

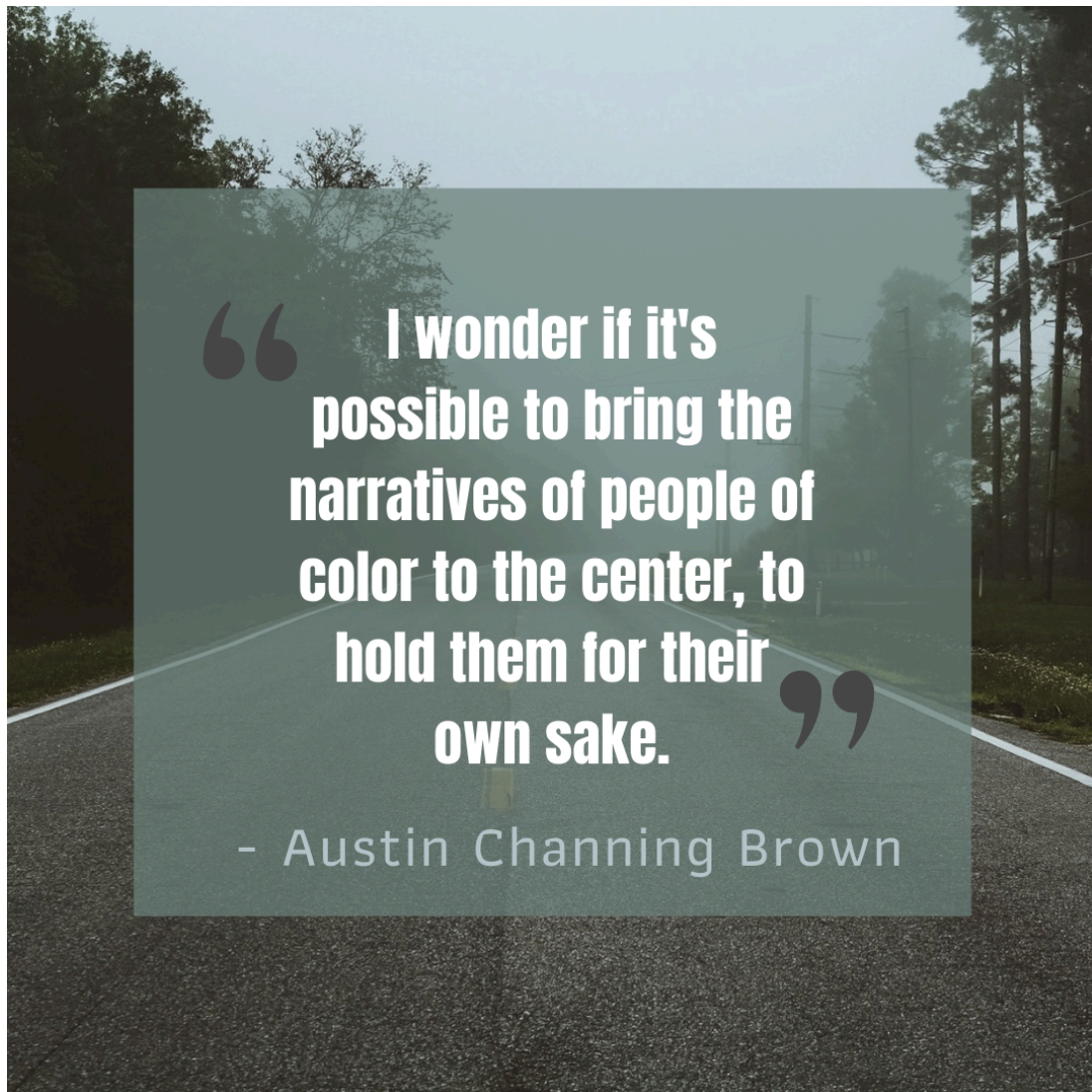
OERigin Stories

Exploring the on-ramps into the Open Education Movement

SPARC Capstone Project
Created by Ursula Pike



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“I wonder if it’s possible to bring the narratives of people of color to the center, to hold them for their own sake... This is not an exercise intended to be mean or to make white people feel awful. Nor is it an exercise to minimize the stories and experiences of white people. I just want to spend a little more time asking myself what it would be like for the priority to be reversed... Could I so center the experience of people of color that they walk away feeling some measure of healing, of energy, of understanding about themselves and each other?”

- [Austin Channing Brown \(2014\)](#)

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I. The Origin Story of OERigin Stories

In the fall of 2019, at my first Open Education conference, I attended a session titled [“Highlighting Women of Color Experiences in Leading OER Projects.”](#) The presenters were Ariana Santiago from the University of Houston, Cynthia Orozco from East Los Angeles College, and Regina Gong from Michigan State University. The session was held in a small room and, because the previous session ran long, we had to quickly file into the room as the presenters began. Attendees lined both walls and more people crowded around the doors trying to get in. The audience was more diverse than any other session I’d been to at the conference. This was noticeable because of the lack of diversity at most of the other sessions I’d attended.

The structure of the session was also different. Instead of slide decks with bullet points, Regina, Ariana, and Cynthia shared pictures that represented their experience in Open Education. This enabled audience members to listen to the presenters’ stories instead of scribbling notes or snapping pictures of the screen. Most importantly, half of the session was devoted to audience members talking to each other. I spoke with two other attendees and we shared our experience as Women of Color in Open Education. It was a quick but memorable session. Ariana Santiago, Cynthia Orozco, and Regina Gong held a similar session virtually in 2020 titled [“Opening a Space and Place for #WOCinOER: Stories, Experiences, and Narratives”](#) that I attended and found equally inspiring.

The two sessions demonstrated an interest by Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, and other Women of Color working in the Open Education movement at non-profits and institutions to connect with each other. Additionally at the OpenEd19 conference, the poster [“Who writes traditional textbooks? Who writes OERs? A Preliminary Analysis”](#) by Malina Thiede of SUNY Plattsburgh illustrated the lack of representation by Women of Color as Open Educational Resource content creators. Although 50% of OER textbook authors are women, only 10% of OER authors are Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, and other People of Color (Thiede, 2019). Inspired by the innovative work and research done by the women listed above, I created OERigin Stories as a way to promote the work of Women of Color in Open Education who, despite being underrepresented as OER content creators, are engaged leaders making significant, innovative contributions to the movement. I also included my own responses to the questions because I didn’t want the participants to have to answer any questions I myself was not also prepared to answer.

The Women Interviewed	
NAME	Title and Organizational Affiliation
Tonja Conerly	Sociology Professor at San Jacinto College; member of the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education; founder of the Houston Area OER Consortium (HAOER); and member of CCCOER Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
Angela DeBarger	Program Officer for Education, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Liliana Diaz Solodukhin	Policy Analyst, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)
Shinta Hernandez	Department Chair, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice, Montgomery College; and member of CCCOER Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
Jessie Loyer	Librarian, Mount Royal University
Ariana Santiago	Open Educational Resources Coordinator, M.D. Anderson Library, University of Houston
Ursula Pike	Associate Director, Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas (DigiTex); and member of CCCOER Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee

Defining Open for this project

For this project, the term “Open” will refer to the global Open Education movement. The Open Movement includes any effort to create, promote, use or reuse content with an open license. Abby Elder’s definition of Open Educational Resources (OER) will serve as the definition for OER: “openly licensed materials that are open and freely available to use and reuse online.” (Attribution: “[An Introduction to Open Educational Resources](#)” by Abbey Elder is licensed under a CC BY 4.0 International license.)

II. The Stories

Question #1: Tell me about yourself and how you came to be involved with Open Education.

As you read the responses to this question, think about these questions:

- *How did you become involved with Open Education?*
- *What was it that drew you to Open Education or OERs?*
- *Did someone already working in Open invite you in and explain what Open Education was?*
- *Did you seek out the opportunity to get involved? Were you unexpectedly handed an Open project and had to quickly learn what it was?*

Tonja R. Conerly

My name is Tonja Conerly and I became involved with Open probably about 10 years ago through [OpenStax](#). Openstax was looking for faculty members to pilot their Intro to Sociology textbook and my department chair came to me and asked me if I would be the one to do it for our College. I, of course, said yes. The reason that I so eagerly said yes is because, as a faculty member, I think that as soon as we receive a textbook it's outdated. I'm always doing research in order to make my information very current. I looked at it as being a free textbook for my students, that means they don't have to pay for it. And I can make it my own, it's a win, win!

“If you look at the publisher textbook and the OER textbooks, the basics are the same, therefore, I'm able to meet my Student Learning Objectives with them both, so why not the free one?”

Tonja R. Conerly

As a faculty member, I always think that the textbook is really your guide. If you look at the publisher textbook and the OER textbooks the basics are the same, therefore, I'm able to meet my Student Learning Objectives with them both, so why not the free one? What's really the big difference between them? I did find out the big difference is in reference to our faculty contributions and I'm going to talk about that later but that is how I came to be involved with Open.

Angela DeBarger

I'm Angela DeBarger, Program Officer at the [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#). I've been at the Foundation for about three and a half years. I work most closely with our

teams working on Open Education and our Open Education strategy. I came to Open Education five or six years ago. In my former role, when I was a Program Officer at the [George Lucas Educational Foundation](#). In that role, at [Lucas Education Research](#), we were developing project-based learning curricula. Collaborating with K-12 teachers and researchers. One of our goals was to create these courses where we were connecting what was happening in the classroom to students' experiences in the world, and in their communities. We really wanted both students and teachers to have agency and ownership and co-constructing their learning experiences. I was in the midst of this work and happened to get invited to a meeting hosted by the Hewlett Foundation with colleagues that I knew from my previous role as a researcher at SRI International. I showed up at this event which had something to do with Open Education, but I didn't know what that was all about.

“ We really wanted both students and teachers to have agency and ownership and co-constructing their learning experiences. ”

Angela DeBarger

I ended up connecting with TJ Bliss, the OER Program Officer for Hewlett at the time. We got to talking and it started to click for me the connection between what we wanted to accomplish with our project-based courses and what the intention of OER and Open Education. I started to learn about Open Licensing with Creative Commons and realized that we could make it explicit to teachers and students that we wanted them to adapt and customize these project-based courses in ways that make sense for them and that make it more relevant. That was my hook into Open Education. Then, from there it opened up. Now I really enjoy working on not just the technical aspects of Open but also the field-build and the other elements around pedagogy and practice.

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

My name is Liliana Diaz Solodukhin and I'm a Policy Analyst at the [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education](#). I'm also a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Department at the University of Denver. Hopefully, we'll be proposing this summer for my first three chapters. I identify as Latina. I am a First Generation student from a low-income background, giving me a unique lens through which I look at things and approach to Open Education.

“ I am a First Generation student from a low-income background, giving me a unique lens through which I look at things and approach to Open Education. ”

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

I became involved with Open Education because my boss said, “we have this project and we think you'd be a good fit for it.” I didn't know anything about Open Education. I used Google, watched a lot of the videos, and went down rabbit holes in my efforts to learn more because Open Education is so expansive. There's so much activity and it's difficult to catch up. Sometimes I feel like I'm getting whiplash because there's faculty and how they engage in Open, and then there's the student perspective, and then the publisher's, and the policies. It's a lot.

Shinta Hernandez

First of all, thank you for inviting me to be a part of this really important work. I'm honored that I can share with you my experiences and my perspectives about Open and where I think we as a collective whole can progress. As far as my involvement with Open, first of all let me share with you that my background is in public policy. Prior to working in academia, I spent a number of years as a public policy analyst in research and public policy think tank organizations in the Washington DC area; namely the [Urban Institute](#) and [Westat](#). While I was a public policy analyst at those organizations, I conducted extensive

quantitative and qualitative research studies. I traveled across the United States on site visits to conduct program and policy evaluations including projects like the No Child Left Behind Act, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Study, and the Food Stamp Program Evaluation. All of those are about social policies and social inequities. Then I ventured into the world of academia, starting off as a Sociology instructor at public four-year institutions and two-year higher education institutions in Maryland.

Teaching students in our local communities is near and dear to my heart. Approaching student success in a holistic, comprehensive and strategic way is what I strive for. In Sociology we teach about social and global inequities all the time and we get our students to think about solutions to the issues that plague our societies. It's fitting for me to continue in this equity work in this current space that I'm in.

Several years ago, Montgomery College received the [Achieving the Dream OER Z degree](#) grant. I became involved in that work as a Sociology professor and helped to promote the work throughout my institution. Over time, I started presenting at national

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Shinta Hernandez

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conferences on the work that we were doing. Now as a Department Chair of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice, I've been in this role for four years, I get to provide leadership and support to my full-time and my part-time faculty in helping them see the benefits of Open. I help them get their feet wet in this space and create opportunities for them to try different ways to incorporate Open in their teaching.

Jessie Loyer

I'm Jessie Loyer. I'm a librarian at [Mount Royal University](#) which is an undergraduate teaching focused institution in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. I am Cree Métis. My mom is Cree and my dad's Métis. I'm a member of Michel First Nation and I grew up in Callihoo, which is a town that's kind of in my traditional territory. I did the First Nations Curriculum Concentration when I was at library school at the University of British Columbia (UBC), because I thought I would end up at home working in a community center/library/museum, what we see in a lot of Indigenous communities. But I ended up getting a job at a university right away. It was a short term position due to maternity leave. I just sort of snuck in a little bit longer and I'm now a tenured professor there. It was kind of all sort of a surprise in a lot of ways.

“Openness has some holes in it when we talk about indigeneity and we talk about Indigenous systems of knowledge.”

Jessie Loyer

My work, especially because I had been doing the First Nations Curriculum Concentration and I was doing librarianship assuming that I would be in an Indigenous community, a lot of my work was thinking about what are the challenges that we have with librarianship right now that don't serve our communities? Things like language revitalization. Where is that happening in libraries? Or how is technology being used in that way? Talking about how things in museums are kept from us. We have relatives in museums. This includes not only human remains that are in museums and universities that are kept from us but also non-human articles that are considered our relatives like bead work and drums. These things in our world are considered living but are held as objects in a catalog in cultural memory institutions. That part of the work was always sort of simmering around in my brain and I don't know that I would have been able to articulate it.

But I remember at UBC, at the museum of anthropology, a lot of their ceremonial items can be lent out to people. They recognize that these are not just kind of needing to be preserved but they go home and they're loved and they're worn and they're sung to and

then they come back. There's a recognition that wear and tear is part of the life cycle of an item. That was already part of my earliest librarian training.

In terms of Open, I think I started to really get a sense of that intersection when I first started at Mount Royal articulating the cost of textbooks for students. You can see it when students are really struggling and they're asking us if we have the textbook in our library. We have to say, "No, it's not part of our collection policy." The strange obstacles that we put up in order to be responsive to publishers can be so frustrating.

Really, it was in 2018 that I got an invite to speak at an Open Access Week event that was happening. The event was co-sponsored by a number of universities in British Columbia. I got an invite from a librarian that I had gone to library school with, Lindsay Tripp who's at Langara. That was really the first time that I had to formally pull together my ideas about openness and how openness has some holes in it when we talk about indigeneity and we talk about Indigenous systems of knowledge. That was when I gave a talk about "[Rez Dogs and Open Access](#)." That's the one where I talk about, yes, we recognize that rez dogs are a problem, that there are dogs on reserve, they can be feral, they can bite people, and chiefs and councils often don't know what to do with them. It's the same as in publishing with all of these awful fees that we have to pay as libraries that get access to publicly funded research. I saw those as similar kinds of problems and, in both cases, I saw that external pressures to try and fix the problem we're actually making that problem worse or really misunderstanding the relationships that exist.

With rez dogs there are lots of culturally appropriate ways to deal with them instead of shooting the dogs or picking them up on the side of the highway thinking that they're bad dogs or that they're not being taken care of, white rescues coming into a rez and taking them away. Similarly, with Open Access, we see things like people wanting to digitize old songs or old stories that actually, we as libraries don't have the authority to do. That's what "Rez Dogs and Open Access" was about. It was the result of years of experience trickling through and me trying to see this big metaphor. The way that outsiders approach rez dogs is very similar to the way that non-Indigenous people approach openness for Indigenous materials. That's where the conversation but that's where it starts.

Ariana Santiago

Sometimes I think that how I came to be involved with Open is different from a lot of other people's experience - but maybe that's normal, and everyone really comes to it in their own unique way. What I mean is that I often hear stories of people discovering

Open directly through their experiences as a faculty member, librarian, or student, and realizing firsthand the problems at play. It's [a story of] a journey where they find out about Open, then start advocating for it and doing that work, and then it may become a formal part of that person's job. Whereas, I hadn't really heard much about Open a few years ago, up until right before I started in my current position. I wasn't thinking about it, I really wasn't pursuing that path. But I was offered the opportunity to move into a newly-created OER Coordinator role. It was more that I was presented with a new opportunity and it made sense for me as something to try.

To give you some context on my background and how that eventually led to being involved with Open, I've been an academic librarian since 2013 and I've always been in the undergraduate instruction and outreach space. In my previous positions I was teaching information literacy, doing campus outreach, supporting undergraduate students, and collaborating with other student services units.

Ursula Pike

My background is in community development. I worked with community organizations in southern Illinois and eastern Oregon. Before coming to Open Education, I was a grant writer for [Austin Community College](#). In that position, I learned about the range of initiatives and best practices being implemented at the community colleges across the country. I also did a lot of equity and cultural competence committee work within the college.

Austin Community College received an [Achieving the Dream OER Degree](#) grant, and, even though I didn't know much about OER, I knew how to make projects work throughout the college so applied for a coordinator position managing the OER initiative along with other initiatives. I promoted OER to faculty, advisors, and students. My focus was on the nuts and bolts of implementation of OER across the district. But as I began to attend local and national Open Ed conferences, I learned about larger issues facing OER such as sustainability and equity.

The other thing that was pretty clear to me from those first conferences was the lack of diversity in the Open movement. I had worked in higher education for eight years at that point and knew diversity and equity was an issue within higher ed, but I noticed it was really an issue in the Open Ed movement. Now, I work with the [Digital Higher Education Consortium of Texas](#), which works with OER across the state, looking at how we can encourage OER use at all colleges, some of which have no OER and some of which have OER degrees.

Question #2: How do you see your unique identities intersecting with Open? (if at all)

As you read the responses to this question, think about these questions:

- *What are your identities?*
- *How do your identities intersect with the people or content in the Open Movement?*
- *What about your identities that don't intersect with Open? Do they contribute to your perspective on Open?*

Tonja R. Conerly

I research a lot and I'm going to be one of the many contributing-authors for the OpenStax Intro to Sociology third edition. Research really means a lot to me because, in my field, we have to talk about facts because Sociology is a science. I think people forget that. If I just make a blank statement about somebody without having research and facts to back it up, it's just gossip.

Probably another one of my unique identities that I am intersecting with Open is that I'm going to be focusing on too is being a Person of Color. I am going to be answering that when we talk about the future of Open. My two unique identities are basically I love to research and I love to update the information to keep our Open textbooks current. My other unique identity is that I am a minority looking to make sure that education is equitable for everyone.

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I am a minority looking to make sure that education is equitable for everyone.

Tonja R. Conerly

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Angela DeBarger

I was reflecting on this question and it's a good question because it makes me think; what are my identities? I thought about myself as an academic and a researcher. My background is in Educational Psychology and I have a Ph.D. Before moving into philanthropy, I did a lot of work around learning and assessment in classrooms and trying to understand that. So, I have that piece of my identity. I have developed an identity as a Program Officer now. I'm a Black woman, so there's that piece. And also, personally, I'm a mom and a wife.

The strongest connection is probably around the academic researcher side and the program officer side. The researcher part of me has always been interested in how to create motivating and engaging learning environments, and how to create spaces where kids love to learn and want to learn. Elements of Open Education really resonate with that part of my interests because I see that at the core of what we're trying to do in Open Education is create more equitable and inclusive environments, where everyone has the information that they need to learn, where everyone can be creators of knowledge and have agency in that. That's always what I've wanted and loved to do through my research.

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...at the core of what we're trying to do in Open Education is create more equitable and inclusive environments.

Angela DeBarger

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Another part of my research that I enjoyed was collaborations -- trying to find spaces where we could bring together policy and practice in the classroom, and exploring that intersection. I see a lot of potential for that and a lot of activity around that in Open Education because if we don't attend to those intersections it's hard to move the work forward. There are a lot of fun questions we get to grapple with there.

On the program officer side, there's the strategy piece, of course. Open Education is core to my day-to-day, but I was thinking more broadly. At the Hewlett Foundation, we have some core principles around openness, transparency, and learning that are how we operate as a foundation. I feel like I can live into these principles through the work that I get to do in Open Education. The content of my work and these practices or principles are really tightly connected. That feels good to have that synergy.

In terms of coming to this as a Black woman, I think about the liberation of knowledge and information, empowerment in ownership, and creation as something that I want to actively play a role in facilitating and wanting to bring to people. I also think about how the field of Open Education still has a lot of work to do around racial equity. But in general, in the field, I see a willingness and wanting to acknowledge and connect different cultures and communities. Creating community is central to some of this work that we do in Open Education. Again, those elements resonate with me culturally.

I had a harder time making the connection with being a mom or a wife. Although, I think I do try to talk about sharing and collaboration and have honest conversations with my kids about the different kinds of assignments that they have and whether or not they're

honoring them as individuals or if they're having to conform and contort themselves to do something that's performative or procedural. I think there's something there about my experience in Open Education that helps me bring a lens to what they have to navigate in school.

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

I think my identities intersect with Open Education because I understand that there are different ways of presenting knowledge that, maybe, are not represented within the Open Movement or maybe not as widely represented. There are online textbooks that are not accessible to low-income communities that don't have reliable internet access or to rural communities if they don't have an internet connection. There are online textbooks that are not accessible to students with disabilities that might not be able to utilize some of these resources if they're not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A lot of the materials are still created by folks in the academy that might not be engaging in other modalities, in other ways of knowing or meaning making.

“ ...rarely do we have textbooks that really go in depth and explore the contributions... of Latinos, Asian Americans, Indigenous, or African American communities.

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

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I totally support Open Educational Resources and Open Education. I think knowledge should be freely available and accessible to people. I definitely have issues with putting locks on knowledge. I've published in an Open Access journal, which is exciting, and I've also published in journals that were not Open Access. It's really frustrating that people can't get to that knowledge. And don't get me started on the inaccessibility of how we write for the academy, how it's really just for the academy and not for public consumption.

I'm thinking of my identity as a Latina woman. I didn't learn anything about Latino culture in the United States or the history of Latino culture in the United States. I'm only learning about it now because my dissertation topic looks at Latino Civic Engagement. There's so much history that's omitted from textbooks and a lot of it centers whiteness and the history of people from European descent. But very rarely do we have textbooks that really go in depth and explore the contributions to technology, to education, or to law of Latinos, Asian Americans, Indigenous, or African-American communities. We're omitted from history and course materials.

I think my identity as a Latina woman primarily intersects with Open. Then definitely my low-income background gives me a way to critique Open. My background empowers

me to say, “You're creating and recreating what we've already been doing.” Textbooks do not have equal representation of the contributions of the diverse communities within the United States. I think I bring a critical eye to the Open Movement. Diversity within the Open Movement exists in pockets but is not as robust as it should be.

Shinta Hernandez

I'd like to focus on my identities in the context of my nationality, my socioeconomic status, and my educational background. I was born in Indonesia and I came to the United States when I was only one year old because my father was accepted into graduate school at the University of Maryland. We lived in this neighborhood called Langley Park mainly because it was close to the university but also because it was affordable for my father, the graduate student. We had very little money at the time. Now, what you need to know about Langley Park is that it's in Prince George's County, Maryland. It is very much a working-class neighborhood where it was very common to see police cars parked in front of my apartment building every day. I saw a lot of things that you often see on television shows or the 11 o'clock nightly news. Growing up as a kid I had this perspective that my friends, my classmates, and my neighbors were experiencing circumstances that were largely not entirely controlled by them. In fact, I witnessed with my own eyes the discrimination they experienced on a regular basis. So here I was, growing up in a resourceful family where education was a top priority, but here I also was seeing my friends' lives going in a downward spiral. Their parents were barely high school graduates, some were refugees, and some engaged in criminal activities.

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I knew since elementary school that I wanted to fight for those who had access to few resources.

Shinta Hernandez

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Several years later, my father graduated from the University of Maryland, got a better job, and we moved to Montgomery County, one of the more affluent counties in the nation. This is where I spent the rest of my childhood and I live here now. Montgomery College, where I work, is located in Montgomery County. I share this to showcase that I experienced, throughout my childhood, a world that was night and day between Prince George's County and Montgomery County. It was because of what I saw on a daily basis in Prince George's County that I knew since elementary school that I wanted to fight for those who had access to fewer resources, and were more disadvantaged.

As I was growing up, I realized that the experiences of those who lived in Prince George's County and even some who live in Montgomery County was largely because of systemic discrimination or an intersection of inequities. Now fast forward to today. I've been at Montgomery College for fourteen years. During my whole time here, I have worked tirelessly to advance efforts in the areas of Open Educational Resources, Open Pedagogy, social justice, racial equity, inclusive and decolonized curriculum, faculty professional development in this OER space, international partnerships and collaborations, and even online education because I think all of these are important pieces of the puzzle that I strongly believe can help increase accessibility, increase affordability, provide a comprehensive holistic opportunity for our students, and ultimately provide or improve equity for all of our students.

Jessie Loyer

I definitely think being Indigenous and also having come from a long line of people that have been educated, my grandmother was a nurse and she went to university, my dad was a teacher, and my mom's a museum worker [intersects with Open]. Later on in her life after she raised us, she went and worked in museums. A lot of people in my family have been involved in cultural heritage and cultural education for a long time. As I was growing up, we would go and sometimes perform or we would be involved in cultural events. When you're involved in those kinds of things where culture is so alive and you see things being

used in the way that they should be, in the correct, appropriate context, and then you see them then divorced from that, you notice the difference. When you see a dress being worn to be danced in and then you see it behind glass, you instinctively know the difference. You know that there's a change there.

I would say that for me bringing that awareness to librarianship in general has been a huge thing. In the way that we talk about the way that we catalog information and the way that we think about what is worth teaching. When you have come from an Indigenous community, growing up in a family that's been really involved in culture, that's always going to kind of be a bit of a culture shock. In the same way, too, when I was going to grad school I was in British Columbia and that was a totally different

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**When you see a dress
being worn to be danced in
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know the difference.**

Jessie Loyer

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context even from a point of indigeneity. West coast culture is so different. I had to do a lot of learning and understanding of their information. I think that helped me articulate a prairie Indigenous perspective on something in opposition to the way people on the west coast think about witnessing, or care and preservation which is done in an importantly different way. I would say that being a Cree-Métis woman has shaped how I come to this question.

I think you really do see the way that Open Access can often be tied to technology. We like sometimes to talk about the tools that we use. By and large, a lot of tech librarians are men. That's an area that is often male dominated. So we really see that some of those interventions, some of those critiques, are coming from a lot of women that are on the fringes, on the outside, from different countries, and from different identities. I think that absolutely indigeneity and also being a Native woman plays into how I come to this question.

Ariana Santiago

I come at Open more from an instructional instructional design perspective, with my background in library instruction and having a master's degree in applied learning and instruction. I sometimes see that as a unique identity because at least in libraries, I think a lot of people come to Open from scholarly communications and open access publishing. When I first started in my current position, I didn't know a whole lot about OER and then it seemed like so many OER folks were scholarly communications librarians, which is an area I hadn't engaged with very much at that point. I felt completely new to everything, but I also appreciate that because I learned so much and I'm always trying to learn more about the scholarly communications side of things.

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I don't necessarily see much of my identities intersecting with Open, but not in a way that's unique to Open.

Ariana Santiago

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I like that you said “if at all” because that might be the answer, too. I don't necessarily see much of my identities intersecting with Open, but not in a way that's unique to Open. Librarianship and academia in general are very white and not representative of people of color, and that's reflected in the Open community. For the most part, I don't see that part of my identity reflected in Open, and that's part of those bigger issues.

Ursula Pike

I'm Native, I'm a member of the Karuk Tribe which is near the California/Oregon border. My background made me a little bit suspicious of the Open Education movement from the beginning. I thought, "It sure is interesting that people are questioning the concepts of ownership and copyright when those concepts are inconvenient for them but these same universities had a different perspective on ownership when it came to ownership of Indigenous cultural and religious artifacts." There's a history there that made me a little bit suspicious and even though I know it's different, that was the context in which I came to Open Education. But, especially in the last couple years, there's been a recognition of this issue and I'm not the only one who recognizes it.

But I am also a writer. That's another one of my identities. I know that there's a lack of openly licensed written material by traditionally marginalized populations. Just the other day, an English professor posted on an Open Education listserv that they were looking for openly licensed writing by Hispanic authors. I didn't know what to recommend and knew there was no great answer. It's a thorny issue because if I want to build an audience for my writing and get a larger audience for things that I think are important to talk about then my best bet is to get that original content to a magazine that keeps the copyright. I think it's an issue that I'm interested in trying to address. I don't know the solution.

Finally, I also know the reality of not being able to afford your textbooks. When I was in college, I worked at the daycare center specifically because they served a morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack to the children and the employees. I can't ever eat applesauce again but it allowed me to afford an \$85 economics textbook.

Question #3: Please tell me about an Open Education project, textbook, or group that you have been a part of?

As you read the responses to this question, think about these questions:

- *How did you become involved with Open Education? What types of Open projects have you worked in?*
- *Who determined that those projects were a priority?*

Tonja R. Conerly

Well, I guess it's gonna have to be the big one then: the [Houston Area OER Consortium](#). When I got involved with OpenStax, as I said, it was through a pilot. I was just piloting the Intro To Sociology book. But then every year, I kept doing something more and more. In June 2018, I basically formed an organization called [Houston Area OER Consortium](#). Literally how this came about is because our college, San Jacinto College, received the [Achieving the Dream OER](#) grant and the director of the grant left the college. I was the Assistant Director and I became the Director. I was very lost. I had no guide, no one in the city of

Houston was involved with it. When I said I had no guide, I had no guide here in Houston, but [Richard Sebastian](#) and everybody at Achieving the Dream (ATD) was amazing - Oh my God, I love them so much. But it's always nice to have somebody who you can walk out your back door and you have something in common with. Even though we had OpenStax right at our back door, Rice University is walking distance from my home, it was still not enough. It was still not enough because again, I was trying to pilot a program for a college. I thought that no one else should go through what I went through in order to start it up.

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I thought that no one else should go through what I went through in order to start it up.

Tonja R. Conerly

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What I did is that I literally got on the phone. First of all, I tried to list all the colleges in the city of Houston. I got on the phone and I called around to all of the colleges in the city of Houston and the surrounding area. I started with the librarians first, they are my hidden gems, I love them. I asked, “Can you tell me what faculty members are using OER?” or “Do you have an OER program at your school?” Basically, I only found faculty members using OER. There was no one with a full OER program but Houston Community College and the University of Houston. That’s when I met Ariana Santiago

(University of Houston), she had just received the job as an OER Specialist Librarian and she had no idea what the heck she was getting into and now she's such a gem. Then from there I met Nathan Smith (HCC). He is my other sidekick, I love him so much. I call us Batman and Robin. He's amazing.

From that point, I told them what I wanted to do. I ended up continuing to call. I think that one of my gifts is that I can bring people together. I have the ability to bring people together no matter what their background is, no matter what their race or socioeconomic status, I have that ability to collaborate and bring people together. This took me like a year. I continued to call people and to assemble. We had our first meeting at Houston Community College and it was well attended. At least 12 colleges were there; San Jacinto College, Rice University, Texas Southern University, Houston Community College, the University of Houston-Downtown, the University of Houston-Clear Lake, the University of Houston Main Campus, the University of St. Thomas, Prairie View A&M University, Lee College, and if I'm forgetting somebody I'm so sorry. But we literally had 12 colleges with representation that consisted of faculty, staff, and administrators. It was amazing!

From that first meeting, we decided to continue on because everybody was longing for this knowledge. We literally set a platform that we would meet every month. We had a guest speaker and then we would have someone from one of the institutions to introduce something new in reference to OER. But we wanted to be a learning platform and that's exactly what it turned out to be. Right now, we meet quarterly and we have a new president named John Lane, from the University of Houston-Downtown. Our goal is to basically make sure that all of our institutional goals are met. That's the first thing. What can we do to make sure that your OER goals from your institution are being met? What can we do as a group? We're going to look at, for example, San Jacinto College. What can we do to help you, San Jacinto College? What can we do for you, University of Houston?

After we do that, after we meet our goals at each institution, we need to connect to the city. We need to continue to market this effort in reference to Open Educational Resources. That means that we need to get with the City of Houston's Education Department, which we've already been in connection with. We need to get in contact with the educational departments in our surrounding counties. We need to not only be concerned about higher education institutions, if we can connect to our K-12 institutions, our students would want it more because that's what they're accustomed to. We need to continue to focus on growing outside of our institutions, focus on the city, and I hope, next we need to see what we can do for our state. HAOER was one of the hosts and helped plan the [Open Texas 2021 conference](#). We need to continue and to grow.

HAOER is one of the biggest things that I have been a part of and that I hope to continue to contribute to that mission. I do not have a leadership role anymore in that, and I'm okay with that, because there's so many other things that I need to do and focus on. But I still have a voice.

Angela DeBarger

The thing I can speak to most directly is the work that I get to do at Hewlett as a Program Officer. My project is the Open Education Strategy. Last year, we concluded a process of refreshing our strategy.. For me, that was a huge project, coming into this field. I knew a little bit from the work that I had done previously around project-based learning, but now I get to work with teams who are not only in K-12 curriculum development but also professional learning. Then we've got the whole higher education sphere with work from the Open Textbooks to educational systems that are trying to support Open Education, and then the field-building globally.

Part of the strategy refresh was really getting an understanding of the landscape of the ecosystem and thinking about the position that Hewlett is going to take at this point in time in terms of how we're supporting the ecosystem. I'm pleased with where we came to in the strategy, in terms of lines of work where we're focused on not just the resources but also practice and pedagogy. We are also trying to really think about how we learn about the interactions that happen in classrooms among educators and students as they're working in Open Education. We now have a more specific line of work now around sustainable systems such as working with higher education institutions and state systems to create support or adopt policies and practices that enable more effective use of Open Educational Resources and practices. We also are looking at supporting faculty educators, acknowledging and recognizing them for what they're doing. Then in field building, we're trying to attend to how we support the growth and expansion of the Open Education field in a way that's intentional about engaging new communities. It's been, as you may know, heavily focused around North America, the U.S., Canada, and Europe. We're trying to see how we can learn more from the leadership on the African continent and in Latin America. We want to be much more intentional about how we address race, culture, and identity through the work in Open Education.

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We're trying to see how we can learn more from the leadership on the African continent and in Latin America.

Angela DeBarger

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Now that we've articulated this through the refresh process, we're moving into implementing the strategy which means identifying partners that we'll be working with and learning together around these new areas.

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

We've launched what we call the OERwest Network for folks that are members of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) region. That's pretty much all the western states including Guam and the Mariana Islands. We're in our third month of getting together. We are identifying what the network's goals and objectives are and what we're hoping to accomplish. That's definitely been enlightening. You can see all the different types of needs and all the different types of players in OER, specifically in each of the states. You have Instructional Designers, Librarians, Faculty, Chief Academic Officers, state level OER Coordinators. It's a very diverse group, which is great.

“ You can see all the different types of needs and all the different types of players in OER, specifically in each of the states. ”

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

I started by actually reaching out to key players in each state in the WICHE region. I requested to interview them before we even launched the network. We did so to really understand their needs and where they are in the process of either adopting or expanding their OER efforts. What I found is that states are in very different places when it comes to OER. Some states are barely now having conversations of launching OER efforts. Other states are light years ahead and already have policies and infrastructure in place. While in other states, it's really decentralized; it's one faculty member leading a charge in an institution, gathering friends that are interested. We really haven't pinpointed exactly what the network will be working on because it was to help them identify what their needs were and support those needs. We want to increase capacity but it's a challenge because needs are very diverse and people are in different institutional areas, which is great but then you run into siloes. We might need to focus on what meets each member's objectives and then support that work by stratifying folks based on where they are with their OER initiatives. We're still figuring out those pieces.

Shinta Hernandez

I've been fortunate to have been a part of many Open Education projects in the last several years, particularly since the start of the Achieving the Dream OER Z degree grant that Montgomery College received. But the one that I'd like to touch on here is the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Open Pedagogy Faculty Fellowship](#). I know that's a mouthful.

At Montgomery College, we were doing really well helping our students save money on Z courses by offering high quality free educational materials. Z stands for Zero Degree or Zero Cost Materials. To this day, we have saved our students \$7.3 million through the wide variety of Z courses that we offer. Now of course that's great news for our students and great news for us but we wanted to take this whole Open Education and Open Pedagogy journey just one step further. We wanted Open Pedagogy to impact our students and our communities through a social justice lens. After attending the Open Ed Conference in 2017 in Anaheim, California, a Montgomery College colleague and I were discussing how there really wasn't anything in the world where Open Pedagogy and community engagement were intertwined. Eventually, we came up with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Open Pedagogy Faculty Fellowship](#). The conceptual framework on which this fellowship is based is the [seventeen goals](#) that the United Nations wants the world to address by the year 2030. These goals are really designed to achieve and maintain global justice.

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Through this fellowship, we've basically married the concepts of Open Pedagogy and community engagement.

Shinta Hernandez

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What happens is that faculty fellows who are selected to be part of this competitive fellowship are teamed up in interdisciplinary and inter-institutional teams and then they create renewable OER assignments to help their students achieve those United Nations Sustainable Development goals of their choice. Basically, the fellowship uses Open Pedagogy to put students at the center of their learning process and makes them agents of change in their communities. The students go out using their Open Pedagogy projects to help save the world, if you will. Through this fellowship, we've basically

married the concepts of Open Pedagogy and community engagement. We're now in year four of this fellowship and we're so proud to say that, in just a short period of time, we have seven institutional partners across the United States and Canada. We're really excited to once again do this work in the summer of 2021 with a brand new cohort of faculty fellows and with some brand new institutional partners. The fellows will be from

across the seven institutional partners. Just the other day, the leadership team across those seven institutions met to talk about our fellows that we've selected. What will happen is a sort of a matchmaking process where we will take all the fellows from all seven institutions who've been selected and match them based on discipline and keeping in mind that one of the teams will have to be interdisciplinary. The teams have to be across the institutions so we will try our best not to have two people from the same institution. We will have one person from place X and another person from place Y.

Jessie Loyer

When I first saw this question, I thought, “Oh no, I'm not Open Access-y enough for this question.” But then I was thinking a bit more about it [and realized] I have been involved. We have an instance of PressBooks at Mount Royal University. There's been some great librarians there, [Cari Merkley](#), for example, has been really amazing at championing that from the perspective of student research, from the perspective of “How do we make this more accessible?”, “How do we think about that?” That's my experience with that kind of particular project that I know a lot of people are familiar with.

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What Indigitization does is it says we're going to provide the capacity, the technology, and the tools that you might need but you decide what happens with this stuff.

Jessie Loyer

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But then I was thinking a little bit more and I actually think that two of my longest experiences with all concepts of Open are [Indigitization](#) and Wikipedia. Indigitization is a project at the University of British Columbia (UBC), specifically the [Xwi7xwa Library](#). They have an endowment where they provide grants for First Nations in British Columbia that allows them to digitize their own cultural material. They award them the grants and then they bring them in for training. Then they have these kits that can be sent out to the community so people don't necessarily have to come down to Vancouver. Especially if they're from a more

isolated reserve, they can come down for the training and then they get sent the kits so that they don't have to be there for weeks on weeks.

I had first heard about this when I worked as a student at the Xwi7xwa Library when I was there. But then they really got going in a big way when I was working at MRU, so I just admired it from afar. I always wanted to bring an instance of that to our province in

Alberta but because of the endowment, the restrictions were based on provincial borders. It could only be a First Nation in British Columbia. Two years ago we were able to bring Gerry Lawson who is a trainer with Indigitization. We brought him to the Blackfoot Confederacy offices and we got a number of people from Treaty 7 Nations trained up in how to do this kind of Indigitization. One of the kits is currently on the Blood Reserve at Kainai with Mary Weasel Fat. She's a librarian at Red Crow Community College and they're doing some really exciting Indigitization stuff there.

It's really nice to see that because, for me, that project really gets to the heart of what's different about the way Indigenous people approach this. It's not just sort of, "Let's digitize everything!" "Let's put it online." Because so often funding bodies require [putting everything online] when we're digitizing, they'll say; you have to make a copy available or you have to deposit a copy. But what Indigitization does is it says we're going to provide the capacity, the technology, and the tools that you might need but you decide what happens with this stuff. If it's something that can be shared; maybe elders talking about their childhoods or something that they think is a really important thing to share with the broader community, absolutely, they can give a copy to the library. But if it's something that needs a little bit more control, like sacred songs as a good example, or even things like legal disputes, like Chief and Council minutes, those kinds of things that might be useful for the community but might actually put (if they're available to the wider general population) then that could be a risk for the community, they decide.

That was a really exciting nuanced project where they're recognizing that we need to format shifts, we need to move things so that they don't get obsolete. But in that process there needs to be a great deal of care and a great deal of knowledge from the subject matter experts, the people that are so familiar with this stuff. I'm really excited to have brought it to Alberta. The pandemic has put a bit of a hold on our training but we're hoping that maybe in the fall, depending on what it looks like up here, we're going to be able to offer that training again. I think there's lots of people in the area that are excited and so many people have tapes in their grandparents' basement or something. I think it's a really cool example.

The other one is Wikipedia. I would say it was in my third year at Mount Royal, I was working with a professor who was thinking about something that would go beyond a research essay. We worked together and figured out this assignment where students would intervene in Wikipedia. They would either create a page that didn't exist or they would substantially edit a page. For this first class, it was looking at Indigenous women. Where are Indigenous women in Wikipedia? Why are there so few female editors? Why is Indigenous content really poor on Wikipedia? There's all these amazing artists that don't even have a Wikipedia page or who are famous only in Indian Country. How do we

make these people's work known more broadly? It was a really exciting project. We probably bit off more than we could chew that first year because we didn't really know how much work it would be. But it allowed us to really think about what is created when students have to write for purpose. How do they do that? How do they write for an audience that isn't just your instructor? So it's something that is going to be out there in the world and that other people can interact with. [We gave them] A little bit of familiarity with the tools that would allow them to engage in open pedagogy. That was really exciting. I've done it a couple of times. I've worked with a professor named [Renaé Watchman](#), she's Diné. We've done it for a number of her classes where we've looked at gaps in Wikipedia. Sometimes it's as simple as what activist organizations can we expand. She teaches literature classes. Where are the Indigenous authors? What do their pages look like? What kind of information do you have when we look at other kinds of books, how are they written about? That's been a really exciting project thinking about filling in the gaps, recognizing that something that so many of us turn to all the time actually has massive gaps when we're talking about Indigenous content. It's not something that I think a lot of people realize. That's been good in terms of pedagogy but also just having people aware that this is something that they can access and that they can edit. They are an invitation to that community of practice. Those are the areas that I've done the most in terms of projects.

Ariana Santiago

I've been part of a lot of great projects and groups in the Open community, like the [SPARC Open Education Leadership Program](#) and the [Rebus Textbook Success Program](#). Some things I've been getting excited about recently are projects that take place internally with my colleagues in the library. For example, I did a presentation at [Open Texas 2021](#) with my colleague about assessment strategies. We've done so much work this past six months or more around assessment for our [incentive program](#) at the University of Houston.

Myself and the library's assessment coordinator have been working on improving the way we gather and analyze data on the courses that use OER. A lot of that is around cost savings, but not all of it. We're mindful about assessing OER use in more ways than savings from textbook costs. Previously, I had an excel spreadsheet where I kept track of all the information I had, and that worked fine, but if we put that into [Tableau](#) we're able to visualize it and get more information out of those visualizations. Simply

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We're mindful about assessing OER use in more ways than savings from textbook costs.

Ariana Santiago

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having that information in a way that is more easily visualized, analyzed, and more robust at this point leads to a lot more meaningful information. I can now see the cost savings in different colleges and different departments across campus rather than one total number. Or the percentage of projects that are using OER compared to library resources to replace commercial textbooks. That kind of stuff really helps, because I can share that information and make an impact just through sharing it in certain ways.

We have a new Dean of Libraries and as she was meeting with other Deans across campus, I was able to tell her the impact of our incentive program in each college - including the number of faculty and courses, number of students impacted, how much they saved by removing textbook costs, and the benefits OER has for teaching and learning. That way she can go into each meeting with the other deans knowing exactly how OER or alternative textbooks have impacted student success in their college. We've had adoption in almost every college. Having that level of detail readily available was possible because of the assessment work we've been doing.

Another example of a project I'm getting back into right now deals with putting OER in our institutional repository, which is something we haven't focused on in the past. It's one of the things that people don't necessarily see - it's not publishing or promoting a new open textbook, or doing presentations or workshops. I've been thinking about how much in the past year I've been able to focus on those behind-the-scenes projects that people don't see or may not recognize right away just how much they contribute. But these are the kinds of projects that really allow our program to be effective and even more impactful. I can go out there and be doing a ton of campus outreach, which I have not been doing as much in the past year, but we also need to complete these projects that support our work behind the scenes. On one hand, you want more instructors to use OER, the more the better, because that's part of the whole goal of what we're doing. But then the level of outreach and individualized faculty support can quickly get overwhelming and all of these other things wouldn't be getting done. I'm really excited about having time to do those hidden supports.

Ursula Pike

I'm on the Community College Consortium for OER (CCCOER) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee. They put out a call in fall 2020 asking for volunteers to work on OER and Equity. The Committee members presented "[Rebuilding Open Courses for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: A Community College Perspective](#)" at the 2020 Open Ed Conference. Now we're trying to figure out what we're going to do next.

The thing that drew me to the committee was the opportunity to work with other people who are interested in figuring out how OER can address equity issues or how to address equity issues within OER. It's hard work, though. What do you do? Do you create a checklist? Well, there are already checklists. What else can we try? It's tough but we have great discussions about all the work that we're doing. There are different perspectives on the right approach to take. Sometimes the work is very frustrating because I don't know what even a little bit of success would look like.

Question #4: How do you see your role in the future of open education?

As you read the responses to this question, think about these questions:

- *What do you think the future of Open Education needs?*
- *Are there Open initiatives that you want to be involved with but aren't interested in leading them?*

Tonja R. Conerly

I truly believe in equity for all. I just did a presentation at San Diego Community College district-wide and the title of my presentation was "[We Were Equitable, When Equitable Wasn't Cool](#)." I always tell my OER colleagues and friends that equity is a buzzword for people outside of our community but equity is not a buzzword for us. I want to say that equity is not a buzzword for myself. I would like to be the voice and face for Open Education for minorities especially African-Americans and here's my reason; currently we have the scenario of OER being introduced to our Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) by white americans who tell them how great this book is and that it's free. From history there has not been positive relationships between white americans when they come in contact with any minority groups (population transfer, genocide, segregation, etc.). So, this is why I believe that you need someone of color to speak to another group or an institution of color so they can have a similarity or something in common with them. I would like to be the one to let our HBCUs know that there is no underlining secret, that this is really a legitimate foundation, and that it will help our students to become a more productive member of our society. That OER will also eliminate costs for them pertaining to education and, in the long run, create fairness and equity among those that are trying to continue to receive an education. I would like for them to know that the [NAACP has endorsed OER](#). We need to get that word out to our HBCUs.

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We were equitable,
when equitable
wasn't cool.

Tonja R. Conerly

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How do we do that? Well, either we're going to start knocking on these doors or we're going to literally start with a list just as I did for the Houston Area OER Consortium. I'm going to get a list of my HBCUs and I'm going to start calling them and introducing myself. I will tell them who I am and what my mission is and this is what we can do for our students. I'm hoping that eventually the OER community will understand my plight

and want to join in since we're all on the same page. It doesn't have to just be me but I want us to understand exactly why our HBCUs and other minority institutions are not embracing Open Education the way that they should. That is how I see myself in the future in reference to Open Educational Resources.

Angela DeBarger

That's an interesting question because I want to enter with humility in this because in the role that I play as a Program Officer I bring funding to the work but I'm not doing the work. Ideally, I want to create a space where there's mutual learning happening -- where what's happening in the field is shaping what's guiding the Foundation and, at the same time, identifying some areas of focus where we think the Foundation can play a role. Hopefully, those areas are ones that are resonant in the field and also helping to create a more expansive field.

The other thing I grapple with is in the early days of Open Education or OER, the Foundation was more in the center of building the field. Now we're one of many actors, which is a great place to be. I'm trying to navigate that shift. When I think about the role in the future of Open Education, the particular ideas that I hope I can help move forward would be around Open Practice and Pedagogy. I want to work in support for educators around how to engage all of their learners, to incorporate their identities and their experiences into the learning, and to have that collaborative relationship with students. OER is a part of this, but it doesn't have to be the core of it.

Another area I'd like to hopefully move forward in is around research and understanding

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...we have a role to play in bringing in and bridging to new communities, new organizations, and new teams that can help shape and inform the field...

Angela DeBarger

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how Open Educational Resources and practices can change teaching and learning. We know a little bit about that, and some of the most prominent research is focused on comparing OER classes to non-OER and looking at grades. But I think there are other important elements to consider, including the nuance in terms of what's possible in interactions in classrooms, and I hope that we can support some research that sheds more light on that. Then when I think about our work with systems, I hope that we're able to partner with a few educational systems where we really can create the space for Open Education to thrive. I hope we can support the

development of sustainable OER initiatives that are really integrated, fully resourced, and supported almost holistically within these systems. What I mean is that it's not another initiative but it's something that institutions see as integral to the way that they support teaching and learning. We have some partnerships underway where that's in-progress, and I really want to do more learning there.

In terms of the field building, I feel we have a role to play in bringing in and bridging to new communities, new organizations, and new teams that can help shape and inform the field, particularly around learning with Black, Indigenous, and Latino communities. That's something that I think, given our vantage point, that we have at the Foundation, we may be able to help facilitate that. Those are a few thoughts that come to mind but, again, we'll all be learning together as we see what's happening in the ecosystem.

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

That is a hard one because Open Education is so broad. There's so much happening in Open and OER specifically.

I think in the policy space is where I see myself primarily. For example, I'm working with a state that wants to approach their state legislators to get support for OER in the form of funding, buy-in, and infrastructure. I can point them to exemplary pieces of legislation that other states have introduced as well as providing some bad examples of legislation that's been introduced in other states. Our goal is to help states introduce good and sound policy that really focuses students at the center, supports the needs of faculty, and provides the ability to create infrastructure. I see myself connecting states to others that are doing this work really well. They could learn and support each other.

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**I see myself connecting
states to others that
are doing this work
really well.**

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

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Shinta Hernandez

There's definitely a reason why I've always taught at public institutions and there's certainly a reason why I'm at a community college today. I think my whole life I've seen the intersection of inequities play out in my friends' lives, in my classmates' lives, and even in my own students' lives. I continue to be on this mission to empower our communities through Open Education. I think it is through this framework of teaching

and learning that I truly believe we can transform our students' lives in a way that allows them to have a more meaningful learning experience. It allows them to have a greater agency in their learning process and really allows us to better our communities through this social justice lens of Open Pedagogy in a way that matters and in a way that is impactful. Whether I help other institutions be formal partners in that fellowship, or I help the faculty in my own department incorporate Open Pedagogy through an inclusive curriculum, or I simply help other higher ed institutions through my statewide/nationwide committee roles; I know there's going to be a place for someone like me in the work of Open Education because there's still a lot more work that needs to be done.

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My whole life I've seen the intersection of inequities play out in my friends' lives, in my classmates' lives, and even in my own students' lives. ”

Shinta Hernandez

Jessie Loyer

That is such a good question and it was one that I was thinking about, too, because my day-to-day work is not tied to Open Ed. I think it's part of the information literacy that I do, it sort of sneaks in there. But I'm not the person that is running our Open Journal System or anything like that. But I'm cautiously optimistic about the way that it looks. I

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I see my work ...reminding people that Indigenous people are here and that our information organization just works differently in a lot of cases. ”

Jessie Loyer

think about that [Rez Dog talk](#) and even the [Land Back talk](#), where I was thinking about Open Education and some of the concerns that Indigenous people have with it. The idea that there's so much that can be done, there's so much exciting work that's being done. People are being really thoughtful. They're trying new things. There's a lot of energy in Open Access and it's really nice to see that in a space that can be really quiet in some ways. I think that as librarians, we have a way of doing things that we like and that is comfortable. It's nice that in Open Access to see that there's energy and a will to be thoughtful and be creative. I have cautious optimism.

The biggest thing, at least where I see my own work, is being really critical of the way that publishers are co-opting this movement. We see these big academic publishers

introducing different levels of access that are really so out of touch with the work that we're doing. It's laughable. Okay, we see that you want to make more money but this isn't actually helping students not pay for textbooks or this isn't actually helping good research get out to the public. That critical eye around big systems like academic publishing and also that critical eye reminding people that Indigenous people are here and that our information organization just works differently in a lot of cases. We're going to have different kinds of concerns than a researcher that's at a university. Reminding people not to forget us is where I see myself, too. Hey, we're still here!

Ariana Santiago

To be honest, I really don't know. I'm not someone who plans far off in the future. This isn't really an answer to the question, but it made me think about where OER fits in an organizational structure. In a lot of places it falls with scholarly communications due to the connections with Open Access. In others it's part of an instruction or teaching and learning unit, or maybe even collections. Open Education could go in any of those, or not within one of those buckets at all, because it touches all of them. What I'm getting at is there are so many possibilities not just for me individually but for everything in terms of what Open is, what this work intersects with, how it impacts different areas, and there's so many directions to be taken.

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...there are so many
possibilities not just
for me individually but
for everything in terms
of what Open is...

Ariana Santiago

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Ursula Pike

I feel like a broken record here but equity is my priority over and above my commitment and interest in OER. That's always what I am focused on; it's why I believe in community colleges. I have seen the reality of community colleges being able to change people's lives in my own family. I will be trying to address equity using OER. Recently I saw that [DOERS3](#) is developing an Equity Blueprint that looks good.

Recently, Jasmine Roberts talked about white savior tendencies in the Open movement and I don't think that she's wrong. We need to talk about how we approach helping people. The long-term sustainability of the Open movement will have to address these issues.

Question #5: What do you think is the biggest benefit of Open Education and what do you think is missing?

As you read the responses to this question, think about these questions:

- *Are the benefits of Open impacts that you have seen?*
- *What do you think is missing from the Open Education movement?*
- *How has the lack of that missing element impacted your work in Open?*

Tonja R. Conerly

Of course, the biggest benefit is that it's free. What is missing is that we need more faculty members to be involved in this mission. The biggest concern or complaint in reference to the use of Open Educational Resources for faculty members is that they don't have all the bells and whistles that the publishers have; the materials, test banks, and things like that. If we had more faculty members involved, we could all collaborate together and we make our instructional resources much better. You have all of this knowledge so why would it not be compatible or even better than the publisher's resources? We know what we want. That's the biggest benefit and that's what I think is missing, the recruitment of faculty members. That's what I recommend because I'm a faculty member and I would be able to relate to other faculty members knowing what you want and what you need in order to make your classroom a better classroom.

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**We need more
faculty members to
be involved in this
mission.**

Tonja R. Conerly

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Angela DeBarger

I would like OER and Open Educational practices to play a role in transforming systems. I don't think that OER or Open Education in and of itself can do that without other work around educator development and collaboration or financial practices and other policy work. All of that would need to be coordinated. But I do think that Open Education can play a role in system transformation, particularly when it opens up the space for communities to have a voice in shaping what's happening.

In a more focused way, I think about also the role that Open Education plays in giving educators and learners agency in their learning. There are the technical aspects of Open Licensing which are a piece of it, but when I think about Open Practice, it's really

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**...Open Education can
play a role in system
transformation.**

Angela DeBarger

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about inviting more voices, listening to multiple perspectives, and really making space, ideally, for learners, who have been marginalized, to have a voice in defining and leading in their learning. I see Open Education as being able to play more of a role in that. Not that it's happening as much as I would like but I do think that's possible.

Then in terms of what's missing, I really think there's a lot more that can be done around racial equity and Open Education. Some aspects of the OER field have been silent on this issue, or perhaps assuming that designing OER for the mainstream will work for every

learner, if materials can be adapted. This is not at all inclusive, if “mainstream” implies white communities. One thing that I think needs to change is being more intentional about designing with and for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color from the very beginning. I'm hopeful and I think there's energy and interest around this. I'm hoping that this change is possible, but I'm doing more than just hoping. I'm going to work on this actively.

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

Definitely the biggest benefit is to, in a sense, decolonize knowledge, and to make it accessible to everyone. Open Education can open the floodgates of knowledge and not have it be exclusive to those in the academy or attending college. If someone wants to teach themselves something, especially if they can't afford to register for classes or go to a college, they could still look at the materials and get a sense of what they should be learning if they could afford to go to college. Especially for folks that are in shifting industries, I can see this being super impactful. Open education can be part of retraining opportunities for folks in industries that are no longer viable or are diminishing. People could look at open materials to see if there's something they would want to explore instead of having them pay for something only to find out that's not what they want to do.

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Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

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There's great potential in OER in that way that it makes things accessible to a variety of audiences. However, there's a couple of things missing. The first is that the movement seems to be decentralized, which has its pros and cons. With decentralization comes a lot of duplication of efforts. Folks are creating multiple textbooks for the same exact topic and then not really addressing some of the high need areas like technical education. We need collective infrastructure that provides leadership. Right now there's a lack of cohesion in the Open or the OER movement and that's just from the U.S. perspective. I'm very new to OER and to Open Education so I'm still learning.

The other thing that I think is missing is representation. I've been working with one particular state that has been trying to develop OER materials and want to include indigenous knowledge and perspectives to increase their equity efforts. That is commendable but we also need to be careful about communities that maybe don't want that knowledge out there. We have to be respectful of that. We have to understand the history that comes with why a community maybe doesn't want to share that knowledge, which again circles back to why we might not understand that if we're not represented in textbooks. It's a vicious cycle. As one of my professors said, not all knowledge is for the academy. That sentiment seems to go against what Open is about but there are communities that might not feel safe or comfortable sharing their knowledge. We have to respect that while still not omitting them from the conversation.

Shinta Hernandez

The largest benefit of Open Education is the communities of practice that have been established nationally and worldwide. We have organizations such as the [Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources](#) (CCCOER). We have the [Open Educational Global Consortium](#) (OEGlobal). We also have Achieving the Dream (ATD) and there are plenty more out there. Really all of these organizations are wholly committed to advancing Open Education and can provide the resources or the networking that I think is needed to help all of us progress in this space. If institutions, for instance, need support or if individual faculty or staff members need support, they can turn to these institutions or organizations for guidance on how to effectively and efficiently incorporate Open Education into their everyday work lives.

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Where I believe we can still improve is we can develop more accurate assessments.

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Shinta Hernandez

But what I believe is missing in Open Education or where I believe we can still improve is we can develop more accurate assessments. Because Open Education is a very broad framework and there are so many components to Open Education, I think it can prove a bit challenging to assess the magnitude of the impact of Open Education or Open Pedagogy or even individual Open Educational Resources. When we assess or measure impact we can ask: is student success truly a function of the affordability and accessibility of OER or is it more of a function of the inclusive component of Open Education or can student success be attributed to another element of open education. There are just so many questions out there and that's what makes assessments challenging but that's where I believe we need to further engage.

Jessie Loyer

I think the most exciting thing and the biggest benefit is that the research that the public pays for is more accessible to them. The historic push for medical Open Access is absolutely understandable. It's this idea that doctors should be able to know what other people have found out in order to better serve their patients. I don't know why we don't apply that same logic to so many other areas. It's important for us to know what people have found out in history, sociology, and psychology. There are all these areas that can often have really awful embargoes and can have huge gatekeeping methods and massive amounts of money that you need to pay in order to get your paper published open access. The exciting thing about Open Access to me is that it's really chipping away at those walls. It's helping people articulate why academic publishers should not be doing this work. It's making some of those systems a little bit more clear to the average undergraduate student or even that person in the average public.

My husband started off as a researcher in a lab and then he was a fitness trainer for many years. He talked a lot about how for so many people in his field the idea of looking at the scientific literature was not part of their everyday life. They hadn't grown up with that expectation. But if we can embed that into areas that really do need to know what's going on in their field, that's super exciting to me. It helps people be more informed, helps them do a better job, it helps them to understand the exciting work that's being done. That's obviously like the biggest, most optimistic benefit of Open Access.

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I really like that it
[Open Education]
destabilizes unethical
publishers
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Jessie Loyer

I really like that it destabilizes unethical publishers, too. I think, “You thought you could try another scheme to get us to pay more, but no, we're going to do it in a different way.” We're going to try something different where we skirt around this. All of these systems like peer review and editing still exist but it doesn't have to be under the publisher's umbrella. That's really exciting to me. That idea of undercutting these horrific systems that make our lives as librarians so challenging.

Affordability is a big one, too. As a student you think about what can you afford, what textbooks can you afford, and what you can't afford? The idea of shaping courses around affordability is so exciting to me. It has a real turn towards student needs that we don't see when people are pushing for the classic. Why does it look like that? How can we reshape our syllabus to include open information in a way that it hasn't before? Oftentimes, it doesn't look largely different, it just means we have to be a bit more creative about where that information is coming from. Affordability is a big one.

For Indigenous people, Open Access, especially, related to our collections, can help us reunite with those relatives that are held in collections. I have an example. An older man who was from [Siksika Nation](#) was coming to the library. He was working as an elder on campus. He was asking me about a book that his uncle had written with someone. It was in a series of collected Blackfoot stories ([The Sun Came Down](#) by Percy Bullchild). I said, “Yeah let me let me have a look.” He had the name slightly wrong and so I looked it up for him. I found the right book and I've never seen somebody so excited to be handed an old leather-bound book. Because he was like, “I remember this man telling these stories to me, in this book I could hear his voice again.” To me that's really exciting. So much of our collection is in closed stacks or there's a level of mediation that's needed in order for people to access those things. That extends even into museums and archives. All of these cultural memory institutions have so many stories that are not ours in lots of ways. We're probably not the ones that should be hanging on to them. There's tons of other people who have more of a connection to them and might be able to articulate a better way that can be shared. Open Access, I think for me, has as part of it a call to action for these kinds of institutions to think about being responsive to those communities whose stuff they have. That's not really a part of Open Access that we often see but I think it's one that I'm starting to see be pushed out a little bit more. For museums, do the communities know what you have, do people know what you have? It starts with that simple simple question. To me that has to be part of the Open Movement, that has to be one of the big benefits. That we start to see relatives coming home. That's really important.

I think about how important it was for me as a kid for me to go to a museum and to see my own culture be represented in a way that was so necessary for me even to understand myself as someone who is belonging to something that's much longer, much farther back, than who I am. It's a messy complicated relationship but I think it's a good call to action to say, "How can this look differently?" The Royal Alberta Museum which just opened up a few years ago has a meteor, [the Manitou Stone](#), that is sacred. People will pray with it. The museum asked, "What do we do with this right? What do we do with this stone?" What they've done is they've now placed it in a prominent place in the museum in their new building. But they've also made it so that people can come and do ceremony with it. That sort of openness is not one that we often see being articulated when we talk about Open Educational Resources or Open Access as a broad idea. But I think that's a great example of it. It's like the recognition that our collections will mean different things to different people and that they might need to use it in a way that we're not familiar with. That's a massive benefit. It's forcing people to be really reflective about what our collections mean to us and to others.

You're asking what's missing from the Open Movement and, honestly, that critique of publishers is missing. People are absolutely doing that but we need to come out so strongly against that. It's highway robbery. It's shocking what publishers ask libraries to pay. The issue also ties to bigger things such as LandBack. That talk I gave at Open Ed is exactly about that idea. We can get so focused with our head down thinking about, "How do we make this one textbook open?" without considering how that textbook ties to bigger ideas. How does the textbook tie to Black Lives Matter? How does this tie to [LandBack](#)? How is this tied to anti-Asian sentiment?

All of these big cultural movements that we're existing in right now require us to apply that lens to our thinking about Openness. We need to think about how much has been taken from these communities and withheld from them. I'm only really speaking about this from an Indigenous perspective but I think we can see it in lots of examples. Even the challenges in talking about genealogy. That's a really good example. For white people, they can follow it back all the way oftentimes because there's excellent record-keeping for their communities. But with most non-white communities, genealogy only works up to a point where our ancestors interacted with that record. I have in my genealogy records a woman just called *La Sauvagesse*. She clearly had a name in the language that she spoke but she's just in the record in that way, as a savage. What a funny thing for us to often have to describe when we're talking about the ways that records fail us, the way that collections fail us. But that's a big part of what we have to think about when we're talking about Open Access in this broadest sense, the harms and the gaps that exist in the record.

Ariana Santiago

It is difficult to say what the biggest benefit is, but it makes me think about the conversation around the textbook affordability piece of Open Education, and the desire to move beyond affordability. I see both as valid arguments. Yes, there's so much more to Open than textbook affordability but that's not to say that the affordability piece of it isn't enough. That still is a really big benefit. The biggest benefit of Open Education is that there isn't just one thing, there are so many benefits. There's textbook affordability and free access to materials, the ability to retain content, and the impacts on teaching and learning, like the ability to be more flexible and customizable, increasing engagement in learning, Open Pedagogy. It can be all of those things.

As far as what's missing, and this might not fit the question, but what's missing is balance. I don't necessarily mean work-life balance, but that's similar to what I'm getting at. There's so much enthusiasm for Open - which is fantastic - and there's so much passion from people around what we're doing - again, fantastic - but it doesn't have to be your whole life. It is similar to what Fobazi Ettarh said in [Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves](#). Vocational Awe is a term coined by Fobazi Ettarh. It has to do with the idea that librarianship is a calling and does so much good. But Fobazi's point with this concept is that librarianship or libraries are beyond critique because they're such "good" institutions. It makes it harder as an individual to set reasonable boundaries or advocate for yourself, or be fairly compensated or treated as an employee. There's a sense of "look at all this amazing good we do through Open Education" and having to live up to that. But can't I just be a person trying to do my job well? Can I do my work and not try to save the world?

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...what's missing
is balance.

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Ariana Santiago

I don't want to go around being evangelical about OER. It isn't the end-all be-all. That influences how I talk to faculty or other people on campus. If they're not into the idea, that's okay. Again, I'm not saying any of this is not worthy of being celebrated or not a good thing or doesn't have good outcomes. Obviously there are good outcomes that come from Open. But when people ask me, "How do you talk to faculty who are resistant?" I tell them, "They can be resistant - they probably have good reasons to be." I won't tell faculty, "No, you need to use OER, I'm super excited about it and you should be, too."

Ursula Pike

The open movement has solutions for problems and issues that higher education is trying to address. Whether it's funding issues or student engagement or accessibility and, of course, equity. OER is a great tool that can be used to address all of the problems that colleges are trying to figure out how to solve. OER has a lot of potential because you don't have to have a PHD to create an OER. The number of people who can work on solutions is large.

The biggest thing that's missing is data. There's not enough disaggregated data on OER outcomes for students. Gathering data is tough because even one class that uses OER is different from the same class using a different OER. It's messy. But there's a lot of data that can still be gathered and as individual colleges or programs measure student outcomes and disaggregate that data to connect with student outcomes, there will be a clearer justification for the use of OER.

Question #6: These are my questions but what questions are you grappling with?

As you read the responses to this question, think about these questions:

- *What questions do you have now?*

Tonja R. Conerly

What's concerning me in reference to Open Education is that there are so many different platforms in Open Education. I don't want it to seem like we were all competing against one another since we're just one community. I don't like that. I would like to see more unification and more collaboration saying that we are one but here are some resources. Right now, there's just too many different platforms for us. And that's good because there is more knowledge. But I don't want it to seem like we're competing against one another when we're all basically set for one goal.

“ I don't want it to seem like we were all competing against one another since we're just one community.

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Tonja R. Conerly

Angela DeBarger

When I saw this question, I went back to some notes from an education team meeting that we had at Hewlett where we talked about the Open Education strategy where we looked at our learning questions. We had a brainstorming session and, while it's still very messy in terms of all of the questions, there were a few that I thought I could bring today that I feel like we're grappling with and want to know more about.

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Is there a shared understanding of racial equity and how that shows up in Open Education?

Angela DeBarger

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- As the field is continuing to evolve, how can we understand who the field is today and how this informs the work that's being done?
 - Is there a shared understanding of racial equity and how that shows up in Open Education?
 - How does structural racism in education show up in different communities and contexts around the world?
 - How can the Hewlett Foundation, our grantees, and the field actively work against colonialism and navigate racial equity and social justice issues? What does collective activity around this look like?

- What unique opportunities does Open Education provide for anti-racist education?

I feel like these issues have given focus to the strategy in a way that wasn't there before. There's so much that can be done in Open Education, and this is so important. If we are able to hone in on this, I think it does create more opportunities for the field to expand and to represent inclusion in new ways.

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

There's so many right now. It's challenging because there's so many needs and how do you support people that have different types of needs? For most of the members of the OERwest Network, they need increased funding. They need the funds to support OER because faculty need to be compensated for their time in developing and remixing OER. It's not cheap to prepare course materials for students. I was a Teacher's Assistant and I understand that it requires a large time commitment, especially when they're expected to publish or perish to be promoted. The biggest question that I'm grappling with is how do I support people and their OER efforts when the needs, the objectives, and the goals are so diverse.

“ They need the funds to support OER because faculty need to be compensated for their time in developing and remixing OER.

Liliana Diaz Solodukhin

Shinta Hernandez

I've always been thinking about these two questions in my head and I continue to grapple with it and I will continue to work tirelessly to help address them. Those questions are: what more can we do to align Open Education with institutional strategic priorities across the United States and what more can we do to build institutional capacity to see that Open Education is a consistent variable in this equation of student success. Let's focus on student success vision statements, let's focus on institutional mission statements and institutional strategic plans, let's focus on diversity equity and

“ What more can we do to build institutional capacity to see that Open Education is a consistent variable in this equation of student success? ”

Shinta Hernandez

inclusion work. What about board of trustees' support or community involvement? What about hiring talented faculty and staff who have experienced working in this space? What about leveraging other resources? These are just some of the ways that I believe we can address those two questions and can help garner additional support in this work because I'm sure that if we can come close to achieving these things our students will certainly thank us.

Jessie Loyer

My brain's always on fire about this. What I've been thinking a lot about and I've mentioned it a bit in our time today but I really think about this idea of kinship. I've written about it. I think it's important in the way that we teach as librarians. For me, it's also thinking about our collections. The idea that in our collections, there's kin-making there. That the people that take care of collections have a stewardship, are kin with the things that they take care of. But we're not the only ones that have a relationship to those collections. Oftentimes, they need to go home when they need to or they need to be connected to their relatives. To me that's a big part of what I'm always thinking about.

I just finished a book chapter that is talking about how so many of our collections emerge from a white man's singular joy. Some guy said, "I like this, and I like this, and I like this." Then that shapes our collection. We might add to it but it is the base of our collection. We can see that in our cataloging systems, we can see it in the way that Dewey for example is really obsessed with certain things. Even at the Library of Congress, the Thomas Jefferson influence on that is so apparent when you really look at it. These sorts of white man's singular joy versus collections as relatives is so oppositional. I'm really excited about how those two things can play together. How we can send our relatives back home.

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When we make everything Open, how do we then identify what's still relevant to us?

Jessie Loyer

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I'm also always excited about this idea of thinking about where an idea emerges from. For Open Access, for example we often talk about it in terms of stewardship. We want to do this for others, we want to make access easier for others. But when you ask me this question, one of the things that I think about is, because Open Access often is situated in a library and so much of library thinking is tied (whether we want it or not) to the idea of being a repository. Concepts around preservation are big in our minds. That's what we learn in library school. That's what shapes our work even as we want to

encourage things that are not always in that realm. But with repositories and preservation shaping the way that Open Access looks, it makes me want to ask; What's the end of the life cycle for some of these things? What about weeding things out or letting things die?

A good example is [Haida totem poles](#). Haida totem poles were never meant to last forever. They were meant to eventually be laid down and go back to the earth, to rot back to the earth. But we now have many of them in museums where they're cared for and they're preserved for many different reasons. What excites me about this question of stepping outside of librarianship to think about Openness is this idea of letting things sleep again. When does something not become useful anymore but can be allowed to go and rest and sleep? Weeding is a big part of librarianship, but it's not one that the public knows about, that we go through and we take things out. In Open Access, how do we let something go back to sleep? How do we let it sleep when it's no longer useful right? I don't even know how to begin to ask that question but it's one that sort of was tickling my brain a bit. I'm thinking about how, when we make everything open, how do we then identify what's still relevant to us.

Ariana Santiago

The perennial one for me is about scaling the work and making it sustainable. I want to say the workload, as well. I'm one person and I can only do so much. I know that's something that people experience across the board. I'm also in a fortunate position because I have a full-time position, I have institutional support, I have funding - and I feel overworked and like there's too much to do. I know other people who don't have all of those things feel it even more or in different ways. But there's this pressure to do everything. It might be a pressure I put on myself but maybe I feel it from other places or people, too. Especially because we have a full-time position doing this, people might ask, "Why can't we do X, Y, or Z?" Well, I'm still only one person.

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**It is hard to move
any level beyond
what we're currently
doing.**

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Ariana Santiago

I collaborate with a lot of people and I have been somewhat successful in bringing other people across campus into conversation around OER - there are faculty advocates, instructional designers, the bookstore is a great collaborator around OER efforts. But at the same time, this work is fairly siloed, at least in how I experience it. It is hard to move

any level beyond what we're currently doing. That's something that I struggle with on the day-to-day.

There sometimes is a sentiment that Open is always better and things should be Open if they are able to be. But I don't know if I always agree with that. From my own experience, I don't necessarily want everything that I make to have a Creative Commons license on it. It'll really depend on what it is and what it's for. This may be something that people of color or other marginalized communities are more aware of or hesitant around, and I have to credit Monica Brown who talked about this in "[Defining the Invisible Labor of OER](#)." I can compare it to the experience of putting an idea out there or making a suggestion and nobody listens, but then a colleague repeats your suggestion and gets all the credit. I could see that potentially happening. When I put something out there with a CC license on it, I don't know who's going to use it in what way. They're supposed to give attribution but maybe my work could get obscured and it's that same thing where I wonder, "Am I going to get credit for my hard work or is someone else going to?" Or similarly, something I can relate to is your work being overlooked or taken for granted. I worry about these things being replicated.

Ursula Pike

What does successful equity work look like for an institution or an individual faculty member? As I said before, measuring success when it comes to equity work is difficult. We can count heads or grades but we can't count anything that will show the transformation. For me, I will believe that change has come when institutions demonstrate their commitment to the success of all students. When I first started working in higher education, the emphasis was on access and getting students into college. But in the last two decades I've seen a growing recognition that we need to focus on what happens once students walk through the doors, what happens while they are here, and what happens when they walk out the doors. Everyone at every level of the institution understands that. Having an institutional focus on equitable outcomes needs to be that deeply and widely understood.

III. The Significance of the Stories

In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's essay "The Danger of a Single Story" in the openly licensed anthology [88 Open Essays](#), Ms. Adichie wrote:

"Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity. ...when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise."

In the four years that I've been involved with Open Education, I have heard different versions of a single story; faculty and staff will be drawn to Open Education because Open Educational Resources save students money. I myself have totaled spreadsheet columns and built charts to illustrate the dollar amount saved. But Open Education is about more than saving students money. The stories of the women interviewed for OERigin Stories highlight the complexity of the advantages and challenges of the Open Movement. The testimony of these women illustrate that there is no single story for Open Education, especially when using OER to address long-standing equity, diversity, and inclusion issues in higher education.

Between May 2020 and May 2021, I attended several workshops and presentations focused on addressing the lack of equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education. At each of those sessions, there was a point when someone asked what was the easiest thing they could do to improve equity at their institution. The people asking the question had seen the evidence and wanted to work to change the situation but didn't know where to begin. Listening is a first step anyone can take. I invite you to read and consider the wisdom and experiences of the Women of Color in Open Education contained in this document. There's no single story here and each response illuminates a different experience.

Attributions

Information for this document was consulted and adapted from

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