaningful progress toward a more equitable and inclusive learning environment.

By embedding accessibility, collaboration, learner-centredness, inclusivity, and sustainability into institutional practice, UFV affirms that education must remain responsive to the diverse realities students face. Strengthening the Zero Textbook Cost initiative and expanding the adoption and creation of open educational resources will support student success while reinforcing UFV's mission to engage learners, transform lives, and build community.

The strategy's recognition of open educational practices as meaningful scholarly and professional contributions, as well as its commitment to student partnership in knowledge creation, reflects a collaborative model of teaching and learning that benefits the entire UFV community.

The Student Union Society looks forward to continued partnership with the Library, Teaching and Learning Centre, faculty and administration to ensure that this strategy translates into measurable impact. Together, we can build a university where cost is not a barrier to education and where knowledge is shared openly in service of students and the broader community.

Sincerely,

Bilal Faisal Faheem

President

UFV Student Union Society

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Glossary

Open education

Open education is an educational movement grounded in the principle that knowledge is a public good. It advocates for the use of open licenses, open practices, technologies, and collaboration to expand access to learning worldwide (OEGlobal, n.d.).

Open educational resources (OER)

Open educational resources are learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that permit no-cost access, reuse, adaptation, and redistribution by others. These resources may include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools or techniques used to support access to knowledge (UNESCO, 2020; Hewlett Foundation, 2020).

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Open educational practices (OEP) refer to teaching and learning methods that leverage open technologies, open pedagogy, and high-quality open educational resources (OER) to foster collaborative, flexible, inclusive, and innovative learning environments (Cronin et al, 2023).

Open pedagogy

Open pedagogy is the opening of educational processes in addition to open content that transforms collaboration between students and teachers (Hodgkinson-Williams and Gray, 2009). It may be defined as: strategies, technologies and communities that make the educational process more transparent; openness that leads to improved learning; ability for learners to be co-creators of knowledge; global teaching and learning connections; and the freedom to act with authority (UBC, n.d.).

Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC)

Courses that use materials to support student learning that are available without cost to students. These course materials may include OER, library resources, open software, free online materials etc. ZTC courses may require students to purchase some items such as lab coats, calculators, art supplies etc. (KPU, 2026). ZTC courses are clearly marked in the UFV timetable and in the UFV Bookstore Textbook Finder.