



Social Justice in African Digital Contexts Colloquium



The role of Open Education: addressing social justice through collaboration and student co-creation

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Innovation in
Learning and
Teaching



UNESCO CHAIR
IN OPEN EDUCATION
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



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)



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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



Why does Open Education matter?

- > There is a need for **accessible** and **FREE** resources
- > There is a need for **localised** materials, transforming the curriculum and addressing relevance **created collaboratively**
- > Lecturers can re-use materials (more efficient use of time)
- > Open education encourages lecturers to reconsider their teaching and learning approaches
- > Colleagues and students can become co-creators



Digital open textbooks for Development (DOT4D)

Initiated as a three-year (2018–2021) research, advocacy and implementation project funded by the Canadian IDRC, following in wake of Research on Open Educational Resources for Development (ROER4D) and other CILT open education initiatives (since 2007). ***Now an institutionally funded initiative.***



Glenda Cox, PI, Michelle Willmers, Publishing & Implementation Manager, Bianca Masuku, Researcher

Open education example: Open Textbooks

- Digital, freely available collections of **scaffolded teaching and learning content**
- published under an **open licence**
- with affordances for **integrated multimedia** and third-party content
- published via platforms and in formats that provide affordances for content delivery on a **range of devices**, print and low bandwidth access strategies

UCT OPEN TEXTBOOK JOURNEYS

Bianca Masuku,
Michelle Willmers,
Henry Trotter &
Glenda Cox.

Read about the journeys these academics went on in developing their open textbooks; including their motivations, challenges, insights around working with students and sustainability factors.

<https://openbooks.uct.ac.za/uct/catalog/book/37>

Social
Justice



Open
Education



EXAMPLE:
Open
Textbook



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

- Open licences
- Localisation
- Voices

- Free
- Digital
affordance: adaptability
- Co-creation

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)



Social Justice as participatory parity (Fraser)

Economic

- Material resources
- Maldistribution and redistribution

Cultural

- Cultural attributes
- Misrecognition and recognition

Political

- Political voice
- Mis/representation
mis/framing

> **Participatory parity looks at the *what*, *who* and *how* of social justice**

> **Justice in each dimension can be remedied through *affirmative* or *transformative* responses.**

(Thanks to Susan Gredley)

Overcoming injustices: Affirmative or transformative

Fraser identifies two types of strategies to overcome injustice: *affirmative* strategies, which include activities aimed at ameliorating the scope or intensity of a particular injustice; and *transformative* strategies, which seek to address the root cause of an injustice.

Economic distribution, cultural recognition and political representation



#feesmustfall



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](#)



Cape Town U Must Fall protests



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

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



Student co-creation of open textbooks (UCT case)

Authors found ways in which to not only capture “*persons’ own embodied experience and their lived realities*” in the authorship process, but also to include their feedback in quality assurance.

Student participation is a critical aspect of the **institutional transformation agenda**, in that it addresses social justice and inequity in the classroom.



'Students as partners' and co-creators

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

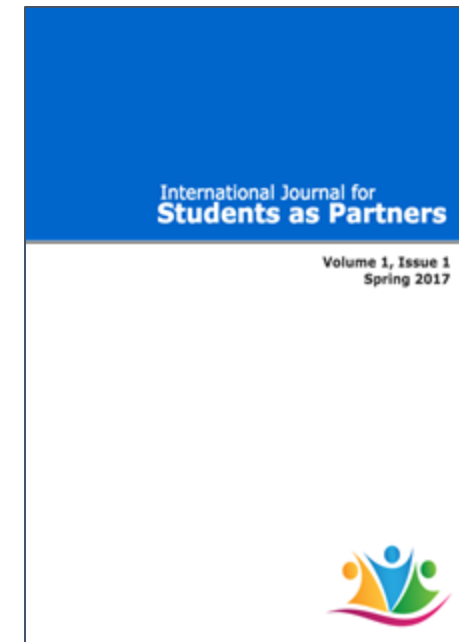
- Shift of locus of expertise - co-design
- Student engagement literature

Principles: respect, reciprocity and shared responsibility

More recently: attempts to think about power differentials

“Promoting Equity and Justice Through Pedagogical Partnership”

De Bie et al (2021)



Models of student co-creation of open textbooks

Bovill (2020) terms of inclusion

(adapted by DOT4D)

Participatory design	Stakeholders contribute to the design and development of initiatives. including curriculum; students are “testers or informants” and don’t have a high level of agency
Engagement	Activities to motivate and interest students; can include engagement in teaching and learning
Partnership	Collaborative; contribute equally; some pedagogical conceptualisation and decision-making; implementation and analysis

Bovill terms of inclusion (cont.)

Co-creation	Contribute new pedagogical ideas; empowerment; meaningful engagement; students construct understanding and learning resources
Representative	Elected role, small group representing whole group
Consultant	Students selected and paid to collaborate
Co-researcher	Collaborating meaningfully on teaching and learning research or subject based research
Co-designer	Sharing responsibility for designing learning, teaching and assessment

Social justice remedy continuum

	AFFIRMATIVE REMEDY		TRANSFORMATIVE REMEDY	
None	Participatory design	Engagement	Co-creation	Partnership



	Terms of inclusion: Colleagues			Terms of inclusion: Students			<i>Model</i>
	Authorship	Quality assurance	Publishing	Authorship	Quality assurance	Publishing	
Marketing	Co-creation: co-design	Participatory design	Participatory design	Co-creation: co-design	[Ongoing: Engagement]	None	<i>Participatory / Engagement and Co-Creation Model</i>
Orthopaedic surgery	Co-creation: co-design	Engagement	Engagement/ Co-creation	Co-creation: co-designer/ representative	Engagement	None	
Architecture	None	Co-creation: consultant	Participatory design	Co-creation: co-researcher	[Ongoing: Engagement]	None	
Statistics	Co-creation: consultant/ co-researcher	Co-creation: consultant/ co-researcher	None	Co-creation: consultant/ co-researcher	Co-creation: consultant/ co-researcher	None	<i>Co-Creation Model</i>
Complex numbers	Partnership	Partnership	Participatory design	Co-creation: co-researcher Co-designer, representative, consultant	Participatory design	None	<i>Co-Creation/ Partnership Model</i>
Computer science	Partnership	Partnership	Participatory design	Engagement Co-creation: consultant	[Ongoing engagement]	None	
Chemistry	Partnership	Partnership	Participatory design	Co-creation: co-researcher	Co-creation: representative	None	

Collaborative open textbook production models

Aim: Provide open textbook creators with sustainable models of production that manifest “parity of participation” as the just end point of social justice

DOT4D context: Four models of open textbook production reflecting varying levels of students and colleague collaboration

- **Participatory/Engagement Model**
- **Participatory/Engagement and Co-Creation Model**
- **Co-Creation Model**
- **Co-Creation/Partnership Model**

	AFFIRMATIVE REMEDY		TRANSFORMATIVE REMEDY	
None	Participatory design	Engagement	Co-creation	Partnership



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.

Current research-student
focus

"Higher education needs to be a fierce advocate for free and open access to knowledge and science"
(UNESCO, 2021:75)

