

Open Textbooks, Intuitive Pedagogy and Social Justice

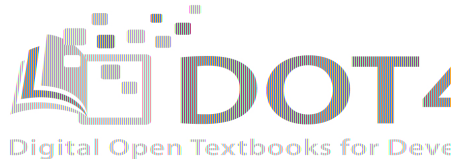
By Glenda Cox, Michelle Willmers & Bianca Masuku

Digital Open Textbooks for Development project, Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching,
University of Cape Town

28 April 2021



Centre for
Innovation in
Learning and
Teaching





This work is carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada.

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THE DOT4D PROJECT

Three-year (2018-2021) research, advocacy and implementation initiative, following in wake of Research on Open Educational Resources for Development (ROER4D) and other CILT open education initiatives (since 2007).

Open education projects in CILT funded by the IDRC, Andrew W Mellon Foundation, Carnegie Foundation and Shuttleworth Foundation.



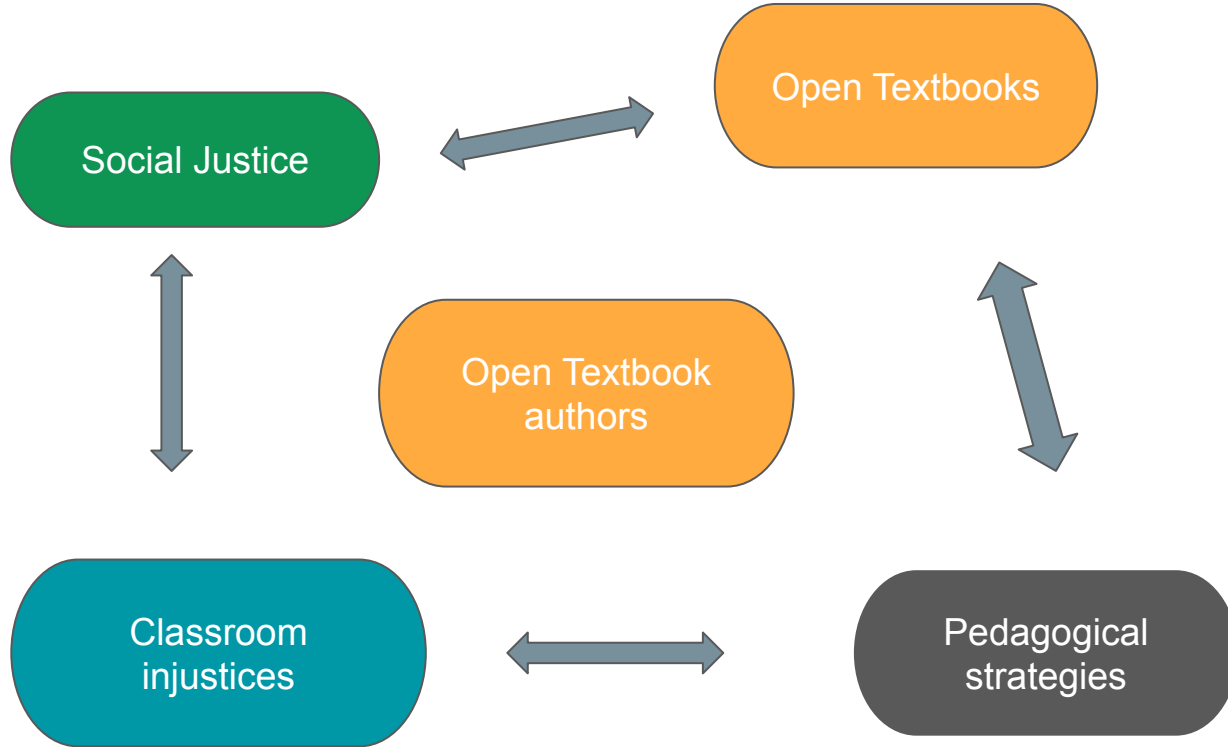
Dr Glenda Cox
Principal Investigator



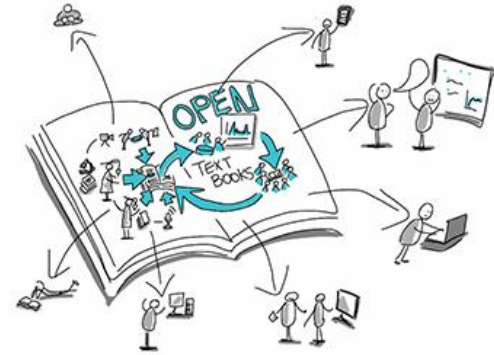
Bianca Masuku
Researcher



Michelle Willmers
Publishing &
Implementation
Manager



**Open textbooks are digital,
free to use and openly
licensed teaching
materials.**



Open textbook definition

Open textbooks are digital, freely available collections of scaffolded teaching and learning content published under an open licence on platforms and in formats that provide affordances for content delivery on a range of devices, the integration of multimedia, and incorporation of content from varying sources through collaborative authorship models. In some instances, they also provide affordances for print and low bandwidth access strategies (Frydenberg and Matkin 2007)

Research method

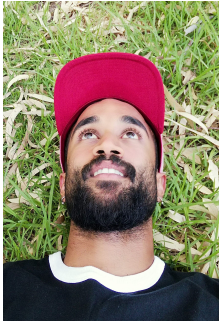
Focus

Exploring the nexus between social (in)justice in the classroom, the textbooks and resources used in teaching and learning, and the pedagogical approaches of open textbook authors.

Data collection

- Two rounds of intensive interviews with 5 UCT open textbook authors (focus on classroom injustices and teaching approach)
- Proposals and reports from 11 participants in the DOT4D grants programme
- Fieldnotes of DOT4D Publishing and Implementation Manager

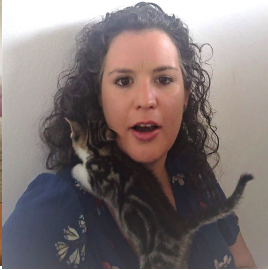
UCT open textbook authors in the DOT4D study



[Kensleyrao Apajee](#)
Mechanical Engineering



[Chris Barnett & Cesarina Edmonds-Smith](#)
Chemistry



[Stella Papanicolaou](#)
Architecture



[Dr Juan Klopper](#)
Surgery



[A/Prof. Abimbola Windapo](#)
Construction



[A/Prof Maria Keet](#),
Computer Science



[Jonathan Shock](#),
Mathematics



[Dr James Lappeman](#),
Marketing



[Tim Low](#),
Statistics



[Dr Michael Held](#),
Orthopaedic Surgery



[Dr Claire Blackman](#)
Mathematics

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' economically, culturally and politically.

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: <https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/31887>

OT author drivers and social justice imperatives

Abimbola	Claire	Kensley	Stella	Michael	Maria	Jonathan	Tim	James	Ingxoxo	Juan
Curriculum transformation Affordable access	Curriculum transformation Affordable access	Curriculum transformation Affordable access	Pedagogical innovation Curriculum transformation	Curriculum transformation Affordable access	Affordable access Curriculum transformation Multilingualism	Curriculum transformation Affordable access	Curriculum transformation Multilingualism	Curriculum transformation Affordable access	Pedagogical innovation Curriculum transformation Multilingualism	Affordable access Curriculum transformation

Affordable access

8

Curriculum transformation

8

Pedagogical innovation

2

Multilingualism

3

Social injustice in UCT classrooms

- **Lack of access**
- **Lack of digital literacy and a skills gap**
- **Late classes**
- **Second- or third-language English speakers**
- **Social dynamics**
- **Social stress**
- **Social and cultural disparities**
- **Cultural dynamics**

Powerlessness to address injustice

- Finding ways to **boost the confidence and comfort levels** of students
- Assuming roles **outside of their capacity** as a lecturer
- Class size
- Challenge of **academic literacy** in the classroom, but **do not know how to go about solving it.**

Fear of perpetuating injustice

Four of five OT authors felt complicit in perpetuating particular injustices in the classroom:

- “by just **declaring** that something was a textbook that students needed”
- Another had not thought about the issue of **language** or considered translating her work
- ‘Whiteness’ of lecturers

Intuitive pedagogy (and parity of participation)

Farrow (2017): **Critical pedagogical approach** offers strategies that are conducive to “improved understanding of both the conditions and techniques that support knowledge creation and transmission; and a sense of the importance of power relations for the pedagogical process itself”.

Intuitive’ pedagogy (a form of critical pedagogical practice) is responsive and focused on the student’s lived reality, [in this study] particularly as relates to principles of access and representation.

In this sense, it entails giving consideration to the **learning materials used as an extension of the classroom space**, and on how the power dynamics of the classroom extend into and are influenced by these resources.

Culture of care: Academics' intuitive practices

- Help students **calm** down
- 'See each other as human'
- Pay attention to **students' mental health**
- Keep interactions with students **informal** in the classroom as a way to connect
- Social engineering the classroom through **group work** in order to encourage peer learning and **accepting different** levels of literacy
- Being more **conscious** of the social and cultural differences between students and lecturers and prioritising the student

Curriculum transformation and decolonisation

The OT authors' understandings of decolonisation were generally an extension of their conceptualisation of curriculum transformation.

The OT authors' approaches to addressing these areas informed by their culture of care and intuitive pedagogy.

Extending intuitive pedagogical practice into open textbook production

Awareness of social injustice in the classroom combined with the OT authors' intuitive pedagogical approaches extended into their OT practice and provided a means through which they felt they could **try** to address social injustice in the classroom.

Strategies that the authors employed in their pedagogical approaches informed their perceptions of what the affordances of their OTs would be.

Shifting power dynamics with the open textbook

Incorporation of multiple voices and challenging the status quo

Reflect realities of the Global South and challenge the dominance of the Global North

Train students to **engage with academic literature**

Move away from an elitist voice to including different voices that **contribute lived experiences** and realities

Empowering students

“bring in female and black voices” and empower students to realise the **“power in publication”**

Challenging publishing models

“Quality information needs to be **free”** in order to shift existing global power dynamics;
BUT the ambition is compromised by the **power imbalance of the predominance of English**

