
Guest editorial: Introduction to the intersections of open educational practices and equity pedagogy

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Introduction

Critical considerations, such as who is included and who is excluded when *opening* education and for whom open educational practices (OEP) foster equity and empower individuals in various contexts, have spurred necessary conversations about equity and social justice within the field of open education. In this special issue, *The Intersections of Open Educational Practices and Equity Pedagogy*, we seek to further the discussion with a focus on pedagogical considerations and practical applications of equitable OEP, adding to the current dialogue and critical questions posed by scholars around the world. In the introduction to a special issue on *Open Education and Social Justice*, Lambert and Czerniewicz (2020) posed the question, “Isn’t open education intrinsically a social justice matter?”, advancing the theoretical underpinnings of how open education can be aligned with social justice in diverse contexts. Other publications, such as *Open at the Margins* (Bali et al., 2020), *Open Education: Walking a Critical Path* (Cronin, 2019) and *Changing our (Dis)Course: A Distinctive Social Justice Aligned Definition of Open Education* (Lambert, 2018), have broadened the conversation around open education by problematizing the dominant narrative. These discussions have focused on theory and perspectives of open education and social justice from diverse voices often in nontraditional formats.

This special issue seeks to demonstrate how equity pedagogy and OEP intersect in practice. The focus of this issue is not on redistributive justice, or reducing cost barriers and access issues. Instead, it focuses on recognitive and representational forms of social justice, those which prioritize recognition and respect for cultural and gender differences and equitable representation and political voice (Lambert, 2018). Equity pedagogy focuses on student-centered learning and recognizes that teaching is a multicultural encounter where the complexity of students’ lived experiences enriches the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995; McGee Banks and Banks, 1995). Students’ various identities, (e.g. cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, social), as well as their abilities and other unique characteristics, provide meaning to the learning experience and extend how others view the world by valuing and sharing each student’s unique perspective. At the intersection of OEP and equity pedagogy, students openly contribute to a global community of learners who acquire, interrogate, reconstruct and produce knowledge.

Open education practices are not necessarily equitable without intention. In this special issue, we showcase examples of *how* educators and learners center equity pedagogy and open education in their research and practice. While grounded in theory, the papers emphasize practical applications of and opportunities afforded by open practices using equity pedagogy. The authors provide details about and insights into the projects they discuss. Each project creates opportunities for readers to integrate the principles and findings in their own contexts as they work toward more equitable and open teaching and learning.

Open educational practices for equity: overview of the special issue

Background

Our collection begins with *Open with intention: Situating Equity Pedagogy within Open Education to Advance Social Justice*, in which we, the guest editors, contextualize the special



issue by providing a brief history of OER and OEP, including a discussion about equity pedagogy and the ongoing conversations surrounding social justice in open education. The article also elaborates on the rationale and process we used for developing this special issue, which we hope will be of use to others wishing to engage in similar work. For readers new to open education, this article provides an entry point into the field. Readers familiar with these topics will find value in the challenges and discussions posed to the field to catalyze social justice within open education.

Professional development applications

To advance equitable teaching and learning, educators need opportunities to cultivate their knowledge and practice. Several articles highlight ways in which educators are using OER and OEP to facilitate professional development for equitable teaching practices. In *Supporting Educators' Professional Learning for Equity Pedagogy: The Promise of Open Educational Practices* Eseta Tualaulelei and Nicole Green focusing on the professional development of Australian early year educators in a multi-phase action research project. Tualaulelei and Green enlisted a group of preservice education students enrolled in an undergraduate intercultural communication course to design OER on multicultural education and reconciliation for in-service teachers. Throughout the process, preservice and early year in-service educators engaged in professional dialogue demonstrating a powerful example of OEP and OER for professional learning. Likewise, Sydney Richardson and Jacqueline Sakho focus on how educator preparation programs can use OEP to develop candidates' knowledge of OER by having them create teaching and learning resources that incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in *Creating Equitable Access: Using OER and OEP for Socially Just Education*. They detail their project, show how it was adapted for different contexts (an undergraduate course for preservice teachers and a graduate course for aspiring principals) and discuss project outcomes. In the appropriately titled article, *Open for Antiracism Program: Supporting Educators to Use Open Education for Antiracist Teaching*, Una Daly and her coauthors provide a case study of professional development designed for higher education faculty. Their study discusses how they supported faculty in designing their courses with more equitable teaching practices using OER and open pedagogy and examines the impact of the program through faculty perspectives and student experiences. The collection of articles discussed in this section illuminate creative professional learning projects from various contexts that use open education to develop equity-focused educators.

Classroom applications

Once educators are aware of the potential uses of OER and OEP for equity, they are able to apply this work in their classrooms, which is exemplified through the following articles in this special issue. Verena Roberts reports on a design-based research study that used an open learning design intervention framework to examine the experiences of a researcher, a teacher and grade 10 students in *Open Learning Design for Using Open Educational Practices in High School Learning Contexts and Beyond*. Her article provides a fascinating example of how OEP and digital networks can be leveraged to support all learners in gaining open access to people, resources, and experiences that were previously inaccessible in K-12 learning contexts. Providing an illustrative case study of social annotation in undergraduate STEM and humanities courses, In *Who Writes and Who Responds? Gender and Race-based Differences in Open Annotations*, Marja Bakermans and her coauthors studied students' epistemic authority based on gender and ethnicity. Their findings show that open annotation fostered more equitable interactions for historically marginalized

groups, particularly women and women of color. Bakerman and colleagues conclude that social annotation provides a way to redistribute epistemic authority in a more equitable and responsible way, but not without careful implementation intended to reduce colorblindness and microaggressions. Sarah Lambert and Johanna Funk write about a project implemented with first-year university students in *Open Educational Practices in a Cultural Capability Unit: Learning at the Cultural Interface*. The authors discuss ways in which the cultural capability unit implemented facilitated students' border crossings, enabling them to better navigate among different, academic/discipline and organizational cultures, which share different languages, norms and values. They find that OEP designed at the cultural interface can enable equity while stressing the intentionality required in unit design. This collection demonstrates OEP in action and illustrates the responsiveness and care that are required during implementation.

Learning design suggestions

Based on research and theory, the remaining two articles provide practical suggestions for transforming teaching and learning with OEP. Showcasing an open guidebook approach developed by the authors in *How OER Can Support Collaborative Teacher Learning to Enact Equitable Teaching Practices*, Bryant Jensen and Royce Kimmons illustrate how small collaborative groups of teachers can engage in no-cost professional learning on implementing equitable learning experiences through accessible content provided in OER. In *Designing for Resistance: Epistemic Justice, Learning Design, and Open Educational Practices*, Peter Wallis and Thomas Rocha explore the intersections between José Medina's theory of epistemic justice (Medina, 2013) with open practices. Practical examples and design principles provided in the article show how common learning activities can be used with these principles to mitigate epistemic injustices. Grounded in scholarly research, the articles provide readers with suggestions for clear paths forward in creating equitable open learning experiences in a variety of contexts.

Conclusion

Our primary goal for this special issue is to provide practical applications of open education for equity; however, we also hope this collection generates and extends critical conversations around the potential of OER and OEP to increase equity within education. This project would not have been possible without the generosity and support of many. We want to thank Sherry Deckman, editor of *Journal for Multicultural Education*, for providing this opportunity to explore these nuances of open education and bring this topic to a new readership. Her mentorship and guidance in this process have been incredibly generous, and we hope to have the opportunity to "pay it forward" to junior scholars in the future. We also received tremendous feedback and support from our Faculty Fellows Publication Program groups and mentors who encouraged us through the process of developing the special issue, particularly the feature piece. We also wish to thank the Hewlett Foundation and Angela DeBarger, in particular, for providing funding so this open access issue could have the widest reach possible. As we noted in our introductory piece, the Hewlett Foundation has shaped open education. The financial support provided shows the values that the Hewlett Foundation continues to uphold within open education. In our discussions, Angela pushed us to proactively include and engage new authors to contribute to this issue, as well as seek out contributors from underrepresented contexts. Additionally, we wish to thank the peer reviewers who generously gave their time and provided critical feedback in a timely manner. Most importantly, we thank our authors for graciously sharing their experiences in this issue.

As you engage with the articles in this special issue, we invite you to imagine and reimagine the contexts within which you work to consider how OEP may transform you and your participants' learning experiences. This work is intended to continue the scholarly conversation and we look forward to forthcoming work that engages with and challenges how open intersects with equity pedagogy.

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