



# Brief Report on *Open Praxis* and Introduction to Volume 14 issue 1

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**EDITORIAL**



## **ABSTRACT**

This *Open Praxis* issue includes seven research papers and one book review.

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As in previous years (Gil-Jaurena, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021), we start this issue with some information about the evolution of *Open Praxis*, especially in 2021. Volume 13, distributed in 4 issues, included a total of 31 articles: 26 research papers, 3 innovative practice papers, and 2 book reviews. The last issue, vol. 13(4), compiled six selected papers derived from contributions presented at the 2021 ICDE Virtual Global Conference Week, including two articles that received the Best Paper Awards in the two conference tracks: innovation and open education.

A main milestone that happened in 2021 was the renewal of the journal graphic design and website; *Open Praxis* is now hosted by Ubiquity Press. Papers published since vol. 13(2) already show the new layout in the pdf and html formats, while all the past issues were migrated to the new site and show the new layout in the html format, available since vol. 18(4) in 2016.

If we check the number of citations to *Open Praxis* in academic publications (journals, conference proceedings, books, etc.), we see that its scientific impact has significantly increased since the relaunching of the journal in 2013: that year *Open Praxis* received 152 citations, while in 2021 the journal received 1581 citations (source: Google Scholar).

Following this brief report on *Open Praxis*, we introduce this new issue, that includes seven articles: six research papers and one innovative practice paper, authored by 14 researchers from 8 different countries: South Africa, Turkey, USA, Trinidad and Tobago, Australia, Ireland, Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

The first two papers explore the vision and mission of different universities with regards to open and distance learning and education.

In the first article (*Contextual content analysis of mission statements of open and distance education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa*), Mpine Makoe studies the mission statements of six open universities in Africa. She highlights the terms that are aligned with the principles of open and distance learning, and also the missing terms, that show the gap between declarations and practice.

In the second article (*Open and Distance Learning Vision of Higher Education Institutions in Turkey: Implications for Leadership*), Mehmet Kara also uses content analysis to study the vision and mission statements of 82 academic units within public and private universities offering open and distance education programs in Turkey. He highlights the terms that arise, from micro to macro level. Both papers are of particular interest to leaders of open and distance education institutions.

The next two papers are related to Renewable Assignments, that is, assignments that lead to products created by the students that are publicly shared as open educational resources (OER).

In the third paper (*Examining the Use of Renewable Assignments in a Teacher Education Course to Build Understanding of Open Educational Resources*), Jennifer Van Allen and Stacy Katz present a mixed methods study about their experience using this type of assignment. They have explored the student teachers' understanding and value of OER, and self-efficacy in sharing openly as a result of participation in a renewable assignment. Acknowledging the limitations due to the small sample, the authors highlight the positive aspects of the experience remarked by the students, and the self-efficacy aspects that influence students from sharing their work.

In the fourth paper (*High Structure Renewable Assignments: A Design Study*), Peter Daniel Wallis, Jennifer Mae White and Stephen Kerr also report about their experience in an Endocrinology course, where they tested four assignment designs: tagging, peer review, working group and chapter rewrite. All these types are explained and analyzed in the paper, and the conclusions are overall positive. These two papers about renewable assignments provide valuable input and are of special interest to other teachers that want to innovate.

In the fifth research paper (*Integrating Design-based Learning and Mentoring Strategies into a Professional Development Program for Distance Education Instructors*), Halil Kayaduman reports about a tailored made course addressed to distance education teachers. The course was based on TPACK and student-centered methods, and the paper describes the course design process and the outcomes and effectiveness of the course, that were overall positive. The implications of the study are of interest to distance education teachers involved in professional development.

The last paper in this section (*The e-leadership challenge in online chemistry learning in the Caribbean*), by Dave Visham Cassie, explores the different attitudes of faculty and administrators towards the introduction of virtual chemistry laboratories and fully online chemistry courses in 4 Caribbean countries, where it is not a common practice. The results confront online and face-to-face chemistry teaching, and the author highlights implications for the Caribbean universities.

Finally, the innovative practice section includes the paper *Final report of a novel and successful online public health capacity building experiment – Peoples-uni*, written by a international team composed by Richard Heller, Alan Barrett, Omo Oaiya, Jane Heller and Rajan Madhok. They report about a programme –Peoples-uni– that closed in 2021, and provide information about the programme and its international development with volunteer tutors, collect students testimonies and highlight both the positive aspects and the limitations of a programme that happened outside the formal higher education system.

We hope this variety of papers will be of interest to our readers and will facilitate reflection and good practice in the field of open, distance and flexible education, and encourage all our readers to register in <https://openpraxis.org> as readers, authors and/or reviewers.

Special thanks from *Open Praxis* to the authors and reviewers who have contributed to this issue.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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