

## Introduction to vol. 13 issue 1 and brief report on *Open Praxis* data

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As in previous years (Gil-Jaurena, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020), this first *Open Praxis* issue in 2021 presents a brief report on the *Open Praxis* progress since it was relaunched as a scientific peer reviewed open access journal in 2013, with a special focus on volume 12, published in 2020. Table 1 includes different data referred to the last 8 years: number of submissions, number of published papers; acceptance rates; number of authors, number of reviewers, etc.

As shown in table 1, a total of 96 authors (excluding the editor) participated in *Open Praxis* volume 12 in 2020, publishing 38 research papers, innovative practice papers and book reviews distributed in the 4 issues. The average number of authors per paper was 2,38, ranging from 1 to 16 authors in one of the published research papers.

These contributions reflect a geographical and institutional balance; the authors are based in all the continents: 8 Asian countries (China, India, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Turkey), 3 North American countries (Canada, Mexico and USA), 5 European countries (Germany, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom), 4 African (Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and South Africa), and 3 in Oceania (Australia, Fiji and New Zealand).

The list of 62 reviewers who contributed to volume 12 in 2020 –and who also reflect a gender, geographical and institutional balance– is available in the *Open Praxis* website (<https://openpraxis.org/index.php/OpenPraxis/about/displayMembership/11>).

Following with the analysis of the international scope of the journal, a total of 32,412 users visited the *Open Praxis* website in 2020 (figure 1): 30,2% users were from the USA, followed by these countries in the “top ten”: Philippines (7,8%), India (6,7%), Canada (5,2%), United Kingdom (5,2%), South Africa (3,3%), Australia (2,7%), Pakistan (2,6%), Turkey (2,3%) and Malaysia (1,8%).

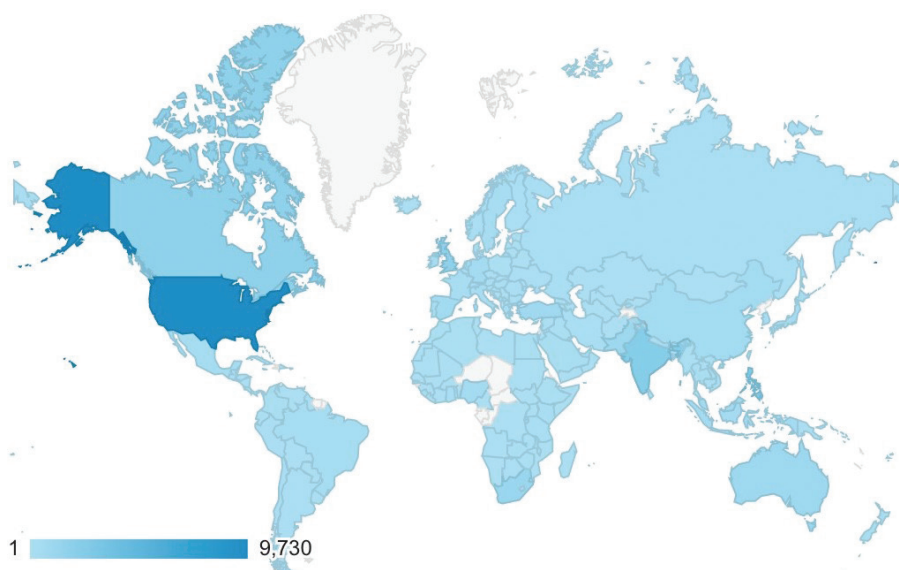


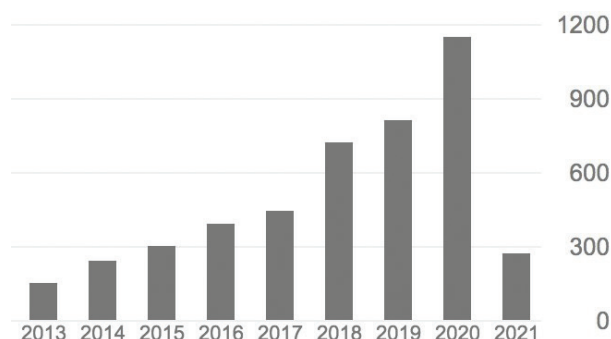
Figure 1: Location of visitors to *Open Praxis* website (January–December 2020)  
Source: Google Analytics

Table 1: Journal statistics per year (2013–2020)

	2013, volume 5 issues 1-4	2014, volume 6 issues 1-4	2015, volume 7 issues 1-4	2016, volume 8 issues 1-4	2017, volume 9 issues 1-4	2018, volume 10 issues 1-4	2019, volume 11 issues 1-4	2020, volume 12 issues 1-4
Issues published	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Items published</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>
Research papers	21	16	13	14	21	20	20	33
Innovative practice papers	2	6	3	2	4	3	2	3
Special papers*	9	9	11	8	7	7	10	-
Editorial	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4
Software or book reviews	2	-	2	6	2	1	1	2
<b>Total submissions</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>63</b>
Rejected before peer-review	10	10	10	15 (+ 4 book reviews)	17 (+ 3 book reviews)	10 (+ 3 book reviews)	16 (+ 2 book reviews)	13
Peer reviewed	44	42	45	38	43	40	42	48
Accepted	32	31	27	24	32	27	32	38
Days to review	47	41	56	63	56	61	57	73
Days to publication	107	118	117	158	169	163	167	199
<b>Acceptance rate</b>	<b>60,70%</b>	<b>59,61%</b>	<b>50,88%</b>	<b>45,28%</b>	<b>53,33%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>63,5%</b>
Number of authors	65	81	71	65	80	70	105	100
Average authors per paper	1,71	2,31	2,15	1,91	2,11	1,94	2,84	2,38
Number of reviewers	45	53	61	59	66	58	59	62

\* Special papers: ICDE prizes 2013 and 2015, Open Education Consortium Global Conference selected papers 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019. They were subject to double-blind peer review by a minimum of two Reviewers.

Scientific impact, based on citations to *Open Praxis* in academic publications (journals, conference proceedings, books, etc.), has continued increasing since the relaunching of the journal in 2013 (figure 2). The *Open Praxis* h-index in March 2021 is 37 (source: Google Scholar).



**Figure 2: Citations to *Open Praxis* per year. 2013–2021**  
Source: Google Scholar

Following this brief report on the *Open Praxis* data and evolution, we present an introduction to the first *Open Praxis* issue in volume 13 in 2021, that includes seven research papers and two innovative practice papers.

In the first article (*An Exploration of China-Africa Cooperation in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges in Open Distance Learning*), Xia Zhu and Gladson Chikwa, based in the United Kingdom, analyze the Sino-African cooperation in ODL, with a focus on teachers' professional development. Using literature review and interviews as methodologies, the authors explore the historical relationship between China and Africa and identify achievements and challenges in different areas: political, economical, sociocultural, curricular, etc. The reflections raise relevant issues with regards to international cooperation in higher education and ODL.

The next two research papers, both from South Africa, are related to student support services.

In the first one (*Evaluating student support provision in a hybrid teacher education programme using Tait's framework of practice*), Folake Ruth Aluko uses a multi-method approach –survey, focus group and interview– and Alan Tait's 7 dimensions model –based on the students' whole experience of studying– to analyze the support provision in a hybrid Teacher Education Bachelor Programme at the University of Pretoria. The author suggests some guidelines on the use of the framework, which can be of interest for other institutions.

The next paper (*Student support service excellence evaluation: Balancing the Iron Triangle of accessibility, cost-effectiveness and quality?*) by Asteria Nsamba, Angie Bopape, Bongi Lebeloane and Laetitia Lekay, focuses on UNISA study centres as spaces that provide support services in ODL universities. Using data of occupancy of the facilities at a study centre and a survey administered to students as users of the facilities (Computer Lab, Library and Study Space), the authors analyze the three dimensions of the Iron Triangle: access, quality and cost-effectiveness. They identify aspects of interest that can help to improve the use of the study support facilities.

The next two research papers, both from the USA, are related to open educational resources (OER).

The first one (*Exploring student perceptions as co-authors of course material*), by Eric Werth and Katherine Williams, analyzes the pedagogical value of and OER-enabled approach. The survey and interview-based study shows students' perceptions about motivation and concern about open assignments, impact of the experience on skills gained, attribution, agency, etc. The findings show

a positive effect of engaging students as co-creators, and the exploratory paper contributes to the empirical literature in the field.

In the next paper (*Inequitable Impacts of Textbook Costs at a Small, Private College: Results from a Textbook Survey at Gettysburg College*), Sarah Appedu, Mary Elmquist, Janelle Wertzberger and Sharon Birch presents librarians concern and perspective on supporting faculty to reduce course materials costs. The survey-based study analyses the students' practices with regards to spending and textbook use and how they manage and experience the high costs. The authors advocate for the adoption of OER as an equity solution.

The last two contributions in the research papers section are framed within the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact in open and distance education.

In the first one (*A global crash-course in teaching and learning online: A thematic review of empirical Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) studies in higher education during Year 1 of COVID-19*), William H. Stewart, based in Korea, presents an analysis on 38 papers about ERT in higher education published in 2020. The review describes the country where the studies were based, the methodologies, the knowledge domain and four major themes the papers dealt with: positive and negative experiences; digital divide and inequities concerns; problems and challenges; and adjustments in response to ERT. The paper provides an interesting overview of the first actions implemented due to the pandemic.

The last research paper (*Exploring Learners' Attitude toward Facebook as a Medium of Learners' Engagement during Covid-19 Quarantine*), by Meisam Moghadam and Habibeh Shamsi, from Iran, explores the use of one of these emergency solutions during the pandemic: the use of Facebook as a supplementary resource. Using surveys, interviews and observation as methodologies and sociocultural theory as a frame, the authors report about the use of that medium for English language learning. The findings show a positive attitude towards this tool and its potential for L2 teaching and learning.

In the innovative practice articles section, the first paper is also contextualized in the COVID-19 pandemic. Phu Vu and Christine Fisher, from the USA, present the article *Does Virtual Field Experience Deliver? An Examination into Virtual Field Experience during the Pandemic and Its Implications for Teacher Education Programs*, where they compare the virtual field experience with the face-to-face field one that was common before the pandemic. The onsite observation of teachers and classroom settings was replaced with videos in a virtual learning platform. The study shows that academic performance did not change in the virtual field experiences. The paper reflects about the potential of virtual observations beyond the pandemic.

Finally, in the last paper in the issue (*Lessons learned developing a massive open online course in implementation research in infectious diseases of poverty in low-and middle-income countries*), an international team composed by Pascale Allotey, Daniel Reidpath, Edith Certain, Mahnaz Vahedi, Dermot Maher, Pascal Launois and Bella Ross present a case study of a MOOC addressed to a specific learners population: those located in LMICs. The authors describe the different steps followed in the planning, development and implementation phases of the MOOC, providing interesting keys and practical insight for those involved in similar MOOC teaching experiences.

We hope these articles will provide input for reflection and good practice in open and distance education.

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