

Introduction to *Open Praxis* volume 11 issue 2

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This second *Open Praxis* issue in 2019 includes eight research papers, authored by 20 researchers from eight different countries (United Kingdom, Spain, Slovenia, France, Pakistan, Turkey, Australia and the United States of America).

The first three papers are based on distance education universities: the first one exploring the case in Spain, and the next two undertaking quantitative correlation analysis about different academic and organizational aspects.

In the first paper (*Structural Changes in the Landscape of Spanish Distance Universities*), Daniel Domínguez Figaredo and José Francisco Alvarez Alvarez present an analysis and reflection about the evolution of enrolment in distance education in Spain (considering traditional and new institutions offering distance learning), about the adaptation to technology and about current challenges that distance universities face. Their focus on a national case is of interest both to Spain and to other regions that may be undergoing similar evolution. The authors highlight some implications that appeal to institutional decisions.

In the second paper (*How e-learning engagement time affects academic achievement in e-learning environments. A large-scale study of open and distance learners*), Mehmet Firat, Aylin Öztürk, Ihsan Güneş, Esra Çolak, Melda Beyaz and Köksal Büyük analyze the relation between engagement (measured through the e-learning system logs and data) and achievement (GPA) in a mass distance education institution, Anadolu University in Turkey. They find, in accordance with other studies, a positive correlation between those two variables. As the authors point out, further research and practical implications could take advantage of learning analytics.

The third paper focused on distance universities (*Impact of organizational culture, organizational communication and supervisor support on the job satisfaction of employees working in online It based distance learning institutions of Pakistan*), by Khalid Usman, studies organizational aspects in the Virtual University of Pakistan and their relation with the job satisfaction of the academic staff. The findings show a positive correlation among the dimensions, contributing to increasing the knowledge about the functioning of distance learning institutions. The survey used in the study is included as an appendix in the paper.

In the fourth paper (*Pakistani Teacher-educator Professional Learning Through an International Blended Course*), Maria Antonietta Impedovo and Sufiana Khatoon Malik report on an experience framed within an Erasmus+ International Capacity Building Project. They highlight the skills developed by Pakistani teacher-educators who participated in the course: technological, pedagogical and instructional design, and interpersonal and intercultural skills, that can have an impact on the improvement of the teacher education programmes they deliver. The authors advocate the value of this type of international cooperation initiatives.

Dealing with a broader topic in the field of open and distance education, in the fifth paper (*Fostering Openness in Education: Considerations for Sustainable Policy-Making*), Javiera Atenas, Leo Havemann, Fabio Nascimbeni, Daniel Villar-Onrubia and Davor Orlic present a framework for policy development in Open Education. After a thorough review of literature and policy documents

in the topic, they explain how they have facilitated various workshops with stakeholders to foster policy-making at national and institutional levels. The narration shows key aspects to be considered in open education policies, such as copyright, technology and recognition of learning.

The next three papers relate, specifically, to open educational resources (OER).

Scott Kersey (*The Effectiveness of Open Educational Resources in College Calculus. A Quantitative Study*), presents a statistical comparative study about the effect of using OER or closed educational resources (both including textbooks and web-based homework systems) in a face-to-face college course. The findings refer to cost, early access to resources, performance, showing differences between the two groups of students. The author mentions the limitations of the study and potential further research, as well.

Maimoona Humaid Al Abri and Nada Dabbagh (*Testing the Intervention of OER Renewable Assignments in a College Course*) present a survey and interview-based study focused on students' contribution to OER creation. The use of renewable assignments as a type of OER was welcome both by the students and the instructor in a college course, and the study explores their perceptions about this educational resource modality. The approach and findings can be useful for other courses willing to increase the use of OER and to engage students in the process. The survey and interview outline are included as appendices in the paper.

Finally, Janani Ganapathi (*User-Generated Content's Impact on the Sustainability of Open Educational Resources*) also explores users' participation in OER creation, not at a course level but considering the case of the Indian organization Pratham Books, which publishes children's books and has OER at the core of its business model. The case study, through interviews to different members of the organization, raises relevant aspects related to sustainability, quality assurance, access and dissemination, among others. Despite the paper is not focused on higher education, it may be of interest to *Open Praxis* readers, who are concerned with open education and widening access to knowledge.

Special thanks from *Open Praxis* to the authors and reviewers who have contributed to this issue. We wish this diversity of contributions will foster reflection, debate and practice in open and distance education.