

From normative to deeper considerations of Open Education

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<https://blog.hslu.ch/oeweek/>

Synopsis

- Preliminary statements
- The normative framing of OS and OE
- Framing OS and OE at the substance level
- The roadmap for OE in the Swiss HE landscape drafted at the epistemic level
- Calling for « Openness literacy »

Acronyms

OE: Open Education

OS: Open Science

OER: Open Educational Resource

OA: Open Access

ORD: Open Research Data

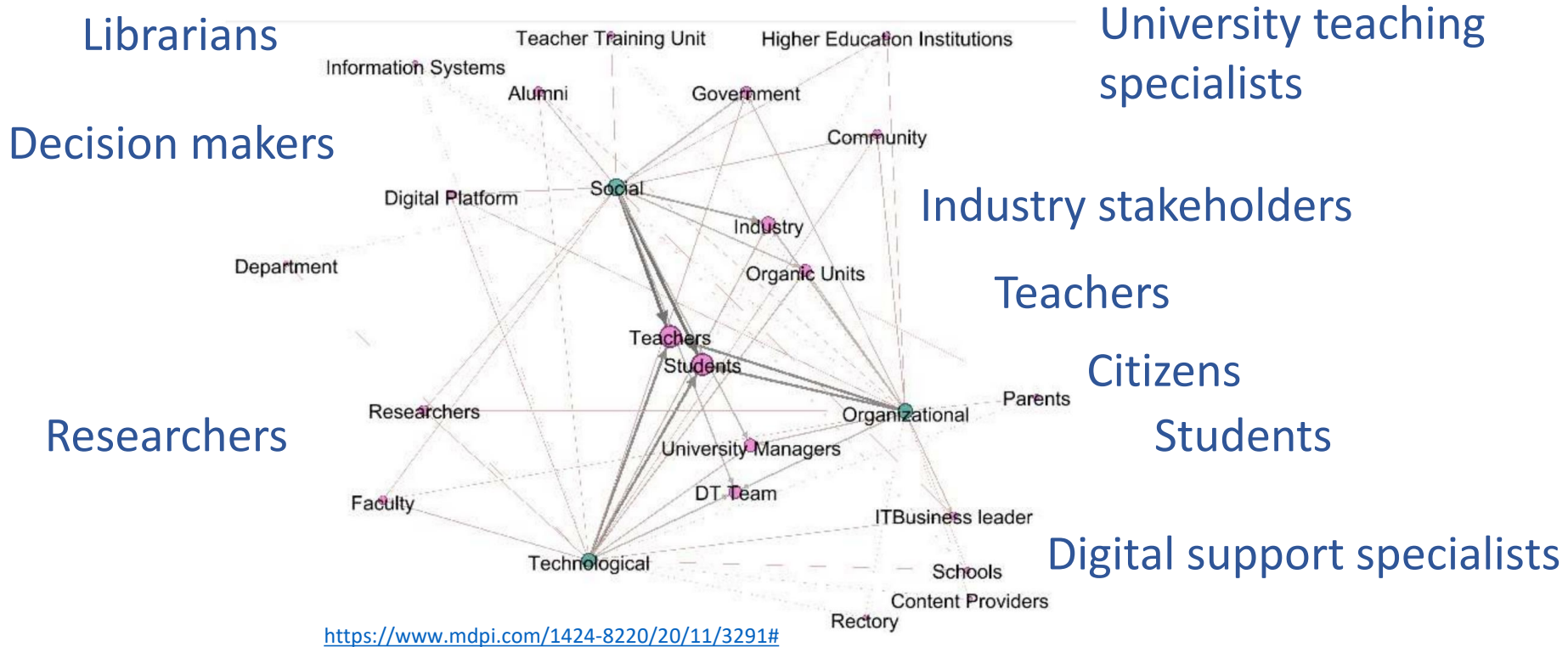
HE: Higher Education

HEIs: Higher Education Institutions

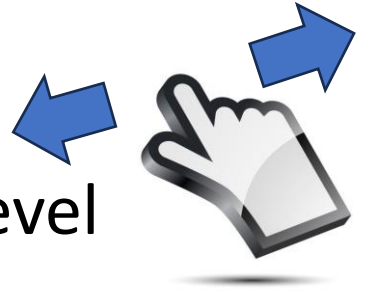
Preliminary statements:

- Actors
- Goal
- Time to conceptualise Openness

HEIs' actors at the time of digital transformation



Goal: **Zooming out!**



Often busy with tasks at a fine granularity level

- Ex: How to design an open textbook
- Ex: How to write a Data Management Plan

Why is it important to see the bigger picture?

- Openness is associated with positive values and presented as *good per default* but the concept is getting more and more ambiguous

Pomerantz & Peek, 2016

Thus...

*“Despite the illustrious history of openness as the cornerstone of liberal thinking, **the 2020s are not a time for naïve calls for ‘openness for its own sake’, whatever that may mean.** As the Internet becomes a playground for **corporate monopoly and fake news threatens to overwhelm attempts at earnest debate, the dangers and misuses of the idea of free information have become apparent for all to see.**”*

=> Importance to conceptualise Openness

The normative level:

- International and European levels
- Swiss level
- Critical perspective

Normative level: International and European levels

- Norm: « an authoritative standard » <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/norm>
- => A norm is like a compass and gives the direction
- Decisions, regulations, recommendations are examples of normative documents
- Ex: Horizon Europe: OS is a legal obligation https://rea.ec.europa.eu/open-science_en
- Ex: UNESCO recommendations on OER and OS

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49556&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949.locale=en>

Normative level: Swiss level

- International and European normative documents have effects on Swiss decisions
- Examples at the Swiss level
 - Ex: Swissuniversities OA and ORD strategies (2021-4)
 - Ex: 2025-8 contributions
- Currently OE is framed within OS (see PgB p.5, [DE](#), [FR](#))

<https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/digitalisation>

<https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/themen/hochschulpolitik/programme-und-projekte/informationen-pgb-2025>

Example: UNESCO definition of OS

“inclusive construct that combines various movements and practices aiming to make multilingual scientific knowledge openly **available**, **accessible** and **reusable** for everyone, to increase scientific collaborations and **sharing** of information for the benefits of science and society, and to open the processes of scientific knowledge creation, evaluation and communication to societal actors beyond the traditional scientific community.” (...)

Example: Swissuniversities website

“Open Science represents a cultural change in science and bundles various aspects that enable open access to research. The sharing of research data (Open Research Data), free access to scientific publications (Open Access) or an open peer review process make a significant contribution to the promotion of transparency and reproducibility of scientific research, as well as improved quality assurance of scientific work.”

Critical perspective (1)

“Understanding of Openness as **sharing** is predicated on an **object-oriented** view of science, where the availability of commodified, stable, tradeable resources is what determines how researchers use those objects to obtain new knowledge”.

Critical perspective (2)

“More thought needs to be given here to what precisely freedom of **access to resources** (and the fact that the analysis of ownership and property focuses on access) can mean, when the **essential thing** is undoubtedly the **actual capacity to exploit these resources**, and the nature of the work for which these resources can actually be used”.

Weinstein, 2013, p. 11,
own translation

The substance level:

- Science
- Education
- Openness

Substance level: Address the purpose

- Substance: « essential nature; fundamental or characteristic part or quality » <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substance>
- What is the essential part or the purpose of science?
- What is the essential part or the purpose of education?

=> Big philosophical questions!

Purpose of « pure » science (after WW2)

Affirming
the value
of
knowledge
for its own
sake



Highlighting
the social
utility of
science
derived from
its applications

=> non-profit purposes

Weinstein, 2013

Science is different from technology

- Science is based on non-profit purposes
- Technology is for profit and has economic and financial purposes directly related to innovation

Weinstein, 2013

Foundations of education systems

Philosophy, politics and science are the foundations

- Politics or ideology => provides a vision of the society that is to be promoted
- Values* and purpose => provides intentions to educate human beings and achieve the vision
- Curriculum => provides contribution of education systems to realise these intentions

* affects and emotions but also basis of legitimacy

Demeuse & Strauven 2013

Purpose of education

“The purpose of education reflects these deeply cherished aspirations for the **Good, the True, the Just and the Beautiful**. (...) **In many cases, the purposes are expressed in relatively general terms**. The result is an **ambiguity** of language that leaves room for personal interpretation, so that everyone can find their own way; **people or communities with different ideologies can imagine that they recognise themselves in the values proclaimed, even if they attribute different meanings to the concepts set out in good faith.**”

Demeuse & Strauven 2013, pp.33-51

Own translation

Purpose of education: some examples (1)

➤ Condorcet (1743-1794) (extract from Deldime et Demoulin, 1980)

“To provide all members of the human race with the means to meet their needs, to ensure their well-being, to know and exercise their rights, to hear and fulfil their duties”.

➤ Pestalozzi (1746-1827) (extract from Deldime et Demoulin, 1980)

“The purpose of education is not to produce good tailors, good shoemakers, good traders and good soldiers, but to produce tailors and shoemakers, traders and soldiers who are human beings in the highest sense of the word..»

Purpose of education: some examples (2)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 26, § 2, United Nations General Assembly, 10 december 1948)

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”

Purpose of Openness

- Middle Ages

Open = unenclosed => commons

Enclose: “to fence off (common land) for individual use”

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/enclose>

XVI^e : Enclosure

- 20th & 21st century

Open = legal rights from which ensues access right

Pomerantz & Peek, 2016

Openness as sharing vs as judicious connection

Openness as sharing	Openness as connection
Unlimited	Relational
Digital	Social
Good	Divisive
Global	Situated
Equal	Equitable
Focused on itemized outputs (objects that can be shared)	Focused on social agency (ways of doing and being with others)

Alternative conception of Openness

“Philosophy of openness predicated on a process-oriented view, whereby research is understood first and foremost as an effort to **foster collective agency**, grounded on intimate forms of relationality and trust, among widely diverse individuals and groups – an agency that is often enacted through recourse to various technologies, shared interpretations of research outputs and collaborations with non-human agents”

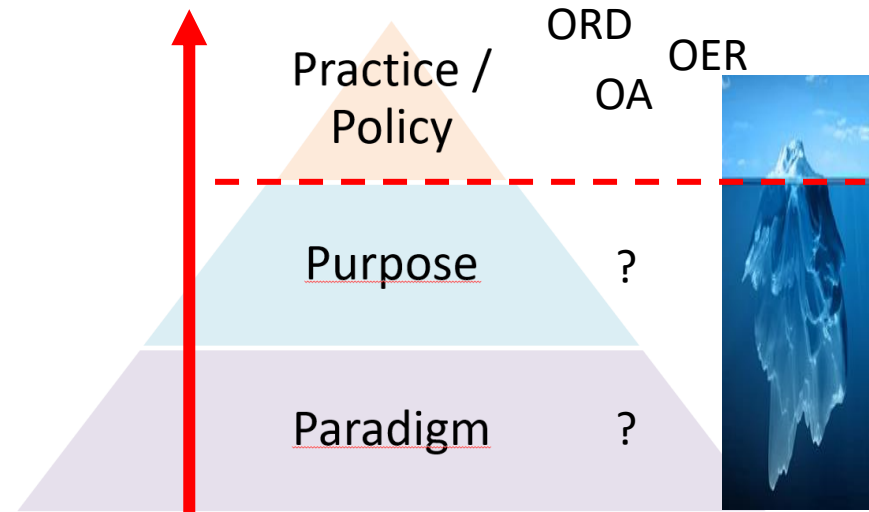
Leonelli, 2023, p. 43

Paradigm: the missing link

- Characteristics
- Mechanistic
- Holistic

Paradigm: driving purpose and policy

- Paradigm = underlying set of perceptions, assumptions, values, and concepts with internal consistency
- Paradigm **determines** purpose and **shapes** practice and policy
- Two major paradigms: **mechanistic** (post 1700, focus on parts) and **holistic** (pre 1500, focus on the whole)



Sterling, 2007, 2021

Characteristics of each paradigm

Relationships largely based on:

Mechanistic paradigm

- Global
- Separation
- Linearity
- Control
- Growth
- Excessive competition

Holistic paradigm

- Context
- Circularity
- Participation
- Collaboration
- Limits
- Equity
- Social, ecological justice

Roadmap for OE, at the epistemic level

- Project and objectives
- Method
- Content
- Critical perspectives

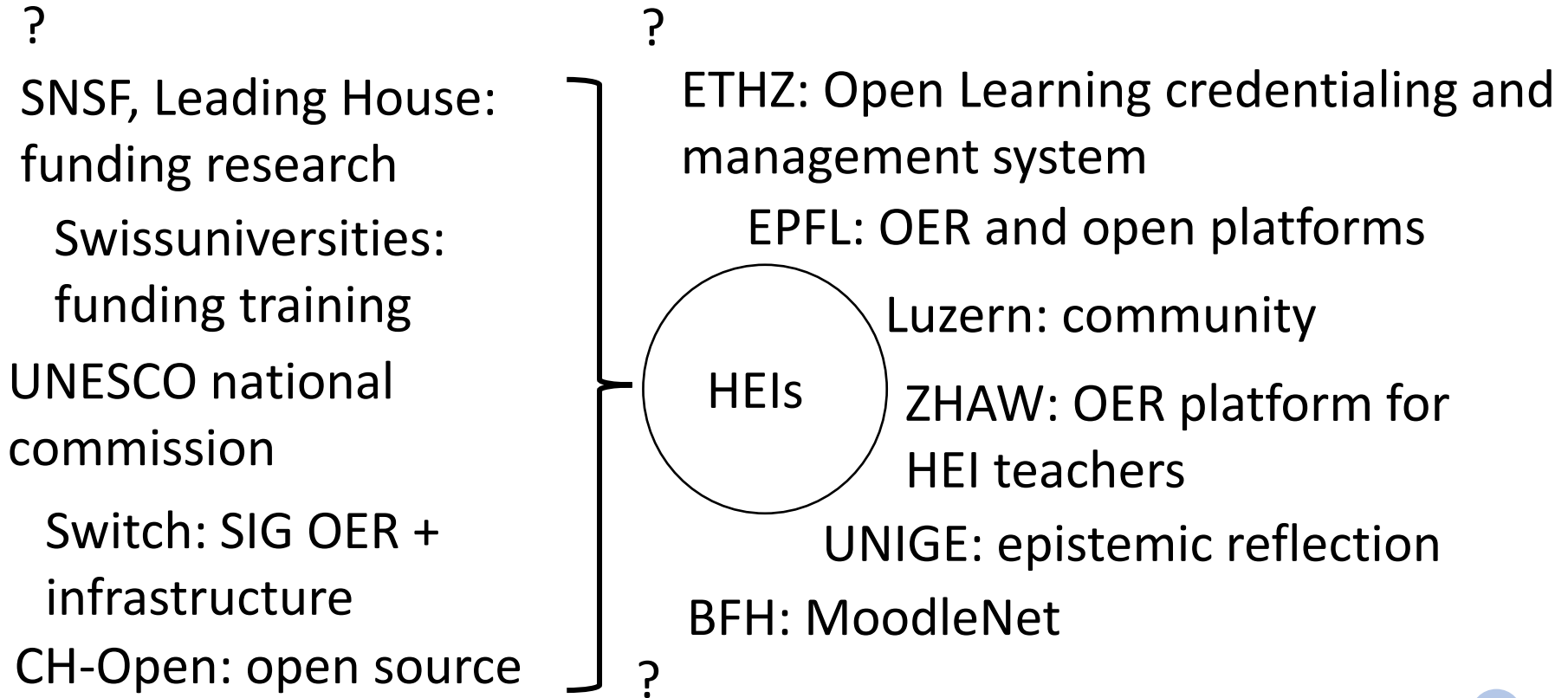
OE roadmap for the Swiss HE landscape

- A project in the form of a scientific exchange
- In 2021, OS well established in Switzerland but nothing on OE
- Project supported by the SNSF (CHF 17,000)
- Swiss and international partners (9 institutions, 10 scholars)
- Roadmap designed in Nantes following the Open Education Global conference in May 2022

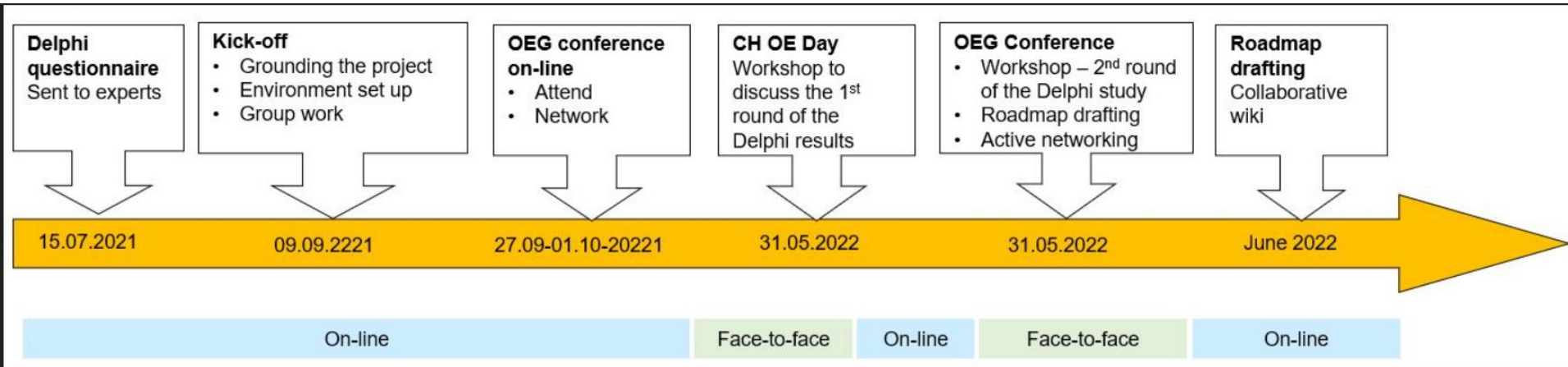
Three objectives

1. Initiate a roadmap for the Swiss HE landscape with a view to establishing a dialogue with stakeholders, citizens and communities
2. Identify stakeholders with leadership who can act as change agents
3. Set up a Swiss network of stakeholders interested in OE

Objectives 2 & 3



Objective 3: the roadmap



<https://edutechwiki.unige.ch/mediawiki/images/8/8c/Timeline.jpg>

Methods: Delphi study + Futures literacy exercise

Survey:

1st round of Delphi study

Open Education Survey

Survey targeted to Swiss and international Open Education experts.

Introduction:

You are being contacted as an expert active in the field of Open Education. This survey is part of a first round of a Delphi study that we would like to conduct openly for obvious reasons (i.e. recognition of experts' work, responsibility, link between content and expert, Open as a topic). Should you wish to remain anonymous, this is of course possible but not the default. The survey is part of a scientific exchange that aims to address Open Education (OE) in the Swiss Higher Education (HE) landscape in dialogue with international discussions to explore education as a commons and draft an initial roadmap.

Instructions:

Below you will find 27 questions addressing Open Education. To contextualise your overall answers to the questions, you will first be invited to provide some information about your background and experience with Open Education.

In addition, for each answer that you will provide, you will be offered the possibility to add the specific context you were thinking of when answering the question if providing this information is deemed relevant. You will also be asked to rate your answer in terms of certainty (absolutely certain, certain, not very certain) and in terms of how important you think what you say is (very important, important, not very important). Finally, you will be able to provide a comment for each answer. For these reasons the total of questions automatically announced is 117 (each question containing 6 questions) but none is mandatory.

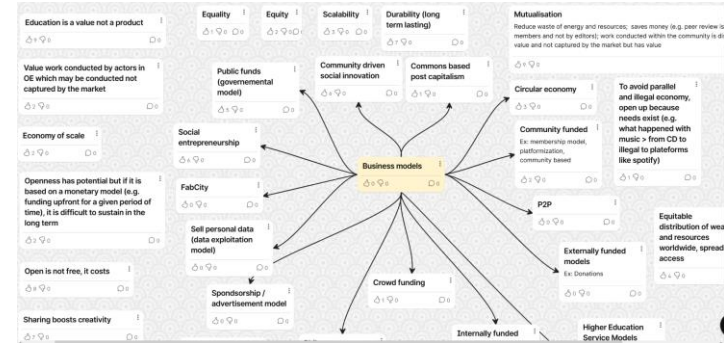
You have the possibility to save your answers and print them so that you can complete the survey in several times.

Example:

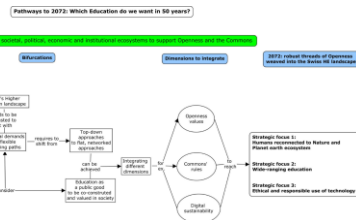
Question: 'What is Open Education for you?'



Swiss Open Education Day, 2022 2nd round of Delphi study



Open Education Global, 2022 2nd round of Delphi study



https://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Open_Education_Roadmap

Following day, futures literacy exercise

Linstone et Turoff, 2002; Salonen et al., 2023

The roadmap

Overall framework and operating conditions for the roadmap:
Enabling legal, societal, political, economic and institutional ecosystems to support Openness and a renewed approach to Commons.

Three strategic focuses:

- Broad horizon education => **Education**
- Ethical and responsible use of technology => **Technology**
- Humans reconnected to the planet's ecosystem => **Sustainability**

Class et al., 2022
Class, 2023

The roadmap in one slide

Education: Acknowledge cultural and historical diversity; Epistemic justice; Equity and participation; Diversity of paradigms

Technology: Serve the common good; Responsible use; Pharmakon role; Collaboration human-beings and technology

Sustainability: Planet preservation; Conceptions of Nature; Eco-responsibility; Co-creation models

Critical perspective

- It was justified to place the roadmap at the epistemic level, challenging normative perspectives of Openness
- At that time no awareness of Sterling's work (paradigm + sustainability)
- Some confusions with regard to goods regime
- Could serve as a basis to discuss purposes of education at situated levels, with fine granularity

To conclude

- Call for Openness literacy
- Take away message

Openness literacy

- As we have teaching and research statements or philosophies, develop an Openness statement or philosophy that you regularly re-evaluate and update
- What could this Openness statement entail?

Call for a joint endeavour!

<https://www.celt.iastate.edu/instructional-strategies/document-your-teaching/writing-a-teaching-philosophy-statement/>

<https://teaching.uwo.ca/awardsdossiers/teachingphilosophy.html>

<https://pce.sandiego.edu/teaching-philosophy-examples/>

<https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/eecs/commkit/faculty-application-research-statement/>

Take away messages

1. Openness is associated to good values: OS, OE, OER are presented as good *per se* and for everybody. Examine it from your perspective because it is time for responsible (vs naïve) engagement with Openness
2. Object-oriented perspective of OE and OS, i.e. sharing vs process-oriented, i.e. judicious connection to foster social agency
3. Become « Open**S** literate »: Contribute to unveil the many levels of Openness and the purposes and paradigms they rely on in Education and Science

Thank you for your attention !

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Some additional slides

- Conceptions of learning
- Common good vs Global Public Good
- Open Space

Conceptions of learning and learners

- “Learning **about** the world in order **to act upon it**”
- “Learning to **become with** the world around us”
- Learners considered **objects of intervention**
- Learners considered **subjects for transformation**

Salonen et al., 2023, p. 618

Yeo & Yoo, 2022
based on Freire

Goods' classification

	Examples	Rivalry	Non-rivalry	Excludability	Non-excludability
Public good	Rail roads		X		X
Global public good	Human rights		X		X
Commons	Mountain pastures	X			X

Brando et al. 2019, Locatelli, 2018, Sabzalieva et al. 2022

Rivalry, excludability...

- Non-rivalry: one's person's consumption does not diminish other's consumption
- Rivalry: the good is freely accessible to everyone but it provides diminished benefits if people over-use it pursuing their own self-interest
- Non-excludability: exclude someone from consumption is hard or not possible

Brando et al. 2019, Locatelli, 2018, Sabzalieva et al. 2022

In terms of power

Table 1: Comparative analysis of the normative implications of commons and GPGs.

GPG: Global Public Good

	Commons	GPG
Power	Power-with Power as cooperation	Power-over Power as the ability to steer the conduct of others
Relationship with the state	No unilateral coercion, violence, or manipulation Emergence and governance of commons independent from the hierarchical structure of the state, but ideally not challenged by the state	Possibility of unilateral coercion, violence or manipulation Provision through supranational and top-down mechanisms capable of coercing free-riding states
Spatial scale	Polycentric Eco-centric Small to moderate-sized groups Primary role for the local level Bottom-up	Monocentric Anthropocentric National and larger-sized groups Primary role for international/global level Top-down

Open Space

Methodology to run productive meetings by H. Owen
Engagement of participants around a topic of interest

<https://openspaceworld.org/wp2/hho/papers/brief-users-guide-open-space-technology/>

Discovered and experimented during the Swiss Network
for Education & International Cooperation (RECI) forum
2023

<https://reci-education.ch/en/breaking-new-ground-reci-education-forum-2023/>