Open Textbook Library Introduction

Hello everyone, I'm Karen Lawrenson, Publishing Director with the Open Education Network, and I'm going to talk now about the Open Textbook Library.

What is the Open Textbook Library and how does it fit into our open education strategy?
The library is really two things. First, it's a resource—an online resource for the common good, available to anyone around the world. Our goal is to be a comprehensive repository, a one-stop place where faculty can find any open textbook that meets our criteria. I'll talk more about those criteria in a moment.

Second, the library is part of a strategy. Faculty at member institutions review textbooks as part of the workshop strategy in the Open Education Network. We direct faculty to the Open Textbook Library, invite them to take a look, and see if there might be a book there that meets their needs. We do this through workshops and the review process, with the goal of connecting faculty to open options and introducing them to open educational resources.

Let's take a look at the library as it is today.
On the homepage, you can see the books most recently added under "New Books." There's also a feature in development listing all the open textbooks currently being developed in the Open Education Network. From here, you can search the library using the search box in the upper right and learn more about our textbooks.

Looking at our textbooks, you'll see the four criteria listed for inclusion. I'll speak in more detail about these shortly. You can also find this information on the Open Textbook Library site. The FAQs section answers most questions about the library. There's also a place to submit open textbooks—I invite any of you to submit a book that you think meets our criteria so we can potentially add it to the collection.

We also have a discovery page with MARC records, a CSV file, and a JSON API. Finally, there's a "Friends" section listing organizations that have supported the library.

Two main goals:

1. To be a comprehensive repository—a one-stop place for faculty to browse open textbooks.
2. To support faculty engagement and adoption of open resources.

Where do these open textbooks come from?
They come from a variety of places, including funded initiatives (grants supporting authors), independent authors, discipline collectives, and more. Books in the library do not only come from Open Education Network members—they can come from anywhere in the world. We review them to see if they meet our four criteria, and if so, we include them in the library for faculty to evaluate.

The four criteria for inclusion:

1. **Open License:** The book must include a Creative Commons license that allows for editing. We no longer add books with the "No Derivatives" license because open means editable.
2. **Complete Textbook in One File:** The entire textbook must be available in a single downloadable file so students can access it offline.
3. **Institutional or Scholarly Affiliation:** The book should have some institutional or scholarly society affiliation or be used in more than one location.
4. **Original Book of Record:** We include the original book to keep the library organized for faculty. Adaptations are included only if they have been significantly revised for a new audience (e.g., "Statistics for Nursing").

How are criteria developed?

We keep faculty needs top of mind, consult with our steering committee, and revisit criteria as open education evolves. For example, we used to accept books with "No Derivatives," but later changed that policy.

What's in the library?

Currently, there are more than 750 textbooks, organized by the World Library's outline of academic disciplines. Books are often cross-listed in multiple subjects. You can hover over the menu to see the number of books in each subject.

How do you know what's in the library?

Use the search box or access cumulative MARC and CSV records. These are live and updated as soon as we add a book. MARC records are also included in OCLC and updated monthly.

Book records:

Each book record includes basic info (title, authors, publisher, ISBN, language), licensing, formats available (online, PDF, print), reviews, table of contents, and author details. Most books are in English, but there are also books in Spanish, French, and other languages.

Reviews:

About 74% of books include at least one faculty review. Reviews are based on criteria adapted from BCcampus and provide a light evaluation to help faculty assess quality. Most reviews rate books highly (four to five stars).

Additional features:

- **Textbooks in Development:** A feature inspired by the community to surface upcoming projects.
- **Dark Archive:** Maintained in partnership with Colorado State University Libraries as an insurance policy in case resources disappear.
- **Submission Form:** Faculty and community members can suggest books for inclusion.

If you have questions, check the FAQs on the site or sign up for quarterly updates at **z.umn.edu/librarymail**. Thank you for your interest in the Open Textbook Library and your support of faculty engagement with open resources. I'm always happy to hear suggestions for improvement and look forward to connecting with you.