

Death of the Textbook

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Scribes and Scholars?

The Textbook is...

- 🪦 **Dead as a Norwegian Blue**
(It's obsolete. Time to move on.)
- 😓 **Not dead, just resting**
(There's life in the old format yet!)
- 👻 **An undead relic**
(Still walks among us... somehow.)
- 🧪 **Mutating into something else**
(It's evolving into open content!)
- 📖 **Alive and well, thank you very much**
(Some of us still love a good textbook!)



Background context

- **Legacy textbook distribution scheme** (Flying Start)
 - Peak: 80k copies of texts to 20k students
 - 1-2-1 model
 - £££ Multi-million
- **Driver for change** – financial crisis
- **Executive approval for change**
 - Library license, Subscribed content, Open content
 - Students **MUST NOT** pay for essential reading
- **‘Open’** – sustainability key to strategic move

A New Model of Learning Resources

Movement Away From Commercial Textbooks

- Financial sustainability
- Increase accessibility and inclusivity of content
- Pedagogical flexibility

Course Reading Lists

- Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Short form scholarly articles and eBooks* from existing subscriptions
- CLA content – digitized chapters/articles

Rationale

- Increasing publisher costs
- Focus on the learner and do not build the course around textbook
- Offer bespoke course/module reading

Exceptions

- Where content is mandatory for professional accreditation or exams
- No alternative open content

Why Adopt Open Educational Resources (OER)?

Reduce

Reduce textbook costs whilst underpinning the university's commitment '**cost of essential resources will not be passed to the student**'

Enhance

Enhance access to quality, **customise learning resources, adapt** to align with the **pedagogical objectives** of each module.

Align

Align OER initiatives with institutional goals for **equity, inclusion, and academic success** and sustainability.

Vision and Goals

Prioritise Open Educational Resources (OERs)

Reduce financial burden to the university whilst maintaining the institutional commitment that costs of course essential resources are not passed on to the student.



Focussed Content

Resources are purposefully aligned with the pedagogical objectives of each module



Collaboration

Library colleagues and course teams work together to identify, adapt, and implement these resources effectively



Copyright, Licensing, and Intellectual Property

Provide guidance, support, and training

Meeting the Challenge: Delivering Course Reading at Scale with Open Content

Challenges

- Replacing the course essential textbook scheme
- Content to 600 courses/2,400 modules
- Time-consuming
- Sourcing relevant open content
- Resistance from academics loyal to traditional publisher textbooks

Response

- Move to an open content model
- Faculty champions engaged early
- Successful pilot with Sylla to validate solution
- Launched institution-wide OER campaign:
 - *Discovery Sessions* across all schools CU Group
 - Strong academic engagement and interest

The Journey to Adopting Open Educational Resources (OER)

Discover



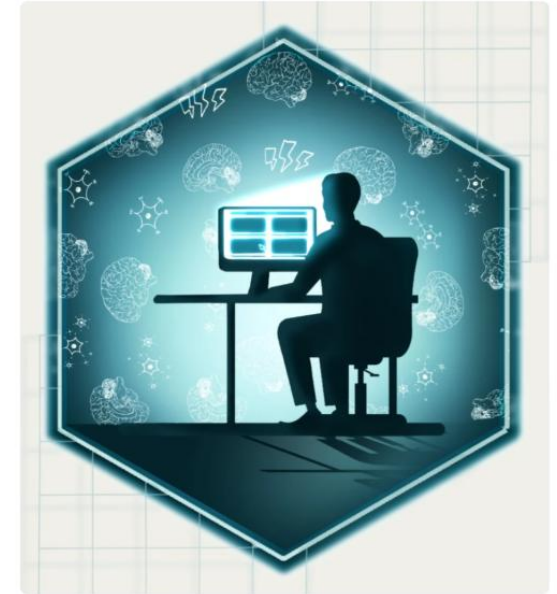
Using **Sylla** match Open Content to module outcomes and indicative content. Customise to meet your teaching goals and student needs.

Adapt



In **Sylla**, tailor your resources for specific pedagogical goals, continuously **integrating diverse perspectives**. Pick and mix from different matches

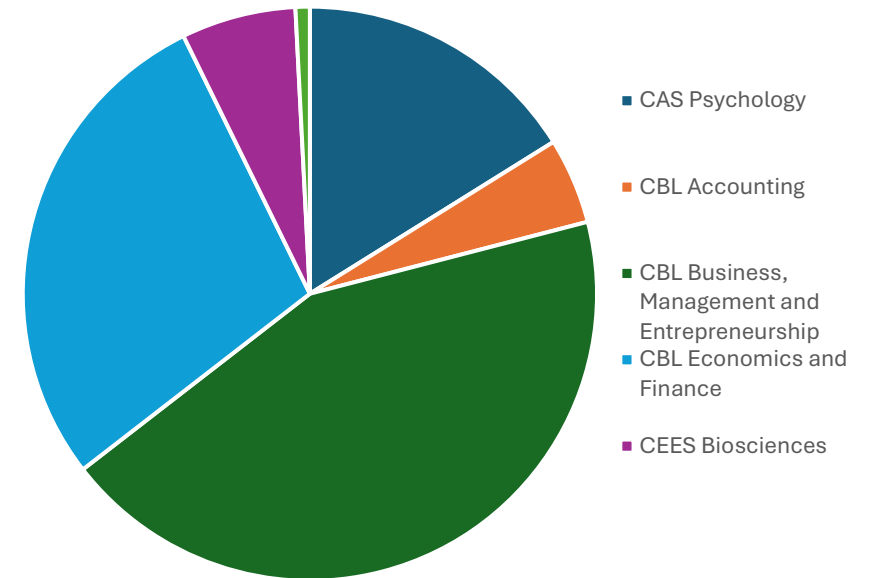
Engage



BibliU Engage enhances students experience through quizzes, assessments, and progress tracking. Real-time feedback, reinforcing learning and comprehension. Analytics on student performance, enabling targeted interventions and support.

Sylla Pilot OER Adoptions 2024 / 25

- **133 modules** transitioned from commercial texts to OERs.
- Across **35 courses**
- Adopting **137 titles (49 unique)**
- **College of Business and Law** adopting almost **70%** of total of OERs



Impact 2024 / 25

OER Pilot 2024-25

Financial sustainability

Spend reduced by **76% from £106k to £26k** as a direct result of moving from commercial texts to OERs

Engagement

Student engagement with OER content matches engagement with commercial content

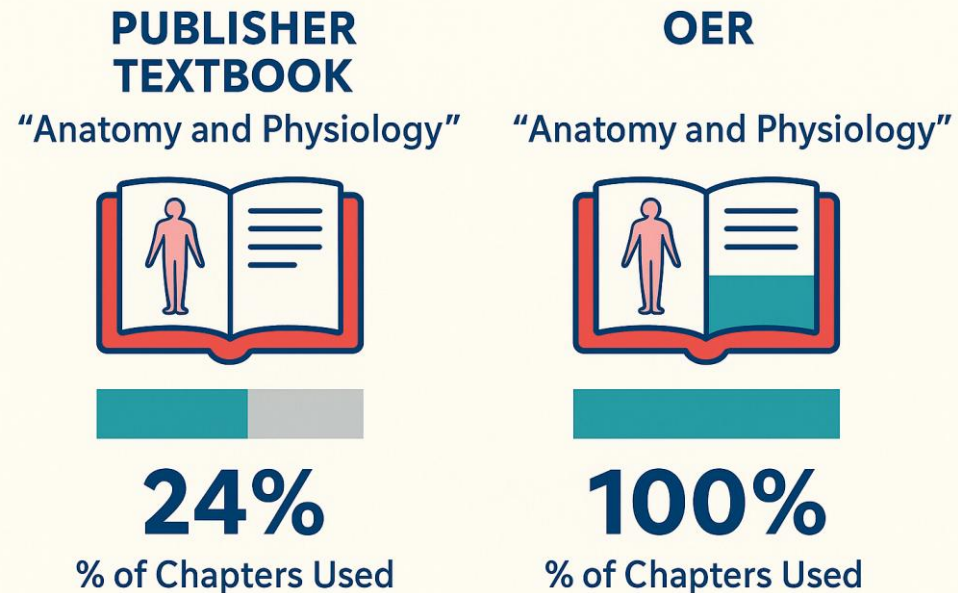
Student Behaviour Textbook/OER Use

Do students read a commercial textbook from cover to cover?

Usage data shows evidence of students using chunks of text or chapters when reading publisher textbooks

How does the use of open content compare to commercial publisher content?

Student engagement data displays greater use of an OER title vs publisher textbook of similar title



Adoption Principles 2025 / 26

Adoption framework – effective and inclusive

- Academic credibility
- Critical Pedagogy
- Diversity and representation
- Transparency and ethics
- Interdisciplinary approach
- Sustainability

Open Future - Content Creators

Creating Open Content

- UK relevant content
- Learn from data and behaviours
- Content rather than Textbooks
- Stimulate rapid growth
- Adaptable, Discoverable, Attributable, Collaborative

What next?

Looking Ahead

- **Scale up**
 - Supporting 2,000 modules with open content, UG and PGT
- **Collaborate**
 - **Library, Faculty, Sylla, BibliU, UK HE Community**
- **Create**
 - **Address UK content gaps** through partnerships and local contributions

Thank you

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