OPEN PRAXIS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Introduction to *Open Praxis* volume 8 issue 3

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This third *Open Praxis* issue in 2016 is an open issue that includes six research papers and one book review. If in our first editorial in 2014 we introduced our editorial process (Gil-Jaurena, 2014), in this occasion I would like to deepen in the role of the Editorial team and present our Editorial Board past and current members, partially renewed in July 2016.

Editor, a Consultative Editor and an Editorial Board compose the *Open Praxis* Editorial team. Dr. Inés Gil-Jaurena is the editor and Dr. Beatriz Malik is the consultative editor since 2011, when our editorial project (Gil-Jaurena & Malik, 2011) was selected by ICDE for the relaunch of *Open Praxis* as a scientific journal. We are associate professors at the Faculty of Education in the *Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia* (UNED) (National Distance Education University), Spain, and have worked together in various research projects and teaching initiatives.

In the composition of the editorial team, gender and geographical balance have been considered. All members belong to ICDE member institutions. Three of them are in the Editorial Board on behalf of the ICDE Executive Committee (currently Alan Tait, Yang Zhijian and Belinda Tynan; the latter has replaced Marta Mena in July 2016); the other four have been appointed among experts from ICDE member institutions in other regions. Thomas Mackey and Gangappa Kuruba have been members of the Editorial Board since 2013; Hemlata Chari and Joel Warrican have joined the Editorial Board in July 2016; and formerly Suresh Garg was a member from 2013 to June 2016.

Professor Alan W. Tait is Emeritus Professor of Distance Education and Development at the Open University, United Kingdom, and was Director of International Development and Teacher Education from 2013–2015. He was formerly Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Dean of Faculty. He has edited *Open Learning*, the *European Journal of Distance and E-Learning* (EURODL) and was founding Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Learning for Development* (JL4D).

Dr. Yang Zhijian is President of the Open University of China (OUC) since July 2010. Prior to that, he served as Deputy Director-General of the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education of China. He is also current President for the China Association for Educational Technology (CAET).

Professor Belinda Tynan is Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) and Vice President at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia since May 2016. She was Pro Vice-Chancellor at the Open University, UK, for 3 years. She has worked across a range of education sectors for 30 years and, over the past 8 years, she has been in senior executive roles in the areas of learning and teaching, quality and innovation. Her research is within the field of online and digital education with a keen interest in 'openness', staff workload and more recently learning analytics.

Thomas P. Mackey, Ph.D. is Vice Provost for Academic Programs at SUNY Empire State College, New York, USA. His research interests include metaliteracy, information literacy, open learning, and teaching with technology. He introduced the concept of metaliteracy with Trudi Jacobson in the article *Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy* (2011) and followed that piece with their book *Metaliteracy: Reinventing Information Literacy to Empower Learners* (2014). This team recently published a new co-edited book, *Metaliteracy in Practice* (2016).

Dr. Gangappa Kuruba is Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Business, University of Botswana. He is presently working as Executive Assistant to the Vice Chancellor, University of Botswana. He has been working at this institution for the last 27 years in different capacities: Coordinator of Extension programmes, Head of Extra Mural and Public Education, and Acting Director at the Centre for Continuing Education. While working at this Centre he participated in various conferences and published on Distance Education.

Dr. Hemlata Chari completed her PhD from University of Alberta, Canada. She is presently working as Deputy Director- Academic, at the Institute of Distance and Open Learning-IDOL, University of Mumbai, India. In charge of Virtual Learning Centre and Study Material Unit. She supervises doctoral students; designs, develops and delivers course material; and peer-reviews for higher education and distance learning journals.

Dr. S. Joel Warrican is the Director of the Academic Programming and Delivery division within The University of the West Indies Open Campus, in Barbados. He is responsible for the planning, development and delivery of the online programmes offered by the campus.

From January 2013 to June 2016, two other scholars have been members of the Editorial Board, and we want to thank them for their contribution to the development of *Open Praxis* during this period.

Professor Marta Mena is Director of the Virtual Training Program for Researchers of the Secretariat of Science, Technology and Graduate Studies of the National Technological University (*Universidad Tecnológica Nacional*), Argentina. She was member of the ICDE Executive Committee until 2016 and member of the *Open Praxis* Editorial Board on behalf of it.

Finally, Dr. Suresh C. Garg has been Professor of Physics at Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, India, since 1993. He was former Pro-Vice Chancellor at IGNOU (2002–2006). He has recently retired from IGNOU.

The expected tasks as members of the Editorial Board are:

- Advocacy, promotion of the journal in their institution and professional networks
- Suggestion of additional reviewers
- Invitation to potential authors
- Advice in case of doubts in the acceptance of a paper
- Proposal for special issues

Also, Editorial Board members participate in the selection process of the ICDE Prizes for Innovation and Best Practice in Open, Distance, Flexible, Online Education and E-learning. The first edition took place in 2013 (Gil-Jaurena & Malik, 2013), the second one in 2015 (Gil-Jaurena & Malik, 2015) and the 3rd edition is expected in 2017, linked to the 27th ICDE World Conference to be held in Toronto, Canada.

Before joining the Editorial Board, some of its current members had contributed to *Open Praxis* in different ways: three of them had published in *Open Praxis* in its new stage: Tynan and James (2013), Tait (2014) and Warrican et al. (2014); and Hemlata Chari had been a reviewer in 2013 and 2015.

After this presentation, below an introduction to the contributions that compose this issue.

In the first paper, Mehmet Firat (*Measuring the e-Learning Autonomy of Distance Education Students*) focuses on the autonomy of students in distance education environments, analyzed with a scale that has been used in his institution, Anadolu University in Turkey. The scale is included in an appendix and the paper evaluates its validity and reliability, as well as the results once applied with a sample of students.

In the second paper, Aras Bozkurt, Nilgun Ozdamar Keskin and Inge de Waard (*Research Trends in Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Theses and Dissertations: Surfing the Tsunami Wave*) review 51 master thesis and doctoral dissertations related to MOOCs to identify research trends in this area. They characterize them by analyzing the areas, methods and conceptual frameworks used in those academic works, providing an overview that complements other studies focused on reviewing scientific literature about MOOCs.

Also about MOOCs, Rebecca Bayeck (*Exploratory study of MOOC learners' demographics and motivation: The case of students involved in groups*) presents a case study of the MOOC *Creativity, Innovation and Change,* which included voluntary group work; it is this particularity that is analyzed in the paper. She provides demographic data and studies the motivations for enrolment in the course. Even if the profiles don't differ much from those identified by other researches, the author points to some findings related to group work.

Olga Belikov and Robert Bodily (*Incentives and barriers to OER adoption: A qualitative analysis of faculty perceptions*) analyze the perception about OER among US faculty, collected through an open question included in a larger survey. The categorization of the free answers leads to identify a set of drivers and barriers to OER adoption that are explained in the paper and exemplified with quotations from the respondents.

Also presenting a study on faculty perceptions and identifying barriers, Sujata Santosh and Santosh Panda (*Sharing of Knowledge among Faculty in a Mega Open University*) focus on faculty attitudes towards sharing knowledge. The survey-based study was developed at the Indira Gandhi National Open University in India and presents an outlook of the behaviours, trends and suggestions for improving the knowledge sharing culture.

In the last paper, Barbara Illowsky, John Hilton III, Justin Whiting and Jordan Ackerman (*Examining Student Perception of an Open Statistics Book*) compare students' perception about open textbooks *vs.* traditional textbooks, through the study of the perception of users of a specific open textbook that had been updated and improved. The students were asked about quality and cost of the open textbook, and the paper provides insight to understand students' perception about educational resources.

Finally, the issue includes a review by William Stewart of the book *Learning Online: What Research Tells Us About Whether, When and How*, published in 2014 in the USA.

We thank to the authors and the reviewers for their valuable contributions.

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