



Online and Open Approaches to Supporting a Pedagogy of Care: Research and Practice that Opens Horizons

Michele Jacobsen 
Werklund School of Education
University of Calgary

Valerie Irvine 
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria

Correspondence:

c/o OTESSA Journal

Email: journal at otessa.org

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We are pleased to publish our first 2023 issue of the Open/Technology in Education, Society, and Scholarship Association (OTESSA) Journal with notable works pertaining to social networks in teaching and learning, onboarding learners into online programs to support success and community development, open educational practices in graduate education, communities of practice for scholarship of teaching and learning, and course co-creation with learners. Across all these articles, which are both research-oriented and practice-oriented, there is an underlying care for the learner and how to support excellence in teaching. Authors are experts in online and open education and their research informed recommendations are important for educators and administrators to consider when offering online or blended programs or courses.

Creating New Precedence

The [OTESSA 2023 conference](#) was held in Toronto at York University, which was the first occasion for OTESSA to have any in-person conferencing since our formation in late 2019 right before the pandemic hit. OTESSA created precedence in that we were the only association at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences to hold online-only conference days. We thank the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences for trusting our association to lead this online component independently and still retain the Congress branding. At most, Congress offered two online concurrent rooms per day. Instead of having face-to-face sessions with and sessions without online access to our remote participants, we opted to have two online days (one on May 27 to start the conference and one on June 2 to close the conference) and three in-person days (May 29-June 1). A second innovation was our pilot of internet radio streaming of concurrent sessions, which we plan to expand in 2024. All our keynotes and invited speakers had Zoom access, whether in person or online. A key learning was our underestimation of online demand for access to the conference, which resulted in OTESSA sessions during the two online days being quite full. In 2024, we will host the OTESSA conference at McGill University in Montreal for four in-person days (June 12-15) and, after a one-day gap for travel, plan to host five online days (June 17-21). Acknowledging we cannot anticipate the online demand, we plan to spread sessions across the five online days and expect them to be part-time days.

Our Next Steps

OTESSA is entering our third year of the journal, with the first issue being published in November of 2021. We plan to transition into our ability to expand our indexing and visibility, along with leveraging our eligibility to apply for national funding for scholarly journals in 2024 to support the operations of the journal. As OTESSA journal grows, we must transition from being mostly volunteer-based and reliance on small grants or subsidies by the OTESSA conference, to one with sustained base funding. As we are an open-access journal with no article processing fees, we provide equal access to publishing for all individuals regardless of academic financial backing. That said, we do encourage those with funding and the ability to pay an article processing fee, to volunteer to do so as we would be pleased to accept the support as we uphold the values of open access publishing for all.

In 2024, our goals are, once eligible, to expand indexing of the journal, apply for grants to support base operations, secure a journal manager, establish support and processes for francophone inclusion, promote the journal for open submissions, and invite applications for special issues. We thank Stephanie Moore from the University of New Mexico for stepping forward as guest editor of our first special issue, which will be tied to the OTESSA 2024 conference strand on ethics in design. Any individuals interested in proposing and editing a

special issue are welcome to contact us at journal@otessa.org. We thank all those who have helped OTESSA grow from the beginning and to all our new members, authors, and presenters. While being a member of OTESSA is not a requirement to publish in our journal, we invite you to join our community to support and advance the collective and collaborative work that we do.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the authors and reviewers whose dedication and expertise have greatly enriched the OTESSA journal. The conversations you lead and these valuable contributions to the journal provide a foundation upon which the OTESSA community can thrive and grow. We appreciate the contribution of authors and reviewers to advancing knowledge and scholarship in our field. Thank you for sharing your expertise and experience in the writing and review process.

Research Section Overview

The Complexities of Using Digital Social Networks in Teaching and Learning by **Enilda Romero-Hall, Lina Gomez-Vasquez, Laila Forstmane, Caldeira Ripine, and Carolina Dias da Silva**

<https://doi.org/10.18357/otessaj.2023.3.1.48>

Ready access to digital social networks has changed how millions of global citizens meet, communicate, and engage with others. From a survey of 336 faculty and graduate students, the authors contribute new insights on how higher education instructors leveraged digital social networks in teaching and learning during the early years of the pandemic. A focus on instructors' use cases, the advantages and difficulties of specific platforms, and the role of digital social networks provided a foundation for critical reflection on further implementation in practice. Results point to successful integration of digital social networks in teaching and learning, along with illustrating many complexities like data privacy, misinformation, user interface issues, and students' preferences for less popular networks. The researchers call for expanded research that includes interviews, along with alternative methods.

Developing Learning Communities Online: A Multi-year Study Exploring the Role of Not-for-credit Online Activities to Support Student Connection by **Jo Axe, Hannah Dahlquist-Axe, Elizabeth Childs**

<https://doi.org/10.18357/otessaj.2023.3.1.50>

Onboarding learners into online and blended environments is an important step to ensuring student success. In this article, the authors share insights from developing a not-for-credit online learning module for new-to-program students that includes resources and activities to support the development of community. Graduate student experiences were studied over an eight-year period using surveys. Findings are shared in three areas: 1) what worked well, 2) areas for improvement, and 3) suggestions for additions. The researchers call for expanded use of this approach to support learners on program entry and share detailed recommendations along with a link in the paper to the open educational resource that was developed.

Exploring our Open Educational Practices in Support of Excellence in Graduate Education: A Collaborative Autoethnography by **Pamela Walsh, Beth Perry, and Cindy Ives**

<https://doi.org/10.18357/otessaj.2023.3.1.53>

In this study, researchers used collaborative autoethnographic methods to investigate their open approaches to teaching and supervision in graduate education. The authors report new findings from data collected over two years, which fills a gap in the literature on the use of open educational practices with graduate students. The authors extend preliminary findings from earlier work about graduate education and open educational practices and review outcomes of their practices for their learners, themselves, and reflect on the ways they can improve.

Practice Section Overview

Sustaining Positive Change in the Teaching Scholars' Online Community of Practice by **Andrew Mardjetko, Michele Jacobsen, Beth Archer-Kuhn, Cari Din, Darlene Donszelmann, Lorelli Nowell, and Heather Jamniczky**. <https://doi.org/10.18357/otessaj.2023.3.1.42>

With a focus on educational leadership, the authors examine the transition of an interdisciplinary community of practice through a pandemic pivot to online engagement, communication, and engagement. Individual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) projects provide a lens through which authors elaborate on how their research on practice became interconnected within the Teaching Scholars online community of practice and reflect on the key learnings that resulted from sustained interdisciplinary collaboration. The authors distill recommendations and online strategies that can be tailored by other academics and institutions who are developing online communities of practice as an approach to sustaining educational leadership and change in SoTL research and practice in diverse and distributed contexts.

Co-Creation During a Course: A Critical Reflection on Opportunities for Co-Learning by **Laura Killam, Lillian Chumbley, Susanna Kohonen, Jim Stauffer, and Jess Mitchell**

<https://doi.org/10.18357/otessaj.2023.3.1.43>

The authors offer a compelling article in which they build and extend upon the conversation about co-creation they fostered at the conference to elaborate on key issues and themes while providing examples from practice. Authors describe co-creation as an open practice in which learners participate in decision-making about aspects of course design, which can include various activities from course design, selection of resources, to assessment decisions. An enduring theme throughout the article is the interconnectedness and overlapping nature of co-creation strategies with inclusion, evidence-based pedagogical practices, Universal Designs for learning, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion and anti-oppression standards. Authors call for ongoing dialogue, more research and critical reflection on inclusive co-creation designs and practices to advance work in this area and to discover new ways to engage learning in inclusive ways.