

Redesigning for Open Educational Practices: A Faculty-Librarian Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

Open educational practices (OEP) are rarely explored in LIS education, despite its alignment with many of the core values in library science. Recent scholarship on LIS pedagogy does speak to the merits of OEP, which can include open and equitable access, real-world learning experiences, and principles of social justice. However, there is little discussion about what this looks like in practice and within the LIS curriculum. This thought piece examines the practical aspect of using OEP in the LIS graduate classroom and describes the collaborative reflections of an LIS faculty member, librarian, and university librarian to prepare to implement OEP at a regional comprehensive university. This collaboration found that OEP is a good fit for the library science curriculum, but that there are important support considerations which need to be secured before implementation, such as access to participatory technology, training on intellectual property and staffing. In addition, the dynamic nature of OEP addresses some of the challenges associated with the current landscape of online learning in higher education, including delivering more engaging pedagogy, increasing student digital literacy and student involvement in the scholarly communication process.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

- Pedagogy
- Teaching faculty
- Administration

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

open educational practices; LIS education; collaboration

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INTRODUCTION

Open educational practices (OEP) is broadly used to describe the teaching practice of using open technologies, open pedagogical approaches and open educational resources (OER) (Campbell, n.d.). Differing from open educational resources (OER) (which is related specifically to free learning *resources* that are shared under an intellectual property license which allows for sharing), OEP refers to the teaching *practices* that actively engage students in using and co-creating knowledge, through a teamwork and collaborative approach. An OEP designed course (or assignment) can be summed up with the presence of Hegarty's (2015) eight key attributes: participatory technology; people, openness, and trust; innovation and creativity; sharing ideas and resources; connected community; learner generated; reflective practice; and peer review. In a time where faculty are concerned that artificial intelligence (AI) will do the work for students, OEP offers a solution that provides flexible, active and engaging teaching solutions that utilize social networks and collaborative learning (Tlili & Burgos, 2022).

This think piece examines the most basic question, "Where are the opportunities for applying OEP in an LIS graduate course?" and the subsequent question, "How can faculty collaborate with academic librarians to transform their practice to include principles of OEP?" And finally, "What institutional considerations are needed before a robust OEP initiative can be successful?"

OPEN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Open educational practices are a strategy for extending, revising, and remixing traditional ways of teaching. Wiley (2013) summarized OEP as "killing the disposable assignment" (or eliminating assignments that add no value to the world). As such, students create their own instructional materials, under the guidance of an instructor's worked examples, often remixing OER (or AI-generated work), undergoing a revision process that includes both instructor feedback and peer review, and then sharing that work with an audience outside of the classroom. To do this well, students need training in intellectual property, selecting resources, and accessibility. There are many examples of faculty using OEP on the [Open Pedagogy Portal](#) and the [Open Pedagogy Notebook](#).

Practically speaking, OEP is a learner-driven approach to teaching. Some describe OEP as a strategy for reducing costs for students by asking them to co-create their learning materials (instead of purchasing them). This agency allows students to find the assignments more useful and meaningful and integrate their own experiences and identities within the materials. Some examples of this might be asking students to co-create course policies (or syllabus), allowing students to create rubrics, providing feedback on assessments, or allowing students to choose the course topics (and teach them). Another key element in OEP is the *renewable assignment*, which asks students to create an artifact that is valuable to both themselves and to others within the field of study (Lambert, 2018). For students, renewable assignments can be more motivating and build higher levels of competence when shared outside of the course (Clinton-Lisell & Gwozdz, 2023). Some examples of a renewable assignment might include asking students to write a book review to be shared or submitted for publication, collaborating on an annotated bibliography (or other paper), using social annotation to annotate or update an open textbook, creating memes related to course content, or writing study guides to share with future students.

Through all its merits and promises, OEP is not without its limitations. The nature of OEP often asks students to create materials that could be shared with others, including those in the class or outside audiences. This can be stressful for students who may be challenged by the additional time needed to create the materials, the risk of sharing with another audience, or feelings of being limited by their own knowledge of content or copyright (Hofer et al., 2021). Jhangiani (2019) encapsulates this complex pedagogical practice with 5Rs for open pedagogy: respect, reciprocate, risk, reach, and resist. OEP should respect student agency, build community (within the course and the field), recognize the risks taken by students and professors in an OEP environment, be a living instructional practice (that may take a life of its own), and resist the commodification of learning (Jhangiani, 2019).

OEP IN LIS EDUCATION

Why has the LIS educator community not talked more about OEP? There are few examples of library science graduate pedagogy in the open pedagogy portals, and a search within the Journal of Education in Library Science (JELIS) for “open education” or “open pedagogy” does not retrieve any results. However, librarians are leading their campuses in open educational initiatives, from open pedagogy programs to open educational projects. Librarians also use OER in their information literacy instruction for undergraduates (for example, see the edited book *Intersections of Open Educational Resources and Information Literacy*). This observation was also noted by Katz (2020) who found a surprising lack of conversation around OER.

Despite a lack of emphasis on OEP in library science pedagogy, there have been a few published examples of OEP in the graduate library science classroom. Hollister (2020) described how he had students create an open textbook for a course on international librarianship. After surveying students about the experience, Hollister found that students appreciated the experience, enjoyed writing for an authentic audience and contributing to the field, and appreciated having a publication for their dossiers. Hare et al. (2020) described how they asked doctoral students in LIS to co-create a research guide for a research methodology course. This assignment helped doctoral students to become more aware of open and sustainable educational practices.

Librarians are leaders in the OER movement. Much of the discussion around open practices in LIS education is related to OER and faculty’s use of OER in the LIS classroom. Katz (2020) explained that one reason for this is that there is little OER to use within the field of library science. Katz suggested that teaching OER would better prepare librarians to work with OER, and could include activities such as cataloging, curating, or selecting OER. Due to their knowledge of copyright, discovery, instructional design, and equity of access, academic librarians play a critical role in OER on their campuses (Crissinger, 2015). Salem (2017) explained that librarians are involved in advocacy and support for OER, particularly in supporting the adoption of affordable course content. As librarians are leaders in the OER movement, significant opportunity exists for librarians to close the gap in advocating and collaborating on OEP with faculty.

REDESIGNING FOR OEP: REFLECTIONS

OEP had not been heavily adopted in the LIS program at our university, a mid-sized regional comprehensive university located in the heart of the Midwest. While we believe many

elements of OEP were already in practice, they were not formally identified as a pedagogical practice in the program. In Spring, 2024, an LIS faculty member and the liaison librarian to the LIS program participated as a faculty-librarian team in the Open Education Network's Certificate in Open Educational Practices. In this certificate, participants were encouraged to use the principles of OEP to redesign an assignment or course. The dynamic nature of a faculty-librarian team provided immediate institutional support for the faculty member, expanding the possibilities for OEP beyond what could be done on an individual basis. However, the redesign was limited to the scope of campus resources. New conversations were needed with library administration to integrate and advocate for the development of open pedagogy on campus. The following are reflections from each stakeholder related to the processes needed to make OEP possible in an LIS course, with the goal of eventually reaching a larger faculty audience through the campus-wide initiatives listed above.

Faculty Reflection

I (faculty member) started the OEN Certificate because I was excited to learn more about OEP and how that might engage the online students in my graduate library science courses. With the introduction of AI, I noticed an increase in AI-generated submissions in an action research course, such as posting AI-generated discussion replies, or using AI to write a literature review. While some assignments were still necessary (like writing a research proposal), I began to reflect on where I could improve the assignments to be more meaningful. OEP was a design strategy which had many elements that might engage LIS students who already appreciated equity, inclusion, social justice, and openness. I also hoped that more collaborative practices would reduce the number of submitted AI-generated assignments, per the advice of scholarship which recommended emphasizing process over product, modifying assignment design, and peer review and collaborative work (Hodges & Kirshcner, 2024).

To start, I examined all my assignments in all courses to identify where I was addressing some OEP attributes and consider how I could address more. Table 1 is an example of the alignment of OEP attributes to the assessments in a research methods class. I realized that while I had some attributes of openness, for the most part my assignments were disposable.

Table 1

Self-study table of current assessments for Hegarty's (2015) 8 Attributes of OEP

	Article Review	Literature Review	Research Proposal
Participatory technology	X	X	
People, openness and trust			
Innovation and creativity			
Sharing ideas and resources			
Connected community			
Learner generated			X
Reflective Practice	X		X
Peer Review			X

The first change I made was to *ditch the textbook* (a phrase used to describe more creative and fun teaching by curating engaging content) and use all open educational resources, essentially labeling the course as a zero textbook cost (ZTC) course. Then, I carefully identified

areas where the Hypothesis social annotation would improve the learning experience, allowing students to engage collaboratively in the readings. Finally, I chose one assessment (Article Review) and considered how to make this a more meaningful assignment (see Table 2). To do this, I narrowed down the goals of the Article Review assignment to identify that the instructional purpose was to identify how students understood the action research process before planning their own action research study. I brainstormed different scholarly deliverables (paper, presentation, report, handout, website, podcast, etc) and decided that a “zine” would match the nature of our students (who primarily work with youth) and allow for meeting the most OEP attributes. Students now create a zine about action research, instead of writing a one page paper reviewing an action research article and explaining how the action research process was used.

Table 2

Redesigning an LIS assignment to include more OEP Attributes

	Action Research Zine
Participatory technology	Use tools with the intent of publishing
People, openness and trust	Scaffold within the course to build community first
Innovation and creativity	Create a shareable resource (skills: digital literacy, IP, usage rights)
Sharing ideas and resources	Identify the value of action research; consider how to share that value with others; consider intellectual property
Connected community	Write for their audience (teachers, librarians, graduate students)
Learner generated	Students choose and summarize the material that is valuable to them
Reflective Practice	Reflect on the relevance of action research to the field
Peer Review	Develop their own grading criteria

In the future, I would like to also develop the research proposal to be more renewable. To do this, I will need tools which allow for students to engage more easily in the open publishing process, like PressBooks. My goal would be for students to create completed action research studies and publish them in a casebook which can be shared both in and outside of the class. This will be a living, collaborative book, where students will add new cases each semester. The casebook can be shared, but students will also create a figure of the major findings in their paper which can be shared in public forums. It is hoped that this will be one way for students to communicate the value of what they are reading (much of which is behind paywalls which are inaccessible to practicing librarians outside of higher ed) with the profession and find it more meaningful to their own work.

Librarian Reflection

When the LIS faculty member approached me (librarian) to participate in the OEN Certificate, I was both excited and nervous. As an academic librarian just getting familiar with both OER and OEP, I knew the program would be beneficial for my own understanding and for building a stronger, more dynamic instructional relationship with a faculty I liaise with. I was hesitant because my understanding of the scope and our university's adoption of OER and OEP was limited and I worried I could not provide an adequate level of course and institutional support needed for this project. With encouragement from the faculty member, I began investigating the proposed program and subsequent project and found that the benefits of even an initial pilot project utilizing OEP would be a great leap forward for adoption of the practices of open education on campus through a model of librarian-faculty collaboration.

The OEN certificate program's exercises were designed to introduce concepts of OEP specific to academic librarians in my role who are tasked with instructional support for faculty in a variety of disciplines. Weekly collaboration with the faculty member through readings and discussions about our OEP plan for the LIS course highlighted the clear alignment of OEP with my prerogatives as a liaison librarian to promote information literacy, understanding of copyright practices, and discovery of and equitable access to information resources. This was reinforced by the renewable assignment design framework for faculty-librarian collaborators by Katz & VanAllen (2020), which emphasizes the benefits of the complementary expertise and experience of both parties in developing meaningful student content in an open educational context. More broadly, the development of a plan of action for the LIS research course in question allowed me to see the implications of providing stronger campus-level support for other faculty and students interested in these principles and implementing OEP. Reed (2018) notes that both formal and informal learning opportunities provided by librarians, both as standalone workshops and more embedded work with faculty are facilitating greater recognition of librarians as partners rather than simply supporters of faculty work. This collaborative project allows me to center my librarianship more firmly as a partnership with faculty that incorporates a variety of modes of instruction. In line with the LIS assignment redesign, I have begun the development of an OER LibGuide, which will bolster classroom instruction on discovery and access to OER, in addition to highlighting principles of OEP and librarians' abilities to provide instruction on their implementation. I am also developing a workshop on Creative Commons licensing and the copyright landscape for designing and remixing OER content. The concepts of OEP that we can apply for this project will also translate well into my instructional design practices for research-focused activities and assignments I administer for courses in other disciplines.

University Librarian Reflection

As University Librarian, I supported the opportunity for the LIS program liaison librarian to directly partner with a faculty colleague in undertaking the OEN Certificate in Open Educational Practices. Encouraging opportunities for academic librarian and faculty collaboration not only promotes stronger relationships between campus partners but also fosters student academic success and the development of new and innovative pedagogical practices. Points of consideration surrounding the administrative support needed to implement OEP included the time commitment necessary for the academic librarian to develop new training and supplemental resources for students engaging in a renewable project and its impact on existing academic librarian duties and responsibilities, budgetary considerations, institutional support for

the adoption and deployment of new technologies, and opportunities in which the gained knowledge and skill in OEP on the part of the academic librarian could be strategically integrated into future instruction, workshops, and initiatives.

While current engagement with OER is limited at our institution, library administration has been advocating for OER resources, including lobbying for funding and resource allocation to support these initiatives with senior campus administration. Key areas of advocacy by library administration include:

- Securing a multi-year financial commitment for collaborative tools, thus providing sufficient time for content creation and course-level content adoption.
- Promoting a faculty incentivization program to encourage OER adoption and content creation within the collaborative tools.
- Exploring alternative funding sources for low and zero-cost textbooks.

The evolving support from senior administration and the successful faculty-liaison librarian collaboration demonstrated through their work with the Open Education Network's Certificate in Open Educational Practices underscore the need for institutional initiatives to promote the adoption of OEP by other faculty and academic librarians. The successful OEP collaboration featured in this paper will support continued OER advocacy by library administration and increase exposure to the ongoing need for OER resources campus-wide.

CONCLUSION - MOVING FORWARD

At the time of this writing, the design of a renewable assignment is in the planning process and has yet to be implemented. We are in the process of securing and building resources and examining other library science courses to identify where OEP can make a more meaningful learning experience for students. For library science students, seeing OEP and OER in their courses is a practical way of learning about these practices (which they may encounter in their librarian roles).

Adding OEP to the library science curriculum would not be possible without the faculty-librarian collaboration that occurred with this project, due to the skills and resources needed to co-create new content. Gumb and Miceli (2020) explained that faculty-librarian team approaches allowed for more scaffolding of concepts. We also found this to be true--moving from a disposable to a renewable assignment would be much more challenging for students without the additional instruction (particularly in intellectual property, information literacy, and universal design) and consultation provided by the liaison librarian, and the institutional support secured by the university librarian.

Finally, one unexpected outcome of redesigning a course for OEP was the realization that this pedagogy supports student interaction with one another, their instructor, and the library field at large. A student completing a renewable assignment is investing their own time and thoughts, as well as publishing for a wider audience. They are learning about their role in the process of information creation and sharing, as well as the review process, remixing, and revising. For faculty seeking engaged and meaningful learning experiences, open pedagogy should be considered as a strategy for both online and face-to-face learning environments.

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