



Open education for social justice: students as partners in transdisciplinary research

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UNESCO CHAIR
IN OPEN EDUCATION
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



Social
Justice



Open
Education



EXAMPLE:
Open
Textbook



- Economic 'distribution'
- Cultural 'recognition'
- Political 'representation'

- Open licences
- Localisation
- Voices

- Free
- Digital
affordance: adaptability
- Co-creation

**Open is based on the philosophical view of
“knowledge as a collective social product and the
desirability of making it a social property”**

(Prasad & Ambedkar in Downes, 2007:1)



Photo by [freestocks.org](https://www.freestocks.org) on [Unsplash](https://www.unsplash.com)

What is Open Education?



Open Education encompasses resources, tools and practices that are free of legal, financial, and technical barriers and can be fully used, shared and adapted in the digital environment. It maximizes the power of the Internet to make education more affordable, accessible and effective (**SPARC**).



OER = Free + Permissions

Retain

Reuse

Remix

Revise

Redistribute



Unpacking social justice

Social justice is a concept that requires the organisation of social arrangements that make it possible for **everyone to participate equally in society**.

Fraser (2005) considers social justice as “**participatory parity**” in **economic**, **cultural** and **political** dimension

(Cox, Masuku & Willmers, 2020)



Open education and social justice

Open education saves money

1. Economics

Student protest #fees must fall



openstax

We visited Rice University and spoke with students about their perspectives on free textbooks. Check back tomorrow to see another student's perspective. [#ForStudentsForever](#)

<https://africanarguments.org/2021/06/fallisms-faultlines-the-paradoxes-of-fees-must-fall/>



Open education for curriculum change

2. Culture and representation



#Rhodesmustfall



Cape Town U Must Fall protests

<https://www.educationworld.in/south-af-rica-must-fall-protests-report/>



<https://www.buzzfeed.com/husseinkesvani/oxford-campaign-rhodes-must-fall>

Open education for collaboration and
co-creation

3. Students as partners

Students as co-creators of teaching approaches, course design, and curricula: Implications for academic developers

Article in International Journal for Academic Development · June 2011

DOI: 10.1080/1360144X.2011.568690

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International Journal for
Students as Partners

Volume 1, Issue 1
Spring 2017



Student as partners

Global movement to include (UG) students in course design, facilitation and research

“a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision making, implementation, investigation, or analysis” (Cook-Sather, Bovill & Felten, 2014)

Different theoretical framings:

- Student voice, agency - critical pedagogies
- Shift of locus of expertise - co-design
- Student engagement literature

Principles: respect, reciprocity and shared responsibility

Very US based / not necessarily context / power aware

More recently: attempts to think about power differentials

I.e. “Promoting Equity and Justice Through Pedagogical Partnership” De Bie et al (2021)

EquityXDesign principles

Safe area for video
to play in corner

Does open education address underlying structures of dominance and subordination?

Only if it is created and used across the institution and potentially across the country and globally, in order to embrace critical reflexivity and pluralism valuing previously excluded knowledge and legitimising indigenous resources.

Only then will we be “dismantling (of) institutional obstacles” or root causes of systemic injustice that underlie the pursuit of participatory parity present in higher education.

“Inclusivity is a key dimension of both social justice and sustainability, in that multiple voices are required in order to achieve more equal epistemic representation”(Cox, Masuku and Willmers 2022a)

A Call to organise open education.....

What are we organising against?

The current emphasis on market value of HE
(via Neoliberalism)

Technological monopolies (technology is never neutral)

Perpetuating injustices

Racism

Economic exclusion

Competition for gain

What are we organising for?

- Equity
- Access
- Intersectionality
- Collaboration
- Community
- Voice
- Generosity
- Care

“Open is a gift on offer. Like any gift, it is up to you whether you think it is worthwhile to accept it. We only ask that you consider”
(Biswas-Diener & Jhangiani, 2017:6)

References

Cox, G., Masuku, B. & Willmers, M. 2020. Open Textbooks and Social Justice: Open Educational Practices to Address Economic, Cultural and Political Injustice at the University of Cape Town. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 1 (2):pp. 1–10. Available at:

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