

11 exemplars: open education as social justice 2014-2017

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How the exemplar cases were selected

The 11 exemplar cases were selected from a larger pool of studies that were analysed as part of a 2014-2017 systematic review study. The systematic review sought to establish the extent that free open education programs including MOOCs sought to enable student equity and social inclusion. A total of 48 studies and reports were examined, representing diverse global programs reaching over 200,000 disadvantaged learners in both distance and blended learning settings. Many of these were staff and policy guides but 22 studies had been fully tested with students. At January 2019 a major journal paper of systematic review outcomes is still in peer review. The as yet unpublished paper considers the impact on both “student equity” (of enrolled students) and “social inclusion” (of the wider community). This classification system is also used in the “type” column of Table 1 “student equity”= SE and “social inclusion”=SI.

During the period of research, an interest in social justice approaches developed. Subsequently the researcher has written and published a paper proposing a new definition of open education that is aligned to the 3 principles of social justice: redistributive justice, recognitive justice, and representational justice. The new definition is: “Open Education is the development of free digitally enabled learning materials and experiences primarily by and for the benefit and empowerment of non-privileged learners who may be under-represented in education systems or marginalised in their global context. Success of social justice aligned programs can be measured not by any particular technical feature or format, but instead by the extent to which they enact redistributive justice, recognitive justice and/or representational justice (Lambert, 2018).”

Amongst other things, the paper proposes that the social justice definition could be used as a research lens to analyse data.

As preparatory work for a social justice focussed book chapter, the data set of 22 studies fully tested with students was re-analysed using the 2018 definition. This was undertaken to better explain the progress and redress of educational justice for regional, multi-lingual and female learners (the focus of the book chapter). The last three columns of Table 1 note the presence of each of the 3 principles of social justice, one per column. No tick does not necessarily mean the principle was not used, but it does mean it was not discussed in the study/paper.

Methodologically, this showed that it is possible to use the 2018 definition as a lens for research analysis. Practically, it clarified and allowed for the selection of 11 exemplars to be chosen as the focus for further writing and analysis. The cases with good outcomes that also showed two or more forms of social justice were selected as exemplars. See page 3 for the reference list.

Table 1: social justice themes in a set of equity-related open education study exemplars (positive outcomes, 2+ forms of social justice)

| Study summary and reference | Type | Outcome | Linguistic | Gender | Redistr | Recog | Repres |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------|-------|--------|
| 1. Understanding Dementia MOOC enabled older regional women with no uni or eLearning experience (Goldberg et al., 2015; King et al., 2014) | SE+SI | Exceeded aims | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2. e-readers, weekly study groups and online support for low confidence bilingual pre-service teachers needing to teach in English (Charbonneau-Gowdy, Paula; Capredoni, Rosana; Gonzalez, Sebastian; Jayo, María José; Raby, 2015) | SE | Exceeded aims | ✓ bilingual | Quotes from 4 women, 1 man | ✓ | | |
| 3. A first year foundation STEM program formed study-groups to learn from a MOOC aligned with their formal course materials. 25% are women (Li, Kidzi, & Dillenbourg, 2015). | SE | Exceeded aims | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 4. The Sustainable Development MOOC platform (Celina, Kharrufa, Preston, Comber, & Olivier, 2016) was customised to facilitate complex group projects undertaken both face-to face and online, on a topic of learner interest. | SI | Exceeded aims | | nd | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 5. Mobile friendly bi-lingual TESSIndia teacher training program with multiple facilitated study groups in low-resourced regional schools and centres, often with no power, laptops, internet (Wolfenden, Cross, & Henry, 2017). | SE | Exceeded aims | ✓ multilingual | 41-55% survey responses women | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 6. AuthorAID program enabled more women than normally attend face to face research writing programs.(Murugesan, Nobes, & Wild, 2017) | SI | Exceeded aims | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 7. “Digital Families” program provided workshops and free handheld devices for parents and children with learning disabilities to explore apps useful for their particular needs (McDougall, Readman, & Wilkinson, 2016). | SI | Met aims | | nd | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 8. Dutch-speaking upper high school students needing preparation for university, eg learning in English or French languages, and digital literacies (de Waard, Anckaert, Vandewaetere, & Demeulenaere, 2016) | SE | Met aims | ✓ multilingual | nd | | ✓ | |
| 9. The Human Trafficking MOOC (Watson et al., 2016) included first hand views of trafficking women from women themselves and social workers | SI | Mixed outcomes | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10. Some groups did better than others in EU funded Hands-On ICT (HANDSON) MOOC for teachers, facilitated forums in 7 different mother-tongues: English, French, Greek, Slovenian, Bulgarian, Catalan and Spanish (Colas, Sloep, & Garreta-Domingo, 2016). | SE | Mixed outcomes | ✓ | Gender data not collected | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 11. Modest first run take-up of Arabic Nano-technology MOOC compared to English version despite consultative translation process (Barak, Watted, & Haick, 2016). | SE+SI | Mixed outcomes | ✓ multilingual | 72-75% male students | ✓ | ✓ | |

Key: Type: “student equity”= SE and “social inclusion”=SI. *Outcomes* are all in relations to the stated aims of the study. *Nd* = not discussed. Last three columns are the three principles of social justice. Green tick means evidence was found for this aspect in the study.

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