

Letter from the Editor

Melissa Layne

American Public University System, USA

Dear Readers of *IJOER*,

Spring has arrived in many US states as well as in other countries, and what a perfect time to release the *IJOER* Spring/Summer 2021 issue! This issue includes some impressive studies that will add to and advance the literature on Open Educational Resources (OER) in new and exciting directions. Professor Mpine Makoe of Unisa is featured in our special section, 3 Questions for an OER Leader. Mpine graciously agreed to an interview and shared her most recent open education contributions and initiatives and are centered on social justice, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and participation in order to resolve the injustices that have prevented many people from accessing higher education, especially in South Africa.

Some of the articles in this issue address the ongoing challenges of OER adoption and implementation experienced by universities, faculty, and students and provide innovative approaches to these barriers. Student and faculty perceptions and student achievement also continue to stand at the fore of OER topics. More and more, we are seeing more essential discussions around an understanding that OER and OEP are not mutually-exclusive. A couple of our articles highlight OER course and curricular design. Below, you will find brief descriptions of each article as it is situated under these overarching, key areas in OER.

OER and Student Achievement. Lane Fischer, Yao Xiong, Virginia Clinton-Lisell, John Hilton III, David Wiley and Linda Williams authors of *The Interaction of Open Educational Resources (OER) Use and Course Difficulty on Student Course Grades in a Community College*, point us in a novel research direction by examining the impact of OER on student achievement as a function of course difficulty. Controlling for student gender, previous grade point average, and Pell grant eligibility status, the significant results of this study shed some new light on understanding the effects OER and non-OER use as a function of course difficulty.

Megan Dempsey's article, *The Impact of Free and Open Educational Resource Adoption on Community College Student Achievement* also reports a significant impact of OER and non-OER use on student performance and persistence by exploring student outcomes for all students in her study, in addition to Pell grant recipients, part-time, first-time and non-white students. Exploring variables linked



to students' grade achievement not only strengthens use of OER in classrooms, it also indicates promise in student persistence and success.

Student & Faculty Perceptions of OER. Various types of postsecondary institutions—community colleges, four-year universities, research universities, etc. offer programs and courses requiring course materials. Although, as both students and faculty become more and more familiar with the term 'open educational resources' a lack of awareness still remains. Three of our articles highlight student and faculty perceptions of OER usage.

The first article, *A Study of STEM Usage and Perceptions of OER at a Large Research University* by authors Neelam Bharti and Michelle Leonard explore these unique characteristics in STEM programs, specifically, within a large research university context.

Viki Stoupenos' *Perceptions of Quality and Utilization of Open Educational Resources in a Psychology Course*, hones in on a specific course, psychology, and looks how faculty perceive the quality aspect of OER, and subsequent adoption of OER.

The Impact of Typical Textbook Behaviors on Satisfaction with Zero Textbook Cost Materials by authors Daniel R. Albert, Alex Redcay and A. Nicole Pfannenstiel, also examine faculty perceptions and satisfaction with OER—in particular, using Zero Textbook Cost Materials.

OER Course & Curricular Design & Development. *Taking OER to the LIS: Designing and Developing an Open Education Course for Library Science* by Steven J. Bell was an exciting read for me. The topic of this study is long overdue and we are thankful to Steven for paving the way toward OER design and integration within LIS programs.

Another fantastic article, *Students Using OER for Professional and Curricular Development: Lessons from Two Composition Textbooks* by authors Alex Wulff, Christina Branson and Vaughn Anderson, outline the affordances gleaned from the redesign of both face-to-face and online delivered courses using OER. One particular affordance the authors make is the ability to successfully customize new curricula due to their understanding their student population and their unique characteristics.

Faculty adaptation and adoption. Another article by Beth Tillinghast, also breaks new ground in OER research with her study, *Using a Technology Acceptance Model to Analyze Faculty Adoption and Application of Open Educational Resources*. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Model has been widely used to measure levels of faculty technology acceptance; however, Beth adds a new twist by using this model to measure levels of OER adoption and applications.

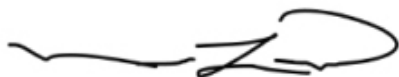
In a similar model-based study, Shouhong Wang's *Adoption and Adaptation of Open Educational Resources: Models of Decision-Making and Action Planning* provides the OER community with valuable information by focusing on the necessary decisions that should be considered as prerequisites toward appropriately planning OER adoption and adaptation.

OER and OEP. *The True and False promise of Open Educational Resources, or, How Open Educational Resources are Condemned to Wither without Open Pedagogy*, by Hamish F. Lutris and Nicolas P. Simon,

The articles in this issue are sure to impress. The articles not only represent conversations on current work within the OER community, but they are also an indicator that these authors are exploring different trajectories for OER research, and to spark OER awareness, growth, and evolution. I sincerely thank these passionate and generous authors for continuing to advance OER knowledge and awareness by sharing their academic scholarship with our *IJOER* readers.

I would also like to thank the *IJOER* & *Beyond* moderators, peer reviewers, and copyeditors whose labor went into producing *IJOER* and who should not go unrecognized for this collective collaboration.

As always, stay with us and expect more.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Layne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Melissa Layne, EdD

Editor-in-Chief, *International Journal of Open Educational Resources*