

## Brief report on *Open Praxis* editorial process

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This issue, the last one in 2014, implies that *Open Praxis* has reached two years of regular publication in its new stage, when it was relaunched as the ICDE scholarly, peer-reviewed and open access journal.

The editorial project for the relaunching included three main aspects: editorial process, scientific quality and dissemination (Gil-Jaurena & Malik, 2011). In this issue, we publish the names and affiliation of those reviewers who have contributed to the quality of volume 6 of the journal in 2013 and 2014 (also acknowledged in [our site](#)). Let's take advantage of this recognition to explain how we develop the editorial process, and specifically the peer-review process, in *Open Praxis*.

The fact that we use an electronic journal management and publishing tool, Open Journal System (OJS), facilitates the editorial process for a quarterly journal, such as *Open Praxis* (Gil-Jaurena, 2013). The journal website is available since May 2012. It includes basic and relevant information about the journal: submission guidelines, information for reviewers, our presence in indexes and databases, archives, etc. Content is updated regularly with new call for papers and announcements. The web design team at the Spanish National Distance Education University-UNED (CinDeTec) designed the interface. Submission and review processes are developed within the journal website through OJS. This journal management system keeps track of all the tasks, including emails among users (authors-editor; reviewers-editor).

Peer-review is among the most important quality standards for scientific journals and is a key issue for being selected in relevant databases, such as Thomson Reuters (Testa, 2012) or Scopus (Elsevier, 2014). In *Open Praxis*, research articles and innovative practice articles are subject to double-blind peer review by a minimum of two reviewers. To ensure that anonymity is maintained throughout the blind peer review process, authors delete their name and those of co-authors as well as their own article titles from the text, from references and endnotes, and replace with "Author" and year. This is checked before sending the paper for review. Reviewers are selected among those registered in our database, where there are more than 200 experts from all over the world.

An open call for new reviewers is open permanently. Candidates are invited to register as a reviewer willing to conduct peer review of submissions. They have to complete their profile in the journal website, specially their affiliation, bio statement and reviewing interests. Additionally, they are requested to send a short CV by email. The minimum requirements for being appointed as a reviewer in this journal and which candidates should include in their CV are:

- be proficient in English
- hold a higher education degree, preferably PhD
- work or have experience in higher education and have expertise in open and distance education.

The request for reviewing a paper is made by the editor and is based on stated reviewing interests (substantive areas and research methods) and expertise. We assure that at least one of the reviewers is an English native speaker and at least one of the reviewers holds a PhD. Considering

the international scope of the journal, contributions and reviewers are geographically and institutionally balanced.

As a journal, we adhere to COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) guidelines and expect our reviewers (Hames, 2013) and authors (Wager & Kleinert, 2011) to do so. According to these, it is our will to strive to constantly improve their journal (COPE, 2011).

After this brief report on *Open Praxis* editorial process, let's introduce this last *Open Praxis* issue in volume 6, which includes three articles in the research papers section and three in the innovative practice papers section, two of them related to OER.

Aisha Muhammad Din and Sadia Jabeen (*Eliminating educational inequality through e-learning: the case of Virtual University of Pakistan*) analyze the contribution of e-learning teaching mode to breaking the educational and social gap, presenting results for Virtual University of Pakistan. With a sociological background, they study the role of their university in facilitating access to quality higher education for all, and conclude that Virtual University of Pakistan is enhancing the educational level in the country and reducing class differences.

S. Joel Warrican, Coreen J. Leacock, Benita P. Thompson and Melissa L. Alleyne (*Predictors of Student Success in an Online Learning Environment in the English-Speaking Caribbean: Evidence from the University of the West Indies Open Campus*) study a main problem in online learning, students' success, retention and completion rates, at course and programme levels. They focus on the case of their context and university, and identify factors that influence these rates. The analysis leads to providing suggestions for early identification and support to most vulnerable students.

Rick J Arrowood, Eva Kampits and Heidi Gregory-Mina (*Setting the Stage for "Good, Better, or Just Right" in Online and Blended Graduate Courses*) analyze students' satisfaction in a course, considering course design, content and delivery, and compare the results in online and blended modalities of the same course. They present some lessons learned and recommend actions that can be developed to adjust teaching to an increasingly diverse range of students and, thus, of expectations and demands.

The innovative practice articles section is opened with a contribution by Helen Sara Farley and Joanne Doyle (*Using digital technologies to implement distance education for incarcerated students: a case study from an Australian regional university*), who describe and analyze a set of projects for students in prison, with the aim of enabling these students without Internet access to have comparable study experiences to other distance education students. They reflect on the results, evolution, limitations and envisaged future, when the project will be expanded in Australia.

John Hilton III, Lindsay Murphy and Devon Ritter (*From Open Educational Resources to College Credit: The Approaches of Saylor Academy*) contextualize Saylor Academy and present its implemented practice for attaining college credit using OER. They explain three models they use for providing opportunities to learners to test for credit, and reflect about the promising results they are getting in these early stages of the project, considered by the authors as a disruptive innovation.

Finally, Pradeep Kumar Misra (*Online training of teachers using OER: Promises and potential strategies*) presents OER-based teaching as a valuable approach for teacher training, both in initial education and professional development. He summarizes different initiatives taken place across the globe and provides a set of strategies that could be of interest for using the potential of OER for improving training of this specific professional group.

These six papers close *Open Praxis* volume 6, which in 2014 has published a total of 31 papers in its four issues. We hope that they contribute to reflection, discussion and improvement of open, distance and flexible education.

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