

Introduction to *Open Praxis* volume 10 issue 4

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Open Praxis is a peer-reviewed open access scholarly journal focusing on research and innovation in open, distance and flexible education. It 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. This last *Open Praxis* issue in 2018 is an open issue that includes seven research papers and one innovative practice paper. 16 authors from 6 countries (the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, Kenya, the Netherlands, and Brazil) have contributed to the latest *Open Praxis* issue.

In the first paper (*Personalizing Feedback Using Voice Comments*), Kjrsten Keane, Daniel McCrea and Miriam Russell from the SUNY Empire State College (USA), explore the use of voice comment tools for providing feedback to students' written assignments. Contextualized within the value of feedback for learning, the study surveys undergraduate online students' perception about (voice) feedback. The results, presented in quantitative and qualitative (quotations) formats, show a majority of positive perceptions of asynchronous voice feedback, and the authors conclude with some guidelines and proposals for further research in this topic.

In the second paper (*The design of an empirical cross-boundary collaborative open learning framework*), Chrissi Nerantzi from Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), proposes a new framework as a dynamic design tool for academic developers. Reviewing literature, using phenomenography and collecting information from 22 Master students, the author draws a framework composed of three dimensions (engagement patterns, learning needs and design considerations). She explains each of them in detail and suggests potential implementation to different stakeholders. Published with a CC BY-NC-SA license, the promising framework requires validation yet, so the author encourages readers to use it in practice.

In the third paper (*Findings from a Case Study on Refugees Using MOOCs to (Re)enter Higher Education*), Gabi Witthaus from UK, presents a study on the learning experience of refugees and asylum seekers who have followed MOOC learning pathways designed by Kiron, a German non-governmental organisation. The author explains the research process in detail, based on her role as a volunteer in the organisation, and structures the presentation of the results using the revised Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, pointing out, as well, the limitations of this framework in this particular study. The author ends highlighting some implications of the study both for refugee education and for MOOC design in general.

The next four papers relate to open educational resources (OER) in different ways.

In the fourth paper (*Scoping the nascent: An analysis of K-12 OER research 2012-2017*) Constance Blomgren and Iain MacPherson from Canada transfer the increasing interest in OER in higher education to a level usually not covered in this journal, K-12, with the purpose of exploring which is the case at this level. They undertake a literature review focused on exploring the topics and the research methods used in 38 studies about OER in K-12. The analysis includes topic, discipline, citations, etc., and the findings show a predominance of theoretical studies. As an emerging field, the paper provides a valuable overview of K-12 OER research.

In the fifth paper (*'Dark reuse': an empirical study of teachers' OER engagement*), Tita Beaven, from the Open University UK, explores an understudied topic in OER research: its reuse. She undertakes a qualitative study using professional conversation with 12 teachers who use OER from an institutional repository of OER for language teaching. Her findings validate the OER lifecycle, but also evidence that the reuse of OER is often invisible and happens privately (dark reuse), thus it is not traceable by the OER repositories; which is a warning about the need of qualitative and situated approaches to the research on this topic, such as the contribution of this paper.

The sixth paper (*Open Textbooks in an Introductory Sociology Course in Canada: Student Views and Completion Rates*), by Heather M. Ross, Christina Hendricks and Victoria Mowat from Canada, analyzes survey-based students' perceptions about a type of OER –an open textbook– compared to traditional commercial textbooks, and compares grades and completion rates between one same course before and after introducing an open textbook. Whilst the perception of the OER (quality, cost saving, accessibility, etc.) is positive in general, there are not significant differences in students' performance in the course, and the completion rate is slightly higher in the course where OER was used. This paper adds evidence to current literature on the use of OER in higher education.

Closing the research papers section and the research papers related to OER, Judith Adhiambo Pete, Fred Mulder, Jose Dutra Oliveira Neto and Kathleen Ludewig Omollo from various institutions in different countries, present a second paper in a series about *Differentiation in Access to, and the Use and Sharing of (Open) Educational Resources among Students and Lecturers* at African universities, in this case focusing on Technical and Comprehensive Ghanaian Universities. Within the umbrella of the ROER4D project, the authors explore quantitative descriptive data through a survey-based methodology and provide an overview of the use, perceptions and intentions about OER in Ghana. They conclude with a set of recommendations derived from the study. The paper includes a remembrance from the first author, Judith Pete, to Fred Mulder, who recently passed away and to whom we also acknowledge as part of the *Open Praxis* community.

Finally, the innovative practice paper by Sibylle Gruber from the USA (*Designing Online Curriculum: Program Revisions and Knowledge Exchange*) reports on her experience in shared curriculum design in an online Master program –versus individual course design–, as a paradigm shift put into practice. Her narration of the participatory research that was used allows the readers to identify the different steps, decisions, learning and limitations they encountered in the process.

In this issue 4th issue in 2018, we specially thank all the reviewers who have collaborated in the four issues in volume 10. Their names and affiliations are listed in the full issue and in the journal website (<http://openpraxis.org/index.php/OpenPraxis/pages/view/reviewer>).