

Introduction to Open Praxis volume 8 issue 4

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This last *Open Praxis* issue in 2016 is an open issue that includes four research papers, two innovative practice papers and two book reviews. *Open Praxis*, a peer-reviewed open access scholarly journal focusing on research and innovation in open, distance and flexible education, publishes contributions which demonstrate creative and innovative research, and which highlight challenges, lessons and achievements in the practice of distance and e-learning from all over the world. In this issue, 14 authors from Sweden, United Kingdom, Nigeria, Pakistan, Portugal and the United States of America have contributed to the different sections.

As a novelty from now on, *Open Praxis* will include authors' ORCID identifiers. As stated in the ORCID website:

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Open Praxis will include authors' ORCID ID in each paper and metadata; once the paper is published, authors will be able to link their *Open Praxis* paper from their ORCID profile, using the CrossRef Metadata Search. Past, current and potential future *Open Praxis* authors are invited to join the ORCID community (<https://orcid.org/register>) and to include their ORCID ID in their *Open Praxis* profile.

Coming back to the content of this issue, the research papers section begins with two papers related to open educational resources (OER). The first one, by Linda Bradley and Sylvi Vigmo (*Pedagogical framing of OER - The case of language teaching*), analyze the case of Lektion.se, a Swedish repository of OER, and focus on teachers' participation in it, specifically for the subjects *Swedish as a Second Language* and *Swedish for Immigrants* (thus, OER for language learning). The findings identify drivers and barriers for sharing OER, related to aspects such as the structure of the repository itself or the lack of awareness of the full implications of OER.

Vivien Rolfe writes the second paper on OER; in her study, entitled *Web Strategies for the Curation and Discovery of Open Educational Resources*, presents an impact and sustainability analysis some years after a series of OER projects were developed in the UK. In the case of De Montfort University, they opted for using Wordpress and SEO techniques for hosting OER and making them discoverable. The paper details the technological aspects and results in this particular case, and reflects about its effectiveness providing practical insight and recommendations to readers interested on sustainable OER web distribution.

The contribution by Juliet O. Inegbedion, Folorunso I. Adu and Christine Y. Ofulue, *Student Assessment of Quality of Access at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)*, analyzes students' perspective about admission and registration processes that they face when they want to access to NOUN study programmes. After introducing the history of NOUN and its commitment with providing higher education for all, the authors study the quality of the access processes, which can facilitate the fulfilment of the university mission. The findings show what students find more and less clear and useful, providing guidance to the institution for improvement of access to NOUN.

The last research paper by Rizwan Saleem Sandhu and Sajid Hussain (*Role of Faculty Development Forums in Virtual Teaching Environment: A Case Study of Marketing Research & Case Group*) reports on the contribution of a faculty forum to professional development and capacity building of participants. The experience, where faculty present, listen, read, share, discuss, etc. in the forums, is valued by for the development of teaching skills in virtual environments. The authors report on the effectiveness of this modality for capacity building.

The innovative practice paper section opens with another contribution related to professional development and capacity building; Clifford Amini and Oluwaseun Oluyide (*Building Capacity for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in West Africa Sub-region: The Pivotal Role of RETRIDAL*) describe and value the experience of the Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning (RETRIDAL), which develops different workshops and research in order to build a network of expertise in ODL in the region. The effort and impact of this centre are highlighted in the paper.

Finally, Rita Falcao and Luis Fernandes (*Teaching Project Management on-line: lessons learned from MOOCs*) explore various MOOCs as a way of identifying appropriate teaching methods and strategies to introduce in their online courses about the same topic (project management). The benchmarking and meta-analysis of MOOCs has facilitated the design of an e-learning course that includes innovative elements and a student-centered approach; the process the authors have followed is narrated in the paper.

Finally, the issue includes a review by Nathan Sand of the book *Minds Online: Teaching Effectively With Technology*, published in 2014; and a review by Jason R. Ward of the book *Developing Adaptive and Personalized Learning Environments*, published in 2016. Both books are of interest for open and online teaching.

In this issue last issue in 2016, we specially thank all the reviewers who have collaborated in the four issues that compose volume 8. Their names and affiliations are listed in the full issue and in the journal website (<http://openpraxis.org/index.php/OpenPraxis/pages/view/reviewer>).