

Foreword

In the description of the work edited by Dr. Molly Y. Zhou on Open Educational Resources (OER), the following was stated: “Access to learning materials has been an issue within education that has had a profound impact on student outcomes and equality among students. New strategies for promoting more equal access to these materials began within institutions of higher learning and can be adapted at lower levels to facilitate equity within educational systems.”

Significantly, the context for the book’s emergence can be metaphorically operationalized with the idea of OER being the modern-day version of the 20th Century Book Mobiles that traversed the landscape of rural America and areas where children and communities had limited access to the life-giving intellectual waters of books and libraries.

The information age seems to have increased access; however, there is a constant need to ensure accessibility and innovation of access and pedagogical application of digital formats of knowledge. Hence, it is the premise of this reviewer’s foreword that Zhou’s edited volume captures the march of humanity toward knowledge acquisition, knowledge application and knowledge contextual resource pedagogical facilitation. The metaphor of the value-added benefit of OER can be conceptualized through the historical advancement of knowledge acquisition through the use of the book mobile concept of the 20th Century. For example, it is perceived that collection of chapters edited by Zhou can be described as an introduction to the modern day virtual book mobile of information dispersion, pedagogical conversion of virtual resources and facilitation of learning through Open Educational Resources (OER).

The chapters promote the importance of this volume with a arrange of reports, from the field of practice and organizational processes toward the application of OER across multiple venues. Moreover, the need for affordability and accessibility of resources should be of significance for humanity’s 21st Century enlightenment as the information highway is constantly reshaping information dissemination. Ideally, the concept and construction of the use of OER may serve the advancement of intellectual and information-oriented capacity in countries where resources may be limited by access. Therefore, the information era for knowledge is not a strictly digital age concept.

Consequently, the contributors to this volume arguably have been able to contextualize current and future applications of OER as humanity marches farther into the decades of the 21st Century. Therefore, the reader of this volume should be able reflectively associate the relevant vigor and advocacy proposed and implemented by the contributions of Mary Lemist Titcomb (1852-1932). Through Lemist Titcomb’s efforts to advance access to library information in the 19th and 20th Century, development of the Book Mobile as an advancement toward equity in educational resources for the rural and underrepresented areas of the country became a reality (Glenn, 2018). In short, Open Educational Resources is an example of the historical manifestation of Knowledge Acquisition by humanity as this foreword is recorded in the

dawn of 2020. Inasmuch, the deserts of knowledge by human beings have always required innovation of available transportation toward the oasis of enlightenment.

In each era of human history, the methods of acquiring and using knowledge and pedagogical supplementation has required travel across the highways by the physical being; the buildings/libraries of knowledge for mass gathering; the construction of information highways in the internet era and the capacity to upload information to support curricular adaptation. Thus, the use of knowledge is among the triumphs of humanity's search for enlightenment. This thematic construct and quest for transforming and transitioning of information can be found in stories of efforts to find the libraries and centuries of knowledge in Timbuktu, Africa during the European so-called Medieval Age (Jeppie & Diagne, 2008). It can be argued that the Guttenberg printing press allowed the knowledge of the universe to be bound and to be transported as the printed words between the covers of the traditional book (Glenn, 2018; Guruswamy Naidu, 1989).

The conceptualization of the knowledge of the universe being available through the context of OER is a continuation of the eradication of the chasm of inequality of resources, and the struggle for equity of access in the digital information age (Dominic, Michele, & Dirk, 2015). For example, Dominic et. al (2015) seem to suggest that the power of education as key to economic, social and environmental progress deems it necessary for governments around the world to seek methods of improvement for their education systems. However, Lessig (2002) posited that the internet revolution advances opportunity but vigilance is necessary because the future of ideas can be hamstrung by gatekeepers who may or have systematically used tactics such as judicious rewritten copyright laws. Consequently, the need to explore the constructs and experiences in this volume can offer perspectives and experiences of the manifestation of OER for pedagogical and IT related ventures. As a result, this volume may provide anecdotal approaches to our need to see the forest for the trees in the journey for equitable distribution of knowledge in the 21st Century.

This edited volume provides glimpses into the march of humanity toward knowledge acquisition through the use of OER. For example, among the topics treated in this volume is the exploration of OER at the University of the Bahamas. The ideal of institutional and societal capacity for the use of OER as pedagogical implications is transcendent.

Furthermore, the volume features the contribution of undergraduate mathematics achievements. The volume has an array of contributions with a range of topics such as instructional design, pedagogy, and gamification. The editor and the contributors have conceptualized this book for its potential value to teachers, curriculum developers, instructional designers, principals, school boards, educational professionals, academicians, professors, administrators, educational policymakers, researchers, and educational agencies (Farrow et al., 2015).

The topics for the book include the following:

Chapter 1, "An Exploration of Open Educational Resources Potential at The University of The Bahamas," provides an insight that reflects the importance of looking at OER from an international perspective (Blessinger & Bliss, 2016). For example, chapter one argues that Developing countries such as The Bahamas may be able to enhance equitable educational access throughout its archipelago nation by adopting Open Educational Resources (OER) at the tertiary education level.

Chapter 2, "The Effects of Using Open Educational Resources on Minority Achievement in Undergraduate Mathematics," provides supportive scholarship that promotes the importance of this topic's relationship to affordability of textbooks. The contributors suggest the following: Prominent in the public debate on college affordability is the rising cost of textbooks. Owing to limited finances or mounting

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college debt, many students fail to purchase required course textbooks. Students without textbooks face delayed course enrollment, high failure or dropout rates, and extended time to graduation.

Chapter 3 insightfully shares the significance of IT departmental practice toward the use of OER toward the following context: The chapter presents the development principles and practices at four levels: OER driven pedagogies, OER adoption and development, course design/review cycle, and department/program level coordination. The chapter also provides an overview of the OER features and adoption in the computing and the IT field.

Chapter 4 entitled “Learner Perceptions of Open Pedagogy in a Psychology Course: A Case Study on Instructional Design with Open Educational Resources” provides a pedagogical case study analysis. The contributors suggest from the internal case study the following: Results indicated that students prefer the renewable assignments, which helped them better understand the content and prepare for the exams. They also like to be involved in the decision process, such as the choice of assignment, including the questions they created in the exams.

Chapter 5 is entitled “Sharing Educational Resources for Experiential Studies Place-Based Programs” and illuminates experiential findings from Democritus University of Thrace. The contributors discovered and reports that Edmodo users may search for and retrieve such resources. Many learning approaches using Edmodo have been implemented in school education. The results are positive in various aspects. This chapter surveys approaches using Edmodo in school education. The survey focuses on the most recent approaches.

Chapter 6 is entitled “Using OpenStreetMap as a Source of Religious Mapping Data in an OER Human Geography Textbook.” Dorrell offers that OpenStreetMap (OSM) is a global scale geographic data source produced by individual volunteers and organizations. It is emblematic of two emerging themes in geographical technology: crowdsourcing and open data. This chapter provides an example of the expansive capacity of OER.

Chapter 7 is titled “A Textbook Transformation Project: Open Access Materials With an International and Interdisciplinary Focus for Spanish.” As the world becomes increasingly closer, the need for language learning and relevant material access is more significant. The study discusses a two-year long textbook transformation effort affecting first and second year Spanish at Georgia Gwinnett College. The goal was to replace the commercial textbook with OER that were free, international and interdisciplinary in focus, and meaningful to a diverse student population.

Chapter 8 entitled “Reshaping Preservice Teachers’ Pedagogical Content Knowledge With Primary Source Documents” explores the significance of primary sources in educator preparation. The team of contributors reported the experiences of preservice. For example, the findings included the following: Pre-service students in the methods course indicated that the use of these resources, in lieu of a traditional text, provided a richer learning experience for them.

Chapter 9, “Open Educational Resources and Student Engagement: The Use of In-Class Exercises to Enhance OERs in Introductory Political Science Classes,” reports practical application with the use of OER in political science. For example, the contributors report the following: Open Education Resources (OERs) have increasingly shaped teaching practices in a variety of disciplines, including Political Science. The goal of this chapter is to explore the use of OER materials, combined with in-class activities, in introductory political science classes.

The volume concludes with Chapter 10, “An Open Educational Resources Journey: OERs in Multi-Section Courses in an Access College.” As with the journey of humanity is eternally in search of manners to promote affordable resources, the author suggests that the Open Educational Resources movement in

higher education has largely been driven by concerns over increasing textbook costs and the resulting barriers to access. As the movement has gained traction in sectors of higher education, research has focused on achievement of student learning outcomes.

SUMMARY

The advancement of teaching and learning in the academic enterprise of the 21st Century should continue to produce opportunities and strategic approaches through the benefit of OER.

As the world has turned from human beings traveling to Timbuktu to visit the places of knowledge, the use of OER to advance equitable access across platforms and processes of knowledge should continue to march toward the greater good of humanity through increased access (Cox & Trotter, 2017). Since our digital era has the capacity to advance humanity's level of enlightenment from Birth through adulthood, the role of pedagogical delivery and the quenching of the thirst for knowledge should be the next virtual metaphor of seekers of knowledge traveling through Open Educational Resources. This volume offers road maps and case studies to support efforts to create roadmaps to navigate the journey.

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Noran L. Moffett, as of this publication, is a tenured Professor of Education in the Department of Educational Leadership of the College of Education at Fayetteville State University. He has formerly served in roles of Associate Dean at two Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) during the reaffirmation of their NCATE Legacy Visits and as a professor who served as dissertation advisor concurrently. Noran is the son of a deceased World War II veteran, the late Rev. M.J. Moffett, and a mother, Alice E. Moffett, who retired as a school cafeteria manager. Noran was honorably discharged from the United States Army. He never loses sight of the purpose for which he came to the profession of teacher education-CHILDREN. Dr. Moffett's educational philosophy is as follows: "I am an educational evangelist and I believe that the purpose of educational preparation in higher education should be to ensure that we prepare future educators to serve as advocates for the children with the least opportunity, so they can compete with the children with the greatest opportunity as contributors to the global community."

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