Podcasting as Praxis:
Exploring Epistemic Justice in Open Education

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Submitted to OCAD University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Design in Inclusive Design

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2021

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Abstract

Using podcasting as a methodology, this project explores epistemic justice in the context of open education to ask questions like: Whose knowledge do we centre in open education? What does epistemic justice look like in curriculum? In what ways does open education enable epistemic justice or reproduce existing inequities found in academia and commercial publishing contexts? How do different people understand and practice openness in education? How can open practices disrupt publishing to create more equitable educational experiences?

These questions are explored through a series of seven podcast interviews with eleven people who are in the post-secondary space in North America. Interviewees include instructors, librarians, project managers, and students, and they all come at these questions from different perspectives and lived experiences. Many have been involved in open education projects or work regularly in open education, while for others it is a new concept. Through these episodes, we discuss representation and language in curriculum; pedagogy; open licences; publishing processes, practices, and tools; Indigenous ways of knowing; disability; and more.

This paper introduces epistemic justice, open education, and podcasting, and how they intersect with each other. It provides an overview of the project design, including a manifesto outlining the values and beliefs that guided the project, a step-by-step overview of the process for producing and sharing the podcast, and an overview of the episodes. It concludes with a discussion of the project's contributions, limitations, and ongoing questions and possibilities for future work. This project also engages with podcasting as a tool to make academic work more accessible, accountable to a community, and epistemically just.

Land Acknowledgement

I am a settler of mixed European ancestry, and my family and ancestors have lived uninvited on the lands of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island for over 150 years. I grew up on unceded Tsimshian territory on the northwest coast, around the ocean, the mountains, and beautiful rain forests. I also have ties to Treaty 6 territory, where most of my extended family lives. Growing up, I spent a lot of summers on my maternal grandparents' farm, which is on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot, Tsuu T'ina, Sioux, Metis, and Cree Peoples. Currently, I live, work, and learn on the unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the territories of the WSÁNEĆ Peoples. I have been an uninvited resident on these lands for over seven years. It is where I completed my undergraduate degree, where I started my work in open education for BCcampus, and where I did the work for this project. I am extremely grateful for the privilege I have had to live and learn in each of these places.

Acknowledgements

I am so very thankful for everyone that supported this project.

First of all, thank you to each of my guests for so generously agreeing to talk with me and share their expertise and perspectives. I learned so much from everyone and have such admiration for their work. A big thank you also goes to my advisor, Dr. Jutta Treviranus, for her patience and encouragement while I spiraled through various cycles of self-doubt and hesitation and for saying, "Yes, do that" when I tentatively brought up podcasting. Thank you to everyone in my cohort. I learned so much from everyone and will miss our Slack rants. I wish we had been able to meet in person again before this degree finished. Thank you to Amanda Coolidge, my supervisor at BCcampus, for her support and encouragement before and throughout this degree. Thank you also to my colleague at BCcampus Tim Carson for generously lending me a good quality microphone and sharing resources on how to get started with podcasting. Thank you to Madeline Peacock for transcribing most of the episodes.

I'd also like to express my gratitude for the many people whose work influenced how I thought about this project and continue to inspire me:

- Dr. Hannah McGregor, specifically her Secret Feminist Agenda podcast. I learned so much through that podcast, both in terms of various ways of understanding and practicing feminism and the possibility of podcasting as a medium for academic communication.
- Jess Mitchell, specifically for her 2018 OpenEd Keynote titled "The Ethical Edges: What is Our Tolerance for Failure? Who are we Comfortable Leaving Behind?"
- Tara Robertson, specifically her talk at OpenCon 2017 where she talked about the real harms that exclusion and uncritical adoption of open practices can result in: Who is Missing?.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Positionality and Context: Situating Myself

I have been thinking a lot about how to acknowledge my own positionality in this project. I am very aware of the many privileges I hold and the context I am working from, and I think it is important to name those things. They impact how I see and interact with the world and how the world interacts with me. And they also have influenced my approach to this project in ways that I am aware of and also probably in ways that I am oblivious to.

I am a white, abled, bisexual, cisgender woman in my mid 20s, living on stolen Indigenous land, a place now known as Canada. I am also a feminist, although I have only started to align myself with that term in the last few years. I am still learning, but my feminism is trans inclusive and informed by intersectionality. And when I say that, it's important to recognize that the term "intersectionality" was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to push back against the erasure of Black women's experiences of racial and gender discrimination in feminist and anti-racist movements and in anti-discrimination legal frameworks, which tend to focus on the most privileged of those groups (white women and Black men). The concept of intersectionality illustrates that people have complex and intersecting identities that influence their experience of race, gender, class, and other bases for discrimination and marginalization (citizenship, sexuality, ability, skin colour, etc.).

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of Victoria (2018). I also have worked for BCcampus in Victoria, British Columbia, since 2016. In that position, I manage the B.C. Open Textbook Collection, oversee publishing projects, and provide training and support for B.C. faculty creating and adapting open textbooks. This means I am very embedded in the technical side of publishing open educational resources (OER), and I work outside of a post-secondary institution. I also have worked to support people in designing OER that are accessible for all using Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which was how I initially learned about inclusive design.

It's also important to acknowledge that all of the work for this project happened during the COVID-19 pandemic. I and many of those who I interviewed are working out of our homes, which is a huge privilege but also comes with challenges. I live alone, so for myself the pandemic has been isolating. This project was a welcome opportunity to connect and reconnect with people outside of my work colleagues and my "bubble."

In "What is at stake with decolonizing design," Mahmoud Keshavarz talked about the tendency for white Western scholars to not acknowledge how their lived experiences influence their scholarship and instead present their work as "universal facts without bodily locations" (Schultz et al., 2018, p. 91) and how that presentation made it difficult to understand what they were writing about and how it was relevant. For me, this highlighted how acknowledging my own positionality can help make the subjectivity and context of my work more transparent and hopefully increase its accessibility for those who do not know me. In addition, as bell hooks (and others) have said, "No education is politically neutral" (1994). Our politics and positionality always influence how we teach, design, and understand the world. Ignoring those things do not make our work better.

With that, let's get into the project itself.

1.2 Project Description

For my major research project, I produced a limited-series interview podcast to explore the topics of epistemic justice (or knowledge equity) in the context of open education in order to consider different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable. This project was grounded in existing theories and practices around open education, epistemic justice, and podcasting as a medium for more accessible and community-oriented scholarly communication.

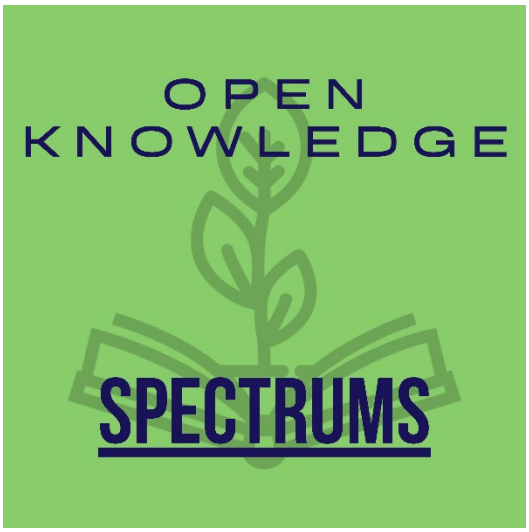

Figure 1 The Open Knowledge Spectrums podcast icon.

The podcast includes eight episodes: One "trailer" introducing the project and key concepts and seven interviews with eleven guests. For each interview, I talk with one or

more people about their work and perspectives on equity in open education. These conversations were based on the research, practices, and/or lived experiences of the guests. And because epistemic justice in open education is such a complex and under-explored topic, each episode looks at the topic from a different angle. See Appendix D for the full transcript for each episode. The audio episodes can also be accessed through the website, Open Knowledge Spectrums.

This project recognizes that while openness can improve access to knowledge, it does not ensure equity. If the same people who were writing commercial textbooks are the same people writing open textbooks, we are not democratizing knowledge production. If Black, Indigenous, and students of colour, queer and trans students, poor and working-class students do not see themselves and their communities in open content, we are not creating resources that are inclusive and useful. If disabled students and students with limited access to internet and devices cannot access and engage with open content, that content is not accessible. Through this paper, I will outline the existing theory and practice that guided this work, describe the design values, methodology, and tools that went into creating this project, and share the takeaways, contributions, and limitations of the project.

2. Existing Theory and Practice

Before I get into talking about the obvious themes of this project, I first need to address inclusive design. Inclusive design is defined by the Inclusive Design Research Centre (n.d.) as "design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age, and other forms of human difference." I have a hard time articulating why this project is inclusive design—in many ways it doesn't feel like design at all. However, as an inclusive design student, inclusive design definitely influenced my approach to this project. For example, the importance of recognizing "the full range of human diversity" is something that I kept in mind throughout the project in terms of the guests I talked to and my commitment to accessibility and universal design for learning, which I will address further in my manifesto. In addition, podcasting was a way to explore alternative—perhaps more inclusive—ways of engaging with a complex topic than traditional qualitative research methods, which are focused on a researcher

identifying and communicating trends and averages. With podcasting, the full complexity of different peoples' experiences and perspectives can be appreciated, and it allows listeners to form their own conclusions and perceptions of what was most important. It's also a way to hopefully make these discussions and topics more accessible. Although I don't specifically address inclusive design very directly in this project, I hope the values and practices of inclusive design around plurality, access, diversity, and flexibility come through.

For the most part, this project was guided by three main areas of research and practice: epistemic justice, open education, and podcasting. This project really highlighted for me how interconnected each of these ideas are. It was productive to explore them together.

2.1 Epistemic (In)Justice

Epistemic justice looks at justice as it relates to knowledge. It asks things like, Whose knowledge is seen as valid and valuable? Whose stories get told? From what perspectives? Who gets to create knowledge? How are different people represented? And why?

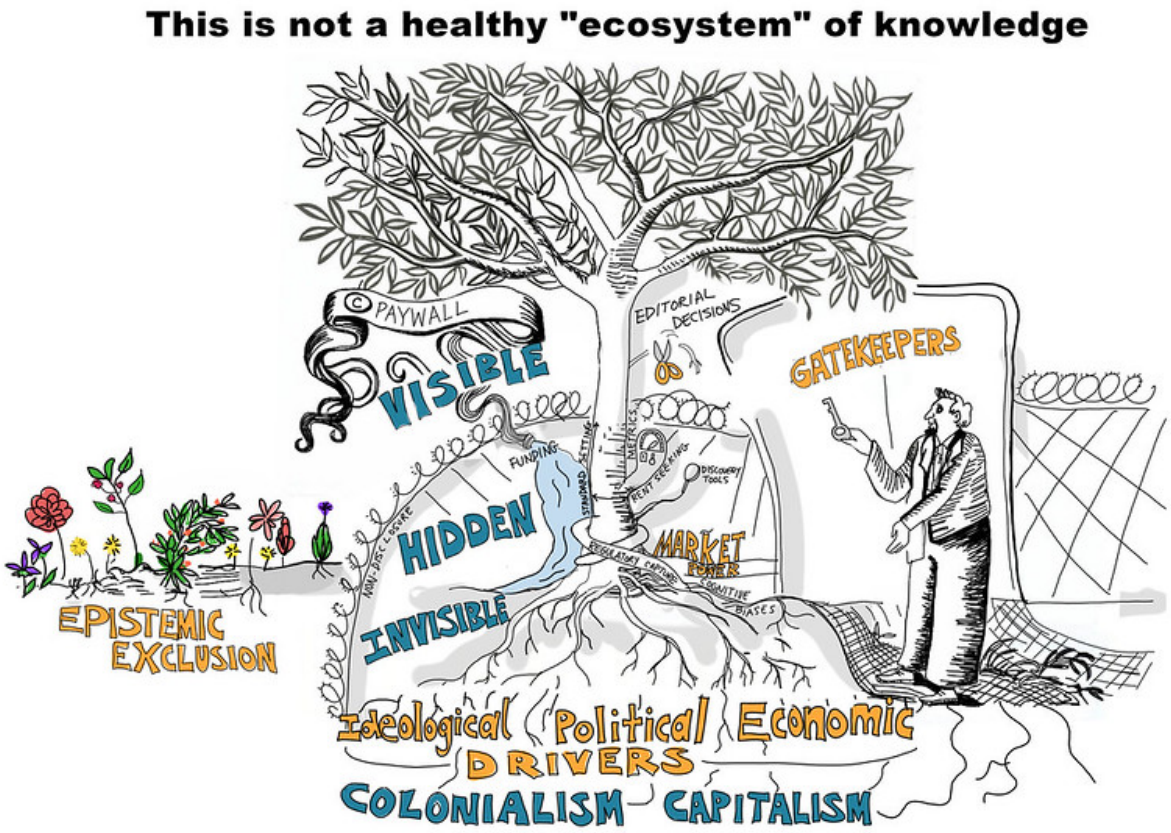

Figure 2 Power and Epistemic Justice by Giulia Forsythe is used under a CC BY 2.0 License. Created for Leslie Chan's Digital Initiative Symposium 2019 keynote.

"Epistemic injustice" as a defined term can be credited to Miranda Fricker's 2007 book, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. In this book, epistemic injustice is defined as "a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower." Fricker identifies two types of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice, which she defines as "when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word," and hermeneutical injustice, which she defines as "when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences" (Fricker, 2007, p. 1).

It is important to note that Fricker was not the first to explore the topic of epistemic injustice. Feminist and critical race scholars and activists have been talking about justice and injustice as it relates to knowledge for a long time using different words. However, this book did lead to a lot of other academics exploring, critiquing, and expanding the topic in response to Fricker's work (Sherman & Goguen, 2019). And as Rachel

McKinnon (2016) pointed out, “when feminist women of color argue for issues we’d clearly describe as epistemic justice (in Fricker’s terms), but that work only secures wide uptake when a white woman articulates the concepts, then this is an instance of epistemic injustice” (438).

In the case of this project, Fricker’s definitions for epistemic injustice does not quite fit the context of teaching, curriculum, and educational resources. Instead, I draw on the work of bell hooks and Charles W. Mills. For example, in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), bell hooks reflected on the emergence of the idea of “cultural diversity” in education, and how much hope there was that this framework would help bring change in an institution filled with “biases that uphold and maintain white supremacy, imperialism, sexism, and racism” (p. 29). She goes on to write:

> When everyone first began to speak about cultural diversity, it was exciting. For those of us on the margins (people of color, folks from working class backgrounds, gays, and lesbians, and so on) who had always felt ambivalent about our presence in institutions where knowledge was shared in ways that reinscribed colonialism and domination, it was thrilling to think that the vision of justice and democracy that was at the very heart of the civil rights movement would be realized in the academy. At last, there was the possibility of a learning community, a place where difference could be acknowledged, where we would finally all understand, accept, and affirm that our ways of knowing are forged in history and relations of power. Finally, we were all going to break through collective academic denial and acknowledge that the education most of us had received and were giving was not and is never politically neutral (p. 30).

Although hooks was not using the term “epistemic justice,” she was talking about the same concept, the awareness of how the construction of what counts as “knowledge,” and the depoliticization of teaching, causes harm and reifies the systems of domination in our society.

As for Charles W. Mills, he developed the concept of “white ignorance.” This idea was first published in the late 1990s, and it looks at ignorance that is specifically driven by racism and white supremacy (2007). Mills discusses many ways that white ignorance allows white people (although Mills acknowledges that white ignorance can affect non-white people, too) to remain oblivious to how race functions in our society. Mills discusses how “white normativity” and then “color blindness” were constructed to allow

for “the centering of the Euro and later Euro-American reference group as constitutive norm” (p. 25).

The specific part of Mills work that I want to highlight is the section he dedicates to discussing how social memory is constructed and curated through things like textbooks, ceremonies, official holidays, and monuments. In particular, Mills cites researchers who demonstrate how standard American history textbooks have allowed white ignorance to be perpetuated in the school system by downplaying and “whitewashing” the realities of slavery and colonization. The erasure and suppression of this history “enables a self-representation in which differential white privilege, and the need to correct for it, does not exist” (p. 31).

To look at a more specific example, Erin Tolley (2020) discusses the how immigrants and minorities are represented in Canadian political science textbooks. She argues that a lack of diversity in textbooks has real consequences, including not giving students the tools to understand and address inequity in our society, not encouraging diversity in thought, and implying to marginalized students that they do not belong in the field. In her evaluation of five Canadian political science textbooks, Tolley identified that minority groups tended to be presented as homogeneous, people of colour aren’t mentioned very often, and only 2.4% of the recommended readings were written by scholars of colour.

Another study looked at how American government textbooks represent marginalized groups. Using a quantitative approach, Brandle (2020) identified 205 keywords relating to marginalized groups and then analyzed how often these words appeared in each book and in what chapters. Of the thirteen books she analyzed, only one scored well, and Brandle notes that it was written with the explicit goal of inclusion. This supports the idea that inclusion does not happen without intention.

While quantitative approaches can be useful for identifying trends and gaps in representation, they do not provide any information about the quality of that representation. In contrast, Tadashi Dozono (2020) writes about how epistemic violence functions at the level of grammar in grade 10 world history curriculum. He highlights how claims of objectivity in textbooks can hide the biases and perspectives of textbook

authors and how the passive voice can be used to both obscure who is responsible for violent actions in history (mainly white Europeans) and downplay the agency of marginalized peoples. Ultimately, Dozono argues that, "The goal is not simply to have marginalized peoples mentioned more often. Educators must always already be attentive to how power shapes discourse" (p. 11). This means disrupting and augmenting inadequate curriculum and giving students the tools to identify and resist dominant narratives and discourses.

When thinking about epistemic justice in the context of education, you also have to consider citational practices: Whose work is included and cited? Who is credited for ideas? Who do we consider having authority to talk about what topics? How does who is cited indicate how we consider whose knowledge is valuable? This is often talked about as the "politics of citation," and there are campaigns like Cite Black Women (created by Christen A. Smith), which "push[es] people to critically rethink the politics of knowledge production by engaging in a radical praxis of citation that acknowledges and honors Black women's transnational intellectual production" (Smith, n.d.).

An example of a project that demonstrates intentionality and transparency around inclusive citational practices is *Data Feminism*, a book by Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein (2020). For their book, they provide a section titled "Our Values and Our Metrics for Holding Ourselves Accountable." In that values statement, they provide a table that lists structural problems present in our world, their initial citational goals to push back against that structural problem, and the citational metrics of the final book. For example, for the structural problem of racism, they had a goal of 75% of citations of feminist scholarship from people of colour and 75% of examples of feminist data projects discussed led by people of colour. In the draft of the book, they had 36% of scholarship from people of colour and 49% of projects led by people of colour. In the final published book, those numbers were 32% of scholarship from people of colour and 42% of projects led by people of colour. Similar information was provided for patriarchy, cissexism, heteronormativity, ableism, colonialism, classism, and proximity. After providing those metrics, they addressed where they were successful and the many ways where they fell short and discussed possible reasons for this. This is a very interesting

model for writing with an intentional goal of intersectionality, equity, and accountability.

Epistemic justice recognizes that knowledge is cultural, subjective, contextual, and diverse. Knowledge has power, and how we treat, share, and construct what we consider knowledge can be empowering, but it can also do harm.

2.2 Open Education

The word "open" is a huge word that encompasses so many different things depending on the context. It is often used to mean public, transparent, free, and/or accessible, and it is often used to describe more equitable institutional and research processes and practices, like open access, open data, open science, open source, open government, etc. But this project focuses on open education specifically.

In education, there are again many ways openness is understood and enacted. But one common goal is to create a more inclusive and accessible education system by thinking about knowledge through this framework of openness. Instead of bundling up knowledge in an expensive textbook or putting it behind a paywall, open education sees knowledge as a public good that should be freely available to everyone to learn from, build on, and customize for their own purposes.

Figure 3 OER is sharing by Giulia Forsythe is in the public domain. Cropped by Josie.

One example of openness is education is the replacement of traditional commercial, all rights reserved textbooks with open educational resources (OER). OER are any kind of resource used for teaching and learning—so for example, textbooks, syllabuses, videos, test banks—that are in the public domain or under an open licence (such as a Creative Commons licence), which allows others to use, edit, remix, and redistribute the content for

free—all without needing to ask for permission from the original author.

In addition to OER, open education is explored through the lens of open pedagogy, or how openness shows up in teaching practices. Open pedagogy is a much harder term to define. It means different things to different people, and it looks different in different contexts. However, one definition I will offer is pulled from a larger discussion on open pedagogy provided by Rajiv Jhangiani and Robin DeRosa in the book *A Guide to Making Open Textbooks with Students*:

> We might think about open pedagogy as an access-oriented commitment to learner-driven education AND as a process of designing architectures and using tools for learning that enable students to shape the public knowledge commons of which they are a part (DeRosa & Jhangiani, 2017).

Ultimately, open pedagogy often aims to put students in the seat of knowledge producers, rather than knowledge consumers, and make them active participants in the learning process. To explore open pedagogy more deeply, I would recommend the Open Pedagogy Notebook maintained by DeRosa and Jhangiani, where you can find lots of examples of open pedagogy approaches and projects and a discussion of open pedagogy in the learning community that they've cultivated there.

Critiques of Open Education

In open education, there is a lot of focus on how OER can increase access to education. This makes sense, especially when comparing OER to commercial textbooks. OER are digital (which makes them easy to share) and free. Anyone with a device, internet access, and the knowledge of where and how to search can find and use these resources. For students who would otherwise not be able to afford their course materials, the adoption of an OER in the classroom can have a huge impact. However, as many others have argued, openness does not equal good or socially just.

For example, in 2013, Jeremy Knox published an article titled, "The limitations of access alone." In this article, Jeremy criticized the open movement's focus on "access to material," and the common practice of portraying knowledge as "immune to the influences of digitization, interpretation or cultural understanding" (p. 25). He points out that at that time, most OER were being published in the United States or Europe, so

while access to that knowledge was free, it was specific knowledge written for a specific context, and access to open knowledge creation itself was still very limited.

Similarly, Amy Collier and Jen Ross (2017) critique assumptions that openness is always a good thing. They argue that those who make those arguments present a "false binary between 'open' and 'closed'… [and put] an overemphasis on access to content" that assumes that all learners are the same, and that "open educational practice does not attend sufficiently to issues of power and inclusion" (p. 7). As such, they present the concept of "not-yetness" and urge people to remain critical about their pedagogical choices and to not oversimplify or idealize openness.

It is also widely accepted that open content is not necessarily more inclusive than content published in commercial textbooks (Nusbaum, 2020; Brandle, 2020). To share my own experience with this, I worked on an English literature open textbook that included a lot of literature that is now in the public domain (meaning that the author has been dead more than 50 years). While I was importing requested pieces into the book, I noticed one of the stories included repeated use of the n-word. I took a closer look at the story and a few others and found numerous examples of racist, violent language and perspectives. These stories were provided with no content warnings or critical framing. Instead, they were presented as examples of narrative writing style or character development. I pushed back on the inclusion of those stories and the author agreed to remove them, but it is a good example of how open textbooks can potentially be even more problematic than commercial texts.

Others have pointed out how open education falls short in its anti-racism commitments on a funding level. For example, in November 2020, Angela DeBarger, the program officer for education at the Hewlett Foundation, released a statement regarding how the foundation would be shifting its approach to more explicitly support open education work that centres anti-racism. In this statement, she reflects on how the foundation's own investments have not always centred inclusion and equity:

> …by privileging the legal and technical over the relational, by prioritizing the creation of materials over the development of people, by allowing ourselves to accept *standards aligned* as synonymous with *high quality*, and by offering

> greater and more consistent funding to white-led organizations and elite higher education institutions in the global North (DeBarger, 2020, para. 5).

Many recent sessions and keynotes at open education events have also looked specifically at inclusion and justice specifically through the lens of race and gender. This includes Sabia Prescott's presentation at OpenEd 2019 about how OER can be used to teach about queer and trans issues and specifically support students with those identities (Prescott, 2019). At the 2020 Open Education Global conference, a group of panelists discussed how OER and open educational practices are or are not living up to social justice aims and what needs to change (McGuire et al., 2020).

How marginalized people within open are treated and respected is also an important consideration. In her 2021 keynote for Open Education Week, Jasmine Roberts builds on arguments offered in Marco Seiferle-Valencia's talk at OpenEd2020 about citational practices in open education scholarship, and notes that open pedagogy is never or rarely connected to "liberating women of colour feminist praxis and scholarship on education" (Seiferle-Valencia, 2020b; Roberts, 2021). In addition, Regina Gong, Cynthia Orozco, and Ariana Santiago have been working to amplify the voices of women of colour working in open education on Twitter (#WOCinOER) and through conferences by making space for them to share their experiences, support each other, and lead positive change in open education (Gong, Orozco, & Santiago, 2020). This work is an example of epistemic justice and representational justice in action, and also a space for issues to be raised that more privileged people are unaware of (referring again back to Mill's concept of white ignorance).

Some have also offered critiques about textbooks as a format for OER. For example, Sarah Hare (2015/2020) cites a number of scholars that argue that textbooks are a "stagnant, oppressive format," since textbooks aim to provide a simplified narrative, which obscures the nuanced and contested nature of many fields of study. As such, Hare asks why people in open education seem so focused on producing open textbooks. Similarly, DeRosa published a blog post following an open education conference where she critiqued the conference's apparent focus on textbooks and creating content. In this post, DeRosa (2015) argues that textbooks are not great pedagogical tools, and that,

"Textbooks, if we don't re-theorize them, have generally (just) been repositories for the master's ideas. Students absorb textbook content and achieve "mastery." (Call it "competency," whatever.)."

When we look specifically at open licenses, we have to recognize that they operate in a western, colonial understanding of intellectual property, and that copyright as a legal framework has been used to dispossess and appropriate the intellectual and cultural products of Black and Indigenous people.

For example, Greene (2010) demonstrates that because Black men and women were not included in the U.S. constitution, they also were excluded from the Patent/Copyright Clause of the constitution. This meant they had no legal protections for their cultural or creative works until after civil rights amendments. Greene looks at copyright through the lens of race and gender to highlight how the American music industry has exploited the Black artists, specifically focusing on Black women blues singers who were wildly successful in the 1920s but did not retain their copyright or receive royalties for their work. We see this continuing today on platforms like TikTok, which encourages remix and redistribution, where white people are amassing huge followings (and associated opportunities and cultural capital) creating videos based on the work by lesser-known Black artists without crediting that work (Chen, 2020; Pearce, 2020).

Scholars have also demonstrated that Western understandings of copyright and authorship are insufficient to protect Indigenous intellectual property and traditional knowledge (Young-ing, 2006). They give examples where copyright and Western understandings of authorship have allowed people from outside of an Indigenous community to publish and profit off knowledge shared with them in good faith. In addition, Western copyright frameworks are also often incompatible with traditional understandings intellectual and cultural property, where knowledge is often held collectively by a community or only allowed to be practiced or known by certain people of a community (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2019).

Open Education and Social Justice

Now let's look at how social justice is considered and addressed in the open education context. In 2018, Sarah Lambert published a literature review that evaluated the degree

to which open education literature addresses social justice principles. In her review, she found very little, especially in the last ten years, which she suggests proves that social justice in open education is not a given; it is something that "flows from our commitment to design explicitly for it" (p. 227). Lambert draws on the work of other scholars to present three principles of justice, "*Redistributive* justice… involves allocation of material or human resources towards those who have less. *Recognitive* justice involves recognition and respect for cultural and gender difference, and *representational* justice involves equitable representations and political voice" (p. 227, emphasis in original).

Lambert then uses the example of an open textbook to explain how these principles apply to open education:

> Providing a free textbook to learners of colour in the American two-year college system, is *redistributive* justice in action. It reduces the costs and increases the chances of success for learners who "by circumstance have less" – they are marginalised in education, workplaces and more broadly in society. But how "open" is the textbook for marginalised learners if indigenous, Hispanic and learners of colour are invisible inside the textbook and perhaps invisible in the whole curriculum? The editing of such a textbook to include images and cases featuring more diverse communities, businesses and people will be an act of *recognitive* justice. But what if the textbook features people of colour, but does not value their perspectives, knowledges or histories? What if the textbook takes a white colonial view of Black lives, if Black stories are told solely by white voices? The development or selection of a new version of a textbook (or perhaps a new resource altogether) written by people of colour where they are free to represent their own views, histories and knowledges would be an act of *representational* justice, to give voice to those who are often not heard. (p. 227-228, emphasis in original)

With this in mind, Lambert proposes a new definition open education that is grounded explicitly in social justice values:

> Open Education is the development of free digitally enabled learning materials and experiences primarily by and for the benefit and empowerment of non-privileged learners who may be under-represented in education systems or marginalised in their global context. Success of social justice aligned programs can be measured not by any particular technical feature or format, but instead by the extent to which they enact redistributive justice, recognitive justice and/or representational justice. (p. 239)

These three social justice principles, and the principle of representational justice in particular, highlight how open education can support greater epistemic justice.

In his work as an OER Librarian at the University of Idaho, Marco Seiferle-Valencia (2020a) draws on Lamberts three principles of OER and social justice to evaluate to what degree the OER projects he supports reflect those principles. He describes a number of projects that (to various degrees) reduced course costs (redistributive), centred the stories and perspectives of marginalized people (recognitive), and brought in collaborators from those marginalized groups (representational). Seiferle-Valencia notes that achieving "representational" justice was the most difficult to achieve, since all of the people he worked with are white, cisgender women. However, they tried to work towards representational justice by partnering with people who do experience those marginalizations and drawing on content created by people of those identities.

Seiferle-Valencia also discusses the role that librarians can play in supporting the creation and adaptation of more inclusive OER through the lens of "intentionally engaged OER," which is informed by bell hooks' practice of "engaged pedagogy." When applied to OER, this means supporting the creation of resources that "affirm our own and other identities" (p. 482). In addition, drawing on Regina Austin's 1989 work, he puts forward the following call to commit:

> …more must be done to make OER work explicitly and specifically antiracist and antisexist in definition, praxis, and content. In addition to antiracist and antisexist goals, OER work must also take up content that represents queer and trans perspectives, as well as those from systemically marginalized groups like Indigenous peoples, disabled people, neurodivergent people, migrants and

> refugees, and the systemically impoverished… By seeking out opportunities to create recognitive, representational, and redistributive justice with intentionally engaged OER, open practitioners can engage with the truly radical and transformative potentials of open pedagogy. (p. 483)

Given these many examples, it is clear that equity, justice, and good pedagogy do not happen on their own in open education. Open education is not immune to systems of power, domination, and exclusion that permeate our society. It requires care and intentional design, contexualization, and a strong commitment to justice for those most marginalized. For open education to be a tool for justice, we must critically evaluate it through this lens of epistemic justice.

2.3 Podcasting

The final area of study and practice that this project focuses on is podcasting, in particular, podcasting as a form of academic communication and open pedagogy. For this, I draw extensively on the work of Hannah McGregor, an instructor in Simon Fraser University's publishing department and host of Secret Feminist Agenda (2017-2020) and co-host of Witch, Please (2015-present). McGregor often speaks about the possibilities of podcasting as a tool for scholarly communication.

Figure 4 Podcasting by Nicolas Solop is used under a CC BY-SA 2.0 License.

McGregor notes that many academics have podcasts, but most do not list them as part of their scholarship. Even for herself, she shares that it took her a while to recogne that her own podcasting work might count as scholarship, since it did not have the same "seriousness" that she associated with academic work (Feminist Publishing and Tech Speaker Series, 2019). However, McGregor argues that it is important to legitimize this kind of non-traditional work because those who are most likely to engage in community-engaged scholarship are queer and racialized faculty who have strong ties and accountability to their communities. When non-traditional work (i.e., anything that isn't

writing a peer reviewed book or journal article) is not legitimized and valued, those people are expected to do way more work to be successful in the institution. McGregor notes that this is an equity issue: "I think that if we want a university that, like, has diverse faculty, has diverse students, is engaged with communities, then we have to be treating public scholarship like it's real scholarship" (Feminist Publishing and Tech Speaker Series, 2019).

As such, McGregor has worked with Siobhan McMenemy at Wilfrid Laurier University Press to explore the possibilities for peer reviewing podcasts (McMenemy, n.d.). They used an open peer review process to review the first three seasons of Secret Feminist Agenda, which is posted online. In partnership with others, they have also founded the Amplify Podcast Network, which is working to develop and support scholarly podcasting in Canada as a legitimate form of scholarly communication.

In addition to thinking of podcasting as scholarship, podcasting can also be thought of as pedagogy. For myself, my podcasting project is an example of an open pedagogy assignment. I am taking my learning and producing knowledge to share back with the world. In addition, more and more instructors are starting to assign podcasts as readings. And podcasts themselves are being explicitly created to teach. For example, Alex Ketchum created an Introduction to Feminist and Social Justice Studies podcast to replace her course lectures and shared the episodes, along with her syllabus, online. Another example is Witch, Please, which explores the Harry Potter books through different theoretical lenses. Each episode provides an introduction to a topic (i.e., celebrity studies, critical animal studies, queer theory) and then uses that theory to unpack one of the books.

For myself, I see my podcast sitting between scholarship, pedagogy, and design. It is scholarship in the sense that I am drawing on theory and practice to craft new knowledge about how epistemic justice, open education, and podcasting are complimentary topics that make sense to engage with together. Podcasting allowed me to do research without relying on traditional, parametric research methods. It allowed for the research to be more exploratory, to appreciate the diversity and nuance of the topics, and to allow people to speak and interpret their experiences for themselves. It is

pedagogy in the sense that the podcast allows me to share the crucial work that others are doing in a medium that may introduce new people to their work and their ideas. And it is design in the sense that we are talking about design. As Jess Mitchell has said, "All decisions are design decisions" (Mitchell, 2019). This includes the decisions we make about how we teach, who we cite, who gets to create knowledge, and more. I also had to design the podcast itself. Although podcasts generally have similar characteristics, designed this podcast to prioritize accessibility, findability, reuse, and remix.

3. Design

Now let's get into the actual design of this podcasting project. To start, I will outline the values and beliefs that influenced this project. Then I well go into the methodology and talk more about the step-by-step process of engaging guests and creating and sharing episodes. And then I will provide a brief overview of each of the eight episodes.

3.1 Values and Beliefs: A Manifesto

One thing that I am really aware of is that justice and equity do not happen by accident. They require intention. So as a final assignment for an independent study I completed on intersectional feminism in design and communication, I drafted a manifesto articulating the values, beliefs, and commitments that influenced my approach and practices for this project.[1] This is what I came up with:

1. Openness is not an objective good.

As previously mentioned, openness does not guarantee equity. Openness is one tool among many tools that can be used to create a more equitable education system, but it is not the only tool and may not even be the right tool in all instances. I wanted this project to recognize and build upon critical perspective on openness. This also meant that not all guests are familiar with open education.

2. Education and design are always political.

Again, as previously mentioned, education and design are not neutral: they are political, whether we acknowledge that or not. For me, this meant sharing my positionality and

[1] Thank you to Jacquie Shaw for their work supervising this independent study and providing super valuable feedback. Go read their MRP: Towards and Intersectional Praxis in Design.

context. It also meant I was intentional about who I invited as guests and on what topics. I aimed to invite people who have lived experiences and identities that align with their areas of research and/or practice.

3. Epistemic injustice is systemic.

In *Design Justice*, Sasha Costanza-Chock (2020) explains that when we identify biases, we need to understand them as symptoms of the "matrix of domination" rather than one-off mistakes. The matrix of domination is a concept developed by Patricia Hill Collins that looks at how systems of oppression (like class, race, gender, sexuality, religion, citizenship, etc.) are structurally organized. The same is true of injustice present in open education. As such, the podcast features guests who bring different perspectives, offer critiques on how open education reproduces epistemic injustice, and are exploring alternative ways forward, while always recognizing these systems we are situated in.

4. Podcasting is a feminist praxis.

As I mentioned when sharing my positionality, I am a feminist, and from my perspective, podcasting is well aligned with feminist praxis.[2] So much of my understanding of podcasting and feminism developed from listening to feminist podcasters like Hannah McGregor on *Secret Feminist Agenda* and Sandy Hudson and Nora Loreto on *Sandy and Nora Talk Politics* who practice public-facing, community-engaged work outside the bounds of media and academic institutions. As such, I see feminism and podcasting as tightly connected.

For example, McGregor talks about how feminism shows up in her own approach to podcasting:

> Feminism is my method, like it's central to what I'm doing and how I'm doing it, rather than necessarily having to be the content… And so, what does that mean for me? It means openness. It means inclusivity. It means listening to where people are coming from. It means being constantly responsive to the difference of my guests and like… the really embodied differences of my guests. It means being

[2] My understanding of praxis is that it is the process of putting theory into practice and allowing practice to inform theory.

> ready to have hard conversations. It means being accountable and responsive to my audience. (Feminist Publishing and Tech Speaker Series, 2019)

Podcasting is one way to make academic work more accessible. When people talk, they are more likely to use everyday language. In addition, podcasting is meant to be public. I don't think you can call something a podcast if you don't share it. And it allows you to easily distribute audio content on the open web, so anyone with a device and internet can access it. With that publicness comes increased visibility and accountability for the work that you do.

And finally, podcasting can also be a way to practice epistemic justice. It allows people to share their experiences, and their research, and their perspectives in their own voice, rather than being mediated through a researcher. And of course, podcasting is an excuse to connect with smart and interesting people while also encouraging a high degree of care and attention when engaging with their work in order to talk with them about it.

Voice, care, accessibility, and accountability are all things that I associate with feminism, and for me, podcasting is one way those things can be put into practice.

5. Openness without consent is violent.

At Open Con 2017, Tara Robertson gave a talk titled "Who is Missing?" where she asked attendees to reject the idea that all things need to be open. Specifically, she told the story of a lesbian porn print magazine that had been out of print for a number of years was being digitized and shared under a Creative Commons license without the consent of the models who are pictured in this collection. Robertson notes that this license "allows feminist porn to be remixed in ways that could appropriate the content and demean women" and shares a quote from one of the models who said, "People can cut up my body and make a collage. My professional and personal life can be highjacked. These are uses I never intended and still don't want." This story highlights the very real ways that openness without consent can cause harm, even unintentionally.

There is also a very real risk to working in the open, even if that just means doing public-facing work rather than applying open licenses. And as Tressie McMillan Cottom has argued, the risk of public-facing work is greater for marginalized people, who are more likely to experience high levels of harassment (McMillan Cottom, 2012).

In recognition of these risks, I allowed my guests to review and revise interview questions in advance and listen the episode before sharing publicly. If they had any requested edits, I made those before sharing. Examples of the kinds of edits that people requested included editing out instances where people misspoke, removing sections they weren't comfortable with sharing, and inserting revisions. I also talked with them about the Creative Commons license I had selected for the project, what that licenses allows, and gave them the option of selecting a more restrictive licenses for their episode. All guests consented to the CC BY-SA 4.0 License.

6. Accessibility is a minimum requirement.

Disabled people have long argued that accessibility is always a minimum requirement: It is not a nice-to-have or something that can be added later. It's important to note how audio mediums can really increase the accessibility for people. This includes those with disabilities that affect their ability to read printed or digital content as well as those who want to engage with content while they are doing other tasks. It's also important to recognize that audio on its own excludes a lot of people, especially those who are Deaf or hard of heading, or those who want to just skim the content to find the important points.

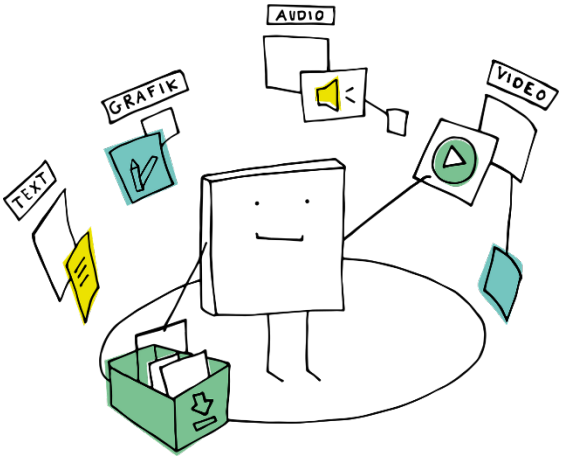

Figure 5 Multiple Formats. "Resource OER Audio" by manfredsteger is used under a Pixabay License.

When designing the website and podcast, I applied Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to ensure content was technically accessible and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to ensure people have choice in how they engage with the content. They can read, they can listen, or they can do both depending on ability, preference, and context. This meant creating and maintaining a website that is accessible, always releasing transcripts at the same time as podcast episodes, and making transcripts available in multiple formats (HTML, PDF, and Word). I also asked guests about their accessibility needs. My practices here were influenced by the Protocols for Crip Podcasting, which are guiding protocols for the Contra* podcast.

7. Critique is valuable and welcome.

I am aware of some of the flaws of my approach so far and will remain open and responsive to critique. I am also reflecting on questions like, What am I not considering? Who is missing? How are my biases showing up here? I will talk about these questions more in the “Limitations” section.

As bell hooks said in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), "If we fear mistakes, doing things wrongly, constantly evaluating ourselves, we will never make the academy a culturally diverse place where scholars and the curricula address every dimension of that difference."

8. I design this work to engage a broader community, not to sit in an institutional repository.

My community is those working openly to make education a more equitable space and those offering critical perspectives around openness. These people do so much of their work in the open: through podcasting, blogging, tweeting, and other means of public engagement. I follow in their footsteps by designing this project to live online, to be easily shared, and to not (just) sit in an institutional repository. I accomplished this by creating a website and by distributing the podcasting episodes through major podcasting players (Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher). All of this was done before writing the MRP document.

3.2 Methodology and Process

In this section, I will provide an overview of the work that went into the podcasting project. This includes getting all of the technology set up, planning and conducting the interviews, editing, and distribution. For a full list of the tools and resources I used, see Appendix B: Podcasting Tools and Resources.

Preparation

I started this project with no prior experience in podcasting. I had never even guested on a podcast. To start, I made a list of all of the things I thought I would need and all of the things I would need to learn based on what I knew of podcasts from listening to them. This included things like: A website, a podcast icon, some way to host and distribute audio files, a microphone, a title, openly licensed theme music, and potential guests. I

also needed to decide what license to put on the project. For a list of resources and tutorials I found useful, see Appendix B.

Music and Graphics

The theme music I selected for the podcast was "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org, which is shared under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) License. I chose this sound because it is fairly generic (a light instrumental) that was designed to loop, so I could make it as long or as short as I wanted.

As for the podcast graphic, I created that using an icon from The Noun Project that I purchased the rights to. I used Canva for editing the colours and applying text. I wanted it to be simple and high contrast, since it displays very small in most mobile podcasting apps.

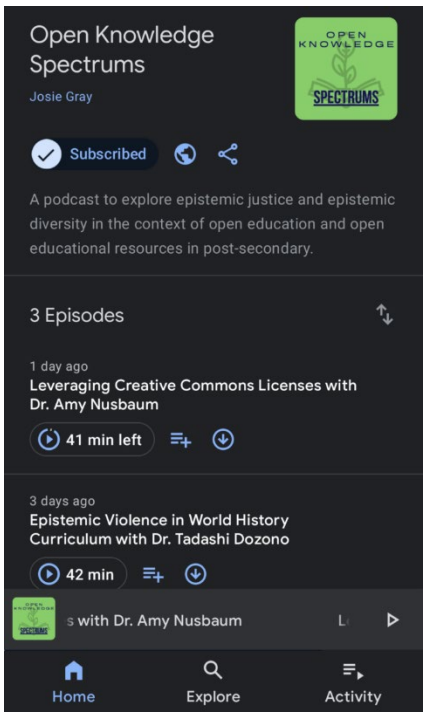

Figure 6 The Google Podcasts app on an Android mobile device. Not openly licensed.

Figure 7 Icon from the Noun Project. "Knowledge Growth" by Vectors Point on The Noun Project. Used under a CC BY License.

Website and Episode Hosting/Distribution

I explored many different options for websites and episode hosting. There are a lot of subscription-based options out there. However, since I intended for this podcast to only be a limited series, I did not want to get in the situation where I was paying for a subscription to keep the episodes up after I stopped putting out new episodes. While I

was researching different podcast hosting options, I found The Podcaster's Toolkit, which included a collection of tutorial videos created by Brenna Clarke Gray, an Educational Technology Coordinator at Thompson Rivers University. Her videos showed how faculty could use WordPress and the Seriously Simple Podcasting plugin to host and distribute episodes for free.

In the end, I was able to get a WordPress site with the Seriously Simple Podcasting plugin through the OpenETC (Open EdTech Collaborative), a collaborative network of post-secondary people who make open source tools available to all faculty, staff, and students in B.C. I have access to these tools through my position at BCcampus. OCAD does provide WordPress sites to students as well. However, you have no control over the site's URL and the plugins are very limited.

It took me a while to figure out how I wanted to set up the website, but knew I wanted it to include more than just the podcast itself. I wanted it to be a more-accessible alternative to the MRP document that would allow people to explore and engage beyond the episodes themselves. Here is an overview of the website structure and content:

- **About:** This page included an introduction and overview of the podcasting project and my positionality statement.
- **Explore the Podcast:** This is where all pages and posts related to the podcast are shared. It included the following pages:
    - **Listen to the Episodes:** This is where someone can access the audio episodes and read the show notes.
    - **Read Transcripts:** This is where someone can read the transcript versions of all of the episodes.
    - **How to Contribute:** This page includes some information about ways to engage with the podcast.
    - **Manifesto:** This page outlines the beliefs, values, and commitments I had with this podcast (a more concise version of what I described in the previous section).
- **Resources:** This is where people could go to explore any of the topics more. It included the following pages:

    - **Annotated Bibliography:** A list of research that was really useful as I explored this topic. I broke it up into general topics and provided a brief description of each to make it easier to navigate.
    - **Podcasting Resources:** This included things like tools and technologies, guiding documents, and tutorial videos that I found useful (see Appendix B).
    - **Other Projects:** This included links to projects that had similar goals.
- **Gratitude:** This is where I provided my acknowledgements.
- **Contact:** This is where people could connect with me directly.

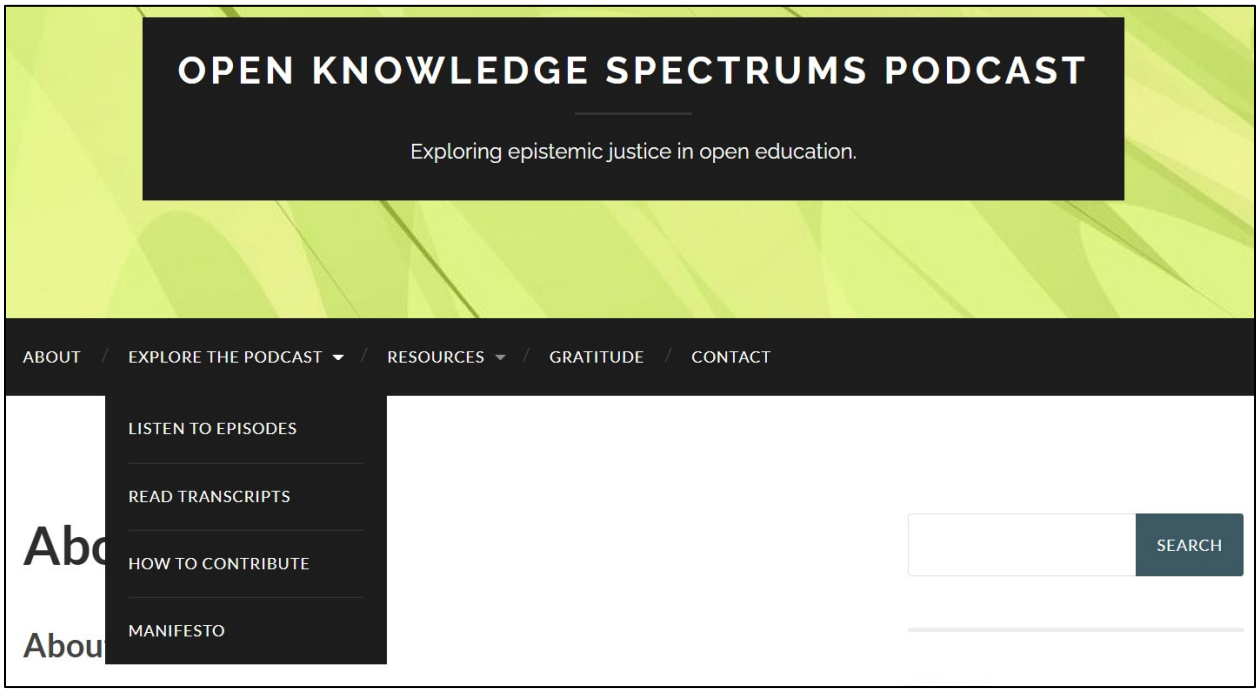

Figure 8 Website homepage and the menu.

Identifying Guests

In the end, I had a total of eleven guests for seven interviews. I found that having more than one person on at a time worked really well, because they would often build off of each other ways that were really generative. I had previous relationships with many of the guests, which is how I was familiar with their work. But for some of the others, I found their work while doing the research for this project, and the interview was our first time meeting. I really liked the combination, because it allowed me to connect with

people who I already knew have done really great work while also getting to dig into new perspectives and ideas.

When selecting guests, I tried to ensure that for topics that focused on a specific identity or social position, that the guest(s) had lived experience in that area or shared that identity, in addition to that being their area of research and/or practice. As previously mentioned, this is a principle of representational justice, which is when someone who experiences some form of marginalization is able to represent themself and their own knowledge about that specific marginalization (Lambert, 2018). In addition, I focused on people that from my perspective did not already have big platforms and large followings (for example, multiple keynotes or "thought leaders").

Pre-Interview: Research, Planning, and Communication

Once I had identified one or more guests that I wanted to interview on a specific topic, I sent them an email introducing myself, the project, and the topic I had in mind for us to explore on the podcast. I provided an estimation of the length of time for the interview, when I was hoping to schedule it, and my intention to openly license the episodes (see Appendix C for the email templates that I used). Of the nine requests I sent out, I received eight replies, seven of whom agreed to the interview.

From there, we set up a time to meet, I sent them a calendar invite with the Zoom link, and I sent them a list of questions that would help me prepare for the interview. Before the interview, I emailed them the list of interview questions to review plus additional information about what they could expect of me and the recording/editing process. I also asked for a short bio.

During the Interview

The interviews were conducted over Zoom. Before I pressed record, I made sure to explain what they could expect from me and the interview. This varied depending on if they knew me before or not, but it tended to include the following:

- Introduce myself, my background, and my intention for this project.
- Check in on the questions I had sent and if there was anything they wanted changed.

- Explain recording process and what they could expect. This included:
    - The interview would be recorded through Zoom, so video will be recorded too but I will only use the audio.
    - There is no need to mute when not talking. Voices are being recorded to separate tracks, and if people mute the tracks get out of sync.
    - If anyone says anything during the conversation that they don't want shared, they can let me know and I will edit it out.
    - I will share the audio file with them to get their okay before I share the episode and will make any requested changes.
- Check in about the Creative Commons license and ask if they would like to use a more specific license for their episode.

Once we had gone over everything and I addressed all of the questions, I pressed record and got started with the first question.

Post-Interview: Editing and Transcribing

After the interview was completed, I edited the conversation using Audacity, an open source audio editing software. When editing, I tried to normalize the volume levels and take out distracting ums, mis-starts, and long pauses. I generally left the content of the conversation alone, although there were a few instances where I removed sections of the conversation that were not relevant or were stated more clearly elsewhere. This level of editing generally took two to three times the length of the actual episode.

From there, I recorded the intro and outros and inserted the music. These followed a consistent script that was customized for each episode. In the intro, I read out the short bios provided by the guest(s) and provided a brief description of the main focus of the conversation. For the outros, I provided resources or information about where others can connect with the guests, shared details about the project website, provided a land acknowledgement, attributed the music, and explained the license for the episode.

Once the episode was edited, I shared it with the guest(s) via a OneDrive link so they could listen through and see if there is anything they wanted edited out. I did receive a few requests for edits. Some were just small wording edits while others asked for a

section to be removed or inserted. One person expressed discomfort at hearing their voice and decided not to listen.

Once I received the approval from the guests, I had the episode transcribed. I transcribed two of the episodes myself but ended up paying someone else to do the rest. I used oTranscribe, but the person I hired used Otter, which creates an automatic transcription that can then be edited. After transcripts were finished, I re-listened to the episode and made any final edits on the transcripts.

Once the episode was ready for sharing, I uploaded it into my WordPress site and got it set up using the Seriously Simple Podcasting plugin. I drafted show notes that included a brief summary plus a list of links to resources mentioned during the conversation. I also set up the transcripts as a separate post, which I linked to from the show notes. The transcript is set up to be read directly on the website, and it is also available to download as a PDF or Word file. My rationale for doing this was to make the transcripts more findable on the web, ensure mobile readability, and provide offline access. With the episodes and transcripts all set up, I scheduled the audio and transcript posts to go live at the same time on a set day, depending on the schedule. I also let the guests know when they could expect the episode to come out.

Publication and Sharing

Once the episode was published on the website, it would appear in the various podcasting platforms within a few hours, including Spotify, Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, and Stitcher. I also shared each episode out on my Twitter with a link to the episode's page on the website. If my guests had Twitter accounts, I would tag them. This was a successful strategy for getting those initial podcast followers, since there is a strong open education network on Twitter that I am connected to. My organization also shared the podcast through our weekly newsletter that has 4,000 subscribers.

Figure 9 Twitter thread introducing the project.

3.3 Overview of the Episodes

Full episode transcripts can be found in Appendix A.

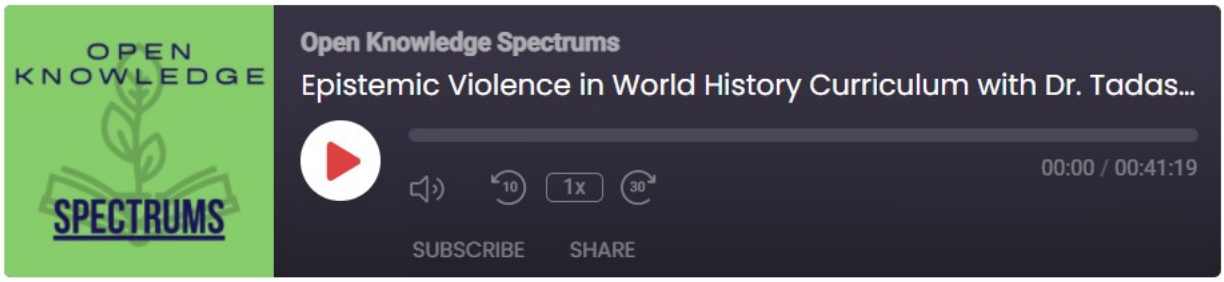

Figure 10 Audio player. Not openly licensed.

Episode 0: Introducing Open Knowledge Spectrums

This first episode introduces Josie, open education, and epistemic justice. It discusses why Josie chose to explore these topics as a podcast and provides brief introductions of all of the great interviews to come!

Episode 1: Epistemic Violence in World History Curriculum with Dr. Tadashi Dozono

Tadashi Dozono talks about his research on epistemic violence in grade 10 New York state world history curriculum. He looks at how white supremacy functions in this curriculum at the level of language, and how harmful that can be for student of colour. For example, through silence, or what is not talked about, and through passive voice, which is used both to obscure the harms of colonial actors and to remove the agency of marginalized peoples.

Episode 2: Leveraging Creative Commons Licenses with Dr. Amy Nusbaum

Amy Nusbaum describes projects she has led to leverage the permission of open licenses to adapt an introduction to psychology open textbook to make it more inclusive. She shares a project that she ran with her students to customize the textbook to their local context, and a broader initiative where she leveraged open tools to crowd-source the evaluation of the textbook through the lens of diversity, representation, and inclusion.

Episode 3: Collaborative and Open Publishing Models with Apurva Ashok and Zoe Wake Hyde

I talk with Apurva Ashok and Zoe Wake Hyde about collaborative models for open publishing. They share the work that the Rebus Community is doing to support more collaborative, open, and transparent approaches to OER creation. We discuss some of

the ethical and equity considerations that relate to open publishing, the work that goes into successful collaborations, and the power of publishing.

Episode 4: Student Perspectives on Open and Inclusive Education with Mitali Kamat, Jaime Hilditch, and Caleb Volorozo-Jones

I talk with three other second year INCD students. They share about their own major research projects and discuss various challenging and positive experiences they've had in the education system. We talk about openness, inclusion, and opportunities for doing and thinking about things differently.

Episode 5: Disability-Informed Open Pedagogy with Arley Cruthers and Samantha Walsh

I talk with Arley Cruthers and Samantha Walsh about their experiences as physically disabled instructors and where they see the potential for disability to be a positive disrupter in open education spaces and for students. We discuss the value of difference and making space for diverse bodies and minds, and the assumptions people make about who will be in a space or use a resource.

Episode 6: Pulling Together – OERs to Indigenize Post-Secondary with Dianne Biin

I talk with Dianne Biin about a project she led to create a series of open, professional learning guides to support Indigenization in post-secondary institutions. Dianne describes the work and collaboration that went into bringing those guides to fruition. She also discusses the decision to publish these guides under an open license and how they thought through what license they applied. She also offers a critical perspective on openness in the context of Indigenous knowledges.

Episode 7: Social Justice and OER with Marco Seiferle-Valencia

In this final episode, I talk with Marco Seiferle-Valencia about his work as an OER librarian and how he has supported faculty in creating low or no-cost materials that have specific social justice goals. He shares how his own positionality impacts the work he does in open and offers a critical perspective on citational practices in open education scholarship.

4. Discussion

To start, I would like to evaluate this podcast through Lambert's (2018) three principles of social justice in open education. For redistributive justice, the project is free and openly licensed, so there are no economic barriers. In addition, the project was designed to be accessible: There are audio and text versions of each episode, which ensures that people can engage in ways that work for them. However, because this podcast was created as a major research project and not to replace an existing commercial resource, redistributive justice may not be applicable, but it could be applied as such in the future.

When looking at recognitive justice, I do believe I was successful in having a relatively diverse selection of guests speaking on different topics. I will talk more specifically in the limitations section about perspectives that are missing, but I am happy with what I was able to accomplish in seven interviews. To truly evaluate the degree of recognitive justice achieved, it would be helpful to gather feedback from listeners who share those identities.

As for representational justice, it depends on how you look at it. If you look at my guests, those who have marginalized identities were able to speak for themselves, which is a crucial part of representational justice. However, the project itself was carried out by myself, a cis white women. While I have experienced some degree of marginalization in some instances, my whiteness, class, level of education, and gender put me in a privileged position that cannot be ignored.

4.1 Contributions

One of the things this podcast contributes is explicitly bringing together open education, podcasting, and epistemic justice as complimentary topics of discussion and areas of practice. In this project, podcasting is a medium used to discuss open education and epistemic justice, but it is also a way to practice open education (the podcast is an open educational resources) and practice epistemic justice (guests who have experienced marginalization can draw on and speak to their lived experiences as well as their areas of research/practice).

I think this podcast also helps emphasise how complex and multifaceted epistemic justice is. Power and systems of domination and exclusion affect the world we live in

and our education and knowledge systems. Throughout the episodes, we discuss language and grammar, open licenses, open and community-oriented publishing tools and practices, student experiences and ways of knowing, disability, Indigenous knowledges, and librarianship. These are wide raging topics that do not even get close to covering the complexity of the issue.

The podcast's manifesto is also a contribution, specifically as it provides principles to guide inclusive open podcasting projects. None of the individual points of the manifesto on their own are original ideas, but together they provide concrete commitments and values rooted in praxis that can be adapted for many different contexts. As mentioned previously, inclusion, justice, and equity do not happen by accident. We must be intentional, and stating these intentions publicly allow others to hold us accountable.

4.2 Limitations

As a podcast about epistemic justice and diversity, it is important to acknowledge the ways the guests I invited were not diverse, since that can highlight whose voices are missing. First, everyone lives in North America and speaks English. As such, non-English and more global perspectives on how knowledge is produced, shared, and are missing. Such a project taking that global approach to the topic of epistemic justice is the Unsettling Knowledge Inequities podcast produced in partnership by the Knowledge Equity Lab and SPARC. Second, all of the guests are very much embedded in post-secondary institutions, as faculty and staff, students, or in external support roles. This makes sense since that is the context I work in and it fits the focus of this podcast. However, it is important to note post-secondary is not the only place these types of conversations are happening, and many outside of post-secondary bring important perspectives. And finally, all guests have at least a master's degree (assuming that the students from my cohort that appeared as guests successfully complete their degrees). This suggests a bias towards people with a high level of education, which excludes people who have been excluded and marginalized by our education systems.

Another limitation of this project was that I was only able to get superficial feedback and engagement with the podcast episodes before I had to submit the project to the university. Due to nervousness and concerns with perfection, I did not start sharing the

episodes until April 19, one week before I was to have my first draft of this paper submitted to my advisor. I received lots of likes and retweets on Twitter and a few positive comments, but this cannot be substituted for concrete engagement and feedback.

4.3 Ongoing Questions and Future Work

For my own future work, I would like to facilitate more open conversations on all the episode topics. I think dialogue is where a lot of learning and new ideas happen, and I had hoped that the conversations started in the episodes would continue with listeners in other mediums (website comments, Twitter, Hypothes.is, etc.). Unfortunately, this did not happen, but maybe I can facilitate these conversations with more prompting and structure. In addition, I would be interested in having the project peer reviewed by people in the community, using a similar process as described by McMenemy (n.d.). The open, public peer review model is its own way for starting conversations and connecting and generating ideas.

Beyond the podcast, I think future work could involve applying inclusive design methods to OER publishing processes and practices. For example, creating OER by co-design with students and/or those with lived experiences of whatever the subject of the OER is. Some people are already taking on projects like these (one example is Arley's UDL project that will include disabled students), but I would love to see it become more of a norm and am really interested in how people in publishing roles (like me) can support these kinds of projects.

One big question that I have is if textbooks could ever be designed to enable epistemic injustice. Do textbooks have to present linear, objective truths? How can we disrupt textbook authoring and design? How do we define what a textbook is? And how could that definition be oriented towards plurality and epistemic diversity? These are all questions where much exploration is needed, and the answers will likely look different in different contexts.

5. Conclusion

Epistemic justice recognizes that knowledge is cultural, subjective, contextual, and diverse. Knowledge has power, and how we treat, share, and construct what we consider knowledge can be empowering, but it can also do harm. For open education to be a tool for justice, we must critically evaluate it through this lens.

This project ties together podcasting, open education, and epistemic justice to explore the research, practices, and/or lived experiences of different people in post-secondary and how those things can inform how we understand knowledge equity in open education. It recognizes that openness does not ensure equity. In fact, openness can reproduce harm that exists in academia and publishing, as well as enable new kinds of harm. In addition, equity does not happen by accident. It requires intention, care, and reflection.

Each episode provides a critical perspective on openness and education. Topics explored include inclusion and representation in curriculum, leveraging open licenses to make OER more inclusive, how open technologies and practices can support collaborative approaches to OER publishing, student perspectives, how disability can inform teaching and learning, openness and Indigenous knowledges, and intentionally engaged open education. These topics only just begin to cover what epistemic justice might look like in open education. There is a lot more to be explored.

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Appendix A: Accompanying Audio Files

The following audio files have been posted along side the MRP. Audio files can also be accessed from the Open Knowledge Spectrums website: Listen to Episodes.

Episode No.	Title	File Name and Type
0	Introducing Open Knowledge Spectrums	Introducing_OKS.mp3
1	Epistemic Violence in World History Curriculum with Dr. Tadashi Dozono	Dozono_OKS.mp3
2	Leveraging Creative Commons Licenses with Dr. Amy Nusbaum	Nusbaum_OKS.mp3
3	Collaborative and Open Publishing Models with Apurva Ashok and Zoe Wake Hyde	Ashok_WakeHyde_OKS.mp3
4	Student Perspectives on Open and Inclusive Education with Mitali Kamat, Jaime Hilditch, and Caleb Valorozo-Jones	Kamat_Hilditch_ValorozoJones_OKS.mp3
5	Disability-Informed Open Pedagogy with Arley Cruthers and Samantha Walsh	Cruthers_Walsh_OKS.mp3
6	Pulling Together – OERs to Indigenize Post-Secondary with Dianne Biin	Biin_OKS.mp3
7	OER and Social Justice with Marco Seiferle-Valencia	SeiferleValencia_OKS.mp3

Appendix B: Podcasting Tools and Resources

This section provides an overview of the tools and technologies I used to make this podcast happen and the resources that I found useful.

Tools and Technologies

- **Zoom (recording episodes):** Because of the pandemic, I was able to use my free Zoom account to record episodes (there was no limit on meetings times). If using Zoom, make sure you:
    - Change your settings so Zoom will record each person to a separate track. This allows you to edit voices individually.
    - Ask your participants to not mute while recording, or the audio tracks will get out of sync.
- **AudioTechnica ATR2100-USB (microphone):** My colleague loaned me this mic for free. It worked great. I don't think they make this specific model anymore, but there are others out there.
- **Beats Studio³ headphones:** I found over-ear headphones helpful for interviews. I don't think you need expensive Beats; they were just what I had.
- **Audacity (audio editing):** A free, open-source audio editing software. It did all the things I needed it to do, and there are lots of tutorial videos.
- **WordPress (website):** WordPress is open source, and I was able to get free website hosting via the OpenETC (Open EdTech Collaborative) in British Columbia, a community of people aiming to make it easy for post-secondary educators in B.C. to use open technologies.
- **Seriously Simple Podcasting plugin (hosting and distribution):** This is a free WordPress plugin that will allow you to host and distribute your podcast to all the places from WordPress.
- **Otter.ai (transcription):** I paid someone to create most of the transcripts, and she used the free version of Otter, which automatically transcribes the audio, and then she edited them for accuracy and readability.
- **OneDrive (file saving and sharing):** I had access to OneDrive through the university, and I used it to back up everything, including transcripts, interview

questions, and both original and edited audio files. It also made it easier to share recordings with guests since I could share files by link rather than having to upload them to the email.

Practices

- **Protocols for Crip Podcasting** (CC BY-NC-SA): A set of protocols developed for the Contra* podcast, a podcast that "focuses on disability, design justice, and the lifeworld." Although these protocols were developed for a specific podcast, it is a helpful resource for thinking through how to make a more inclusive and accessible podcast. It also discusses the processes around preparing for an interview, producing and editing the podcast episode, and promoting the podcast.

Tutorials

- **The Podcaster's Toolkit:** A collection of six videos covering the some basics for setting up your first podcast and other helpful links. The videos are designed for faculty at Thompson Rivers University; however, if you are using WordPress, Kaltura, or have questions about what technology you need, it's a great resource for others, too. In particular, I found the video on using the Seriously Simple Podcasting WordPress plugin very helpful!
- **How to Start a Podcast (in 2020!) – The SMART Way:** Another great video series providing an introduction to podcasting. These videos are a great place to start if you have questions about services that provide website and podcast hosting. In addition, this series includes reviews of microphones and tutorials for audio editing software. Thanks to Tim Carson for sharing these videos with me!

Appendix C: Email Templates

There were the base email templates I used during that initially communication with guests. These emails did vary based on my degree of familiarity with the person, but this was a starting point.

Podcast Guest Request

Dear [Name]

My name is Josie Gray, and I am a master's student at OCAD University (Toronto, Canada), and I also work for BCcampus on their open education team where I maintain the BC Open Textbook Collection and support OER publishing projects.

For my master's major project, I am producing a podcast (tentatively titled *Open Knowledge Spectrums*) where I will be interviewing different people to talk about epistemic justice and epistemic diversity in open education. For the podcast, I would love to interview you about [the specific area of their work that I am interested in exploring] and any other work/thinking you are doing in this area.

The interview would be hosted in Zoom and would last 30 minutes to an hour, and I would share preliminary questions in advance. I also intend to openly licence the episodes. I am hoping to schedule interviews [insert time period].

Is this something you would be interested in? Let me know if you have any questions or concerns. My supervisor for this project is Dr. Jutta Treviranus, and you are welcome to reach out to her as well (jtreviranus@ocadu.ca).

Best,

Josie

Scheduling

Hi [Name]

That's really great to hear. I am looking forward to talking with you.

First, I would like to find a time to meet so we can get that in our calendars. I am in the PST time zone, and [insert times and days I am available]. Could you send me a date and time that works for you sometime between [range of dates].

Thanks,

Josie

Additional Information Request

Hello [Name]

I am really looking forward to our interview on [date].

To help me prepare, would you please send me your answers to the following questions?

- How you would like me to address you? (For example, a nickname or title)
- What are your pronouns?
- Do you have any accessibility requirements?
- Is there anything you'd to make sure I read ahead of time?

Thanks,

Josie

Interview Questions Plus More Information

Hi [Name]

I am following up with proposed interview questions (see attached document) and some more information. Also, would you be able to send me your bio?

Please let me know if you would like anything edited/removed/added for the questions. I intend to use them as a guide but am very open to the conversation going in different directions.

Also, here is some points for your information:

- If you say anything during the interview that you do not want to appear in the live version, just let me know and I will take it out.

- I will send you the edited version of the podcast before it goes live to make sure you are comfortable with it and will make any requested edits you have.
- I am sharing this project under a CC BY-SA 4.0 License to make it easier for others to share, reuse, and build upon the work. But I want to make sure you are comfortable with the specific license applied to your episode, so we can discuss options when we meet. If you are not familiar with Creative Commons licenses, there is an introduction here (about the licenses), and I can give you a better overview when we meet.

Please reach out with any questions you have.

Best,

Josie

Appendix D: Episode Transcripts

Episode 0: Introducing Open Knowledge Spectrums

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie Gray: Welcome to the Open Knowledge Spectrums podcast, which explores questions of epistemic justice, or knowledge equity, in the context of open education and considers different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable.

My name is Josie Gray, and I am your host. This podcast is my final project for my Masters of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

This podcast is an interview podcast, but this first episode is going to be just me. I am going to introduce and situate myself and this project, explore some of the key concepts that guided this project, and share a few teasers about what to expect from future episodes.

[Theme music]

Josie: To start, I would like to situate myself. I am an accessible open publishing practitioner who is trying to figure out what it means to be an inclusive designer. I am interested in the balance between print and digital design from an accessibility perspective, feminist approaches to publishing, and what lies beyond providing "access" to information.

I am a white able-bodied bisexual cisgender woman in my mid-20s. I am a settler of mixed European ancestry, and my family and ancestors have lived uninvited on the lands of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island for over 150 years. I grew up on unceded Tsimshian territory on the northwest coast, around the ocean, the mountains, and beautiful rain forests. I also have ties to Treaty 6 territory, where most of my extended family lives. Growing up, I spent a lot of summers on my maternal grandparents' farm, which is on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot, Tsuu T'ina, Sioux, Metis, and Cree Peoples. Currently, I live, work, and learn on the unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the territories of the WSÁNEĆ Peoples. I have been an uninvited resident on these

lands for over seven years. It is where I completed my undergraduate degree and where I started my work in open education for BCcampus. I am extremely grateful for the privilege I have had to live and learn in each of these places.

I am feminist, although I have only started to align myself with that term in the last few years. I am still learning, but my feminism is trans inclusive and intersectional. And when I say that, I think it's important to recognize that the term "intersectionality" was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to push back against the erasure of Black women's experiences of racial and gender discrimination in feminist and anti-racist movements and in anti-discrimination legal frameworks, which tend to focus on the most privileged of those groups, that being white women and Black men. The concept of intersectionality illustrates that people have complex and intersecting identities that influence their experience of race, gender, and class-based discrimination. You can't look at just race or just gender.

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of Victoria. This podcast and the accompanying website is in partial fulfillment of my Master of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

I work for BCcampus in Victoria, British Columbia, where I manage the B.C. Open Textbook Collection, support OER publishing projects, and provide training and support for B.C. faculty publishing open textbooks. I have also been learning about and supporting accessibility in the context of open educational resources since 2016.

I share all of these things so explicitly because I am very aware of the many privileges I hold and the context I am working from, and I think it is important to name those things. All of these things impact how I see and interact with the world and how the world interacts with me. And they also have influenced my approach to this project in ways that I am aware of and also probably in ways that I am oblivious to.

With that, let's jump into the two big ideas that guide this project. The first is open education.

[Theme music]

Josie: The word "open" is a huge word that encompasses so many different things depending on the context. It is often used to mean public, transparent, free, and/or accessible, and it is often used to describe more equitable institutional and research processes and practices, like open access, open data, open science, open source, open government, etc. But this project focuses on open education specifically.

In education, there are again many ways openness is understood and enacted. But one common goal is to create a more inclusive and accessible education system by thinking about knowledge through this framework of openness. Instead of bundling up knowledge in an expensive textbook or putting it behind a paywall, open education sees knowledge as a public good that should be freely available to everyone to learn from, build on, and customize for their own purposes.

One example of openness is education is the replacement of traditional commercial, all rights reserved textbooks with open educational resources (OER). OER are any kind of resource used for teaching and learning—so for example, textbooks, syllabuses, videos, test banks—that are in the public domain or under an open licence (such as a Creative Commons licence), which allows others to use, edit, remix, and redistribute the content for free—all without needing to ask for permission from the original author.

In addition to OER, open education is explored through the lens of open pedagogy, or how openness shows up in teaching practices. Open pedagogy is a much harder term to define, and it's one that I am less familiar with. And it means different things to different people, and it looks different in different contexts. Open pedagogy often aims to put students in the seat of knowledge producers, rather than knowledge consumers, and make them active participants in the learning process. If you want to explore all of the nuances of open pedagogy, I would recommend going over to the Open Pedagogy Notebook at openpedagogy.org/open-pedagogy/ and read the exploration of the complexities of the term written by Rajiv Jhangiani and Robin DeRosa.

One important thing to note is that openness on its own isn't an objective good, which I'll talk more about in a few minutes.

Now let's talk about the next big idea of this project: epistemic justice. Epistemic justice looks at justice as it relates to knowledge. It asks things like, Whose knowledge is seen as

valid and valuable? Whose stories get told? From what perspectives? Who gets to create knowledge? How are different people represented? And why?

Epistemic justice as a defined term can be credited to Miranda Fricker's 2007 book, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. However, feminist and critical race scholars have been talking about justice and injustice as it relates to knowledge long before that.

For example, in *Teaching to Transgress*, published in 1994, bell hooks reflected on the emergence of the idea of "cultural diversity" in education, and how much hope there was that this framework would help bring change in an institution filled with "biases that uphold and maintain white supremacy, imperialism, sexism, and racism" (p. 29). She goes on to write:

> When everyone first began to speak about cultural diversity, it was exciting. For those of us on the margins (people of color, folks from working class backgrounds, gays, and lesbians, and so on) who had always felt ambivalent about our presence in institutions where knowledge was shared in ways that reinscribed colonialism and domination, it was thrilling to think that the vision of justice and democracy that was at the very heart of the civil rights movement would be realized in the academy. At last, there was the possibility of a learning community, a place where difference could be acknowledged, where we would finally all understand, accept, and affirm that our ways of knowing are forged in history and relations of power. Finally, we were all going to break through collective academic denial and acknowledge that the education most of us had received and were giving was not and is never politically neutral (p. 30).

Although hooks was not using the term "epistemic justice," she was talking about the same concept, the awareness of how the construction of what counts as "knowledge," and the depoliticization of teaching, causes harm and reifies the systems of domination in our society.

Another example is Charles W. Mills, who developed the concept of "white ignorance." This idea was first published in the late 1990s, and it looks at ignorance that is specifically driven by racism and white supremacy. Mills discusses many ways that

white ignorance allows white people (although Mills acknowledges that white ignorance can affect non-white people, too) to remain oblivious to how race functions in our society. Mills discusses how "white normativity" and then "color blindness" were constructed to allow for "the centering of the Euro and later Euro-American reference group as constitutive norm."

The specific part of Mills work that I want to highlight is the section he dedicates to discussing how social memory is constructed and curated through things like textbooks, ceremonies, official holidays, and monuments. In particular, Mills cites researchers who demonstrate how standard American history textbooks have allowed white ignorance to be perpetuated in the school system by downplaying and "whitewashing" the realities of slavery and colonization. The erasure and suppression of this history "enables a self-representation in which differential white privilege, and the need to correct for it, does not exist" (p. 31).

Epistemic justice recognizes that knowledge is cultural, subjective, contextual, and diverse. Knowledge has power, and how we treat, share, and construct what we consider knowledge can be empowering, but it can also do harm. For open education to be a tool for justice, we must critically evaluate it through this lens.

For example, while openness can improve access to knowledge, it can also reproduce inequities found in academia and our larger society by centring Eurocentric, colonial narratives and ways of knowing. If the same people who were writing commercial textbooks are the same people writing open textbooks, we are not democratizing knowledge production. If Black, Indigenous, and students of colour, queer and trans students, poor and working-class students do not see themselves and their communities in open content, we are not creating resources that are inclusive and useful. If disabled students and students with limited access to Internet and devices cannot access and engage with open content, that content is not accessible.

We also have to consider open licences and recognize that these licenses operate in a western, colonial understanding of intellectual properly that is not culturally appropriate for many Indigenous ways of knowing (Young-ing, 2006; Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2019). In addition, copyright as a legal framework has been

used to dispossess and appropriate the intellectual and cultural products of Black and Indigenous peoples (Greene, 2019). As such, not all knowledge can or should be open, and there are harmful histories that need to be acknowledged.

So these questions and these issues are some of the things that this podcast aims to explore.

[Theme music]

Josie: But, why do a podcast? I mentioned at the beginning that I am a feminist, and for me, I see podcasting as well aligned with feminist praxis. Praxis is the process of taking theory and putting it into practice. So much of my understanding of podcasting and feminism developed from listening to feminist podcasters like Dr. Hannah McGregor on *Secret Feminist Agenda* and Sandy Hudson and Nora Loreto on *Sandy and Nora Talk Politics* who practice public-facing, community-engaged work outside the bounds of media and academic institutions. As such, I see feminism and podcasting as tightly connected.

For one, podcasting is one way to make academic work more accessible. When people talk, they are more likely to use everyday language. In addition, podcasting is meant to be public. I don't think you can call something a podcast if you don't share it. And it allows you to easily distribute audio content on the open web, so anyone with a device and internet can access it. With that publicness comes increased visibility and accountability for the work that you do. I also am making sure that transcripts go live at the same time as the audio to give people options in how they engage with content: You can read, you can listen, or you can do both depending on your ability, your preference, and your context.

In the open education community that I am embedded in, people do so much of their work in the open through podcasting, blogging, tweeting, and other means of public engagement, and I have learned so much from them. So I see this project as kind of following in their footsteps by designing it to live online, to be easily shared, to not (just) sit in an institutional repository, and to also pass on the tools and resources I used to create the podcast for others wanting to do similar work.

And finally, podcasting can also be a way to practice epistemic justice. It allows people to share their experiences, and their research, and their perspectives in their own voice, rather than being mediated through a researcher. And of course, podcasting is an excuse to connect with smart and interesting people while also encouraging a high degree of care and attention when engaging with their work in order to talk with them about it.

Voice, care, accessibility, and accountability are all things that I associate with feminism, and for me, podcasting is one way those things can be put into practice.

[Theme music]

Now I'll provide a brief intro to each of the episodes that will be released over the next few weeks.

In the first episode, Tadashi talks about his research on epistemic violence in grade 10 New York state world history curriculum. Tadashi looks at how white supremacy functions in this curriculum at the level of language, and how harmful that can be for student of colour. For example, his research looks at silence, or what is not talked about in curriculum, and looks at the use of passive voice, which is used both to obscure the harms of colonial actors and to remove the agency of marginalized peoples.

In this episode, I talk with Amy about projects she has led to leverage the permissions of open licenses and adapt an introduction to psychology open textbook to make it more inclusive. She shares a project that she ran with her students to customize the textbook to their local context, and also broader initiative where she leveraged open tools to crowd-source the evaluation of the textbook through the lens of diversity, representation, and inclusion.

In the next episode, I talk with Apurva and Zoe about collaborative models for open publishing. They share the work that the Rebus Community is doing to support more collaborative, open, and transparent approaches to OER creation. We discuss some of the ethical and equity considerations that relate to open publishing, the work that goes into successful collaborations, and the power of publishing.

In the next episode, I talk with three other second year inclusive design students that are in my cohort. They share about their own major research projects and discuss various

challenges and positive experiences they've had in the education system. We talk about openness, inclusion, and opportunities for doing and thinking about things differently.

In this episode, I talk with Arley and Samantha about their experiences as physically disabled instructors and where they see the potential for disability to be a positive disrupter in open education spaces and for students. We discuss the value of difference and making space for diverse bodies and minds, and the assumptions people make about who will be in a space or use a resource.

In the next episode, I talk with Dianne about a project she led to create a series of open, professional learning guides to support Indigenization in post-secondary institutions. Dianne describes the work and collaboration that went into bringing those guides to fruition. She also discusses the decision to publish these guides under an open license and how they thought through what license they wanted to apply. She also offers a critical perspective on openness in the context of Indigenous knowledges.

In this final episode, I talk with Marco about his work as an OER librarian and how he has supported faculty in creating low or no-cost materials that have specific social justice goals. He shares how his own positionality impacts the work he does in open education and offers a critical perspective on citational practices in open education scholarship.

I am so grateful for all of these guests for taking the time and speak to me about their areas of expertise and being so generous with their time and their willingness to share.

I'm really looking forward to sharing these episodes with all of you.

[Theme music]

Josie: You can learn more about this podcast at knowledgespectrums.opened.ca. On the website, you can find all episodes and transcripts, along with many other resources and information related to this project. Comments and Hypothes.is are enabled on the website, so if you have thoughts and ideas you want to share, that is a great place to post them.

You can connect with me on Twitter @josiea_g and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #OKSPodcast.

I record this podcast on the traditional and unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples.

The theme song is "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org and shared under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

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This has been Open Knowledge Spectrums. Thank you for listening.

[Music fades out]

—End of Episode—

Episode 1: Epistemic Violence and World History Curriculum with Dr. Tadashi Dozono

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie Gray: Hello! Welcome to the Open Knowledge Spectrums podcast, which explores questions of epistemic justice, or knowledge equity, in the context of open education and considers different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable.

My name is Josie Gray, and I am your host. This podcast is my final project for my Masters of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

In this episode, I am joined by Dr. Tadashi Dozono. Tadashi Dozono is an assistant professor of history/social science education at California State University Channel Islands. Through cultural studies, ethnic studies, queer theory, and critical theory, Tadashi's research emphasizes accountability towards the experiences of marginalized students by examining the production of knowledge in high school social studies

classrooms. His work draws on his experiences as a queer Japanese American cis-male, his family's internment during World War II, and over twelve years of teaching in New York City public schools. He received his PhD in social and cultural studies from UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education, where his dissertation focused on "trouble-maker" students of colour in world history classrooms. Tadashi applied his dissertation findings by returning to teach in Brooklyn, NY, at a small public school focused on restorative justice. His research has been published in journals such as Race, Ethnicity and Education, Educational Theory, Studies in Philosophy and Education, and The History Teacher.

I found Tadashi's work when I was doing research on inclusion and representation in curriculum. A lot of the articles I was reading were using quantitative approaches, like basically counting the number of times specific groups of people or individuals appeared in a text to evaluate who was being included and in what chapters. However, they weren't really looking at the quality of that representation. But in contrast, Tadashi's work was really digging into the layers of representation and uncovering how white supremacy was functioning at the level of language in world history curriculum.

So in this episode, I talk with Tadashi about epistemic violence in world history curriculum. We talk about textbooks, standardized curriculum, queer theory, the power of grammar, and allowing students to bring their own ways of knowing into the classroom.

Hope you enjoy.

[Theme music]

Josie: I think it's.. Yep, looks like it's going. So to start, I was wondering if you could share a bit about your background, as a person, as a teacher, as a researcher?

Dr. Tadashi Dozono: So I'm Japanese American, grew up in Portland, Oregon, and I identify as queer cis male. And I taught in New Your City from like early 2000s to just like a couple years ago, until 2019. And I did my PhD work, kind of course work right kind of in the middle of that and finished doing dissertation writing while

continuing to teach in New York City. And then now currently, I teach at Cal State University Channel Islands, just about an hour north of LA. Yeah.

And kind of teaching wise, I always taught high school social studies. For most of the time taught ninth grade world history, but also taught nine through twelfth grade U.S. history, civics, economics, and world history.

Josie: Great. And what brought you to work on epistemic injustice in world history curriculum?

Tadashi: I guess a lot of it was through my years of teaching in New York City, teaching world history to ninth graders, and almost all of the students are/were Black and Latino, and just knowing after years of teaching them, just how they ended up like seeing themselves or not seeing themselves in the world history curriculum.

And I think in a lot of ways that reflected my own experiences in K to 12 schools, of not feeling like there was room in history classes for my background in history. Yeah. I mean, a lot of.. A lot of why I ended up going into teaching was because of experiences of racism that I had had growing up. And so it was kind of— I guess teaching was my way of dealing with racism, as my way to sort of create change around that. And I guess going into doing research on this stuff was my way of kind of further processing that. And figuring out— I guess even though I had been trying to change the narrative of world history to be more inclusive of my students' backgrounds, they still felt overall excluded from the narrative. And so.. As a teacher, that felt frustrating to feel like, I'm trying to make these changes but it's not really— it's not doing the sort of change I intended it to. And so, going into researching this stuff was trying to figure out, okay, what else needs to happen? Like besides— You know, I think the content— changing the content is important, but what else is going on here besides just changing, you know, the places that are included in the narrative of world history?

Josie: Yeah. Absolutely. Could you maybe talk about some the research that you have done? Like general overview?

Tadashi: Yeah. I mean I guess my PhD dissertation work was then focused on interviewing high school students of colour—pretty much all like Black and Latinx

students—10th graders in world history classrooms. And then trying to really document their experiences and their relationships to world history. And so it was kind of building off of what I had seen in my students as a teacher, and then.. then going back into classrooms to try to document those experiences of different students in like urban classroom settings. And so I guess in terms of my research, part of it's like documenting those experiences that students have and their relationships to make teachers and researchers more aware of that sense of, you know, ways that students can feel like unseen or negated through the curriculum.

And then part of my work is also then looking at curriculum—often world history curriculum, like textbooks, or state standards, or curriculum units—and trying to look at, okay, what's problematic about these? Like where— what could change in how these are structured. Cause I think oftentimes the people creating curriculum, I believe that they are trying to do a good job of being more inclusive. But there are still these sort of issues, right. So part of my work comes from this sense of like, I know that I as a teacher had good intentions of changing the curriculum for my students but it still— it's like, what's that something else that's still missing that's not creating that change that I want it to? And then I guess, yeah I end up doing a lot of theory work to kind of— I guess it's trying to get to the foundations. Like what are the underlying things going on beyond just the surface of like, this looks like an inclusive narrative, but then what's actually going on underneath?

Josie: For sure, absolutely. And so, I guess you were just talking about like recognizing that people come into this with good intentions, but even with those good intentions, there's still some— there's a gap there. And so where do you think that gap is? Is it kind of— Cause it's not— You're right, it's not just curriculum. It's also the teacher, and how it's taught, and how students are brought in. Could you maybe talk about that?

Tadashi: So to some extent, I think, another layer of these tensions is how student thinking comes into play. I guess overall I think a lot about the idea of like knowledge production and the relations of knowledge production in the classroom. I guess I think about like, what's the relationship between like students and the teacher and the text in

the classroom? You know, okay, so if we just take the text itself, like the textbook or something. What went into producing that kind of set of knowledge that's there? Right? And then I also try to think about, in terms of students, what's the knowledge that students are bringing into the classroom, and how can that knowledge be incorporated into the overall kind of system of producing knowledge in the classroom. And then the teacher as well, right? What role does the teacher play in that in terms of kind of taking authority of themselves as the "expert" or kind of putting the expertise in the books that they are reading or the expertise in the students, right? And their ability to listen to what students are saying.

So to some extent I— through my work with interviewing students, I really try to think about, okay, what's all the thinking going on with that students are saying? Beyond just, is this a right answer or a wrong answer? What are the things going on into their thinking behind that, right? And to.. To have the ways that students are thinking about history and world history to be just as interesting as what's in the textbook itself. So I think part of my goal is to get teachers to be really attentive to the ways that students are thinking about the world and to have that be just as important as the history that the world history textbook is presenting.

Josie: Right. And I was wondering if you could talk about, like how you do that in a context there's this state-mandated curriculum with exams that students have to take. Like how do you do that kind of teaching with those structures being imposed?

Tadashi: Yeah with this I guess I'm thinking about this more from my own experiences as a high school teacher, and then also presenting this as like a possible solution for like other teachers to.. I guess to find the ways to subvert the state standards, kind of openings in the state standards. Like so for example, on the New York State exam, there would be these thematic questions about world history. And so they don't— They suggest some examples of cases that you could use. So I would often try to take those themes and think about other examples that could be used that are not necessarily like in the traditional history textbook, right. So for example like, thinking about like Jamaican Maroons, Maroon communities, as an example as kind of revolution or protest, right? So thinking about like cases that

might relate more to my students from the Caribbean and a New York City classroom, but that are not talked about much in the New York City textbook. Yeah. I guess it's like trying to find those openings in the ways that you can—You can use the sort of bigger questions or themes and then find, you know, ways to incorporate different content into that.

Josie: Right. Absolutely. I guess that leads into another question that I have. My work life is very focused on textbooks [laughs], but I'm like fully aware that textbooks can be super limiting. So could you may talk about like, how do you feel about textbooks? And do you use them? Are they ever useful to you?

Tadashi: Yeah. It's— I think textbooks are definitely useful.. In some ways I kind of think about them kind of like, something like Wikipedia, where it's like a really good starting point, and it's useful, but then it's kind of moving from the sort of like kind of background knowledge, narrative foundation that the textbook might provide and then.. then going into much more critical like depth of looking at primary sources and— I mean I think it would be great to do some analysis of what is going on in the textbook. So to get students to do kind of discourse analysis of like, okay, how is this narrative being constructed? Like what's missing? What language is being used about certain groups and not being used around others. So I think it would be great for teachers to use those issues around textbooks as a way to also study it as a text itself and to be critical about that text. Yeah. So I mean I think— I definitely use textbooks as a teacher. You know, I will still use certain kind of base-narrative texts in my own classrooms, but then thinking of that as just the beginning point and then doing inquiry from there.

Josie: Right. Using textbooks as a tool to give students the abilities to kind of analyze like, what's the narrative here? And be more critical about it rather than presenting it as this like "master narrative."

Tadashi: And I think— I guess with my own work, I think it's important to do the critiques of the textbooks, but then I also— I guess just for myself, I try to make sure that I'm doing a sort of balance of looking at like the problems that can be in textbooks but be also solutions oriented. Right, so what would alternatives look like? And trying to

look at models of that or examples of alternatives to using the textbook or ways to extend past just using the textbooks.

Josie: Yeah. I know that's a question that I have, it's like whether textbooks, just in the way that they're designed, whether they could every really be epistemically just? Or whether they could include multiple ways of knowing, like that's a question I have about textbooks, is whether that's possible based on how they are designed. Or if kind of new designs need to be imagined. Yeah, I don't know the answer, but something that I've been thinking about for sure.

Tadashi: Yeah, and I guess kind of—I mean I think, I think one of the big tensions I have with textbooks is the presentation of "objective" knowledge. I think it's important for the textbook and the teacher to be honest about, this is presenting as objective, but there's inevitably some sort of bias and ideological influence going into how this narrative is being presented. So I think either the textbooks being upfront about that bias or the teacher helping students to unpack that bias and perspective that is there.

Josie: Yeah, absolutely. I'm trying to find a quote of one of your articles that I pulled out... MM okay, there is a quote that went, "The promotion of 'normal' and 'traditional' curriculum is just as political as those deemed radical or politically motivated." And I think that kind of speaks to what you were just saying, like claiming objectivity with a certain narrative is a political act even though it's been kind of depoliticized by European ways of knowing or, you know.

So you write a lot about epistemic violence. Could you talk a little bit about how you define the term and maybe an example of what that looks like?

Tadashi: Epistemic violence is— it's basically when the ways that people understand the world and makes sense of the world, when those ways of knowing are negated or ignored. It's like when you deem someone's way of making sense of the world as illegitimate, it's really—in a big way, especially in terms of world history, it's a way of dehumanizing people, of kind of taking away that part of their humanity. And I think in terms of world history, a big component of how being human is defined is that capacity to reason, and so when you take away the legitimacy of a group of people's capacity to reason, then that's an act of dehumanization. And so to a large

extent that's why I frame it through this term of violence. We often think of violence as these physical acts of harm. So I use the term violence here to point to the way that like words can do harm and words can be an act in themselves. And so to make that sort of judgement of whether someone's way of knowing counts or not, to me it's important, especially in schools, to understand that as a form of epistemic violence.

Josie: Right. And with you talking about language, in one of your articles you really get into the language and grammar and look at how those are used to reinforce white supremacy in grade 10 world history curriculum. So could you talk about some of the ways that white supremacy functions at the level of language?

Tadashi: Yeah, so it's interesting because I— I think, partly I never really thought of myself as being a good student in English classes, and you know, I think I always thought that I was interpreting the text wrong, and things like that. But I've gotten really interested in the idea of grammar overall as really this representation of relationships of power. You know, it's— Just the idea of who is the subject in the sentence and who's the object in the sentence? And just doing some analysis around, you know, who gets to be a subject, who gets to be an actor in history versus who is the object, who is acted upon, I think really then opens up these power dynamics that can go kind of unnoticed. But they're really king of these powerful structures at the sentence level in these texts, right. And so— Yeah, and I guess beyond just sort of object/subject, there is also who then is being seen as passive? Or who has agency? You know, often times non-white peoples in world history are included only once they are acted upon. They become a part of history once Europe has had contact with them. And then they enter history. And often times, the events are only remarkable as a sort of reaction to something that Europe has done. If it's a revolt or something. Like the Haitian revolution is remarkable only in terms of being a, both an example of kind of redoing what Europeans were doing in terms of political revolutions, but then also sort of like repeating that action. But then also only in response to France's actions. So yeah, so I think we can see these power dynamics at the sentence level in a lot of these texts.

Josie: Yeah, and I think like one of the examples that really illustrated it for me is where you talked about how passive voice functions both to remove the responsibility, or the— Yeah to downplay European or white actors that are often doing the violence and doing the dispossession and all those things, and how using passive voice means you don't have to say who did those things. And then also how passive voice, like the same tool, is used to remove agency. Like it's insidious the ways some of these things work.

Tadashi: Yeah, and that— that was an interesting process for me in my analysis, because I think initially, in doing my analysis of the state framework, was noticing those moments when the passive voice was used to kind of make non-white peoples objects being acted upon and then I started notice this other dynamic of, oh, the passive voice is still being used for like white Europeans' actions. And so it was really trying to figure out, oh, but there's still this significant difference in how that passive voice functions. So it was an interesting process for me to figure out for myself what that meant, how the passive voice was being used differently. And it read very differently for me. I was reacting to that difference in the passive voice.

Josie: Yeah, yeah. Very interesting. I have an undergraduate degree in history, so— like history is very interesting to me, and how history is studied is very interesting. And you're talking about how like history is periodized. Like all these frameworks that are "history," how these come from a European tradition and are then imposed through all of history curriculum. And it trickles down through all of these levels. Even at the university level, a lot of these things that you have identified still exist, like these historical claims of objectivity and this periodization, like what kind of courses get offered and who teaches them.

Tadashi: Yeah. I guess along those lines, like, thinking about what epistemic violence can look like in curriculum is—Like I've been recently doing work at looking at like Indigenous belief systems in the curriculum, and a big tension that comes up with that is, you know, there might be room for Indigenous knowledge to be studied as an object of study, but not being acknowledged as having their own way of making sense of the world. So just the terms that are being used to study the knowledge of other

people, it still takes the methods and the perspective of western science to then make sense of that and to make it intelligible. And otherwise it's just sort of like "culture" that we can study versus its own legitimate way of understanding the world and knowing. And so I think that's a way where epistemic violence can— it can have this appearance of like, oh this culture is being valued. But in actuality, it's still being objectified. Yeah, it's not being valued as its own legitimate system of reasoning.

Josie: Right, yeah, absolutely. This is another quote that I pulled from your article, which—and you said, "The goal isn't simply to have marginalized people mentioned more often. Educators must always be attentive to how power shapes discourse." And I think that really applies to what you were saying there. Like the goal is not just to talk about Indigenous knowledge systems. The goal is to value those as own knowledge systems equivalent to other knowledge systems and actually change how we think about knowledge and education, and all of those things.

Tadashi: Yeah. And along with that is— I think even in my early attempts to study world history on my own I would often still read, you know, books about Africa or China or the Middle East by white scholars. And then.. I think then at some point there was a shift for me of then trying to focus on reading texts about other places by people from those places. And you know, that's not to say that scholars who are white who are writing about those places aren't valuable, but it was to acknowledge that there's this sort of difference in where the authors are coming from. Yeah just the approach that content ends up being different and the way it's being presented is somewhat different.

Josie: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, reading some of your research I see you doing that, like kind of acknowledging your positionality and where you're coming from and being transparent about your identity and how that affects the work that you do. So could you maybe talk more about how positionality of an author and who is being cited and all of those things play into epistemic justice?

Tadashi: Yeah, I think.. I mean I think the idea of positionality.. To some extent I think that became important to me in a lot of ways through my students in New York in my first couple years of teaching. I think I learned humility pretty fast in teaching high school. And that it's better to acknowledge those differences between me and my

students than to make it seem like I know what they are talking about or I know what they've gone through. And so I think— I mean I think a big piece of that was like, having always identified as a person of colour, and then having my students point out that in their eyes, I'm not a person of colour because I, you know. And to acknowledge that my experiences growing up as Japanese American in Portland, Oregon, is so vastly different than my students growing up in New York City who like, grew up as Black and Latinx. And that even though I see a commonality there, there is still a big difference there.

Yeah, I mean I think.. in terms of positionality, it's kind of— an important piece of that is having a humility about the limitations of, you know, I'm not going to claim that I can understand this fully, or you know to, to acknowledge that perspective. And I guess that kind of comes to, like comes back to that conversation about textbooks. Like, you know, if I expect the textbooks to be honest about the perspective that they're coming from and the bias that is inherent in those textbooks, I think it is important to be upfront about how where I'm coming from in my approach to writing of my research.

Yeah, and you know, that does play a role in who I end up citing in my papers as well. You know, I appreciate these sort of movements around citational practices. Things like movements to cite Black women. And that idea of, you know, what lineage are you creating in your work? And who are you placing at the, kind of at the origin of knowledge for your work? You know, to me that speaks a lot of that idea of epistemic injustices is, you know, is the origin of all knowledge in Europe at all times versus changing citational practices and changing those lineages to be able to trace back to other locations beyond Europe. And I think there is, built into academia, there's an expectation of who you cite. And you know, in the publishing process being told that I need to cite certain people. And that, you know, and that really becomes— it just kind of becomes this reproduction of lineages that will remain white if we just kind of continue those practices. So that— That's kind of this other way that white supremacy can kind of become reproduced in the writing up of research is the expectation of who gets cited, how you're tracing knowledge, often it ends up being tracing it back to Europe.

Josie: Yeah, for sure. Yeah I've been doing a lot of think about these kind of things.. for this project in particular and thinking about like how to acknowledge my own positionality, which I— like as a white cis woman doing—like talking— trying to talk about epistemic injustice feels really important. And like be transparent about that subjectivity.

I'd love to talk about queer theory, because queer theory is something that I am very new to. So I was wondering if you could maybe give like a brief introduction to the field and talk about how queer theory connects to questions of epistemic justice?

Tadashi: Yeah so, queer theory for me.. I guess even like, starting from this sort of like.. Cause I think the idea of theory can often be this sort of big word that's intimidating. But I think.. I think at the end of the day like, one thing I try to emphasize in my work is that the idea of theory is really— it's one way of trying to make sense of the world. And I think for marginalized groups, one has to always try to make sense of the world in a way that's different than how it's been presented to you to understand yourself other than being sort of at the margins of society. And so I think.. I approach theory as not so much the sort of like realm of kind of dead white men philosophers but really to acknowledge the ways that people who are marginalized try to make sense of their position in the world and that marginalized people are theorizing daily and having to recalibrate like, their position in the world and society.

And so I think for me, queer theory stems from.. Or I guess my relationship to queer theory stems from like my own experiences of growing up feeling like being gay was bad. And then really kind of through college, being able to read texts that were affirming of who I am and flipping that relationship of, you know, it's not me that's the problem, it's society that has the problem of having a limited sense of who is legitimate and why. And so I think kind of that experience of getting to a point of self-validation is a lot of how I relate to queer theory.

So I think overall, queer theory is this sort of critique of power dynamics and of the power that the idea of "normal," critiquing how much power that category has in our society. Cause when you have this category of "normal," that means you have the category of "abnormal," and the category of "queer" as kind of strange. And so really

queer theory is that sort of like reclaiming of that space of being kind of strange or queer and really kind of flipping those power dynamics.

And so, in terms of epistemic justice, queer theory is playing that role of kind of flipping that relationship of what is seen as the sort of normal and status quo way of knowing things to then consider what's in this other realm of these other ways of knowing that have been deemed as illegitimate, as subordinate to the dominate ways of knowing.

Josie: Right, so it's kind of this practice of flipping those expectations and like the narratives that we're told about what is normal and what isn't. So I guess then queer theory is applicable much broader than just the fields of gender and sexuality, like it can be used in other contexts, is that right?

Tadashi: Yeah, and I guess queer theory ends up also critiquing sort of inclusive models as well a lot of times. I think kind of a good example that I use to help understand this is like, like the idea of gay marriage is more of a normative.. kind of assimilating into the mainstream by adding gay people into the system of marriage. And the sort of queer critique of marriage is more like, why would I want to be part of a club that didn't want me in there to begin with? And why would I want to be part of a system that has been known for excluding others or also has strong roots in kind of placing women as objects of property. And it is sort of, instead of trying to be included into the norm, it's critiquing that power of that idea of normal and like let's get rid of that category.

Josie: Yeah that makes me think a lot of Sasha Costanza-Chock's work on design justice. They write about, in the book, about their experiences as a trans femme person going through airport security and being flagged every time they go through because they don't conform to male and female.. like norms of what a body is supposed to be. And they talk about how design justice isn't about making a more inclusive airport security, it's about like taking down those systems of surveillance and all of those things. It's kind of like breaking down those systems, not just trying to be included in those systems that cause a lot of harm.

Tadashi: Yeah and I think kind of as a high school teacher I think I often would link queer theory with like critical disability studies and the ways that my students were being categorized based on their learning styles and the ways that they think and process things. Yeah, like categories of able-bodied and normal versus, you know, abnormal ways of thinking or being then become this other category, right. So trying to dismantle what that idea of what the normal child is or the normal functional body and mind, you know, instead of trying to get students to, you know, be able to fit into that category, well let's question what that category is and what it's actually doing.

Josie: Right, absolutely. So I guess maybe you could talk a little bit about.. I think you kind of did there, but how epistemic justice shows up in your teaching practices? Both maybe in the K to 12 level but also in the university system?

Tadashi: Yeah and you know and cause like we kind of started talking about like textbooks, but I think at the end of the day, like I don't care so much about the textbook. What I care about is the students and their sense of themselves and their education. And so I think that idea of epistemic injustice really comes down to, what's going to help my students.. I don't know, like just have confidence in who they are and in how they think about the world. And you know, to continually push them, but to.. You know, I guess my concern is really about the students and how they understand themselves. And so I think a big part of how it comes up in my classroom is— I guess even like K to 12, is to break down the idea of what being smart is. Or you know, trying to move it past the sort of like, this innate inborn capacity and, you know, that the grade means— You know, like I was always really so bothered when students would have this sense of like, "Oh, I failed this class. That means I'm stupid." And when a lot of times there were all these other factors that were impacting the work that they were turning in or not turning in to the classroom, to the teacher.

So I think, like in my work now with teaching elementary school teachers how to teach social studies, I'd say a big component of the work that I do with that is kind of repairing students' relationships to what economics is, government, geography, history. I think a lot of my future elementary school teachers come in with kind of like a

bad relationship to some of those things. Like economics feels intimidating. And I think a lot of my work there is trying to break it down to both to acknowledge their relationships to those disciplines and to really broaden the definitions of what those mean, right. That economics is really about resources and how we distribute resources and so that can be as simple as, you know, like having like a bag of candy and how we divide it amongst everyone in the class. So really trying to break some of those ideas down to their kind of core concepts. So I think like a chunk of that is kind of repairing students' relationships to those disciplines and to really kind of broaden what counts as knowledge in all of those disciplines, and to really engage students' own background knowledge as a part of those disciplines, cause often times they are not seen as that. So a big part of it is like encouraging my future teacher students to really try and incorporate like the knowledge that their students have as a part of that process of learning in the classroom.

Josie: Yeah, absolutely. So where do you see a potential to disrupt epistemic injustice and epistemic violence in world history education?

Tadashi: I think an important component of that is to trust teachers and to provide teachers with the time and the resources to develop curriculum and adapt curriculum. Because I think localizing the learning is really important for teachers to be able to incorporate not just the background knowledge of their students but also of the communities in which the schools are embedded and the students are embedded. And, you know, that takes time and resources to be able to learn the histories of the communities and to incorporate those in. And I think— I think that's where the learning just reaches new levels of depth and richness when the knowledge is able to be localized and embedded within students' communities. So I think a big piece of that is really entrusting teachers with, you know, so not just, "This is the state curriculum and you have to teach exactly what this says," to "Okay, here's this sort of beginning point of state curriculum, and let's also make sure that we're trusting teachers to be able to develop curriculum or expand on the curriculum to really figure out ways to link students' lives and their communities to these state standards and the state curriculum, or right. Or even just go beyond what the state curriculum says [laughs].

Josie: [Laughs] Absolutely.

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie: If you are interested in learning more about Tadashi's work, I've linked a number of his articles in the show notes. That is also where you can find links to resources about other topics covered in this episode.

You can learn more about this podcast at knowledgespectrums.opened.ca. On the website, you can find all episodes and transcripts, along with many other resources and information related to this project.

You can connect with me on Twitter @josiea_g and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #OKSPodcast.

I record this podcast on the traditional and unceeded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, known today as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and the territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples. I am very grateful to live on these territories, and working to learn and enact my responsibilities as an uninvited settler here.

The theme song is "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org and shared under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

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This has been Open Knowledge Spectrums. Thanks for listening.

—End of Episode—

Episode 2: Leveraging Creative Commons Licenses with Dr. Amy Nusbaum

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie Gray: Hello! Welcome to the Open Knowledge Spectrums podcast, which explores questions of epistemic justice, or knowledge equity, in the context of open

education and considers different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable.

My name is Josie Gray, and I am your host. This podcast is my final project for my Masters of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

In this episode, I speak with Dr. Amy Nusbaum, about projects she has led to localize and diversify an introduction to psychology open textbook. Dr. Amy Nusbaum earned her Bachelors of Psychology in 2015, her Masters of Psychology in 2016, and PhD in Experimental Psychology in 2020, all from Washington State University. She is currently an assistant Professor at Heritage University, a Hispanic-serving, and Native-American-serving/non-tribal institution located in Toppenish, Washington. Amy was recently awarded the Wilbert. J. Mckeachie award from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology, which recognizes one graduate student instructor each year for excellence in teaching, and the 2020 Fred Mulder Award, for best open education research paper from the Global OER Graduate Network. Her research in teaching centre issues of educational access and equity, with a specific focus on first generation students and people marginalized by racism and/or sexism.

And with that, let's hear from Amy.

[*Theme music*]

Amy Nusbaum: I am a first-year faculty member in psychology at Heritage University, which is in central Washington, in an area outside of Yakima, Washington. I just finished my PhD in experimental psychology at Washington State University—I guess just... it's almost been a year now—after getting my undergraduate degree there as well. So I've been in Pullman, Washington, for a while now. I am a first-generation college student and really struggled with college costs, generally, but specifically, textbooks costs as a student, and so as a graduate student, as I was finding ways to get involved with these kinds of practices. I really fell into the open education world ,and I'm excited to continue getting to do that work with my current students and my current job.

Josie: So open education was something you came to as a student, is that right?

Amy: As a graduate student, yeah. So, during my time as graduate student, most of the students in my program end up teaching independently. So I, from years 2 through 5 of my program, was teaching courses. And, you know, was frequently running into students who couldn't buy their textbook. And you know, as a student with a background who also couldn't buy their textbooks at times, like, I couldn't tell them to "Suck it up and buy it," right? Because I know that's not how life works. And so, by way of, I think, teaching practice and just experiences with those kinds of students, I got more interested in open education. And I was definitely coming at it from the angle of free textbooks, which I know is sort of how a lot of people get into it. I'm now more involved in sort of the other aspects of openness, but definitely got into it from the free textbook side of it. And then, sort of took a while to convince some other people in my department that that was a way to go. But for the last few years as a graduate student, we were using open textbooks in our intro psych classes, which are all taught by graduate students. And it was sort of— then trickling down to some other courses as well.

Josie: Cool. So, you were able to kind of make that shift in your whole department.

Amy: I certainly wouldn't claim credit. [*laughter]* I think there was some seeds that were planted, and I have a tendency to be obnoxious about things that I want to see happen. So, I was poking, I think, some correct buttons, but there were definitely other people in the department who were doing some advocacy work on their own. Dr. Carrie Cuttler who's been involved in open ed in different levels, was already using books in her particular classes. And so, there were a few entry points, but I will take some credit for being annoying and not letting people forget about it.

Josie: Yeah. Great strategy. [*Laughs*] So how does open education show up in your teaching?

Amy: As a framework, open education is everything that I do, right. So especially in the last few years I think I've taken open education to be more than just free textbooks, and really a conversation about who gets to decide what's important? Who's teaching content? What's included in content? What are we asking students to *do* with their work? Because from a purely pedagogical perspective, I really hate assignments where

student writes it, I grade it, and then it goes away for forever. So I think the thought process of open education really permeates everything I do. I think the two big examples are in terms of course costs. There are no costs in my courses from using mostly openly licensed materials, at least free materials. And then most of my classes have assignments that are also in the open pedagogy sphere. So things like, they're creating infographics based on research articles that make their research articles more accessible to a general audience. Or this semester, my capstone classes are working on a wiki-education project where they're editing and adding to Wikipedia pages. So, it appears differently depending on the particular class, but I really think it's a holistic approach to what it is to teach and what you're asking students to do.

Josie: Right, absolutely. The textbook is such a great entry point, but it does open up a lot of other possibilities in the general open education space.

Amy: Yeah.

Josie: So, from your experience, you talk about the financial benefits for students, but how else does open education support greater equity in post-secondary education?

Amy: I think finances are a big one, obviously. Having access to your textbooks early, though I know there's some debate in the research world of whether that accessibility hypothesis holds. But I think it really... it evens the playing field. You know, I think of how— I knew a friend in undergraduate that was able to keep all her textbooks, and so like, when she was studying for the psychology subject GRE, she just had all of her textbooks available to her. I could never do that. I had to sell them back so I could buy my next round. So even if we're not talking about, you know, a particular class or spending money in one class, those decisions I think are a bit of a domino effect. You know, in one of my papers, we look at whether students are going to select classes based on their— whether there's an OER designator by the class, and we find it affects students course decisions, right. So, you think about things like—and I'm not going to make a causal claim here because there's no evidence for a causal claim—but thinking about relationships that exist. And for instance, lowered percentages of low-income or Black and Brown students who are persuing, like, medical degrees. Textbooks in those fields are also really expensive, right. So it would be really interesting to look at whether

there's a correlation there, whether students who can't afford their textbooks are looking at classes when they're registering and being like, "I can't have that $300 textbook, so I guess I should find something else to do." I think it goes beyond the one class that the OER text exists in, and is really a cascading effect that can have a lot of downstream issues. And so, I just think OER is… is often talked about in that one-class situation, like my class is using textbooks, but I think is we think about it at a broader level, we'll actually find even more exciting stuff that we can do with these kinds of approaches.

Josie: Right, yeah absolutely. So, from your perspective, where is open education falling short?

Amy: Yeah. I think we very much run the risk of replicating the current systems of—you used the word systems of exclusion, which I like—if we re-design something where it's generally the same people writing or working on OER that were always working on commercial textbooks, and the only difference is that they're free. Free is certainly better. But as we've already talked about, there's lots of other reasons why OER are good.

I think right now we're falling short in terms of the people at the top of our movement. I mean there was lots of drama around the OpenEd conference in 2019 for some of those reasons, right. And I think that you're seeing people start to realize that… "Well, crap. Did we just do the same thing and make it no cost?" And so I don't necessarily think it's a fatal flaw, but I think the movement is at a point where we've got traction, right. A lot of people know what OER are. A lot of students have had them in our classes. And so we're, I think rapidly approaching a point where if we engrain what we're doing right now as "this is what open ed is," we run the risk of just being a copy-paste of a publisher's—or a commercial publisher's—format. So again, I don't think it's a fatal flaw, but I think it's somewhere that we need to work on in terms of making sure that we're following people who should be followed. Or maybe not having follower/following situations in the first place. [*Laughs]* I don't know what exactly it looks like!

Josie: Right, like valuing those critical perspectives that cause us to reflect and consider what kind of system we're creating.

Amy: Yeah, I talked earlier about the idea that open pedagogy really transcends *just* free textbooks, right. It's how we think about who is important enough to talk about things. And I think that has to be reflected in our discourse outside of the classroom also. And making sure that we're, you know, involving from community colleges, who aren't necessarily always valued in the way that they should be. Or the student perspective. And I think people who get to OER often… want to do those things, it just perhaps hasn't been modeled for them. And so I think making sure we're following our own values is going to be important.

Josie: Yeah, for sure. I know people talk a lot about, like— I don't work within a post-secondary institution, but people who do often talk about the lack of supports that there are for faculty to do open education work, to like create OER or to adapt. Have you had that experience, where either the supports have been there or haven't been there?

Amy: Yeah. So I think a little bit of both. As a graduate student for most of my time I felt really lucky because my research mentors were pretty much of the mind that as long as I was doing what I needed to do for them, they weren't paying much attention to what I was doing outside of the lab. So, I was lucky in that I was able to work on those kinds of things. And, you know, as long as I was willing to work 60 hours a week to fit all that stuff in, then that was fine. And so I don't think my story is traditional in that sense. I was a single, child-free person, who could do whatever she wanted with her time, and that's not a good system to replicate, right.

Josie: Mhmm.

Amy: I have seen a lot of faculty members, especially non-tenured, or non-tenure-track faculty members, who report really wanting to do these kinds of things. But they're teaching four full loads and don't get paid over the summer. So when, when is that going to happen? Some universities certainly have internal supports for that, so my graduate institution did have a grant program that was pretty prolific, just in terms of the amount of money it was able to give out to support either faculty or graduate students to create OER. So those are the kinds of programs that are great. My current institution is much smaller. So while it's— they're incredibly supportive of OER, and I think I'll definitely be able to take the time to do that. There's not like and internal grant program for that,

because it just doesn't make sense in this context. So, I think the answer is both, *and*. So, we—again sort of the colloquial "we"—need to think about how we support people who aren't at institutions that have that internal support. And what it looks like to do that in an equitable way.

Josie: Yeah, for sure. I think that's a lot of the big questions people are asking about that wider sustainability and allowing more people to participate where there aren't always supports to do so.

Amy: Right, and it's not an easy question, right. Money doesn't just come out of nowhere, and we're not making money. I was doing a presentation for our faculty at my new institution about a month ago, and someone asked like, how do you equitably support people? Because if you're writing a textbook for a traditional publisher, you probably don't make that much. But you go into it, you sign a contract on your own, you understand the conditions. How do you do that in a situation where the person is not able to make money? And one of the things we talked about, you know, is having appropriate state-level support, right. So in the state of Washington, we have decent support. It's not as good as it could be, and so I think that's like— State and federal governments are a way, or provincial governments are a way to get that kind of support. You know, the money we need is not… a whole lot, right. If you look at the state budget, it would be like one tenth of one tenth of a percent, right. It's nothing in their eyes. But to us it could be everything. And so, being creative about how we access those the streams of a financial support.

Josie: Mhmm, for sure. So, last year you published an article describing a project to diversify the OpenStax psychology open textbook. Could you tell me more about that project?

Amy: It was sort of a two-headed monster, and it honestly wasn't originally intended to be that way. But it just.. shook out that way. So, the in-class version: I was teaching an intro psychology for the fifth or sixth time. It was a class that I felt like I'd gotten the basic mechanics of and so was ready to do something a little more expansive. And so, as a class, the students took on the project of basically editing their own textbook, right. So, I like these kinds of projects because… textbooks need to be edited… But also, again it

gets at this idea of who gets to contribute knowledge, right? Like I believe my students have valuable things to contribute to a textbook. I don't think they realize that they have that power in themselves, or at least a lot of them don't. And so for a couple reasons I like that project. It was a multi-step, semester-long project. The students, they could write on other things that were sort of outside the diversity scope. So, they could add general research articles as well, and make other modifications. We ended up with something like 900 annotations on the textbook. They used Hypothes.is to like annotate directly onto the textbook. I then had a team—through the funding that my graduate institution offered—I was able to pay a team of undergraduates, who had previously been in the class but we're now more advanced students, to go through the comments and basically select the ones that would be appropriate for a textbook-level content. I love my students but not all 1000 of those comments [*laughs*] were ready to be put into a textbook. So there was this next layer where undergraduate employees were going through and sort of selecting comments for their rigor and just the general sense of fit with the textbooks. And we ended up with something... somewhere around 80 comments that ended up integrated into the local version of the textbook that WSU uses. So, from the beginning of WSU's time using the OpenStax book, they had taken advantage of the license and made a local Pressbooks copy. And so we were able to make it hyper-specific to our students. So, there were, you know, in the treatment and disorders section of the book we were able to link directly to our counselling services, right, and so there were some edits that were like that. There were some, like, for instance where Washington has a really high population of Latinx immigrant farm workers because the central part of the region is a big farm worker area. And so, a couple students added information in like, the diversity sections, that were specific to what students' families often look like. And so, there were a wide variety of changes, but that was the student-lead part of it.

Around the same time, I think it was after OpenStax 2019—no 2018. I had reached out to OpenStax to ask about leading a project to diversify the national version of the text. This was an effort specifically aimed at diversification, and so it wasn't just a general revision process. And they were super gung-ho and so, I was like, "Cool, okay now what?" And so, ended up basically doing a whole lot of cold emailing. So I set up the

Hypothes.is layers—like from the tech side had that all set up. And then looked for people who were doing research in areas that I thought made sense. Like, looked for some affinity groups that I thought made sense. So like the Black psychologist groups and things like that. Sent emails to our psychology teaching groups. I think on one day I sent like 1200 emails...

Josie: Wow! [*laughs*]

Amy: It was like publicly available emails, which means that like a lot of them are wrong by that point. So I remember I took a picture at one point of all of the "Return-to-sender emails" I was getting in my inbox. There was like a hundred of them. So it absolutely was not efficient whatsoever, and I would probably do it a little bit differently. Oh! And OpenStax also provided me—this is where all of the return emails came back—they provided me with like their list of people who are using the book and had said, "Yes, we can be contacted." And there are a lot of people using that book.

Josie: Mhmm.

Amy: So it was a massive undertaking, and I'm not sure I realized how massive it was when I was like, "Yeah! Let's do this." *But,* got back some really awesome comments. So those were similar process to what the students did. It was a Hypothes.is layer on a Pressbooks copy. And I basically... Once they were all collected, as I said, OpenStax was going through their own wider revision process at a time. And so I basically sent them on to their team, and was like, "Here. Here's a bunch of really great ideas for how to make this book better." And to my knowledge, some of those where then inserted into the national, sort of, core textbook that is used for intro-psych classes.

So those were the two projects that were sort of going on at the same time. One, a hyper-local effort to really both empower my students to be like "Yes! You can do this," while also creating a localized version of the text that made sense for *us,* and then a more national effort geared at diversification of the book on a wider level, reaching out to subject matter experts.

Josie: Yeah. So you've mentioned Hypothes.is and Pressbooks a few times. Could you describe what those tools are, just for those who aren't familiar?

Amy: Pressbooks is basically like an online publishing tool. It allows people to publish open textbooks in a way that I think is familiar to students. So it doesn't just look like, you know, someone just put a Word document on a website and said, "Here, read this." At least in my experience, it's incredibly helpful for working with other open textbooks because it's really easy to utilize licenses and like, copy a textbook that someone used across the country into your own format and then just give students a link to yours after you've made edits, so you're not accidentally editing someone else's stuff without them knowing.

Hypothes.is is then an annotation tool—or I think they call it a social-annotation tool. You can embed Hypothes.is into Pressbooks, so super great functionality between those two. And then when a student goes to read the textbook, there's sort of a sidebar that pops up from Hypothesis, where they can highlight things and comment on them, other students can see what they're doing. And so, it's basically the idea that if you have a physical textbook, you'd be able to literally highlight it and write things (if it belonged to you). It's sort of taking that idea and putting it into the virtual space. With the added benefit that other people can see and sort of collaboratively do that process.

So that's how students were putting their annotations on. So they'd highlight a section and say something like, "Add this sentence here," and they'd write their work. That's also how we did peer review, so students could then see what their peers had proposed and make comments. It's how we did grading. So it was really nice to keep both myself and my teaching assistants from getting overwhelmed with the process of doing something that was out of our learning management system, that was a little bit novel, because it was able to all be housed in one spot.

Josie: And so, with the instructor-focused project, did you do any kind of vetting about who could participate?

Amy: I mean, I vetted in the sense that I was sending direct emails. But I also posted things on social media and some Facebook groups and stuff like that. So sort of, but not really.

Josie: Was that really something that was— would've been important? Or were you more looking for general— like open to general contributions?

Amy: I think I was open to general contributions because I knew that there was— like it's not like these things— Like someone made a comment and they were automatically in the textbook. Like I knew that there was going to be several more stages of looking at comments, and sort of a peer-review-like process. And so, if some malfeasance slipped in, I guess I wasn't super concerned about it being problematic. And I think I was very clear in the call that I wanted—or was interested in—perspectives from people who— I can't remember how I phrased it. But I made it clear that it wasn't just Psych-PhDs who should be commenting. It was people who had perspectives or experience in the field of psychology, I think is what I said. And so, I think if there was a... highly structured betting process, that would've excluded some of the people who I was interested in reaching.

Josie: Mhmm, for sure. And so, what were the responses like?

Amy: On that side of things, they were pretty highly focused in the social psychology, the disorders, and the sort of sex and gender sections, which makes sense from several different angles. But mainly because a lot of the work in psychology that's focused on diversity happens to fall within those subject areas. So, I guess that wasn't particularly surprising.

There were comments like, "This would be a good place to talk about intergenerational trauma in Black Americans and Native Americans." So in the section of the textbook where we're talking about how chronic stress can lead to... like negative consequences down the line, someone came in and was like, "It would be really good to talk about how this is true both in an individual person, but also across generations." And we're talking about things like the consequences of slavery or the Holocaust—there was a study that was done recently on that. And so that was one example that I can think of that was, you know, pretty easy to embed in the textbook. Like, yeah, you're absolutely right. We should talk about how the stress is experienced disproportionately.

There was another one that I can think of where the person said that the textbook doesn't do a good enough job talking about the disproportionality in the ability to access mental health services. So there's a section in the text that talks about how lots of people don't—who can benefit from mental health services—don't seek them. And the number's

abysmally low. It's something like 13% of people who could benefit don't seek services. But those numbers are even lower if you're not looking at just white people, right? So, you know, you have some sentence were someone's reading it and it's like, "Wow, that's unfortunate. We should do something about that." But there's— It's even worse, like when we think about other systemic problems, and that information just wasn't included.

So, there's a lot of things like that, that weren't even massive changes. It's not like—well, there's a couple places where entire sections could be added—but most of it was fairly minor stuff that just hadn't been included, and it's the kind of stuff that sparks really great conversations in classes if we're talking about it.

Josie: Yeah, wow. So after you received the comments, you handed them off to OpenStax?

Amy: Yeah, because they were doing, again, their sort of full-fledged revision process of the text at the same time. And so I basically said "Here's some stuff we did!" And they then had the option to integrate it or to not integrate it.

Josie: Right. And then the second part of your study was like, looking at how those edits impacted different students. So did you edit a few chapters yourself for that?

Amy: Yeah, so the way that I did that— So for the study part of it, the research part of it, I was interested in looking at whether… basically reading the diversified version of a textbook would change how people feel about their sense of belongingness on campus. That was my approach because we know that, one, we have gaps in retention and graduation based on a number of factors. I chose to focus on people who are marginalized by their race and by first-generation status. We know that those groups of students persist and graduate at lower rates and then their white, continuing-generation counterparts. When I say continuing generation, I mean people whose parents had bachelor's degrees. And we… one of the hypothesized reasons for this, with some data to support it, is that those students don't feel like they belong on campus as much. Because they don't see themselves reflected in their peers, they don't necessarily see themselves reflected in their faculty or their staff. And so, like, we should be able to do some things about that, right? We can't necessarily overnight—or at least as an instructor, I can't

overnight fix... the college affordability crisis, right? But I can try to make students feel like they belong in my classroom, because they do. So, that was the approach I took, that if we provide students with materials that reflect them as human beings, that's one way of saying "Hey. You and people like you belong in this space."

So I took a sort of hybrid version of the textbook. So I took some of the edits that were done by my students and some of the edits that were done by sort of that the wider audience, and specifically focused on two sections: so the section in social psychology that focusses on discrimination and the section that focusses on gender and sexuality. Again, because those are places where it's fairly simple to make these kinds of changes, right. If you're not talking about diversity in those sections, then you've got a problem.

So I recruited a group of students, like 400 of them or something, through our department subject pool. These were not people who had participated in my class. They were totally separate group of students. In fact, they weren't allowed to be enrolled in an intro psych at the time. And students were assigned to either read the sort of standard book—so the OpenStax book that had none of the modifications made. Or the "modified/diversified" book, even though I don't love that name. And then they answered a bunch of questions, as we have them do in research studies, but these ones were specifically focused on their sense of belongingness on campus.

And I was, to be quite honest, not... I wouldn't say I was hopeful that we would see some great finding. But I was sort of ready for that to not be the case. Because in my head, you know, I think is that as an instructor and as a person in the department, that all of these changes need to be really systematic, right. Again, we can talk about OER in one classroom, but those changes, you know, are going to have longer-term impacts. Like we're going to have to look at the effects across, like, a multi-year period of time using OER. Not just like having someone read a book for ten minutes. So I didn't have incredibly high hopes going into it. But what we found is that, specifically first-generation students who read the diversified textbook felt like they belonged on campus more than if they read the sort of standard text. So in the standard condition, we see a belongingness gap. So students who are first generation, whose parents do not have bachelor's degrees, feel like they belong on campus less so than students whose parents

do bachelor's degrees, right. So we have this gap. When they've read the modified textbook, so the text that was “diversified” in some sense, that gap shrinks. It's still present, but it's much much smaller. So that was a really cool thing, right? Again, it wasn't years of effort or even an entire class's worth of effort. It was one snippet of one textbook, right. And so that was… I think a neat finding, in that it was affirming that even small changes matter. I think sometimes (myself included) we get bogged down in, "We must have all free textbooks in all classes tomorrow!" As opposed to like, "What does this allow me to do for the students that I have now, in the context that I have now?" And I think these results say that that matters. It's certainly not the end-all be-all solution. I think we should be working towards those sorts of grander solutions. But it still was meaningful, and it still mattered, and I think that was a nice finding.

[*laughter]*

Josie: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, absolutely. So what would you recommend to people who want to take on similar projects?

Amy: I'd say, start small. The class project was wonderful. My class had 120 students. There's no way I could've done it without a team of undergraduate teaching assistants helping me. So it depends very much on the context that you're in. At the intro level, there are some interesting things that can be done. I think if we're talking about making substantial changes to textbooks, focusing on your upper-division students might be more productive. These are students who have used textbooks for a while, right, and are imbedded in your discipline. So I think, taking appropriate-size chunks is helpful, not cold-emailing 1200 people [*laughs*] like I though was a solid plan. So, starting small.

Again, recognizing that the small things that you do *matter*. So maybe it's that, you know, one summer you swap out some of the images in your textbook. That was one of the things I had done in the text, unrelated to either these projects. I was just sort of flipping through, and all of the images of couples were super heteronormative and super white. And so I just went to Unsplash—or one of, you know, one of the options with openly licenses photos—and put some queer people and Brown people in there. That was like a really easy swap. It took me maybe an hour to do for several sections of the

textbook. Again, starting small, but recognizing that those small things are still important things.

And then I think in involving students, whether that's a lower level or the upper level, or honestly make it a project with your research lab, right. If you're a PI or principal investigator studying the effects of a particular drug on the brain, right. A lot of the common discussions about addiction are not well-versed in science and are very blame-y of people who are struggling with addiction. And so, you know, we often think about this from a pedagogical lens, but it's also really hard to communicate things, like your research, to a general audience, like people reading a textbook. So I think there are some unique and creative ways we can come at this problem that aren't just class projects, or aren't just someone laboring for an entire summer to completely revamp an entire textbook.

Josie: Yeah, and do you think that the crowdsourcing approach that you describe in your article, do you think that was successful? Would you— how would you do it differently?

Amy: It was successful in that there were some very good comments. I mean at the end of the day there was material created that would substantially improve the work. Was the cost-benefit ratio something that I would try to replicate in the past—or in the future? No. [*laughter*] I think, as a graduate student, and I think some now, I suffer very much from an obnoxiously gung-ho spirit that just says, "Well I want to do this, so let's do it!" Which is good in some ways and then bad in others. I think getting some sort of internal support from organizations you want to work with is incredibly important. Like there were a lot of groups who were willing to let me send things out on their list serv. But how many emails do we get come through our list serv, right? So, you know, if you want to do a project aimed at, for instance, you know one thing that I will say the OpenStax book lacks is a chapter on gender and sexuality. It's like a tiny section in the motivation unit? I don't know why. Most textbooks have an entire chapter devoted to that. And so if I, as a human being—this is not me—but if I was like "Hey, I'm going to spearhead an effort to make that chapter, I think making sure that you have the buy-in of the organizations that study those things or the society for the teaching of psychology

or, or whatever. I think those things are incredibly important as opposed to, trying to lone-wolf it. I think sometimes we do that a lot in OER, like, we are confronted with this massive problem. And again, maybe some—I'm not the only one with this obnoxious gung-ho spirit. [*laughter*] And so we try and tackle all of the problems immediately all by ourselves, and we burn out. And so I think utilizing networks that exist both in the OER space, but also trying to loop in other people, right? Other people are interested in this idea. If you want to get a researcher mad, talk to them about how their research is like misrepresented in a textbook and they will spend *years* [*laughter]* fixing the textbook, right. And so I think getting other people involved to see the benefits of these kind of things, using those networks that exist, those are important and I think will continue to be more important as we figure out what OER looks like five, ten years.

Josie: Mhmm. For sure. And do you think like having the kind of open… Hypothes.is… like anyone-can-participate method was effective? Or would you want to have it more organized in the future?

Amy: I think a little bit of both. I think I liked the idea that it was still easily accessible. Right, so I think about— Like the area that I live in right now is a very rural area. We're about a mile away from the Yakama Indian Reservation. Lots of people have issues with internet access. Putting up a boundary… like that involves you having to fill out a really lengthy questionnaire or like propose your changes in a really formal way, is going to leave out people like tribal mental health professionals, who probably have a lot to say about where our textbook can do better. So I think… if things are added, I think they have to be done really mindfully of those other challenges that exist. And again, being conscious of not replicating the previous systems of exclusion that exist.

I think there were certainly ways I could've organized it better. You know, I think Hypothes.is has a lot of nifty ways of like, using hashtags or organizing material within their own systems that I could've used better. But again, I was one person who had never done a project like this, so I just went for it. So I think that gets back to the idea of looping in networks. Like, could I have reached out to someone at Hypothes.is and said, "Hey, can you brainstorm with me, the best way to do this?" Yes, I could've. No, I didn't do that.

Josie: Right. So I guess in terms of creating new OER, what do you think is needed so that those projects consider diversity and representation from the very beginning?

Amy: Pay people who are not just cis straight white dudes to help you with the effort. That sounds very simple, and I don't necessarily mean it that way. I think it really gets back to the idea of, who are we asking to be important enough to work on these kinds of projects? Because that's really what we do when we create textbooks, or even when we decide what we're including in textbooks. We are making value decisions about who should count as “fancy” or “important enough” to be doing this work. And so I think from the very beginning, it has to be inclusive in terms of who's working on the project. And I very much— I want to be very clear, that I do not mean you should harass Black and Brown scholars to do free work for you, and then like give them a brief acknowledgement section. It has to be diverse in terms of the team, but it also has to be— It can't be just replicating hierarchical approaches. So I think that's step one.

I think step two, you know there has to be consideration of all elements of the textbook process. So I think... Sometimes... If I say "diversification"—which again, I don't love the word, but I seem to have sunk myself in a hole of using it a lot—of a textbook, some people might just mean, "Oh, I just need to make the pictures, you know, less just white people." Which is a good thing, but also whose research are you talking about, right? There's been studies done looking at doing very systematic studies of like whose research is talked about in various textbooks: overwhelmingly white men. Which is not surprising, but you can't just put pictures of— You know, if you're talking all about the work of men and then you have some pictures of women doing science, that's not helpful. Like you're still codifying this idea of "Men are scientists” and they're important enough to do the work. So, it has to be about content, it has to be about graphics, it has to be about the process. Like, it has to be about at all. If you’re doing the project on the beginning, don't make it so in three years, someone else to come along and do a diversification project, right. [*laughter*].

And it's going to be hard. Like, I think it's not an easy process, trying to change fundamentally how we treat knowledge. That's what we're doing or at least it's my head what we should be doing. For a lot of us there are 25 years of schooling engrained in our

head about, "This is who is smart, and this is what counts." And so bucking that, or working against that, is a lot of un-training our brains, and that's hard work. And so, I guess I just, I don't want— I made a joke in the beginning of this, but, I don't want to take it lightly that it's something that's super easy to do. But it has to be done, like period. At the end of the day, it has to be done.

[*Theme music]*

Josie: If you want to check out Amy's research on open education and the diversification project in particular, I've linked to her research page in the show notes. You can also connect with her on Twitter at @Amy_Nusbaum and Nusbaum is spelled N-U-S-B-A-U-M.

You can learn more about this podcast at knowledgespectrums.opened.ca. On the website, you can find all episodes and transcripts, along with many other resources and information related to this project.

You can connect with me on Twitter @josiea_g and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #OKSPodcast.

I record this podcast on the traditional and unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, now known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and the territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples.

The theme song is "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org and shared under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

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This has been Open Knowledge Spectrums Podcast. Thanks for listening.

—End of Episode—

Episode 3: Collaborative and Open Publishing Models with Apurva Ashok and Zoe Wake Hyde

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie Gray: Hello! Welcome to the Open Knowledge Spectrums podcast, which explores questions of epistemic justice, or knowledge equity, in the context of open education and considers different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable.

My name is Josie Gray, and I am your host. This podcast is my final project for my Masters of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

In this episode, I speak with Apurva Ashok and Zoe Wake Hyde about how collaborative, open models for publishing open educational resources can support more equitable and transparent publishing workflows. We also discuss the power of publishing and the importance of ensuring that that power is distributed and accessible.

Apurva Ashok is the project lead for the Rebus Community. She helps educational institutions build human capacity in OER publishing through professional development offerings, such as the Textbook Success Program. Apurva has studied literature and marketing at McGill University and completed the Master of Publishing program at Simon Fraser University. Her experience ranges across academic publishing, media, social justice, and volunteerism. In 2020, Apurva received an Open Educational Award for Excellence, in recognition of her contributions to the field. She strongly believes in translating knowledge among communities and regions and in the value of greater critical thinking for all.

Zoe Wake Hyde worked in media research and academia in New Zealand before completing the Master of Publishing program at Simon Fraser University. Having been somewhat radicalized by discovering the faults of traditional academic publishing, she is now focused on creating systems that support better, more equitable access to knowledge and learning. She is currently the project lead

for Rebus Ink, a project exploring better ways to support researchers' workflows and connect them with the open ecosystem.

And with that, let's hear from Apurva and Zoe. Hope you enjoy.

[Theme Music]

Josie: To start would you each introduce yourself and say your name so that people can differentiate your voices.

Apurva Ashok: Hi, everyone. My name is Apurva Ashok. I am originally from Bangalore, India, but I'm currently based in Toronto, Canada. I want to mention I am located on the traditional territories of many nations, including the Mississauga of the Credit, the Anishinabek, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and Wendat Peoples. And I want to acknowledge them and thank them for the privilege to live, work, and play here. And for allowing all of us to have a conversation today.

Zoe Wake Hyde: Hi, everyone. My name is Zoe Wake Hyde. I am from New Zealand originally. And realizing now I should have looked up my land acknowledgment for being based in Montreal currently. And certainly, I can tell you that I'm from the Waikato region in New Zealand and was immensely fortunate to grow up on the land of the Tainui and I can't think of anything else to say there. *[Laughs.]*

Zoe: Okay. So, clearly I was not prepared for this on the day, and I can't do a land acknowledgement off the top of my head… yet. But it's important, so I asked Josie if I could record one after the fact, still owning up to the fact that I got it wrong the first time around, but giving it the time and space it deserves. With that in mind, I want to acknowledge that on the day of the original recording and today, I am located in Tiohtià:ke, also known as Montreal, which is found on the unceded territories of the Haudenosaunee and Kanienʾkehá꞉ka First Nations. It is a place where I am immensely grateful to live and work. Now, my understanding of a land acknowledgement is that it is an opportunity for me to speak to and reflect on my relationship to the land I find myself on, but as an immigrant and a settler, I also feel strongly that I want to acknowledge the land I come from, to which I still have a really deep connection. So with that, I also acknowledge and extend my respect

and gratitude to the Tainui iwi, who are the tangata whenua, or people of the land of the Waikato, my home in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Thank you for the chance to get this right. Lesson learned. And now, on with the show.

Josie: Could you both maybe give a bit of background about your professional background?

Apurva: Zoe, why don't you go ahead this time?

Zoe: *[Laughs]* Okay, absolutely. So, I took a long, winding path to where I am now, that from this perspective looks like it makes a lot of sense. So, since my undergrad back in New Zealand, I have worked in various roles related to higher education. So, I was a media researcher for a while, so I was analyzing media coverage of universities. I then worked in administration in a university as well, and ended up finding a real interest in academic publishing and set out to, you know, pursue the nice wood-paneled office in some cushy university press job, which I thought existed. And in doing my Masters of Publishing discovered that open research is really the place that I want to be. And I'm really interested in open monographs in particular, and then through that program ended up working in open education with the Rebus Foundation and Pressbooks. And so that was about.. close to five years ago now, and I've been very happily exploring the open space through a few different channels, up until today.

Josie: Thanks. Apurva?

Apurva: I have a similar background to Zoe's. I've also side-stepped from academia to publishing to open publishing. I have a background in English literature. I also completed the Master of Publishing program that Zoe just mentioned. And I've been working in open education for about four years now. I learnt a lot about commercial publishing during my master's degree. I was introduced, thanks to wonderful faculty in that program, to ideas around open pedagogy, open tools, open processes, and landed an internship at Rebus, where I now work. So, got into the field as an intern, worked hands-on with open publishing projects, and have stayed in the field ever since and continue to be more and more amazed by all the potential it has to change systems and education to make it more equitable and to really act more as a service than as an industry.

Josie: Right, absolutely. So, both of you got into open education through that publishing program, is that right?

Apurva: Mhmm.

Zoe: Yep.

Josie: Oh cool. I didn't quite realize that. I knew you had both done that publishing program, but I didn't realize that was directly your tie to open education.

Zoe: It's a great funnel. *[Laughter]* We try to bring as many through as we can. There have been others, too, from that program who we've worked with in open ed.

Josie: This wasn't a question I had on the list, but something I thought about after. I was kind of wondering with your - both of your - backgrounds, both of your educations in publishing, I was wondering like what part of that education did you find useful as you kind of transitioned into more open education? And where did you have to kind of imagine differently?

Apurva: I think for me, one of the most useful pieces was just really understanding the ins and outs of what it takes to make a book. I think so much of the labour that goes into the work tends to happen behind a curtain. You sort of hand someone a manuscript if you're an academic and then *bam* out comes a book in many different formats and forms. So, the program really broke down the various stages of the process, and the number of different hands that are involved into making this work. So, with open education, the shift for me was sort of seeing how this could work in maybe a non-profit sense, in a non-commercial sense, and finding ways to again match how pieces of the trade publishing world could map out differently in an open publishing context.

Zoe: Yeah, I really echo that. So much happens behind the curtain. And there's real power in it. And that's another thing I took away from my time in MPub was understanding the power of publishing. It is an incredibly important industry, cultural phenomenon... the technologies involved. It's pretty immense in terms of its impact on how we live our lives when you think of publishing as making anything public, right. You can use quite an expansive definition. And so, the combination of

understanding its power and understanding how it can be done so that you can then translate those to the wider world outside of the publishing industry, that there is power in the process of publishing, that should be owned by everybody, that should be accessible to everybody. That's really one of the things I've brought through into my work in open education, is that this is something that anybody can do. We all do it all the time in different ways. So how can we then support and structure that a little bit so that publishing can be done by people who want to have that impact on the world?

Josie: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I was really looking forward to talking with you both because you have that background in publishing, which I am extremely jealous of. I feel like in my own work, I'm kind of trying to do publishing and not really sure of what I'm doing, but...*[laughs]*

Apurva: And I'll hold on to what Zoe said where you've probably been doing it all along without necessarily calling it publishing. I know you've contributed chapters as part of your masters cohort to a book that you've published on Pressbooks and were using that term officially, and that counts as part of the work. Producing a series like this one counts as part of the work.

Josie: *[Laughs]* Right, yeah.

Zoe: Absolutely. Yeah, it has really felt like we're in this space in between a lot of different things, and that by trying to do the work of publishing in a way that isn't about us creating the content and publishing the books, but supporting everybody to do publishing, there are so many spaces where I feel on the edges. And Apurva, I'm curious if you feel this too. You know, when I'm in the open access space, I am a publisher, but not. When I'm in the open education space, I'm not a publisher, but I am. And when I'm around other publishers, I'm something else entirely different from them again. It's a really exciting and interesting space, but it does kind of get at that - yeah there's a bit of - kind of mystery to where we fit in all of it, because publishing has traditionally been so structured, so centred in the industry. And then people on the, you know, outside of that walled garden haven't seen themselves in it, haven't seen themselves as part of publishing. They might be authors or writing, but seeing themselves as publishers I don't think comes very naturally to people.

Apurva: No, folks don't, and I'll say that, you know with you and I, Zoe, having that interdisciplinary lens to this field or these sets of fields, if we're looking at all of them, can be very valuable because we're sort of challenging those notions of, are you inside that elite sphere, who was able to - or unable to publish something, or are you watching from the outsides. I think we're really trying to blur those margins and really make it more of a self-determining activity, rather than someone looking at a checklist and saying, "Well do I meet all of these criteria or not."

Zoe: Right, absolutely. Those boundaries are barriers, and we're all about breaking down barriers, yeah.

Josie: Yeah, Absolutely. I think that's a good transition to talking about what the Rebus Community is. Could you maybe give listeners kind of an overview of the Rebus Community?

Apurva: Sure thing. So, the Rebus Community is a non-profit organization. And really what we're trying to do is to build human capacity. We're trying to help people through the OER Publishing process, specifically with some professional development programs. We offer in depth courses, we offer webinar series for instructors, faculty, librarians, and other kinds of institutional leaders or even students. And really our goal is to try to de-mystify the open publishing process, encourage OER adoption, support faculty to author new content, introduce students to affordable, high-quality materials. And also make connections between people. We're trying to build a global OER community and give them the foundational skills to be able to carry on this work in future. And maybe Zoe can speak to sort of the larger pieces of this puzzle, which is about re-imagining the publishing landscape.

Zoe: *[Laughs]* Right. Okay, good. Glad I have something else to say because you explained the Rubus Community beautifully. Yeah, we have with this ... kind of a parent organization, which is the Rebus Foundation. And the mission there is to re-imagine the publishing ecosystem on open principles. So, we all work with the belief that by applying open principles to every part of the publishing system - or publishing systems - we can make them more expansive, more inclusive, more radical, more cooperative. There's so much potential when you take an open approach to these things. Now, I always view

open as a tool. There are other ways to achieve the kinds of goals we have for the publishing ecosystem, but openness is a really strong one. And so, the work that's happening in Rebus Community is very much within that broader context, understanding how one kind of publishing can be done really differently and with the values of open - as you know, I think the open education community does a great job of defining - built right into the foundations of that publishing. And it's also feeding into this wider idea of, how do we do publishing across the board, throughout education, academia, research spaces, anywhere where it's about the creation and sharing of knowledge. It gives us an opportunity to think about those differently as well. Connect to them, inspire them, all sorts of kinds of things that feed off in lots of directions. And certainly, is really at the forefront of rethinking quite a fundamental process, being the publishing of educational materials, in the name of also thinking about how can we publish everything differently?

Josie: Mhmm. Apurva could you talk a little bit about how openness shows up in kind of like the day-to-day practices in the Rebus Community and the technologies that you use?

Apurva: Sure thing. We're always conscious of the fact that, you know, we're working here in Toronto, Zoe's in Montreal, you're in Victoria. We're working in Canada, but there are a number of open education practitioners around the world. So very simply we want to begin by having a forum or a conversational space where people could connect, regardless of their time zones or regions. And one of the main pieces, I guess, of the Rebus Community infrastructure is our community forum platform, where people can ask and answer questions, they can post calls for contributions on projects. Really the idea is to be transparent about what folks are working on, to learn from one another, to help each other out, to ensure that the work doesn't take place in silos, to ensure that our efforts aren't being duplicated. And we also use other tools for publishing our resources as well, and I might actually pass this over to Zoe to talk a little bit about Pressbooks, which happens to be the Rebus Community's prefered tool for publishing open texts.

Zoe: Absolutely. So I got my start with Pressbooks, so it has a special place in my heart. *[Laughs]*. So Pressbooks is an open-source platform for publishing all kinds of materials, but typically open education materials is where it's largely used. And so, it's built on top of WordPress, which is an open-source system itself and has a very large open-source ecosystem, and through the customizations built to Pressbooks, it is a very simple but very powerful tool for publishing any kind of content. You know, back to my early days with Pressbooks, it was incredible to see the uptake in the open education community, and it really kind of lit a fire to see where it could go because it was exactly the purpose of having this tool that is - you know, as we've been talking about - accessible to more people, that puts more kind of power and control on their own publishing and to hands of many more people. So, it's grown and grown from there and has, you know, its own community of open-source users, of contributors, and is certainly well connected into the open education ecosystem to be seeking to contribute what it can as a tool that performs a pretty fundamental function which is, how do you get your content out there?

Josie: Mhmm, yeah. I've worked with Pressbooks since I got into open education - so four and a half years ago, I think - and it's incredible how much the tool has changed and grown, just in that short period of time. It's honestly phenomenal. And with the new Pressbooks Directory and seeing how that allows for more collaboration and connection and sharing, bringing all of those different Pressbooks books that are out there in existence now. It's been... really lovely to see.

Apurva: Yeah, it's exciting to see what companies and organizations can do when they sort of focus on the people, and the needs of the people, and really respond directly those rather than sort of chasing the profit dollar.

Josie: Right. Yeah. It's pretty easy to sell people on Pressbooks, *[laughter]* when they see how nice it can look with not too much effort. So, to kind of shift the conversation a bit, how do you think about equity and justice in the context of open education, generally?

Zoe: To me it's the absolute fundamental reason why we do this work. Again, open is a tool to achieve something, and something that I think that we're seeking to achieve in

the education space is equity and justice. If tomorrow, openness stopped serving that purpose, you know, certainly me, and I think this is likely true for many, if openness isn't a thing helping us achieve that, we would seek out the thing that would help us achieve it, rather than sticking with openness. You know, I love the open space, I love what's possible, I really believe in it. The reason I believe in it is because it's giving to this goal of equity and justice in education and/or in research and whatever place you want to apply those principles. It's that fundamental.

Apurva: Yeah, I agree. I think it informs every aspect of the work, every aspect of decision making. It's the undercurrent through all of our conversations and actions. And I know that open education has - you know, when we talk about it more generally - the potential to make content more inclusive for learners, to reduce opportunity gaps. But I do want to flag that there needs to be intentional action in order to make this happen. That's why, sort of having it at the core, as Zoe was describing, is so important. And you know, when we've mentioned the word context, it's helpful to remember that we're practitioners in Canada. I'm someone who's from South Asia and the product of a very different education system. So, I'm always conscious of the ways in which we're working here, the other models for openness that apply to other regions, to people who might be working in non-English languages as well. And I think that an equitable and just model for open education is one that is also mindful of these and finding ways to integrate with this, rather than just being one model to supplant the rest. Because we know from history that that doesn't work well.

Josie: Yeah, a bit motivation for me doing this podcast, was kind of this realization in the work that I do in open education - that's not a new realization - but just like examples that I found of open resources being created that were not inclusive, that had racist content and things like that. And kind of recognizing that, okay, we need to be more intentional here, like we can't just create open educational resources with no attention to the other ways that exclusion can come into those resources.

Zoe: Yeah, I've been reflecting a little recently on my use of the term “open” because I think I hang a lot on “open” and “open” doesn't necessarily mean inclusive/accessible. There's so much more that I think we need to call out more explicitly, to make sure that

the content is open *and* there's a gap there right now. I think "ethical" maybe gets at some of it, but I've been toying with whether there is more language needed to capture this focus on equity and justice, alongside, or as well as, or very closely integrated with "openness." But sometimes it feels like there's a kernel of something there that we don't capture when we just use the language of open education.

Apurva: I think that I mean that the danger of labels is a pitfall that we fall into often, but I think it's also important for us to acknowledge that struggle because, you know, if we do land on whatever that second adjective is to describe this process, it's very likely that our needs could change five years from now, and those labels and terms would also need to change. So, to sort of acknowledge that this reflection and retrospection and thinking through is a part of figuring out the best way to think about the work, approach the work, do the work, and create those resources, is critical.

Josie: Mhmm. To kind of bring it back to publishing, what are some equity and ethical considerations that you think are important for people working on the kind of the publication or the project management side of OER projects.

Apurva: Oh, I have so many.

Josie: Let's hear them!

[Laughter]

Apurva: I'd say the big one for me that I've learnt is, you know, this idea of a model learner or a sort of single way or process by which people learn, doesn't really exist. So, I always think at the start of every project, one of the big things to do as a team is to map out the context in which you're working, the people for whom you're creating these resources, and seek out and try to understand what their needs and requirements are. What are the best ways in which they learn? Bring those people into your creation teams from day zero, we like to think about it. Co-create, collaborate with them, and plan for the time and work that it takes to make accessible, inclusive, equitable resources, whether it's in terms of the content, whether it's in terms of the formats in which those

resources are available, or just in terms of team. You know, it takes a lot of time to bring someone who might be completely new to the world of publishing and introduce them to concepts within the field. I have more, but I will let Zoe jump in and share all of her wisdom as well.

Zoe: I just want to hear all of yours *[laughs]*. I'll link a little bit of that and build on it. I think there really needs to be a conscious effort from day one to think through the implications of what creating a project together will look like, and then how it's going to be used in the world and that's both why students, learners, and also by people who might be adapting, remixing, and building forward. And there is often I think a risk that there's so much that you're learning about publishing itself and how to go through practical steps of bringing people together and writing the content and editing it and getting it out there, it's really important to also take the time to be very explicit about things, like Apurva was just saying, around the context. And there's so much there that gets assumed that can get, you know, you can get distracted from it because you're facing the very practical things. So I would really encourage people who are encountering this work to set aside dedicated time up front, seek out resources that support you to identify what questions you need to answer from day zero. There may be things that you haven't thought about thinking about yet, and so it's a question of being very deliberate and building in upfront the kinds of structures, changes, patterns, interactions, you know. There's so much in there that needs to be thought through with this lens of equity.

Apurva: Being flexible and adaptable as well, because, as you said Zoe, there are things that you might not know to think about at day zero. They might only crop up at day 260.

Zoe: Right.

Apurva: So you need to be adaptable in order to adjust and respond.

Zoe: Mhmm.

Apurva: And as we're sort of gesturing towards the future and sort of the time that these projects take, one thing that I've had to learn is letting go of what I think is sort

of the finish line for a product. I've learnt that with open education resources especially, you have to see your resource in action, in use, if it's in a classroom, or a lab, or whatever environment that you've designed for it, and see how it plays out in the hands of instructors and learners, and then revise it to make sure it works better, it functions better. So, I think that's when open publishing comes hand-in-hand with open pedagogy or other kinds of open educational practices. It's sort of the stepping stone to another way of thinking about teaching and learning more generally. And you know, you don't need to consider all of that when you're starting out an open publishing project or managing an OER project. But to know that those are the paths it could take you on is helpful. And I find, having been on those paths, it's very rewarding.

Josie: Yeah. That's such a good point. And I think in the context that I work in, where we're creating these resources and then we want them to get into the open textbook collection. Which is supposed to be this static kind of copy of the book that's not supposed to change. And then it doesn't ever get changed. And like, there's a bit of a... a disconnect in there that I think... me and other people at BCcampus need to think about. *[Laughs].*

Zoe: It's a very real challenge and this is where you run into some of the structures of publishing aren't designed for this kind of content

Josie: Mhmm.

Zoe: This comes up time and time again. If you want to have a static repository of content, it's essentially a library, right? Library books are done. They aren't evolving, they aren't changing, they aren't being revised, they-- you know, or it's happening over a very, very long period of time. So, this is not a BCcampus problem *[laughter].* it's certainly something I encourage you to explore and figure out. But, you know, we've run into that time and time again at Rebus Community is thinking through, you know, when you run up against a traditional publishing structure, whether it is something like, should we have ISBN's for our books? Or you know, how do you start an editing process when maybe half of the content isn't finished yet because it's going to be done over a long period of time? So, I don't know if this is a take heart moment, but certainly this is, you know, when you're trying to rethink how publishing happens, you are going to run

up against pre-existing structures that just don't work for this kind of content. And there's a real excitement in that. It's also a real challenge in terms of figuring out how to navigate through it and keep that balance of doing what you need to to meet certain standards or whatever that might be expected of you. And also then push back and say, well why is it done like that? And how can we do it differently?

Josie: Mhmm. Yeah, I think it's a challenge, especially with a lot of the advocacy. We're kind of-- A lot of the time, we're trying to just get instructors to adopt an open textbook. And if it looks more like a textbook that they're used to, they're more likely to feel comfortable doing that. And it's not going to change on them, and they-- you know, it's dealing with those expectations, but also trying to allow for things that are different, like things that aren't "textbooks" as we maybe traditionally understand them.

Zoe: I think I also would like to bring up thinking about ethical considerations in publishing. And this is one where I don't have easy answers, but I think it's incredibly important to acknowledge the labour that goes into these projects. It's enormous. Over, you know, the past several years of working in open education, I've just seen hours and hours and years and years of people's commitment to this work. And it's truly a thing to behold. It has given me so much hope and heart, *and* there's this unresolved question of, how can we keep asking people to do all this work without adequately compensating them or rewarding them? And you know, the kind of standard reward is compensation, and you know... So, no easy answers, but I think if you are asking labour of people, if you are engaging them in this way, and certainly if you, yourself, are taking on a side project or something that's kind of feeling like a passion project to commit to this, there's a wealth of resources around how to kind of manage that and be a good steward of these projects, and also those of us who are thinking structurally about open education publishing have to constantly be reflecting on and grappling with and exploring how we can better reward the people who are giving their time to this.

Apurva: And I'll say financially compensate them for their work, but also build in a recognition process into our systems. So, I know in B.C. there has been some advancement with tenure and promotion policies. I know there are other institutions and universities that are acknowledging the labour involved in creating open

educational resources, adopting them, adapting them, or teaching with them, and rewarding instructors in the same way they would if they were publishing a traditional monograph with a university press. So, I think... Yeah, thinking intentionally about those structures is useful and I will flag, you know, if we're looking at the diversity of the open education field right now, we can do a lot better. And that's really because there's a privilege in who has the time to volunteer their skills and expertise on these projects and who cannot. And this takes us back to Zoe's point about funding and compensation. If this is going to be a sustainable movement, if this is going to be the norm twenty years from now.

Josie: Mhmm. Do you think that the collaborative model used by Rebus is like one strategy for addressing that labour? Being able to kind of take a more crowd-sourcing, collaborative, distributed approach?

Apurva: I think it's one way to do it. I think there are ways it could improve. You know, I want to acknowledge that a lot of the projects that we work with have been able to get this far because of grants provided by their institution. The value that I see in the Rebus approach really is about the transparency and sort of, public approach to the work. The explicit welcoming of people who might not traditionally be involved in these processes to come join, and that could be anywhere from students, but to designers, or filmmakers, or people in other industries or walks of life. We try to build in time for community conversation, make sure that teams are as central the story of the resource as just the content or the gap that they're filling is. You know, we try as much as possible to value marginalized voices, and just exposing people through this process, exposing people through the work, and exposing them to a new way of creating content, publishing content, that is more inclusive that does have community at the core and the heart, can in itself be a step towards that more sustainable future. But I would love to see more investment in OER from different systems, not just from foundations who we've been privileged to partner with and work with. So, I think ours is a start but we have a long way we could go.

Zoe: Yeah, with rose-coloured glasses on a little bit, something I hope that the transparency that the Rubus Community process offers as well is visibility on the work it takes to do this work.

Josie: Right.

Zoe: And going back to again that idea of publishing being something that is not typical understood or just visible to most people. I think that the approach that the Rebus Community undertakes and encourages and facilitates shows what it looks like to do this work. And so my hope is that by having that out there, everybody who's invested in the success of the open education movement can see a bit more about what it's going to take to achieve sustainability.

Josie: Yeah, absolutely. Where do you see the value in these community and collaborative approaches to OER publishing?

Apurva: Again, it feels like all along the way. Collaborative models, and I know specifically when we're explaining the importance of teams and people to the projects we work with, we extremely stress on the fact that diverse teams really do produce more equitable resources. And this is not just me saying it as someone who's a person of colour and who is in this space. But really, the research shows us that working with people who don't have the same backgrounds, skills, or experiences as you do, forces you to think through challenges or questions from different perspectives. And it's in that moment of communication and conversation with someone else who is really coming at it with different needs that you're also exposed to something new. And you realize how your resource might need to be modified to also work for that person, and how you're not just building for someone who looks and works and exactly like yourself, but you're really trying to build something that is a little more modular and flexible and can be picked up and used by more people. You know, it's easy for us to sort of live and operate in a bubble, but once the bubble bursts and you see that there are folks that have different needs and operate in different contexts and different regions, that's when you also realize that a problem exists that you hadn't been aware of before.

Josie: I was wondering if you could share a little bit about, like, what does it look like to build community and to build teams like that.

Apurva: It takes a lot of, again, intentional work. Some of the things that we have learnt to do over time is to really let it be known that that is what we're trying to do. We are trying to build a representative team. We're trying to involve people in this process who might not have previously been invited to work here. I think it's about reminding people that they can make contributions that can be as big and critical to the project or very small but still just as important and critical. It's understanding that folks have many pathways into doing this work and those pathways come with valuable contributions. And Zoe I know you've been part of many collaborative projects, so I'm curious about how you felt your experience was like.

Zoe: Yeah. Yeah, you know, in some of the projects where I think we've seen the most incredible community building, there's a little bit of magic in it that I think comes from shared belief and a shared enjoyment in the work. That there's a belief that what you're doing is important, and that you're all in it together. That kind of community spirit has evolved in, you know, several of the projects I worked closely with. And I think in some ways - I've always found it a little difficult to articulate exactly where that comes from but again - I think it comes down to shared intention and, you know, that kind of buying in to, this is a really valuable use of your time and something to do together. And that there's an openness to other people being a part of that too. It doesn't have to come from, say, you know, I've seen maybe projects start with collaborators who have known each other for a little while. They're kind of maybe, one, two, three of them, and then by being open to others buying in, that's grown and grown and grown to, you know, these incredible communities full of lots of different people who then bring their perspectives and really influence - really, really, substantially influence - the direction of the project,. I think that's critical to say. And as Apurva was saying this, I mean there's value in that. Yeah, that's certainly a pattern I've seen a little bit. There's a spark that comes from that.

Apurva: Yeah. In addition to the motivation, I'll say something that we do with a lot of our projects, in that initial project-scoping phase when they're sort of framing and trying to conceptualize what the project is going to look like, we ask them to work as a team to list out what we call their “measures of success.” And you know, for most projects it's going to be, "I want to get this project done. I want it to be published or complete."

But we really encourage them to sort of think beyond that. What does success look like for them? Is it connecting with "x" number of practitioners in their field or in related fields and bring them to be part of the project? Is it working and trialing this resource out with students and getting their feedback? Are there other pedagogical models that they'd like to explore through the creation of this resource? There can be many ways to define success on a project, and for most of them, I will say, it boils down to connecting with people, making sure that this resource has an impact on various groups of learners that they've identified. And it's not always just getting to that finish line. But sort of the means to this larger end, which is changing the field for instance, replacing a commercial textbook that's saving students money, and coming up with a really new way of engaging with students.

Zoe: And enjoying working together, too. *[Laughter]*

Apurva: Enjoying that, yeah. I will say that with the textbook success program, which is sort of a yearlong professional development course that I facilitate, a lot of my end of year evaluations really highlight the importance of the cohort model. They're all working on different projects and different disciplines in different stages in different regions, but they come together and connect frequently and regularly on-- and just discuss the work that they're doing. And it's sort of just that act of being able to have a shared space where you can talk about this work because you know, going back to what Zoe said in her introduction, it spans so many different areas and disciplines and industries, not just publishing. And for folks to come together and identify that they're not alone in this work, that they're also not alone in some of the struggles. You know, if you have writers block or if you don't quite know how to figure out this open tool that you're using, you can share those frustrations or worries with others in the group and find solace and comfort in the fact that people have been there before, or even if not, that they're there to support you through that. And that's where really the value of the community lies. And for us as well to be able to have this conversation together, as people who have worked in this field in different ways, but to be able to share our learnings is wonderful.

Josie: Yeah, absolutely. Super valuable to be able to connect with people and to commiserate or celebrate *[laughter]*, you know, it's very, very, valuable. What are some of the challenges that you've encountered, trying to build community?

Apurva: A big one that comes to mind for me is pulling people out of the entrenched tools and workflows that they have been used to, especially for folks who have been involved in academia, and been using particular systems and ways of going about their work for decades. It can be tough to break the habit and have them test out a new space or a new way of communicating and doing things. And sort of getting everyone to be able to not only, you know, have an account on the same platform, but to really be using it fruitfully is the biggest challenge. In addition to obviously finding the funding to compensate everyone fairly.

Zoe: Yeah. I second both of those. The first thing that came to my mind was email, which is a little reductive. But certainly, when the activity that's happening on a project ends up being a bit kind of hidden away, that just sometimes we've seen that kind of lead to... a lack of pickup and progress and excitement. And that's not to say that that doesn't work for some people. I'm completely sure that some people are creating excellent projects, and they're doing all of their communication via email. But occasionally people do get stuck in those patterns. And that can kind of just close off a couple of possibilities here and there that can then snowball a little bit into some challenges for the project, if there isn't kind of a really strong driver kind of making sure that it's all moving forward. Which I think is common to any kind of project. That sometimes it just doesn't quite take off in the way you want to, it becomes a little more of a slog.

Josie: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. What about successes?

Zoe: Again, I go back to like there's a little pixie dust sometimes like, you know *[laughter]*. This is the least useful information in the world, I'm sure. But I mean this is why we've worked to kind of profile and talk to the people who have had amazingly successful projects. I'm thinking of the Introduction to Philosophy, OER Course Markings, Blueprint for Success. There are some examples where there's just been magic, and it's incredible to behold. So, if there are resources associated with

this podcast, we can share some of the case studies and things that have tried to pull out what makes those so successful. There's just kind of a buzz you get sometimes, but, you know, Apurva's much closer to it than I am these days, so I'm sure she has something more practical *[laughs]*.

Apurva: Well, I was going to say it's one we've already discussed before. For me the big successes are just seeing the impact of groups and cohorts working together.
That's definitely been my biggest take away. I know 2020 being the year that it was, I would often go into my OER project sessions and leave
feeling reenergized, revitalized, rejuvenated, because I've just been able to go in and talk to people who are doing this work very informally and casually, for about an hour and a half. And there's just real value in establishing those kinds of professional relationships with people. And value that I've seen others also echo and sort of highlight and hold dear to their selves as well. I think the big successes again, are not just in creating the resources, but creating the communities that exist around those resources. Because that's really the way that we can change some of the systems in which we're currently trying to operate.

Zoe: I completely agree with it. I'll try to come to something a little more practical as well. I think openness to opportunity, I think we've seen go far as well. That being open to the possibility of someone coming to you with an idea that you never thought of. And to me, this is-- I think this is at the heart of why I love, you know, open licenses, open content, generally. You don't know what someone else is going to do with the work that you've started. And I think there have been cases where we've seen a project that has started along a path--and been able to continue along that path, and kind of achieve what it set out to--and some other, you know, parallel path has sprouted out with someone doing translation, or they're creating an audiobook, or something that you wouldn't have envisioned from the start. And the projects who are open to and positioned to kind of bring that work in and really incorporate it as part of the project at large, we've seen some amazing kind of results from that.

Apurva: Yeah, we talked about pathways in, and this is sort of pathways out, and the many shapes and forms these documents can take. I've seen that with people too, they

come in with the intention of publishing a book and they leave with a whole new understanding of how they could teach. And they're sort of taking so much out of a process that really was telling them the A to Z of the publishing process, but through those interactions with people and through thinking about other ways of doing things, are leaving as changed people with new perspectives, and I think that's a big success.

Josie: Absolutely. The final question is a very big question, but where do you see the potential for open publishing practices to disrupt exclusionary and oppressive systems and structures in education?

Apurva: Oh wow, another big question to close us out. *[Laughter]* I always come back to the fact that open publishing, and our way of approaching it in particular, is people and human centric. So, as I said before, we're really not focused on raking in every last dollar, but rather we're focusing the needs of learners, and instructors, and staff, and the key players in the space, the stakeholders in this space. So, the fact that this type of process can be co-created with community, with people at the core, and create models that are owned by us all, that can be adapted by us all if we need it to be, I think there's value in that. You know the more I think about it for me, and this is my personal approach to open education--education more generally--I really see education as a human right. It is as essential as food, shelter, water, health care. And it's what makes the world turn in so many ways. It's what shapes us as people. It's what shapes us as members of society. And therefore, it's so important that the system itself be created by the people, be used by the people. I think the biggest potential is for us all is to align towards those centres as people and not just money. And see the wonders that education could do if it's really reimagined as a service industry.

Zoe: Awesome. I love hearing you talk about that, Apurva. For me, I come back to the power of publishing. So, when you think about particularly educational resources someone by publishing--I'll use textbook, but that's a shorthand for lots of things--by publishing a textbook, you're putting a stake in the ground saying, "This thing is worth knowing." And so who decides what is worth knowing? Who can access what is worth knowing? Who can create the communication that says this is worth knowing? All

of these things are so incredibly powerful and so that power must be shared and distributed. Any concentration of that power is massively damaging to the world on any level. You know, fundamentally, access to knowledge, access to the creation of knowledge, participation in the creation of knowledge, is a human right as well, to kind of echo what Apurva was saying. And so, when you believe in the power of knowledge, in all the ways people can interact with it, you have to work to ensure that it is not being used to cause harm, that it is not incidentally causing harm, and that it is as much owned by everybody who can and should be participating and benefitting from it, as possible. Again, that's kind of the fundamental thing for me with publishing broadly. And in the education context, that means publishing of educational content has to be open and equitable, and everybody should have ownership of the systems to create their own knowledge, to create all the different forms of knowledge, the different ways of knowing. There's just a myriad of different possibilities in the world that have to be supported by these systems, or they aren't doing their job as far as I'm concerned.

[Theme Music]

Josie: You can learn about the Rebus Community and explore their platform at about.rebus.community. And Rebus is spelled R-E-B-U-S. If you are interested in learning more about collaborative and open publishing models and practices, you should check out two incredible resources created by the Rebus Community, including *A Guide to Making Open Textbooks with Students* and *The Rebus Guide to Publishing Open Textbooks (So Far)*. You can also follow the Rebus Community on Twitter at @RebusCommunity. You can connect with Apurva on LinkedIn. Her profile URL is LinkedIn.com/in/ApurvaAshok. And you can follow Zoe on twitter at @ZWHNZ.

You can learn more about this podcast at knowledgespectrums.opened.ca. On the website, you can find all episodes and transcripts, along with many other resources and information related to this project. You can connect with me on Twitter @josiea_g and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #OKSPodcast.

The theme song is "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org and shared under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

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I record this podcast on the traditional and unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, including the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and the lands of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples. I am very grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and learn on these lands.

This has been Open Knowledge Spectrums Podcast. Thanks for listening.

—End of Episode—

Episode 4: Student Perspectives on Open and Inclusive Education with Mitali Kamat, Jaime Hilditch, and Caleb Valorozo-Jones

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie Gray: Hello! Welcome to the open knowledge spectrums podcast, which explores questions of epistemic justice, or knowledge equity, in the context of open education and considers different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable.

My name is Josie Gray, and I am your host. This podcast is my final project for my Master of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

In this episode, I speak with three students in my Inclusive Design cohort: Jaime, Mitali, and Caleb, who I've had the privilege to work with and learn from over the last two years. They graciously volunteered to record an episode with me to talk about from their perspectives as students and inclusive designers. We talk about their master's major research projects (MRPs), we reflect on positive and challenging learning experiences, and discuss how education could be more inclusive.

Jaime Hilditch is a second-year student in the Master of Inclusive Design program at OCAD University. She has a background in graphic and communication design from Kingston University and OCAD University. Jaime is passionate about social design and

inclusive and open education. Her most recent work looks at introducing braille concepts and emphasizes pre-braille learning in kindergarten classrooms.

Mitali Kamat is an inclusive designer and occupational therapist who is passionate about building inclusive environments and products with and for individuals with disabilities. She has been working in public schools in the United States for 7 years. Her key interest areas are assistive technologies, inclusive product design, and built environments. Design for her is multidisciplinary, it is the process of collaborating with individuals from different fields of expertise and lived experiences that make her work life most meaningful.

Caleb Valorozo-Jones is an Inclusive Designer, food allergy "foodie," and accidental rubber duck collector. A lifelong misfit and edge case, Caleb's design ethos focuses on increasing representation of minorities and oppressed groups in policy and design processes, especially his fellow neurodivergent and 2SLGBTQA+ community members. His current passion is researching Dungeons & Dragons for and with neurodivergent adults to help build self-autonomy and self-advocacy skills, as well as creating cathartic experiences. Ultimately, Caleb aims to carve out a space for his fellow misfits through design.

And with that, let's switch over to the conversation.

Josie: Hello**,** to begin, would you each introduce yourself and give listeners a bit of background about who you are, your educational background, and what brought you to inclusive design, and what your MRP is?

Jaime Hilditch: My name is Jaime Hilditch. I'm a designer and author of a children's book called *The Earth Needs a Break from Plastic*. I have a background in graphic design and communication design. And all the design work I did, when possible, served companies, people, organizations wanting to do good. So for example, branding for Fashion Revolution in Calgary, Alberta, graphics for an environmental company working to serve Henvey Inlet First Nations, and exploring dangers of plastic pollution. And I realized through inclusive design, I had an interest in early education as well as design. So my major research project is titled "Pre-braille implementation into early education," more specifically in the kindergarten classroom. And we're working to

introduce pre-Braille. And pre-Braille is activities done before learning the formal Braille writing system—so Braille grades one and two. The activities work to build two-handed coordination, finger sensitivity, grasp and release, light touch, finger dexterity and mobility, which are all important to formal learning of Braille. And it's my hope that with this project, introducing these pre-Braille exercises and activities, students will be more engaged in the Braille writing system if they need to later on learn Braille, there will be more inclusive lessons conducted in the classroom, and starting it at a younger age.

Josie: What brought you to the inclusive design program?

Jaime: So, I was in graphic design at OCAD, and I heard about this program through my professor during my undergrad thesis. And I was working on a project, which was the book I ended up writing and illustrating. And she thought I should, you know, attend one of the sessions, and I did. And you know, being really interested in social design, I thought this was another area that could broaden my design perspective. I think, you know, learning design was very helpful—graphic design—but I was more interested in how it could be accessed by what wider audience. You know, web accessibility and more inclusive education. Yeah.

Josie: Mitali, how about for yourself?

Mitali Kamat: I'm going to give you the short version, because the long version is really long. But um, I've been an occupational therapist for a while now. So I've been practicing about seven years now. And I've tried to sort of... you know how you're in, you're practicing in a field, and you're trying to find what you want to do, or like your niche in that field. So what ended up happening was, I was on that discovery, and I landed in a school, which was heavy on assistive tech—so I'm a school-based occupational therapist, and that's what I do—and because of the caseload I had in the school, I had to learn a lot more about assistive technology; I ended up getting certified. And there was this 3D printer at the school, or in my department, which was not being used. And we also had this incredible tool guy—or a carpenter—who would sort of customize devices for therapists. So it was like therapists basically engaging in design without actually knowing that they're doing it. And I started doing like adaptive 3D-

printed aids for my students because they had unique preferences, like they wanted to use one type of water bottle that would fit on their wheelchair. And there was not a cut, like, you know, something that was off the shelf that was out there. So we ended up designing an adaptive aid for her, for her wheelchair. So things like that.

And I realized that I enjoy that process of actually working with someone to design an adaptive aid or assistive tech device. And that's when I started reading about it. And I started connecting with organizations, and I came across the book *Design Meets Disability*. And I read it. And I was like, "Yes! This is... this is what I'd like to do." Finally, after, like, 10 years of trying, or something. But yeah, then I started basically just googling what inclusive designers is, and I came across this program, since, you know, there's not a whole lot of them out there. Yeah, that's how I ended up in the field.

Josie: Thanks. And do you want to share a little bit about what your MRP is?

Mitali: Yeah. So my major research project, I'm working with blind and partially sighted participants who have an art and design background or who are in the arts, to come up with tools and strategies that could reimagine what drawing looks like for blind, and maybe come up with a drawing toolkit that will help them create, help them access education programs and even industry.

Josie: Cool. Thanks. And Caleb?

Caleb Valorozo-Jones: So I have a bit of a weird background. So I have a certificate and diploma in music production and business. And through doing a lot of like music production and marketing, like on an indie level, I started building websites, and I was designing stuff for people because I knew how to use Photoshop—which was all that you need to know at the time on the local level—and got more and more into it, and learned about interaction design as a field so then I got a degree in interaction design. And now I'm doing a master's of inclusive design at OCAD. So kind of like a weird transition from like doing music and like pop culture-based things to more design and service design.

Josie: And what was it about the inclusive design program that really appealed to you?

Caleb: That's like, complicated because like, I think I've always to a degree been passionate about inclusive design. Although it wasn't like called that when I was

younger. And like design education, especially like in high school to when—because like, I went back to school as a mature student—like the degree did not exist when I had graduated high school. And when we took design in high school, it was communications class, and you had to do certain things that— It was primarily graphic-design based, and like—no offense to Jaime—that's just not what... I'm just not into it the same way. Like I like to digital design and like multimedia design. And you had to take art, and I was terrible at art classes, and I wasn't into it. So we didn't really have the vocabulary to understand that like how things are designed or industrial design, or like all these things that can encapsulate inclusive design. But it was largely because like, my sibling is autistic. And he has other learning disabilities, and they required a lot of assistive technology and accommodations going through schools, and what they have IEPs in Ontario. And it was such a battle to just do the simplest things, like a computer with like assistive technology, so that they could participate in school. And my family was kind of like always embroiled in these battles about it and seeing the same thing, like my mom is also dyslexic and has ADHD. And like, there's whole complexities around the education system that like... like now I identify as neurodivergent, as well, but didn't have those same access needs or barriers to be a “problem” student. And so I was always kind of like, very aware of the lack of access and inclusivity for certain people, because we make exceptions and inclusions and access needs or exceptions for people all the time. But we just don't consider it that if it's not above and beyond what we want to do. So I became very aware of that. So when I was doing my interaction design degree, they always talked about, “You have to make it accessible. And it's easier to make it accessible before, than after, the fact. And it's cheaper,” which is like always how things are framed in education, because it's capitalism. But we didn't really like go beyond how to do that beyond like WCAG. And like, I was like, well I want to know more. And because I was kind of passionate, especially about like neurodivergent and autistic accessibility and the getting involved and following people on Twitter in those communities, you eventually find out about the IDRC and learn about those projects. And they were so cool and finding out about how it's linked to the program.

Josie: And you want to share a little bit about what your MRP is.

Caleb: Yeah, so my MRP is Dungeons and Dragons for neurodivergent adults. So a lot of neuro-diverse programming—or program for neuro-diverse populations— focus on having them change their behaviors to fit more into society. And there's specific therapies that are very harmful and can cause a lot of psychological damage and PTSD. So this is looking at, instead of asking neurodivergent people to change themselves or come from a deficit-based approach, using hobbies or activities that use a lot of role play and imagination and creative opportunities to imagine and construct neuro-diverse spaces that are a) safe spaces for neurodivergent people, but also to have them work and build on the skills that they identify as needing, so like, self-advocacy, self-determination, etc, which all happens in Dungeons & Dragons, but unless you've played you might not know that. But it's, that as alternative. And also helping neuro-diverse people who may not have access to support systems or funding for accessing programming. So it's like, a more inclusive, hobby-based, less expensive way to do it.

Josie: Yeah. So one of the questions I'm exploring through the podcast is this idea of openness. And how people think about openness, and how people understand openness. And I was wondering how you three have experienced openness in education? And that could be in kind of, whatever way that word makes sense to you.

Jaime: So for me, before I went to OCAD, I did a diploma in art and design at Kingston University. And so it was a one-year program, and the first six months you're encouraged to explore. So we tested out fashion, 3D animation, fine art. A lot of those I realized I was not good at all. I remember creating a fashion piece with one arm hole.. but actually, sort of inclusive because then I was like, well, you know, this could be for someone who is pregnant, or it could be for someone who has hurt their arm. Anyway. So we did have briefs, as most design projects do, but there was always room to go speak to people in the community—which would inform our designs—guerrilla marketing and campaigns, and collaborating with one another. So we did eventually—after the Christmas break, so halfway through—we focused on one of those areas, and I chose the communication design. But we were still able to work on projects with people in fashion, and people in, you know, 3D modeling and stuff. So I think those, you know, learning from people in different areas was very beneficial and just really interesting.

Josie: Yeah, for sure.

Mitali: I don't remember a whole lot of openness, honestly. I think the only times I can remember are like when we had sort of, project-based activities. So I remember when I was in undergrad, there was this one, one time, that we had to do like... audio-visual presentation. And I ended up, with my friends, making a movie out of interviews from these people who are working in a school with children with disabilities back in India. And I was completely out of the context of what our curriculum was. Yeah, I think I didn't have a whole lot of opportunities for openness in my programs until I got to OCAD, I guess. And getting— the only things I remember being, like flexibility and like, the creativity to go out and explore and do whatever makes sense to you out of this school or this learning goal was probably everything that was project based, I would say.

Josie: Mhmm. The videos you describe, so you were— was that in the States?

Mitali: That was not in the States. I was in India, in Mumbai. And I was at a point where I was getting frustrated with the curriculum, and I really wanted some real world, like, experience. So we ended up going to this school. And they had, you know, a lot of children with multiple disabilities and Down syndrome. And in India, you don't have the education system that's like, sort of funded by the government. So you don't have like IEPs, and all of that. So you have these schools, which are special-education schools, which support students. So we went to that particular school, and it was my first sort of... exposure into real-world application of students in a school environment with regards to OT. So, yeah.

Josie: Yeah, I think that's a great example of just like, how making learning more "real world" can be so much more impactful and motivating and feel like it's worth the time. How about you, Caleb?

Caleb: In terms of, like open education resources, I think, not a lot of exposure to that stuff. With having taken like design fields and stuff—and I don't know if Jaime had a similar experience—but because there is a lot more informal or like, grey literature, about design.. Like there's like oodles of blogs and Medium posts. And most companies now post their, like, design systems, so that you can understand how they develop them. And, and like Microsoft's Inclusive Design package, I forget what they call it—

Josie: Toolkit, I think.

Caleb: Yeah, their toolkit. So there's a lot of resources in that sense, that we have access to in learning, and that they were free and were referenced. Because they are like industry examples and case studies and resources, so they're useful in that regard. But like Mitali said, I— my instinct is to say there was not a lot of openness in education, but like, the more I think about it... And in my interaction design projects and the briefs, like yes, we had to do specific things to learn specific hard and soft skills, but we could do whatever we wanted with the project, usually within approval of the professor.. Like I still— *[laughs]*. No, I shouldn't tell that story, *[laughter]* but like, if they didn't think it was a good idea, you wouldn't do it because you, you'd get a bad grade. And ultimately, even if it was the most fulfilling project for you, your scholarships and funding and bursaries are ultimately based on your grades. So you're not going to do that in pursuit of it, unless maybe you have better like, ethics than I do to like not compromise your principles... [*Laughter*] But to me, I was like, yeah, well, I'm not going to lose my funding.

Josie: Mhmm. Yeah, that the topic of grades in that context is so tricky, and I feel like it's one we've had in practice with this cohort in the last year, right? Like how grades are so limiting, but also how they still have a lot of power over the type of work that we do. And like, as long as there are grades, we can't not consider grades. I follow a lot of people on Twitter that talk about "un-grading" and changing— Like they still have to submit grades, but they change their grading practices. So it's more about... Like, they're not grading the work, they're more grading how students reflect on their own learning over the semester. And like, that's the grade. There's a lot more collaboration between instructor and student, and a lot more self-reflection and self-grading. So yeah, those conversations are very interesting. And, when you want to... when you *want* to give students the ability to like, explore and do things maybe outside of what's expected, stepping back from grading is pretty important, just because they're so limiting, and they're so oppressive.

Caleb: And I love those systems, but also like, the thought of that sends me into like a panic spiral because it's like, we've learned nothing else other than to achieve the grade.

Mitali: It does make you happy also. It's like—

Josie: Yeah!

Mitali: It doesn't mean anything! *[Laughter]* Like it really doesn't

Caleb: Yeah. Because I also hate it when professors are like, why are you so obsessed with grades? And it's like, because…

Jaime: We're made this way?

Josie: Grades got me scholarships.

[Laughter]

Caleb: Yeah, like, how do you think I am here? If my grade drops, so does the money…

Josie: In past educational experiences, what are sometimes you have felt included, or excluded, or otherwise? Like, what kind of challenges have you faced in the education system.

Mitali: I feel like my largest barrier or challenge, has been being on a Visa… *[Laughs]* I didn't realize how much that limits your options, like even in my master's program for occupational therapy. You know, all of these students had the chance to go and explore an externship. You know, they went to Ghana, and they went to, I think multiple other places where they got to explore. And, because of money and because of Visa and because of all of these things, that was just not an option for me. I mean, the process was so different from back at home that the time it took to sort of navigate and understand what kind of environment I was in, I was pretty much out of school by then. So you know, you just kind of follow this traditional path that, you know, most people have taken before you. And it's safe, and you know, you're going to graduate and get a job at the end of it. Yeah… Not a whole lot of room for exploration, even at OCAD. OCAD, though, I did try to like— I had the chance to sort of edit my program to my needs. But it took a lot of, sort of, reaching out myself and trying to see what I can get replaced with, you know, what I needed to do.

Josie: Yeah, you did a lot of self-advocacy work.

Mitali: Yeah, like, this is my second master's. So I was like, I don't want to get through another program and be like, I'm not happy with what I learned, you know. So I did replace a lot of things with more experiential learning, like an internship, an independent study project. Anything that's a project for me, I found was like, a good place to learn. [Caleb: Yeah] Something that was not an assignment or like, like a graded assignment or something like that. Yeah, I think that has been my biggest challenge or barrier, I would say, is navigating the international aspect and trying to find scholarships, and trying to find classes I can take, and stuff like that.

Josie: Mhmm. Yeah, I think that challenge of being an international student, for sure. I think you faced a lot of barriers with that. And it's interesting that OCAD—or at least the inclusive design program—isn't better equipped to deal with those barriers, considering it's a program that aims to be welcoming of international students and to build more global communities.

Caleb: I wonder how much… well a) that will change. And I just find it interesting too like, with Mitali doing all this self-advocacy to get all these experiential and like more custom and well suited to your learning goals. And why like, we kind of talked about this prior, like, in class when you're discussing about like electives and like, wanting to learn and trying to take electives at other schools, and the whole system kind of seems like you *can* do this, but they don't really want you to.

[Laughter]

Mitali: It's true.

Jaime: Yeah.

Caleb: It's not exclusive to OCAD. That's just, I've noticed that other schools. Like even when I was trying to take electives in my undergrad and wanting to take them at a different school, because it was something I was interested in learning, and it was just like, such a headache.

Josie: Mhmm. Yeah. Jutta has talked about doing co-design sessions to see how we can improve the inclusive design program. And it would be interesting to see—it sounds like it used to be—but interesting to see how the inclusive design program could be more

flexible and easier to personalize it to specific learning goals. Like I think those barriers are things that could be made... less

Jaime: For sure.

Mitali: It was interesting when she said that like, because it does make sense. Like, you know, it's kind of like an individualized education program, or like plan. Which would be like, a perfect fit for an inclusive design program, right? You are basically using something that has been used for students who need that, to see if it works better for everyone else? And that makes sense. Yeah, I think it would be really nice if they can do that.

Josie: Yeah, Caleb or Jaime, do you have experiences or challenges you'd like to share?

Caleb: I have, like, two thoughts about it. And like, my first thought is always—not always—but like my first thought is kind of experiencing the education system as a queer person, as a queer man. And that's always been a concern, like— It's less so in post-secondary a concern because like, it's impolite, especially in Canadian society to be like, outwardly homophobic. But that doesn't mean like you don't experience microaggressions. I know everyone experiences microaggressions for various things. But like, I have definitely had those moments in education. And I think like with any person who's experiencing microaggressions, or oppression, or being marginalized in the classroom, that is going to take away from your experience. And you're not focusing on learning, you're more focused on your safety. And I'm sure that has been experienced by lots of people, having sexist or racist or xenophobic professors. Like, I've not met anyone who has not had that experience. And I know schools have policies to deal with these situations. But I think the reality for students is much different. And as much as— I feel like students are told a lot like, “Oh, well, you're buying this education, like you're the customer. It's catered to you.” But there's not that— There's such a huge power imbalance that even making complaints or advocating for yourself, it very much does feel like you're putting yourself at risk. And you're risking your grades, which depend— Like it all, it all ties into, like the system where you feel excluded and also like, could hurt your academic or your professional career if once you graduate that you're a “problem” person.

And then I think a lot about, in my undergrad, when I was sick, and I had to have surgery, and I was on, like, accessibility, the Student Accessibility office. But it was a nightmare to deal with, and like to deal with teachers, and systems that like we're not doing what they were meant to do. And just being a person with temporary accessibility needs. The hurdle for people who are not able bodied, or disabled, or sick, or experience chronic illness, I like, I can't imagine having to go through schooling or post-secondary schooling with that. That's, to me, like one of the biggest problems with exclusion—in society in general—but specifically education where they… they say they have these policies, but it's still so difficult for the students themselves to enact them.

Josie: Yeah. Post-secondary is very ableist and not designed to support disabled people at all. And I think with COVID, we've seen a lot of like disabled people who've been asking for accommodations to be able to take their classes remotely and being told for a long time that that wasn't possible. And now all of a sudden, oh, all of a sudden, it's possible. And will those accommodations still be… Will those be provided now as accommodations? Especially for people who are immune compromised and chronically ill, where it's still a huge risk for them to go back in person, even once people start to get vaccinated. Yeah, I've been reading a lot about the different kind of accommodation requirements that have come up with COVID, and around like, people not having quiet places to work or take tests because they're at home and not having their own space, and with this online proctoring and how ableist those systems are and how racist those systems are. Yeah, academia is not a safe place for a lot of people.

Caleb: Did you see the thing about the York student in Myanmar?

Josie: Yeah, the email.

Caleb: Yeah.

Jaime: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Caleb: It was—I don't know if you saw it, Mitali—but it was a student who's in Myanmar, who's going through a military coup. He asked to reschedule his midterm because they were shutting down all the internet, the cell. And the teacher was like, incredibly rude and dismissive and questioned his sense of reality…

Mitali: Oh my god.

Caleb: And said, like, “Well, you better pass the exam, it's going to be difficult.”

Mitali: *[Laughs]* Sorry. This is not like, laughter…

Caleb: No, it's… incredulity. And that people were so shocked. I'm like, no, like, this is so exemplary of a lot of the mindsets. A school may have a policy, but that professor is a barrier to enacting that policy.

Josie: Mhmm.

Mitali: Yeah.

Jaime: Kinda reminds me of a classmate of ours talking about being like a half a semester behind because their accessibility was delayed, and like he couldn't get the transcripts.

Josie: Yeah, accommodations not being the default, and having to go through all these hoops to get those required accommodations.

Jaime: And then having to catch up while you're doing a giant project. And I think similar to Caleb, less so in post-secondary, but in high school and younger. I am a person of quiet nature, and I also have anxiety. So many times, but depending on the class or the project structure, I wasn’t able or didn't feel comfortable contributing. So I think it's really important to acknowledge the different learning styles, and mental health, and language barriers, and you know, to create a safe and inclusive space to learn. I did have some teachers in high school that would try and make these accommodations. But I was definitely extra work on my part to go and speak to them, even if I wasn't comfortable doing that on my own and advocating for what I needed. But in terms of inclusion, I think this year in class with Jutta, definitely co-designing a class outline was something I'd never experienced before. I think that was really exciting.

Caleb: That just made me think, Jaime, basically, like what we're kind of discussing is that at all— It puts the onus and the effort on the student. But I had a great professor. I only had her for like two classes, she was one of my favorite professors. But at the start

of her class, she would do a survey so that we didn't have to, like, speak up in class. Because a lot of times teachers say, “Who has accessibility accommodations?” and you have to put your hand up, and you'd be singling yourself out, and people who wouldn't want to do that. And she said, "Regardless of whether you're registered with the accessibility office, do you have any accessibility needs? Do you have any concerns?" And it would be in the survey, and like it also said, like, "What's your preferred name? What are your pronouns? What accessibility needs? Are there any concerns that you have about this class?" And like, yeah, the onus is on the student, but you don't have to, like, go initiate that conversation or out yourself in any capacity. She was initiating, and she was laying the groundwork for setting up that dialogue.

Jaime: That's great. I wish I had that.

Josie: How do you think inclusive design practices can make education better?

Jaime: So many things. I think, you know, we all talked about this a little bit, but tailoring studies to unique interests. Kind of creating your own your own degree, your own study path. As well as something that includes cross disciplines and collaboration, combining different faculties. So like, even science and fine art. You know, having these conversations that would not typically happen. I think that's one thing.

Josie: For sure.

Mitali: Yeah, definitely. I think it would help to have the intersections, right. I mean, the more that we get to... sort of interact with students or professors from different fields and different backgrounds. And I think it depends on what level of education we're talking about, as well. Like, I feel like once you're at a graduation and post-graduation level, you would assume that you a little bit know where you're going. Whereas it would be harder to identify goals for someone who is very, very young. You have to, you know, come up with a lot of creative methods to do that. Yeah, I think tailoring a program according to your goal—like overarching goal—would be ideal, according to me. Like, so my goal at the end of this is I want to work on this one project, or I want to be able to learn how to do this. And whatever skills I need to get there, hopefully, the university or the program can equip me with those tools or those resources to get to my end point.

Josie: Mhmm.

Jaime: I also think it'd be interesting to look at post-secondary education models in Europe, ones that are free to attend. You know, cost is a big barrier for education post high school. I don't know the school specifically or how they operated, you know, I have to look into that more. And I also think we've touched a bit on this in class, these schools in Europe are maybe more tailored studies, and they're free to attend.

Josie: Yeah, cost is a huge barrier, right.

Caleb: Cost definitely. And I also think, like, the thing that I love most about open education and open education resources—and obviously I'm not the resident expert here, that's Josie *[laughter]*—but just kind of the sharing of knowledge, in a sense that knowledge does not have to exist or be captured in one way. Like I was reading a survey and report of graduate students and professors, and the majority of them have at least one parent who has a PhD. And there's like insights into the education system and participating in post-secondary education that you're not going to have in terms of its culture, and also the understanding of its materials and the way it works, that if you don't have that knowledge, like I don't have that knowledge, my parents don't have post-grad degrees. We always talk about the accessibility of journal articles and learning materials in terms of their accessibility for disability and needs, but also, the concept of plain language and understanding knowledge. I think that's like the biggest opportunity for open education resources is just giving more people access to knowledge that is not paywalled and is also at different levels of knowledge scaffolding. Because journal articles can be like so, so painful when you want to learn about topic or get into it. And a lot of the time, it's easier to read and start at these, like, simplified blog posts. But like, there's somewhere in the middle that you can meet with open education and making it more inclusive in the sense that getting more people into different topics.

Josie: I think you've made great points, both talking about like for first generation students, post-secondary is like such a *system* in that it's like, you have to learn how to navigate it and how it's structured, and who to talk to, and like what kind of supports are available that, like if you don't have those support networks that can help guide you through that, that's a huge barrier for students who are first generation. And talking

about paywalled articles and more access to information, but also more like public facing scholarship, where the goal is to make knowledge more accessible in all of those different ways. Like not behind a paywall, written in plain language, actually relevant to people outside of academia, digitally accessible, like can be worked with assistive technologies, those are all part of it.

Jaime: But a lot of times during the early part of the project and literature review, finding these journal articles, and be really excited about them, and then just... just not comprehending because it's such scientific— Yeah, I guess... I don't know the type of language. But it's quite difficult to understand, and you have to, you know, review multiple times. And so, I'm trying with my MRP to make it very plain language, also something I'm comfortable with writing as well.

Josie: Yeah, it's such a skill, right? Like you get people who do academic writing all the time. And they have such a hard time writing in plain language. Like it's... both of those things are skills.

Caleb: Because I think it's shown itself to be a very large problem. Like, with dissemination of information and knowledge surrounding COVID. And people's understanding of how it works and the dangers it poses, because so much of it is written in academic language and scientific language and then disseminated through journalists who are trying to—and like, I know there's science journalists and whatnot—but I think that's perhaps one of the problems with it. And like trying to explain to my family about like, "Well, they're saying a different thing every day. It's changing. They keep saying different things." I'm like, “You're watching like, science and academia happened in real time, like, probably for the first time in your life.” We're not used to that, like as a society, like we don't have... it's a completely different world.

Josie: Yeah. It's so interesting to see the new ways people are sharing information. Like I've seen so many great TikTok videos explaining how vaccines work that are hilarious but also make so much sense.

[Laughter]

[Theme music]

Josie: If you want to connect with any of the guests today, you can connect with each of them on LinkedIn by searching their names. So you can search for Mitali Kamat, Jaime Hilditch, and Caleb Valorozo-Jones. You can also find Caleb on Twitter @qrnrd and check out his website at https://calebvalorozojones.ca/. You can also checkout Jaime's website at https://jaimehilditch.com/, where you can learn more about her children's book.

You can learn more about this podcast at knowledgespectrums.opened.ca. On the website, you can find all episodes and transcripts, along with many other resources and information related to this project.

You can connect with me on Twitter @josiea_g and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #OKSPodcast

I record this podcast on the traditional and unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples.

The theme song is "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org and shared under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

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This has been Open Knowledge Spectrums. Thank you for listening.

—End of Episode—

Episode 5: Disability-Informed Open Pedagogy with Arley McNeeny and Samantha Walsh

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie Gray: Hello! Welcome to the open knowledge spectrums podcast, which explores questions of epistemic justice, or knowledge equity, in the context of open education and considers different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable.

My name is Josie Gray, and I am your host. This podcast is my final project for my Masters of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

In this episode, I speak with Arley and Samantha about their experiences as physically disabled instructors and where they see the potential for disability to be a positive disrupter in open education spaces and for students. We discuss the value of difference and making space for diverse bodies and minds, and the assumptions people make about who will be in a space or use a resource.

Arley Cruthers teaches Applied Communications at Kwantlen Polytechnic University and is passionate about open pedagogy, disability justice, and open education. She is the creator of the OER textbook *Business Writing for Everyone: An Inclusive Guide to Workplace Communications* and is just finishing her term as the Open Education Teaching Fellow at KPU. For her work in inclusive approaches to open, she received an Excellence in Open Education award from BCcampus. Arley has an MFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has also published several novels.

Samantha Walsh is a scholar and activist. She is currently a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Toronto-OISE in the department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Social Justice Education, formerly Sociology and Equity Studies. Her doctoral research is in interpretive sociology with a focus on disability and social inclusion. She holds a master's degree in Critical Disability Studies from York University, and she completed her undergraduate degree in Sociology at the University of Guelph.

And with that, let's hear from Arley and Samantha.

[Theme music]

Arley Cruthers: My name is Arley Cruthers, and I teach applied Communications at Kwantlen Polytechnic. And before that—which is how I know Sam — I played wheelchair basketball. I was on the national team for, I think, seven years, went to the Paralympics. And yeah, definitely interested in open education. I've written an open textbook called *Business Writing for Everyone* that tries to take a more, sort of, story-driven, inclusive approach to a textbook. And yeah, interested in disability justice, open pedagogy, all sorts of things.

Samantha Walsh: My name is Samantha Walsh. I'm a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto-OISE. My program is social justice education, and my degree is going to be a PhD in sociology. My research looks at the inclusion of people with physical disabilities in Ontario, using Toronto as a case study. So specifically looking at like, what are we doing post AODA? And moving from inclusion and accommodation as a legal standard to a reflexive politic of difference, where we expected different bodies and different ways of being in the community, and it's not a big deal. And as Arley referenced, we met when we were in high school through wheelchair basketball. And then that has interesting significance because it was—I don't, I can't speak for Arley—but for me, it was my first experience of like peer support for disability, as well as an assemblance of disability pride and valuing my experience as a wheelchair user.

Josie: Thank you. And I was wondering what brought you both to open education, like early on, like, what was your introduction to open education?

Arley: Yeah, so my introduction was basically that I was teaching at University of Illinois. And then I graduated the height of the recession and took basically seven years off from teaching. And when I came back, I was like, "Okay, great. I'll just use the same textbook as I used before," and realize that that textbook had gone from like $40 or $50, to like $250. And so I kind of panicked and assigned something that was not great, and I had a student who had come to every one of my office hours and take the book and go read it, and then bring the book back. And I thought like, there's got to be a better— This is— The book doesn't even really reflect— Like a lot of business communication textbooks are very, like, really directive of like, "Here are the five steps to write a proper email." And I wanted something that was a bit more sort of process based. And so I thought that I would kind of write it myself, and then slowly realized that like a lot of other things that I were doing was open pedagogy and sort of hopped in to the community.

Samantha: My path was both as a student and also a professor. So I have taught a number of contracts at both the university and college level. And it's always been fascinating to me—well, someone else's experience might be different—often, when I show up, the expectation—both in the physical environment as well as the social—is not

that the person leading the class would be disabled. And it really gave me poise to think about like, who do we expect to show up as a teacher? Who do we expect to show up as a student? What happens when the person who shows up is not who we expect? And the idea of creating a more accessible, less elitist approach to access an education is something that I'm passionate and excited about, both like, professionally and personally. Additionally, some of the background, I think, in my interest to gravitate to, how do we manipulate the environment and the social context as opposed to change the person? Not only do I use a wheelchair, but I have a number of fairly significant learning disabilities. So I'm also very used to interacting with the idea that I do not perform "student" well. I am often late. I very much don't look like I'm paying attention. I use colloquial language when I lecture. So it's also from a selfish perspective in wanting to create a place for myself and be able to engage with material in different ways to suit my own learning needs. And I think too, there's also value in making manifest and highlighting disability in different ways of being within pedagogy. It's not always just able-bodied white men.

Josie: Yeah, absolutely. So last year, you were both scheduled to facilitate a session at the Festival of Learning titled "Disability and Open Education," which was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID. But in your session description, you say, and I'm going to quote this directly, "Conversations about disability and open education often focus on accessibility, which is framed as a process done for disabled students by abled instructors or instructional designers. Relatively little attention has been paid to the idea of disabled people as OER content creators, change makers, or disruptors." So I was wondering if you could expand a little bit on the intervention that you'd like to make here. And like, how you want to shift the conversations?

Arley: Well, actually, what's interesting is that I think our kind of original title was actually "Cripping Open Education," and it was changed to "Disability and Open Education." And I think it really sort of speaks to that, that language kind of hasn't yet come into the open education or that, that way of... sort of, thinking about disability hasn't really yet gained traction, even though the idea of cripping is a pretty, you know, in disability studies, you know, circles is sort of pretty well established. But the reason that I had, kind of had the idea for the session is that while we went to an open

conference, and besides your presentation, Josie, like, a lot of the presentations that are about accessibility were like, they were not in accessible rooms, they didn't have advanced copies, they didn't, you know, have sort of basic accessibility. And it really made me think about, what's the assumptions that are being made here? And it seemed like the assumption was the people who create the OER are abled, and the people who consume it are often assumed to be abled, and kind of accessibility is sort of this problem to be solved. That we have the small group of students who need it, and so we have to do it for ADA compliance. But there's just sort of this idea that— I hadn't seen a lot of attention paid to the idea of, you know, if we actually
sort of centre disability, centred disabled people as content creators, and kind of even reimagine the process of like creating open through the lens of disability. What sort of things would happen? And you know, I'm thinking of books like Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's book *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice,* Aimi Hamraie's work on like, crip time or slowness. So kind of shifting the focus about, you know, what would happen if we, rather than sort of assuming who the content creators are, and who the consumers are, made space for a different way of being, and rethought what assumptions are we making about who's in the room here?

Samantha: I concur with all of Arley's thoughts. it's probably why we decided to work together. One of the things I'm interested in to when we think about creating space for disability or disability perspective in the classroom, is also thinking along with Dorothy Smith, who writes about the concepts of standpoint theory, and the idea of insider knowledge. So the notion that what's understood as like the dominant or overarching view of the world is not always like the "one monolithic truth." That different experiences and different ways of moving through the world produce different ways of being, different knowledges, different perspectives. And really creating space and opportunity to celebrate those different perspectives, as well as legitimize those perspectives. So I think about like, not glorifying, busy or anxiousness. Or like, I don't have to test you to know your knowledge, like we could do something different. We could do like narratives, or write on our perspectives, things like that. And also shifting the idea of accessibility as something that needs to be, that there's a "norm" and then there's an "accommodation." As opposed to like, the classroom is a community and we

create space for the people who turn up in it. And so if that means we're having one less chair because there's a wheelchair user there, or you know, we're not using the blackboard because the prof is short, or in my case, also using a wheelchair. We need to disrupt this idea that disability is like a marginalized, limited thing that will only make appearances in the classroom occasionally, and when it does, it will be like best case scenario, something you can be taught to accommodate, worst case scenario, it will be like a burden. But rather thinking about disability as an open-ended category and a different way of moving through the world. And when I say open ended category, that's from a gentleman named Rene Gadacz who talks about like, it's a category that folks can enter in and out of, or like Tobin Siebers talks about, if we all live long enough, we'll all have the opportunity to be disabled. So the idea that like, this is not actually like a small minority, and this is a way of being that folks move in and out of, so it's best to create space for it in the classroom.

Josie: Mhmm. My introduction to disability and accessibility work in particular, was very much through technical like web accessibility standards. And like that was my understanding and conception of that space for a while. But being introduced to the social model of disability really kind of expanded, quite quickly, my understanding of that area. So I was wondering if one of you could provide people with an introduction to what the social model of disability is.

Samantha: The social model is the idea that the issues with disability come out of, not an individual's problems, or the way they move, but rather the way we've designed society. I like to use the example of the subway. The medical model of disability says, “I wish Sam could walk so she could take the subway. We teach Sam how to walk, then she can take the subway.” And the social model says, “Why don't we build a public transportation system that relies on being able to use the stairs?” Or why do we assume that everyone who comes into a room is going to need lights? Or how come there's only one way of opening a door. So the idea that we create the “average” or the expected body through both the environmental spaces we create, as well as the social spaces we create, so the social model is constantly looking at like the interactional part of disability. And the folks to read to learn more about that are Michael Oliver and Tom Shakespeare. And again, it's the idea of like, instead of the only narrative of disability being a medicalized

one, like Sam is disabled because of a birth injury. The social model says like, Sam uses a wheelchair, so how do we create so that there's always space for a wheelchair? And it creates more communal approach to disability rather than a medicalized individual one, where like, it's biology going wrong, or some sort of mishap.

Josie: Mhmm. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I think abled people, people who don't have a disability, often only understand disability as something that could be negative or a shortcoming. So I was wondering if you both could share, like, where's the potential for disability to be positive force or offer this critical perspective?

Arley: I mean, I think that, like my feeling about my own disability is basically that, like, it's one of many traits in my body, you know, like, it's kind of like a neutral force. But I think one of the really beautiful things about inviting disability into the conversation is that it draws attention to difference, I think in really interesting ways, and I think it disrupts assumptions in really interesting ways. So you know, Sam and I have often talked about how I got my start in teaching through coaching junior wheelchair basketball. And when you coach junior wheelchair basketball, because it's such a small population group of the 20 athletes, you could have, you know, ranges from age like six to 20, you could have different disabilities, height, sizes, strengths. And so, when you enter into that space, you learn right away to design for difference. If I go into that practice, and say, "Okay everyone. We're going to shoot at 10-foot hoops. Everyone's going to do the same activity," would just fundamentally not work. And so, you know, that logic, I think, is something that has really helped me in my career as a teacher in terms of not making the assumption of, "Okay, everyone's going to have the same skills, the same background. We're going to do the same things," but imagining how can we use that difference, you know, as a strength? How can we put people in positions to be successful? Because you know, this idea that I don't think students have ever really interacted with textbooks, especially, you know, if we're talking about that side of open, the way that instructors think. You know, I've had my students do these projects, where they— For example, we did one semester, the students work together to write a report about textbook barriers. And it was really interesting to me to see how they were using textbooks. Even when they bought textbooks, often they would go Google like, you know, a YouTube tutorial or something. So I think when you invite

disability and you invite difference in, you start thinking about how are people actually using this tool? And are they using it the way that I expect? And what do they actually need? And, you know, especially because open is so customizable. What is this group of student's needs? You know, that might be different from what another group of students need. So I think it, it sort of opens… invites really interesting questions.

Samantha: I like the idea Arley was talking about, about like disability just being like one of many character traits. Like, I think that's a really cool way to think about it. I've written papers before where I've lamented, like, you know, someday I hope that like, the refrain is not like, "Why do you use wheelchair?" but rather like, "Hey, cool wheelchair1" like, "Where'd you get it?" Or like, "Why did you pick that one?" As opposed to being like, "I'm sorry, you're using it." One of the positives—and Arley's kind of already touched on this—is the idea that it it makes manifest and to some extent normalizes difference. I also like the idea that like disability calls into question the fragility of all of our bodies. So I think that one of the things that has been really interesting for me, both in my own kind of personal journey and also teaching and engaging with post-secondary education, has been the idea that like, me existing in this space calls into question the idea that like, your body might be fluid, or it might change, or your situation might change. Or the student who is like "Ah man. Like, tests are hard," or "I'm tired." Like, this person isn't lying. Like these are legitimate pieces. Like there's not a mind-body dualism where we exist one or the other, like these are real pieces of legitimacy. So standing as a hallmark of difference and creating legitimate space to talk about, like, if you think your student is lying about being tired or not understanding, like, would you say the same thing to me? Like, would you be like, "No. You're not tired. You're fibbing." And so I think like I appreciate—on most days, I appreciate how disruptive my body can be to like, the taken for granted. And I like the idea that I often stand outside like cultural expectations. Like, I think… I think there's something really powerful to be a cultural disrupter. On the flip side of that, like, it can also be exhausting. And then one of the things I've been thinking about, as well, it's been fascinating. So I have a professional job. And one of the things that I've had to do for my professional development is, I'm taking a college certificate that is geared towards professionals. And I've been super fascinated by the fact that like, I didn't request any

accommodations, because why not. But all of the accommodations that have been extended to folks under the guise that they are busy professionals who have busy lives, are the same accommodations that I had to produce, like, massive amounts of paperwork in undergrad to receive. So the idea of like, it's no trouble to email a professor in this context and be like, "Hey, work went long. My assignment is going to be supes late"—I don't use the phrase "supes" in my professional life. *[Laughter]* And the professor to respond back with like, "No problem. I understand. like, it's been a busy time," or like, "Sorry, I had to take care of the kids." Like, these are all things that— Like it is assumed that everyone is busy. It is assumed that everyone is, you know, an active member of their family. And I think about like, I had a very good undergrad experience and was, for the most part, very well supported. But I still had to produce quite a bit of documentation to get those supports. And I know— I can think of at least twice where I emailed a professor being like, "The wheels came off. Like, I can't do this right now." And they've basically written back, "Well, life is hard. And like, you're here to learn that." And I think it's fascinating that like, we are able to accommodate hallmarks of disability if we understand them as being for a different reason. Versus, there seems to be a lot of concern about whether or not disability is a legitimate reason to do things differently. And I've just, it's been really fascinating. Like, I find it's far easier to get accommodations and make reasons for my lack of time management skills, as someone who is perceived as almost 40 and working in a professional capacity, versus when I was 21. There was a large focus on like, "You're going to suffer the consequences of your lack of executive function." My disability provides me with the opportunity to think deeply about these things. And I don't think that I would if I didn't have one.

Josie: Yeah, that's such an interesting observation. For the inclusive design program that I'm in, at least when we were in person, it was a, kind of like a hi-flex model. So you could attend in person or you could attend remotely. And the remote option was advertised as something for like, working professionals and to allow people outside of Greater Toronto Area to attend that program. But being able to attend online is a huge accommodation that disabled people have been trying to get for their education for a long time and have generally not been permitted, in a lot of those standard classrooms. Yeah, a great example of when those accommodations are made, and for what reasons.

Arley: I think it's really interesting to that, like, you know, I see sort of two sides of the coin of sometimes people make the case that say things like universal design for learning benefit all students, and that is erasing disability. And so therefore, we should only focus on sort of, like the needs of disabled students. But I think that, you know, you can both honor that, like, disabled people should be accommodated and deserve to be in that space. And also, that, you know, the ways that universities have traditionally been set up, don't work for a lot of groups, and doing some of these simple accommodations benefit everyone. You know, like, they benefit so many groups.

Samantha: Yeah. Snd part of the purpose of the presentation Arley and I wanted to do is to also think about like, also questioning like a bit of the pedagogy and the tools we use to track pedagogy. So, I had a story relayed to me by one of my friends who also works in post-secondary education, who talked about— She was really proud of herself, because there was no timed test in her course, so you can take as long as you wanted to finish your exam. And a student with a disability came to her and said, “You know, it's still not fair because I'm going to use the full three hours to do this, and my friend who also takes three hours, is just going to use the full three hours, to once they're finished writing, they're going to go through and edit, they're going to find different things.” She was like, like it takes the stress off, because they don't have to, you know, get a doctor's note and provide a letter from the accommodation's office. But like, it's never going to be even. And at that point, like, I think if we're looking for like, performing social justice and education, we also need to start to think about not just how can we create a level playing field, but like, maybe we shouldn't burn the playing field down, maybe we should change how we do things. We need to find better ways to perform knowledge and engage with people from a pedagogical perspective. We're interested in structural justice. I don't have a lot of great ways to do that other than, like, differentiated instruction. In the classes that I've taught, I've always tried to give people the option of like, “you can write a test. You can write an essay.” Things of that nature.

Josie: Right, giving people more options to actually do something that plays to their strengths, rather than everyone having to do the same thing, recognizing that equality is not the same as equity. So you mentioned earlier about how your original title for the session was about cripping open education. So could you talk a little bit about what does

it mean to crip something? And like how you think that concept can disrupt or shift our understandings and approaches to open education and open pedagogy?

Arley: Yeah, so I think in our sort of proposal, we use the Hutcheon & Wolbring's definition, which defines cripping as "A verb to describe a process of critique disruption and reimagining, that's deployed and redeployed for political purposes as a way to reimagine conceptual boundaries, relationship, communities, cultural representations, and power structures." I think we've touched on a lot of, sort of, how we're using cripping, but basically, as a way, you know, thinking about the open community, is how can we use disability as a way to, you know, think about making more spaces for different types of bodies, different types of brains. You know, first if we're designing textbooks and open pedagogy assignments, that are still predicated on the assumption that there's like, one way of moving through the world, or one way of interacting with the text, you know, it has to be reading or it has to be kind of dense, you know, paragraphs. Often, we can reproduce norms. Or if we're saying, "Okay, we have to publish on this schedule," or, you know, "We have to use this type of language." Inviting disability in really does disrupt a lot of systems, you know, you begin to think about grading, you begin to think about your workflow, you begin to think about who you're inviting in, and how you're compensating them. And, yeah, so rather than viewing accessibility as like, kind of a one-way street, or you know, thinking about expanding the conversation using disability to look at, like, the entire open community.

Samantha: Yeah, I would say like, if it lines up to some extent, although perhaps more politicized and more radical, with, like inclusive design, or concepts of universal design. But like, what I think stands out for me or like, differentiates it from those things, is cripping also is a reclaiming and like a... validating—that's that word—of the disabled body being like legitimate and one that should rightfully take up space.

Josie: Yeah, for sure. How does disability and openness inform and show up in your own teaching practices?

Arley: Well, I think disability has sort of been, you know, it both in implicit and sort of explicit ways. You know, I've moved through disability categories a lot through my life. So I started teaching when I walked on forearm crutches and used wheelchair. And

then I sort of reentered teaching again—I had a couple years where I could kind of pas as able bodied. And so I had a couple of years where I really was not very visibly disabled. And, you know, now I'm back to walking on forearm crutches. And I'm a lot more explicit about my disability. And so I think on sort of a basic level, I am not able to lecture. So I can't stand for more than like 20 minutes. I've always had to look for a different way to do things. So I kind of got into experiential, you know, sort of more hands-on approaches. Both because I came from a coaching background, where that is how you coach. And then also, because I just couldn't do it, right. Like, I can't stand for 60 minutes, so I'm not going to just stand and then talk at you. So I think my disabled body sort of informed my pedagogy early on in really interesting ways.

I think now, I am trying to be a lot more intentional about actually claiming identity as disabled. I sort of realized based on some of the conversations I have with Sam is that, you know, my body doesn't really critique systems in the same way that Sam's does. You know, like, I don't show up in a wheelchair. I have to, especially when I was teaching before I went back to using forearm crutches. You know, I'm tall, I can reach things, I don't really disrupt that space. And so I've tried to be a lot more intentional about talking about my disability to students, and really accessing, trying to access, accommodations, and thinking a lot more about how I can invite other disabled— like how to make it easier on the next disabled instructor who comes after me.

But, you know, I think that a lot of my teaching practice is about— I think I, you know, I already gave the example of starting my introduction to pedagogy really being from coaching, and being about trying to accommodate and make a practice, where students from a wide range of backgrounds, and abilities, and ages, and stuff, could thrive. But I also think that disability kind of shows up, in the sense of—A lot of the principles of Universal Design for Learning I sort of was doing accidentally. And then when I learned that there was actually a word for it, then you can actually access a community of people who are doing it, and you can be more intentional. It's not just like, “Oh, I've noticed that when I give students options in terms of assignments, they produce richer work.” You can actually be like, “Oh, other people have been working in this space for a really long time. And I can, I can learn from that.” But yeah, I think that it's connected to my experience with open, in the sense of really being cognizant of the

time pressures that my students are under, and feeling like, if we're going to do something, like, let's try to make something that's meaningful to students. And let's try to figure out together, what's meaningful, and what we want to do here, and how we can show our work in the best way. Because I have definitely had spaces in academia where, you know, my experience was about sort of trying to normalize myself rather than, be like, "Hey, this is what I need." And because I can pass as able bodied in certain spaces, it's very easy to sort of normalize and mask and be like, “No, no. I'm— It doesn't impact me at all." Now, I'm trying to be more explicit about how it does.

Samantha: Could you just repeat the question?

Josie: Yeah, no problem. The question was, how does disability and openness inform and show up in your own teaching practices.

Samantha: So it does so by default, for the most part. So Arley pointed out that I don't necessarily have a choice to be able to pass. And much like Arley, by virtue of the fact that I can't do a lot of the like, really traditional things that teachers do, I've had to find different ways to make things manifest or make things happen. And I have been successful in this. I have also failed spectacularly. But one of the things that it has really made salient to me, is that my experience of teaching becomes incredibly symbiotic and more community based by the fact that, because I don't show up in normative ways to be an expected teacher, where I have the most success is when I am able to work with students and we've all collectively agreed, that like, I will be the teacher, regardless of what supports I need. And it's been really interesting to me to have that. And in some ways, it creates a really accessible learning environment for my students, because I'm able to ground that in my own lived experience of like, “I'm different. So like, I appreciate how like, this could be hard for you or this could happen.” It's also like from a positive perspective created really, really rich kind of conversations. In particular, I'm thinking of—I taught sociology of mental health for a while, and I used the social model and inclusive design principles to talk about, “Is it important that we all think and act the same? Or like, have we oriented ourselves such that you need to be able to wake up at 8am and work seven hours to survive?” And like, is that where the problem is? And it was super interesting with mental health—and I think, hopefully, there'll be a

point where someone is listening to this and this won't be true—a lot of students were somewhat bewildered by the idea that like, you could just think, or be, or feel, differently, or be erratic, and that that might be okay. But then when I was able to be like, "How many people here would be like, 'We should never build the ramp'? Or like, 'Accessible parking is silly'?" And everyone was like, "No, like, ramps for everyone. Accessible parking everywhere." And then I was able to be like, "You know, how does that translate into like supporting someone with an invisible disability? Or supporting someone who identifies as having a mental health diagnosis?" So just even in grounding my pedagogy and creating space, I think is how it shows up in my own teaching. I've talked about differentiated instruction, like I do that both for the benefit of my students, but I've also done it for the benefit of myself. So marking is often overwhelming for me. So if there's the option to do group presentations or YouTube videos, I can mark those things faster than I could like a 100-page essay. I like to mark things online, where I have access to spellcheck and grammar check, because the like significant learning disabilities, if I had to do it with like pen and paper, I don't know that it would translate as well. So again, like my own accommodations create supports and differences for my students.

Josie: Mhmm. So you've kind of both touched on, like, one potential here is to make space for more diverse and pluralistic ways of knowing, and to actually bring that into the classroom, and to make that valid. Could you maybe expand a little bit more about what that would look like?

Arley: I mean, I can expand like, in my, in my sort of own practice, a lot of my pedagogy involves, I guess, as Sam said, sort of offering multiple ways of accessing, you know, materials. A lot of it also involves collaboration with students and really working with students to say, "Okay, what do we all need to be successful here?" Like, what are the, what are the things that are going to help us learn, in this community, this moment, this group of students. And I also think with my work and kind of creating open textbooks, the nice thing about doing some of the open pedagogy projects where I'm co designing with students, is that it also helps me kind of test my own assumptions. So for example, my students this semester are creating—we decided that we want to create an instruction book, because it covers a lot of the learning outcomes of the class. And it was

interesting to sort of see it evolve, where I had sort of thought initially it would be a kind of a more traditional, like, everyone's going to kind of write on the same topics. But it was interesting to see the project emerge, and how students really wanted to create lessons that they had learned from the pandemic. And so we actually turned that into an alternative assignment where they could write reflection letters to their pre-pandemic selves and reflect on what they learned and why. And you know how some of them—even though I hadn't explicitly said, like, I had expected to get a bunch of letters in a written format—many of them produced videos, some of them produced cartoons. Like really, really kind of making space for that beautiful work and giving students permission to… That they have some agency and that they can transform learning. You know, I think sort of on the basic level as well, with my textbook, is trying to involve student narratives and really centre disabled people as well. So I have tried really hard in my open textbook to de-centre whiteness specifically. So you know, if I am adapting something, I'm trying to take out sort of the more like, "We have to learn ethos, pathos, and logos." And, you know, make space for different types of scholars and the scholars from outside the Academy. I got a grant to work with someone from the Kwantlen Nation to share about how she uses the seven teachings of the Kwantlen Nation in her business practices. So really trying to kind of disrupt what a textbook is supposed to be, and think hard about what knowledges I am valuing, and which ones I'm upholding. And like, I'm also making room for the fact that I'm not perfect, like, I try to talk a lot about failure. And, you know, times when it's like, "Oh, I gotta get this textbook thing done, I got to teach it," and looking back and being like, oh, shoot, I actually included tables there. And that's not a super accessible format. I need to go back and fix that. So, you know, I think a lot more attention to thinking about failure and making space for failure, and making space for— the learning might not happen in the step and the ways that I expected to happen. So it might not happen in 13 weeks, we might need an incomplete contract to extend it. It might not happen in the middle of the semester, but it might happen towards the end. Like just thinking—trying to be willing to disrupt systems.

Samantha: Yeah, I tend to agree with a lot of that. I think for me, too, like the recognizing that inclusion and accessibility aren't necessarily going to be a destination.

Like it's constantly going to be in flux, depending on, like, who shows up to the classroom.

Josie: Mhmm. Absolutely. Arley, do you want to share a little bit about the UDL project that you're working on?

Arley: Yeah, so I am working with Lilach Marom and Seanna Takacs. Seanna Takacs is a UDL specialist, and they're both wonderful colleagues of mine. And so we are working on—there's a lot of UDL guides that are kind of, "Here's how you implement UDL." And we wanted to take more of a narrative approach. So our resources going to first foreground the experience of disabled students. You know, I think that often— When BCcampus hosted that Studio20 and I had hosted a panel of disabled students talking about their experiences. And, you know, when you uplift the voices of disabled students as experts and learners who are navigating these systems that are hostile to them, I think it really, you know, you can really learn a lot from their expertise. You know, that students are able to talk about all of the things they do in order to thrive in these systems that aren't necessarily set up for them. You know I think that's an important perspective to have. So the goal is that the students will be— We'll be paying them to sort of share these stories in whatever format is accessible for them. They can kind of create whatever they want. But we're also going to be sharing stories of student teachers who are navigating UDL to just give that richness as sort of, what challenges are they coming up with? How is their understanding shifting? Really taking a kind of story approach. And we'll be building it in a WordPress site, so that people can move through it in the way that is right for them. So you can do it as kind of a traditional module. But you can also say, like, I just want to read the stories about from the students, or I really want to just read the student teacher story. So that the idea is to again, complicate, you know, who we centre as an expert? That, you know, we could centre students as experts and value that expertise.

Josie: Yeah. I'm really excited to see what you— what you all pull together. I think it really fills a gap, for sure. So maybe as a final question to wrap us up, given your experiences, what are your dreams for education to make it more inclusive?

Arley: I mean, I think my main dream is, is just getting people to really think about what systems need to be disrupted. You know, I think, obviously, the pandemic highlighted a lot of these systems. And it's been really interesting to see some faculty kind of going in the direction of, "Okay, I've— You know, I'm going to be more sort of compassionate. Or I'm going to, you know, take up these UDL principles. Or I'm going to rethink how I do it." And others just really feeling that fear and trying to say, "No. We have— I have to do exactly what I did face to face in this online environment. It has to be exactly the same. And I have to use proctoring software." And, you know, really kind of looking for that control. Like I think it... My hope is that we are able to make systems that are more equitable. And like, I think often a lot of the conversations about teachers should do this to students. But, you know, it is often, you know, how do we do this without burning people out? You know, how do we do this in a sustainable way? You know, I think a lot about, for example, we don't have a degree in applied communications at Kwantlen. And so everyone I teach are students where it's either an elective or it is a required course that's outside of their major. And so when you are the person who is giving the extensions and providing, you know, the feedback and the flexibility and the patience, you're doing that in the system that is often where other professors are more inflexible. And so you're taking kind of the full burden. You're the one who students are coming to when they have mental health crises, or... And so, how do we sort of spread that load out? Because right now I see that there's a small percentage of faculty who are doing a lot of this work, and often they're precarious. How do we spread that load out? How do we value that work? How do we value the care work that's going on in higher education? How do we compensate faculty for this work? How do we do it in tenure? How do we make it so that it is, you know, supporting adjunct faculty? Like I think that right now is sort of, the focus is like, you can do this in your own teaching practice. But I would love, my dream would be to move to a system where some of the systemic barriers are removed, rather than me just having to be like, "Sure, here's an extension. Here, you can do this, you can do that." So that it's more equitably distributed.

Samantha: That was really good, Arley. That was very eloquent. I would really like to see like a disruption of like, stereotypical or traditional elitism in post-secondary

education. Snd I think open education and the themes of this podcast really speak to that, that disruption. And it's interesting that you're from the inclusive design master's program, because one of the things that was really impressive to me about how that program is designed, although it may have changed, is they're not necessarily looking for someone with like, the highest grades or a master's degree. They're looking for someone who is passionate about design and has had an interesting life and like, cool things to share with their community. And I, I like that disruption of stereotypical elitism, because I think there's such value in welcoming other voices to the discourse, who are not necessarily going to perform, like, "student" well, or like the hallmarks of someone who is like, quite academic or book-smart. I think about for myself, like, I made it and it was good. But I had a lot of professors and teachers who were really engaged with like, the ideas I was thinking, and were able to, like, not focus on the fact that my grammar was terrible til I did my masters, or like, I still can't spell, and I'm gonna be 15 minutes late every class. And I think about— there are so many people who just never get to engage with all of these emancipatory concepts and ideas or think about their disability differently because they don't perform "student," or because they don't... There's an individual I'm thinking of an Ontario, whose sole reason for not being able to access post-secondary education is that the amount of work they would have to do to coordinate public transportation to the school they go to is it's too much, like it's, it's a suburb of Toronto. So, he has to take the suburb paratransit to the Toronto paratransit to the other side of Toronto where there's another paratransit system. And it's just, it's too much. And I think there's such value in disrupting that elitism. So more people can think deep thoughts about society and how we organize things. And that's, that's I think, what is most exciting about open education and some of the work that Arley and I do.

[Theme music]

Josie: In the show notes I have linked to Arley's OER called *Business Writing for Everyone* and also a recent piece that she published in *Voices of Practice*, which is titled "An Incomplete History of My Teaching Body" which I would highly recommend.

You can learn more about this podcast at knowledgespectrums.opened.ca. On the website, you can find all episodes and transcripts, along with many other resources and information related to this project.

You can connect with me on Twitter @josiea_g and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #OKSPodcast

I record this podcast on the traditional and unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples.

The theme song is "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org and shared under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

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This has been Open Knowledge Spectrums. Thanks for listening.

[Music fades out]

—End of Episode—

Episode 6: Pulling Together – OERs to Indigenize Post-Secondary with Dianne Biin

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie Gray: Hello! Welcome to the Open Knowledge Spectrums podcast, which explores questions of epistemic justice, or knowledge equity, in the context of open education and considers different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable.

My name is Josie Gray, and I am your host. This podcast is my final project for my Master of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

In this episode, I talk with Dianne Biin about a project she led to create a series of open, professional learning guides to support Indigenization in post-secondary institutions. Dianne describes the work and collaboration that went into bringing those guides to fruition. She also discusses the decision to publish these guides under an open license and how they thought through what license they wanted to apply. And she also offers a critical perspective on openness in the context of Indigenous knowledges.

Dianne is from the Tsi Del Del community in Tsilhqot'in territory. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Simon Fraser University (1994) and a Master of Education degree from University of British Columbia (2016). Dianne has worked as a community development and revitalization consultant, an Indigenous event planner, and facilitator and educator. She worked at Camosun College from 2011 to 2020 as an Indigenous faculty member and Indigenization Coordinator. Dianne was also the project manager for the BCcampus open textbook series *Pulling Together: Guides for Indigenization*. She is currently the Manager of Indigenous Education and Engagement at Selkirk College.

And with that, let's hear from Dianne.

[Theme music]

Josie: There we go. So would you start by introducing yourself?

Dianne Biin: Absolutely. My name is Dianne Biin. I am Tsilhqot'in on my mother's side and Slovenian on my father's side. Our traditional territory's neighbors are the Wuikinuxv, Nuxalk, and Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw to the west. The Dakelh to the north. The Chilcotin to the east, and the St'át'imc to the south. And so it's those neighbors and those alliances that has really guided the work that I do. And currently I am the manager of Indigenous education and engagement at Selkirk College, and just started here, just under a year ago. So that's me.

Josie: Thank you. And the main reason I want to talk to you is because the work you did a few years ago managing the creation of the *Pulling Together* series, would you provide an overview of that project?

Dianne: Yeah, that was probably one of those projects where I was super naive going into it. [*Laughter*] As it was like-- It was a project that was funded actually through the Ministry of Advanced Education, and BCcampus came forward as the organization that could help kind of steer and guide the project. So I was seconded, I was hired on secondment from Camosun College. And the project was meant to be about a year and a half—or about a year—to create five distinct, openly licensed guides to help different segments of post-secondary education institutions to indigenize their practice and indigenize *how* they work with one another. It involved a provincial advisory committee of powerful Indigenous educators and women. And they've all been involved in education for decades. And so I was so fortunate to be part, to have this wealth of advice and guidance and support. And they were working committee, they weren't just an advisory committee. So they were really getting their hands into creating aspects of what the guides could look like. We had a— we had a funding letter that said, "Hey, you can create five guides. Here's the funds. You've got a year to do it." And so from there, we created a vision of what the project could look like. We looked at what the guides could be. We realized we needed a sixth guide, and that was the *Foundations Guide*. That was some foundational knowledge that we felt a lot of people in post-secondary still didn't have a grasp on or had been looking at different aspects. And so it was a chance for us to just pull that type of information together. The guides were developed over that year. And then it took us about another year... just under a year. So it was just about a year and a half to two years for the entire project. There was a lot of people coming in and out of the project. I think at one point I counted, I was working with about 40 people.

Josie: Wow. That's huge.

Dianne: Yeah, it was huge! I mean, that included the advisory committee, that included the editors, that included all of the authors, and it included people that I was consulting with to gain bits and pieces to help support the guides. And working with the BCcampus crew, because you guys were really instrumental in helping do the quality control on the guides, once when they were edited and ready to put up onto the Pressbooks platform. I really needed your guys' expertise to try to bring those guides to life. And so, just the accessibility and the ways that H5P could be incorporated into the

guides. And that was work that also helped create more quality of the guides themselves. And the fact that these guides could be read online, or they could be downloaded right onto somebody's learning management system and adapted and modified. So a lot of faculty and teachers really appreciated that approach.

When we were starting to build the guides, it was hard to figure out how to contain them all. What was the framework we're going to use to make sure that all of the guides seemed consistent but were all very distinct? And so we spent time looking at Indigenous frameworks, and one of the committee members, Janice Simcoe, came forward and suggested that we use the Indigenized integral model. And so it's looking at the culture of things. And so it's looking at our intentions, it's looking at our behaviors, how we work together in community, and how our networks and how our systems work. And so we took a look at that integral model and it was a nice bridge between an Indigenous framework, and a Western framework, and so we use that to create all the audience profiles for each guide. So those audience profiles meant in an Indigenized world, what are those skills and abilities that people will have? And so we created categories and statements under each of those areas, those four areas.

And then that was given to the writers, and so the writers— it was just a targeted call out to people, letters of interest came forward, we created small contracts. So writing teams were either a team of three or up to a team of eight. And so every single guide was developed differently. One was a writing sprint that happened over a weekend. Others were guides that were created over the span of about two to three months. Others were interview focused, so they would go out and interview folks and then come back and then build the guides. So that's the *Leader's Guide*. The *Frontline Guide* was, you know, four or five different faculty that just whenever they had time, off the side of their desks, they were putting content into the guides. And so for every writing team, there was different supports that I was providing. And at certain times, I would be ghostwriting a lot of the information based on what they were giving me and then giving it back to them to see if that was the messaging that they wanted, because I knew how busy they were. The generosity of the Indigenous scholars and the ally writers in this project was immense. And if it wasn't for them, you

know, spending four to six months to create these guides, then we wouldn't have what we have today.

One of the elements that I really appreciated in doing this project was the amount of collaboration. There's a lot of collaboration going on between the writers. I created wiki sites for all of them, but gave them access to their wiki
site. So the *Curriculum Guide* writers could see what the *Frontline Guide* writers were doing or the *Teacher's Guide* writers. So there was an ability for us to make sure that we weren't being that repetitive throughout each guide. And so if there were constructs that fit better in a different guide, then we could do the shift easily and make it seamless. The editors for the project were amazing. And they were amazing, because they were also working on editing the provincial curriculum, the Indigenous curriculum. So they were a great viewpoint for us to see what was being done in the K to 12 system, and the concepts, and then to make sure that those concepts carried through into the guides.

Josie: Wow.

Dianne: It was a lot of moving parts, and there were long days, like they were 15-to-16-hour days every once in a while. And it was a huge time sacrifice on my part to just kind of be available to everybody, whenever they needed some assistance. And sometimes it was just, "Hey, I'm trying to find this resource. Can you help me on it?" or other times, "Hey, can you help me find an image that is Creative Commons licensed for this section?" Okay, great, I can do that.

Josie: Yeah. Yeah, that sounds like a lot of work just to... pull all of those little parts together and to make it so people can stay connected and have that collaboration be successful.

Dianne: And it was a bit of a learning curve as well, because I had never really been involved in open education at that point. And OER's, and like, I didn't know the licensing regimes or anything. So it was nice to be trained on that focus. And then we spent time with the committee, so the committee also got that same information. And it was an opportunity for us to really think through, what is the licensing that we want to do? What is appropriate Indigenous information to share in these guides? And what's information that's not?

Josie: Right. Could you talk a little bit about those conversations?

Dianne: Yeah, certainly. I remember the committee meeting. We sat there for about two hours going through this, and it was thinking through... We want to make sure that the Indigenous information provided is representative of groups, that it wasn't a pan-Indian approach for the information that was to be shared, that we recognized, whomever contributed to these guides, that it was their knowledge and that it was being shared in a very specific context in a very specific way. And a good instance of that is actually the prayer that shared at the beginning of the *Leader's Guide*, and that prayer was shared to the writer from her uncle, who shared it on Facebook. And so in the Nuu-chah-nulth way, we explained what is the appropriate way of using that information and that knowledge. So it didn't fit the open licensing categories perfectly, but it did provide the way of how Indigenous knowledge can be shared in an open way. That there's common knowledges that we can share. A lot our specialized teachings and sacred knowledge wasn't part of the guides. And that was a bit of a balancing act, because there were some writers who, who had to think that through themselves as they were writing the content, you know, What's appropriate to share? What is mine to share? What is my community's teachings to share? And what is my nation's teachings that I can share? And so it wasn't just that individual writer's responsibility to make sure that the information they're sharing was appropriate. It it was them making sure that it was appropriate for their nation, and where they came from, and how they were trained. And that really came through in the *Teacher's Guide*, because everybody who was part of that writer's sprint all came with different teachings and different traditions, yet they all approach education in the same way. So we've found that commonality before we sat down to start doing the writing. And we spent a good half day just hearing our stories of why we're in education and what we hold important for education. Once we had that framework there, then we could start building what the sections could look like, and the writing teams went off and did what they needed to do. And it was a great way to see how we could come together in a good way over a short time.

Josie: Mhmm. Yeah, that sounds a really challenging balance of like being contracted to write something, but having to do that work of reflection and making sure what you're

sharing is appropriate. And not being able to just make that individual judgment, like it's much more—

Dianne: It is. Everybody had to situate themselves. They had to situate themselves before they could do the writing. They had to be very intentional with what they could share. And a lot of them who had already had a lot of scholarship writing, they then had to go back into their scholarly writings to figure out what is appropriate for me to share in an open context?

Josie: Right.

Dianne: And so they had to do that sift and sort on their own to figure out what was appropriate. And that happened a couple times were stuff was— because of the licensing of some of their scholarly writing, we couldn't use it in the guides. So we had to find a way to adapt it, or to try to figure out a way that they could rewrite it, so that it would be appropriate. And so that happened in a few instances. Snd that was okay, as long as we knew we had to do that. And so that's what I really appreciated about the open team at BCcampus, was that you guys were there to just answer those questions.

Josie: Right, all those tricky copyright things. [*laughter*]

Dianne: And even the licensing for the guides. We spent a quite a lot of time thinking that through. Because we were debating about ShareAlike, we thought about NoDerivative, we thought about NonCommercial. And we stayed away from the NoDerivative because our goal for these guides was to make sure that they're foundational so that anybody who wanted to come in and use these guides and make them relevant to their place, to their situations, could. So we couldn't do a NonDerivative licence. The ShareAlike is okay, but it meant you'd have to keep adding on things and keep that licensing the same. And we realized that, you know, there may be some that are okay with doing CC BY. And so it's like, okay, we need to be flexible on that. The NonCommercial aspect is a very kind of honor-bound type of licensing, where it's just the community kind of tracks the community. I have had commercial companies who have used information from the guides, but they recognized the sources. So it's like, okay. So there's trickiness in how to do that, but we wanted to make sure there was something there, and that it wasn't just a CC BY to just make people aware that this

information's not here to be ripped apart and used in bits and pieces, that the information is a foundation piece. And that whatever you add to this guide to make it meet your needs has to keep that spirit of integrity in it as well.

Josie: Mhmm. Yeah, thank you for sharing that. It's great to hear the careful thinking that went into actually picking the specific license on these guides.

Dianne: Yeah. It was a couple of sleepless nights to figure that one out. [*Laughter*]

Josie: So was it the Ministry that said they should be open?

Dianne: It was the advisory committee. Yeah. Everything went through the committee for approvals. And the Ministry was actually part of the advisory. So they kind of were there. And they were learning this as well, because usually it's, you know, a "Province of British Columbia" publication. And this was new ground for them as well to create openly licensed products. So it was a nice way to kind of do that shared learning throughout the project.

Josie: Mhmm. Did you come across any resistance among the people you were working with around the open licenses?

Dianne: It wasn't really resistance. It was just more being careful.

Josie: Right.

Dianne: And for First Nations and for Métis and for Inuit scholars, and for communities, there's always been instances where our information has been appropriated. *[Josie: Mhmm.]* And copyright is held by somebody else on our information that is not—doesn't fit within Canadian copyright, doesn't fit within copyright laws. Because a lot of our teachings and our learnings and our engagement in Indigenous pedagogy is based on traditions. And it's based on shared teachings, and that those teachings go back and forth generations. And so for us to do what we do, we have to recognize where things come from. And so citation for us is a bit different, because we have to recognize how we heard it, who we heard it from, when we heard it, and how we heard it. Because things change in contents, things change across time. And so it was nice for some of the writers to be able to just figure out a way that they could make it

work. And so they were very good on their citation management. And at the time, the APA citation guides were undergoing changes, because there was a wonderful publication that had come out from Gregory Younging, on how to write about and for Indigenous peoples. And our editors had taken his training before he had passed. And so they had those concepts built in when they were editing to make sure that they weren't infringing on anyone's abilities and ways of writing, that they wanted to make sure that the information was shared in a good way. And in a good way means that we acknowledge our responsibilities to make sure that that information goes forward. And that when it goes forward, that those who receive it, receive it in its entirety. And so that's the difference between an Indigenous frame of acknowledgement and citation and copyright that's a bit different. So there were some writers who really had to dial it back, and there were other writers who were very open themselves, and really wanted the information out there. And that has always been a bit of a problem with some of the ways that we write and we get published in books. But it's hard for folks to access those writings. Because if the library doesn't have the license to access it, it's hard to get to. So with openly licensed guides, it was a nice opportunity for some writers to just stretch those boundaries.

Josie: Mhmm.

Dianne: I think the only resistance that we came through, when we were developing the guides... was trying to figure out... the flow. And it was the writers who were sharing the information, but the advisory committee was also taking a first look at those drafts. And so the advisory would have their own viewpoints of what the information should be, and sometimes that differed from what the writers had presented. So it was my job to go back and forth and have those dialogues with writers and with the advisory committee to say, "Okay, what is it really that that's not sitting right with you?", because they come from their own traditions as well and their own teachings. So there was a lot of dialogue that went back and forth. And so that resistance was just an opportunity to just talk through a lot of items. It was also the opportunity to bring in different ways of doing things. So we had worked with Métis Nation BC, who is a provincial organization with very minimal people power. And so, we had to be able to bring in graduate students when we could, to help fill some gaps and make sure that things could get done on time,

and so that took a while. And sometimes when you're doing that, some of the communication breaks down. So it was hard to try to keep track of what was going on at certain points. But in the end, things came together, we could go back and forth with folks, and it was just a nice way to feel that their voices were represented in the guides. And that the committee had met their responsibility to make sure that the flow of the guides and the content in the guides were relevant and respectful.

Josie: Mhmm. This wasn't a question that I had written down, but I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about the title of "Pulling Together." And that theme that runs through all of the guides.

Dianne: Yeah, pulling together. That was that was me kind of asking the Universe for help. And I was asking for help because I was trying to figure out what a metaphor could be that could pull all the guides together. We had an idea for all the guides should be, but we needed a common element. We needed a common story. And that story could then pull all of those pieces together. And so the *Pulling Together* series is everybody who's within a canoe. So we created a canoe story. And when you're in a canoe, it was something that a lot of people who I was talking with at the time—because I was going out and doing a lot of consultation with people, How does this look? How does this feel? Are there elements that are missing? Is this language that isn't appropriate? Or is appropriate? Or should we strengthen some of this?— and so everyone said, it's as if we're... We're trying to do this together. And so the analogy of the canoe came forward, and so that each guide is a person within that canoe. And that canoe, on either side, has Indigenous and non-Indigenous people pulling together, that we have people who are steering us, and that we have the youth who are looking forward to keep us going. And the stars are what guide us. So those are the values and principles. So whenever things were going astray, or getting off track, we could go back and look at the stars, and say, "Look, these are our values and principles, we're holding to these guides. Let's take a look and re-shift some of this." And so it was just a nice way to go back to that analogy and that metaphor to just keep everybody on task, and to keep everybody thinking through their teachings on what it means to be canoe people. And the day that the canoe came to mind, it was a week, a full week of meetings where I was all over the place. And every place that I went to, I kept seeing northwest coast canoes. I was sitting in a

boardroom: the lighting fixture, northwest coast canoes. And so it was like, "Ah. Okay, Universe. I think I heard the message." [*Laughter*] Let's try with the canoe and see how that feels with people. So drafted up a quick little story, thought it through, thought about that Indigenization are the waters that were navigating through, and that those waters aren't consistent. And that was the underlying message for all of those guides, is that the work that we do in Indigenization, it's new, it's different. And there are a times what works for one institution is not going to work for the other institution. So it's very individualistic. Because of the places that we're doing our work in, there's over 36 distinct First Nations just within BC. And we've learned over time, that those perspectives, and those voices, and those realms of self-determination, are different for each nation. And so we wanted to make sure that the waters that we're navigating recognize that. So at a certain point, we had to build levels of Indigenization. So where are people at in how they Indigenized? And what holds people back? What are those back eddies or those cross currents that throw us off track? And how do we get back on track? So that was the metaphor. It kept everybody on task. It kept everybody focused. And it helped the creative process.

Josie: Yeah, it's great to see how that title was actually a huge part of the work going forward. And yeah, thank you for sharing that.

Dianne: You're welcome.

Josie: And what has the response been like for these guides?

Dianne: The response has been really favorable. You're always scared when you do these type of training materials, that it'll just sit on a shelf somewhere, or sit on a website that goes null and void after a year. And that nobody uses it, nobody really connects with it. And people connected with it. The writers, they felt— because of the generosity that we were building within writing these guides, and their collaboration, and they could see their voices in the guides—a lot of the writers really appreciated the content that was shared. And so they wanted to share it outwards. And so a lot of them were sharing it at professional events, at conferences, in their institutions with other faculty members. And it was really nice to just see that type of sharing going on. And then the sharing went across Canada. And we had done a couple of presentations

at CICan as we were developing the guide. So CICan is Colleges and Institute's Canada. And so they do national education conferences every spring. So we shared the process for building the guides at that conference, and a lot of Indigenous educators from across the country were like, "I love this model, this is a great way to do it! You know, that's always been our problem is how to how to create a product where we have so many distinct voices." And that's always been a challenge in the work that we do. So it was nice to sit with them and to think through, you know, what would work, what wouldn't work, what are some of their challenges and going forward and managing this type of project? So it was nice to share our project model. It was great to share our project charter. We created an iterative process diagram, and we made sure that all of those project materials were on a public repository, so anyone could go in and download those, and just use those as a visual reference. So that's the SOL*R BCcampus site.

Josie: Mmm, okay.

Dianne: Yeah. So, before we started building the guides, we wanted to make sure we did an environmental scan. So the environmental scans there, and the environmental scan showed, actually what's being done for cultural competency training already, across the 25 institutions. So it was nice to see where folks were at and where a lot of folks are struggling. So that was another way that we could then go back to those institutions who were struggling, and say, "Hey! We have this amazing resource, it's openly licensed. You can easily adapt it into your LMS (into your learning management system) and you can adapt it to your specific working relationships that you have with First Nations and Métis Peoples at your institution" So they were really appreciative of that. And so that sharing and that collaboration, and that gift giving—because at certain points, it felt like gift giving, that it needed to happen.

One of the things we had done after the guides were released was we did an honoring event for all of the writers who could come—because I was back at Camosun by this point. My secondment had ended. And we were just finalizing bits and pieces of the guide. So I was working 150% to do my job at Camosun and to help make sure that the guides could be completed. One of the things we wanted to do was do a ceremony, to really celebrate the release of the guides and to acknowledge the hard work that

everybody had done. And a lot of people were very generous with their time to do this project. They weren't compensated a lot. And a lot of people were doing this off the sides of their desks, at night, over weekends, during holidays. And so we just wanted to really acknowledge that hard work that went into creating a unique piece of writing. And so we did that honoring ceremony. So a lot of us is some traditional gathering, we did a lot of jarring and canned salmon, and some berries, and some baking. And we just created these little care packages for all of the writers who could join us for lunch. And so during that lunch, we shared a meal together. The Elders at the Elders Program at Camosun really appreciated and thanked everybody who was part of the guides. And then we gave these gifts. Just to say thank you for nourishing us, this is a chance for us to nourish you. And it was that act of generosity that I think also helped make writers feel more invested in the project, and that they felt this was theirs, and so that they felt comfortable sharing it outwards. And that was one of the realms of generosity in this project that was so powerful, and so rewarding, in spite of the exhaustion of making this project happen. It was just acknowledging that we're very generous people, and that we came together and we supported one another to make this happen.

Josie: Yeah, that's really lovely. So my last question is kind of generally about openness as a concept. Like what is your perspective on openness? And you can interpret that however you like, and if it's a concept that you find useful, or you see any limitations.

Dianne: This was a question that was asked of me a lot on how Indigenous knowledges could be within an open context. And so we really had to spend time thinking through, you know, what are those realms of Indigenous education that are important to share, that need to be done in an open way? So we really went back to the work of Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt on "The Four R's" and for us it was the five R's. Because relationship is key. And when I think of openness, I think of relationships. And what you can share in a relationship and what you do in a relationship, is openness in action. And how you build those relationships and build that trust, is figuring out what can be shared and what is sacred, and what is secret. And so when you look at Indigenous knowledges, there are realms of knowledge that can be shared within a community. There are realms of knowledge that are shared with in societies, or people who are specially trained, to hold that knowledge and to practice that knowledge in a safe,

respectful way. And so at certain points for openness, openness doesn't really go all the way across Indigenous knowledge systems. There are times where we're seeking knowledge and we receive it through dreams. So that's very individualistic. And that's not something that we can share openly, unless we are given that permission to do so from our Knowledge Keepers and our Elders.

And so it's recognizing that there are levels of openness. And that was my approach when I was taking this project, because open education, like I said earlier, was something new to me. And so I was still trying to figure it out. And I'm thinking, okay, OER is very westernized concept where, you know, everybody needs access to the information! It's like, yeah... but what's the intent? How is that information being brought together? How is that information being shared outwards? And then how can others use that information? And so in an Indigenous way of doing, you always have that intentionality in whatever you're sharing. And it depends, it depends on the audience, it depends on the time. And that really comes through in our language revitalization. Because there's such a desperate need for our languages to come back to a place of healthiness or... stability, I guess, more within communities, that it's hard for speakers to come forward and be open with that, because of what had happened in the past. And so for me, openness has also been influenced by colonization. And that at certain points, what we have shared openly has then been taken from us, and we can't get it back.

Josie: Right.

Dianne: I think of the wax cylinder recordings that were happening around the time of settlement, and the copyright on those is now sitting in other countries. And so it's our knowledge, but we can't even have access to it. And yet, at the time, it was being collected, because we were considered a dying species, and that we had to try to preserve them somehow. And it helped launch careers. So for me, openness— that was used in a bad way. The ethical side of it, the ethical space of openness, had never really been considered. And now that we have more and more Indigenous scholars and our ways are becoming more shared. That we're in a place now where we're safe, and we feel safe to share our knowledges, that we need to still have that caveat, that some things are open,

and some things are not. And when we mean open, it's some of the things we're sharing are our common teachings and our lived experiences. And there are other realms of this that are not on the table, and they should never be on the table. Because that knowledge makes the Nation what it is, and keeps it going, and it has for millennia. And so I wanted to make sure that when we were doing the project, that I would have individual discussions with writers and with the advisory committee on what we meant by open and what was off the table. To make sure that whatever was being shared that was of a personal nature, from the writers, that it was okay to be shared in an openly licensed product.

Josie: Yeah, thank you. Thank you very much for sharing. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

Dianne: I think what I like about the response to the guides, has been the individual conversations that have been happening across North America and across the globe. Even when we were doing the project. It was nice to have collaborators from New Zealand. It was nice to have conversations with researchers from Australia. And it was great to have these open conversations on how information can be shared respectfully and relevantly. And after those conversations happened, and then when we shared the guides back out it, it started this web, this network, this interconnected web of people who were, "I just discovered your guides the other week, and oh my god! They're amazing! You know, can you share with me? Can you—" And then it's like, “Okay, sure. I can do that. But more importantly, how do you see these guides helping you in the work that you need to do?" And "Okay, let's work that through, let's figure that out how it could work for you, and how you can adapt them to make sure it helps what you need to do." So there was some great conversations, and it was across disciplines. It wasn't just, you know, educators or administrators, it was across industries. So, you know, the healthcare industry, you know, folks are saying, "How can we adapt this to what we need to do?" And it was in the sciences, and it was wonderful to just spend time with people that just have these discussions. I've always tried to make myself available to people ever since the project ended, and ever since the guides have been released, because there's always people who are discovering the guides, still, and it's been two years now since they've been out there. It's always great to just hear that excitement in people as they're

like, "Ah! this is exactly what we've been looking for! And oh, my God, this is, you know, we needed this five years ago!" And I said, "Well, it's been out now for about two years."

[*laughter*]

Dianne: And they asked the same questions that you're asking, so I feel happy sharing it through this medium, because it's pretty much the same type of conversations that I have. And it is, you know, how do we keep how do we keep these guides authentic? And that really comes through in how you're going to license it? What's the type of information you're going to be sharing? How that information can be used and adapted? And who does it? That is a great conversation to have with allies. Because at certain points, there's a miscue on how they could see these guides could just, you know, throw it out to all of the faculty, "Here, these guides are amazing!" But you don't include the learning and the teaching to embed those guides into your institution.
And so it's really nice to, to use these as learning tools, and not just as a standalone publication. And so those are the conversations that I like having with folks. Because it changed them, when they read through the guides, it changed them. And they wanted to do that same type of process, that transformational type of work, in their institutions and with their organizations. Because there's also been nonprofits who have been gearing on to this. It's about relationship building, it's about creating shared learning space. And these guides are just a great way to start those conversations. At Camosun, we would take the *Teacher's Guide*, and we had reflection circles. So faculty would sign up—and these were faculty who had already done a lot of competency training on their own, or as part of what we offer at Camosun. So it was a chance to just do a dialogue circle after every single chapter in the *Teacher's Guide* and relate back to their practice. And so that's the gift of these guides, is that they're broad enough that anyone can read them. But they're also deep enough, so that people can gain the reflective teaching that they need from the content. And that was some of the, some of the learning activities that are included at the end of each chapter in each of these guides. People can go as deep as they want, or they can keep it at the surface level. It's just, what are they ready to receive at that point? And so for us, with the *Teacher's Guide* at Camosun, it was just a chance for folks to just feel in a safe, comfortable environment, to really share what they

teach. Because when you're teaching, you're all by yourself most of the time. Especially now that we're doing more and more online teaching. So it was a nice way for folks to just feel validated and what they were doing was appropriate and was the right path. That's what I appreciate about these guides, is it's really helped folks figure out their pathways on how to do the work in a good way. How to Indigenize not just themselves, but their department, their school, and their institution, so that it goes outwards and it comes back inwards. And that's the strength of these guides that has been slowly coming through, in whomever is discovering them and making them their own. There are others who just don't have the resources to do what they envision. And it's like, alright, start small. Let's just do, study groups, you know, use it as like a book club. Maybe, you know, go through like a couple of paragraphs at the beginning of each of your department meetings, things like that. Like there's different ways that you can take bits and pieces of those guides and just build it into your daily practice.

[Theme music]

Josie: In the show notes, I've included links to all of the *Pulling Together* Indigenization Guides that were created through Dianne's project. I will also link to the project resources that Dianne mentioned.

You can learn more about this podcast at knowledgespectrums.opened.ca. On the website, you can find all episodes and transcripts, along with many other resources and information related to this project.

You can connect with me on Twitter @josiea_g and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #OKSPodcast

I record this podcast on the traditional and unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples.

The theme song is "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org and shared under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

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This has been Open Knowledge Spectrums. Thanks for listening.

[Music fades out]

—End of Episode—

Episode 7: OER and Social Justice with Marco Seiferle-Valencia

[Theme music: "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org]

Josie Gray: Hello! Welcome to the Open Knowledge Spectrums podcast, which explores questions of epistemic justice, or knowledge equity, in the context of open education and considers different possibilities for making open education and open educational practices more equitable.

My name is Josie Gray, and I am your host. This podcast is my final project for my Master of Design in Inclusive Design at OCAD University.

This is my last episode for this project. Thank you so much for tuning in, whether this is the first episode you've listened to or if you've made it all the way through. If you have thoughts or ideas about any of the episodes, I would love to hear from you. I think these discussions are super important, and I definitely want to continue them. I know that I've learned a lot on the way.

With that, let me introduce the final guest, Marco Seiferle-Valencia. Marco is a Brown, two-spirit digital archivist and librarian. He is currently the Open Education Librarian at the University of Idaho Library. He is also a co-founder of the Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective, which is both a digital collection of Chicanx archives and oral histories, as well as the radical praxis that encourages non-institutional memory recovery as encuentro.

In this episode, Marco shares the work he is doing at the University of Idaho to support faculty in creating low or no-cost course materials that have specific social justice goals. He shares how his own positionality impacts the work he does in open and offers a critical perspective on citational practices in open education scholarship and discourse.

And with that, let's hear from Marco.

[Theme music]

Josie: Would you provide an introduction to who you are and what you do?

Marco Seiferle-Valencia: Yeah, so my name is Marco Seiferle-Valencia, and I'm the Open Education librarian at the University of Idaho library. I'm also the manager of something called the Gary Strong Curriculum Center. So that's a small education library, like separate from our main library. And it's where we actually have like all the state curriculum. So like, when K through 12 educators want to pick out a new textbook, we actually have all of the, sort of like "official" approved state curriculums and all the different subjects for them to go check out. I'm also, in terms of professional roles, the technical director of a project called *Chicana por mi Raza*, which is a sort of grassroots digital memory project. And so we collect oral histories and we collect archives of what we might loosely term Chicana-feminist. I say loosely, because, you know, some of the people in our archive don't identify as women, they don't identify as Chicanas, they may be a different kind of Latinx background, and they don't necessarily identify as feminist either. But that's kind of the sort of grouping ideology that the project comes out of is looking at, how do we kind of recover this, sort of, submerged history of Chicana activism? The very sort of minimal kind of documentation we have around Chicano rights is sort of macho and male-centric and ignores a lot of the contributions that women who are artists, activists, educators, politicians made in all different kinds of areas across the country. So we have a few geographic focuses like Texas, and Los Angeles, California, places like that. As well as other sort of like less expected places like Michigan. Like sometimes people are surprised like, "Ah, there's Latinos in Michigan?" Like who knew. There are. [L*aughs*] So those are kind of my key, sort of, professional roles. And I always like to, sort of, contextualize myself personally as well. And so I grew up in Northwest New Mexico. I identify as Brown. I am biracial—my mom is white, and my dad is Indigenous New Mexican. So sort of a complex interweaving their different identities. And I've been a librarian for about, I guess, 10 years, if you count when I was in grad school.

Josie: And what brought you to open education?

Marco: It was kind of an accident, to be honest. So I had moved to this region to actually have a job at a university in the region (that will not be named). I was actually in kind of a completely different field. I was a digital scholarship librarian at my institution before. So I was at Michigan State University as a digital scholarship outreach librarian. And so I was in charge of trying to put together you know, sort of outreach and programming for our digital scholarship lab. So at the time, we had gotten a huge grant and were putting in, you know, this like really exciting, like VR technology and sort of like 360 spaces. And so I had a lot of digitization expertise, my undergraduate degree is actually in photography. And so I had been, you know, sort of in the digitization, digital humanities, and somewhat archives. But the sort of like grassroots non-traditional archives, open archives, if you will. Not sort of like traditional special collections work. And so I moved to the region for a job in that vein, working specifically with Indigenous communities using a well-known content management system. And I immediately had some challenges with the leadership on that team, and you know, was one of very few people of colour working on this people-of-colour-focused effort. And immediately running into some very... predictable and structural issues, we'll say. And so I made the really tough decision to quit that job, actually, not knowing what I was going to do and having [inaudible], now I'm in the Pierce region. There's really not a lot out here.

And so I got very lucky, and I saw this position in open education open up at the University of Idaho. And I had really never thought that much about open education, right, I've been thinking about digital scholarship and digital humanities, and this digital memory work, which had sort of veins in open, you know, these thematic things that I'm going to come back to later, but weren't overtly connected. And so I thought, well, you know, I'll try it out. I'd never thought of myself as an education librarian. I'd never thought of myself as an open education librarian. So I did sort of the crash course thing and you know, gave the presentation and ended up really liking the library. Here at the University of Idaho, we have a lot of really innovative digital projects that actually kind of continue that digital humanities work that I've talked about, including that kind of emphasis on, sort of, grassroots or non-traditional or under-resourced archives via some of the software we develop here. And so I was like, oh, this

may be a different place than I was expecting. I really didn't know anything about Idaho. I didn't have ties to the region, right. So I just really came into this role sort of completely blind. And it was very challenging, right? Because you're immediately in the role as an expert. And I'm like, I'm actually not an expert in open education. And everyone's like, "Oh, that's your imposter syndrome." [*Laughter*] And I'm like, no, it's literally... the truth. You know, I don't have that sort of, like, "Oh, I learned about it in grad school, and I've been doing it..." You know, people have some really deep histories in it. And for me, I was very new to it and brought this, you know, very kind of digital humanities focused perspective. And so I started that role in 2018, and it's been really exciting. And it's been really interesting, the ways that I can, you know, have sort of synthesized that past experience in digital humanities, and digital project work, and that digital archiving work. And how those perspectives informed what I saw in open, when I saw those open histories, seeing the same kinds of things repeatedly play out. So, yeah.

Josie: Yeah, one of the great things about open is it is so flexible to be able to take those past experiences and use them to inform the work that you do in open is, yeah, really great way to approach it. In the work that I read of yours, you talk about the Think Open Fellowship Program. Could you provide a little bit of information about what that program is?

Marco: Yeah, so I like to try to, you know, follow a sort of citational practice and give people credit. So that was started by someone who was in my role, like a couple of people ago. And her name is Annie Gaines. And she's actually a librarian at the Idaho Commission for Libraries now. And so she started the Think Open Fellowship, you know, using sort of like a $10,000 grant that— I actually don't know how she got it, because it's sort of like soft money from inside the library. So I think it's very much like she came up with this idea, and then, you know, successfully pitched it and got the funding. And, you know, it's a pretty big success story in that the state has picked it up and sort of provided funding to the library to support it. And basically, what it is, is it's a kind of typical incubator program, if, you know, people listening are familiar with those. The kind of idea is that we incentivize faculty with a small financial reward, or award, to change a course from a traditional text to an open text.

Different programs, of course, have different, stricter definitions of open, you know, kind of “open as a spectrum.” And so at the University of Idaho, I think it's a very pragmatic program, and it's very low-cost focused. And so when I came in, you know, vis-a-vis that sort of unusual process of arriving, I arrived halfway through an academic year, and so I came actually into a set of Think Open programs already happening. And I was like, “Oh, so this is interesting.” Like, you know, I think maybe one of them, the book actually still cost money. The solution was to use a really old edition of the book because chemistry hadn't changed that much or something. And so, you know, it's a $5 cost. And I was like, “Oh, so this is really interesting,” right? Because like, I'm learning about open, you know, and I'm kind of, I'm feeling like I'm starting out. And so I'm like, oh, the five R's and I'm like, "Well, where's the five R's in a $5 textbook?", and it's like, well, but that... this is part of the thing, right? Is it's like, you know, Annie's program I think really had a very pragmatic focus about let's try to, you know, not constrain faculty to platforms or impinge on their intellectual freedom in any way, and just try to incentivize them and support them and getting, you know, the best possible option that they can come up with that's as low cost as possible.

And so, there are some pure, you know, sort of like textbook-transfer projects that we've had through Think Open fellows where, you know, we had a graduate student who was really successful in getting a lot of our core courses switched over the standard physics textbooks, switching those to OpenStax physics textbooks. And having just really great results with that in terms of the cost savings. You know, him saying, “You know, there are some challenges with the content. But there's also challenges with the traditional content.” And so, you know, the grad students aren't necessarily as entrenched in a particular format or anything and are sort of like, well, you know, they see there's issues with kind of either approach, and I think are more flexible. And it's interesting, sort of that trajectory of that project also then kind of hit a limit in where it could go, because, you know, a faculty department only has so much input from grad students. Not every faculty is going to throw out their traditional texts just because Ross Miller has done a really great job [*laughs*] of making a persuasive case.

We also had more intensive, kind of custom digital projects, like a custom music textbook, where it can actually be like, edited in real time, it can actually have students

like annotate it, and it plays the music back or plays the score back. And so that was something that we had built actually in the library via our digital infrastructure librarian, Evan Williamson, who's, you know, just kind of a technical genius. And he was able to collaborate with that faculty and really build this like, very unique offering, that happens to be OER, right. But that's just sort of one piece of what it's doing.

And so those were all the kinds of projects that had been underway when I came into the Think Open Fellows Program. There hadn't necessarily been an overt DEI focus—diversity, equity, and inclusion, for those who don't know, or aren't in the acronym soup. And so because that is something that's very present for me in my personal and professional identities and also something that's a thread in my research, you know, I think that sort of was immediately in my mind, which is like, "Well, how does this, you know, how are we engaging with our sort of land grant obligations and opportunities to, you know, challenge limiting curriculums and improve representation?" And so I think I kind of immediately brought that, sort of, tweak to the program, to what had been a pretty traditional and successful kind of mini-grant program.

Josie: Yeah, that's really great. Could you talk a little bit about, like, what that shift looked like, and some of the projects that have come out after?

Marco: You know, I think it's hard for me to quantify, right? Because it's like, I will never know what Annie Gaines' experience was like, or whatever. I think something that... and I don't want this to be a controversial thing to say. But I do think that... my positionality in the university, you know, I'm one of 16/17 faculty librarians, three of whom are obvious people of colour, right. So very, very, sort of low representation for people of colour on campus. The library is probably one of the more diverse units on this campus. And so it's like, I'm sort of immediately conspicuous. And so it was interesting to me that a lot of the people who applied the year that then I came onto campus, and I'm the person who is facilitating the Think Open Fellowship, they sort of naturally had this focus to their work as well. I mention this because I think I didn't necessarily do some fantastic job of promoting DEI and Think Open Fellowships. But part of the reality of being a minority faculty is that you are sort of a walking advertisement for minority faculty concerns. And so that's both good and bad, right? It's the sort of like lightning

rod where it's like, so I tend to be the place where people want to come and bounce bad, racist ideas off of sometimes, or, you know, they want to share things that it's like, hmm, maybe you shouldn't be sharing that. But then it also does attract collaborators who are like, "Oh, you know, I noticed, you're not only a person of colour on the campus, but you know, through conversation, that that's one of your research interests, and I'm also engaging around those topics. And so what about if I were to do a Think Open Fellowship". So in that first year that I came on, four out of the six projects that ended up being selected did have that strong DEI focus.

Folks might wonder about, like, the selection process, which I think is, you know, potentially reasonable question. And we try to use a sort of model where we have like a little, like, panel of faculty librarians who review the applications. And at the time, I think the rubric was really around cost savings, like what's the sort of potential overall impact? You know, probably angling for a higher impact and when possible, sort of weighting that. But also trying to sort of, I think, evaluate projects for sort of how unique they were in terms of, is this a unique contribution? Is this an opportunity to do something where maybe an OER hasn't been developed before? Maybe working to develop a different kind of technical solution? And then of course, evaluating them for feasibility, you know, sort of like, is this something that is actually within the scope of what this can support? I think those are sort of the main criteria. And I do you think that I modified the official kind of proposal, CFP, call for proposal thing, to actually say that projects that include an emphasis on DEI, you know, sort of supporting U of I land grant mission. It's very conservative state here, and so, obviously, how we word things, we have to be very mindful of no appearance of support for any particular political positions. And so, you know, it's all it's kind of threading a tricky needle there. But I do believe that I went ahead and added that.

And so, I don't quite know what the magic is that made it so that this particular year that we had these projects. I think it's partly that a couple of the fellows that I've worked with were people who had developed relationships with and we were already talking about these issues. I think other people, I had had more sort of a, like a kind of professional acquaintance-ship. Maybe I'd done one or two lectures in that class, but not as strong of a collaboration. And then I think we had a couple of projects that year that

really didn't have any DEI focuses. You know, and I think that's one of the things that I do think it's worth trying to, you know, talk about a bit is, you're kind of in this tension, where if someone isn't interested in modifying their courses in this way, I don't really feel that it's my position to even really try to convince them, right. I feel like it's more appropriate to support the people who actively have that and to, you know, to suggest things, when possible, when people are open to it. But in general, the Think Open fellows, we have a real range of collaboration, where sometimes I'm seeing people every week, in which case, those tended to be the ones where I did have a bit more input. Other times, it's like, well I saw them twice a semester, and then when they're done with the project. So of that particular year, there's kind of four main projects that came out of it, and that have that strong DEI focus. Two were actually by grad students, and then two were by faculty.

And so one is a project that is like still very much in progress because COVID hit right when we were starting it. And the kind of concept of it is filming Indigenous community members in our U of Idaho community and having them talk about that experience of being a person who's Indigenous and who's also, you know, a faculty or, you know, staff-researcher on campus, something like that. And talking about the kind of overlap between those roles, tension between those roles, with a real focus on creating curriculum for education students. So this comes from Professor Vanessa Anthony-Stevens who's a really amazing education professor who also has a really great anthropology perspective, and a really great perspective from just doing a ton of work with different Indigenous communities in the area. She's a big facilitator of our IKE program, which is our Indigenous Knowledge Education program, where we're actually helping Indigenous educators figure out culturally responsive teaching strategies, culturally preservation teaching strategies. You know, trying to actually really create a space that nurtures our future Indigenous educators, as opposed to kind of trampling them down like our typical education systems do. That was her idea was, you know, we tend to have these like really, really limited curriculums that in terms of how we depict Native American people. It's pretty common for, you know, kids, even in a region like Idaho where we have these really strong Indigenous histories and presences, current realities, and histories to, you know, they're like, “I don't know any

Indigenous people," or, you know, I don't know, like "Nez Perce people over there and we're like, over here." And so trying to figure out, you know, how can we model for educators, this is a way that you can create curriculum, and also, you know, sort of this meta thing where the educator students are themselves hopefully learning something from the content as well. And so the kind of idea for that was to replace some of her existing textbook with these curriculums that we created that are kind of focused around these interviews with those different Indigenous community campus members. So we recorded a couple, but then, you know, COVID kicked in, and obviously in-person recording was not ideal. And we were very particular about wanting a certain kind of aesthetic on this. And so, you know, one of the things that Vanessa rightly noted is that the sort of overall presentation of the thing, including the textbook or an OER, can be a place where, you know, white supremacy and structural racism also expresses itself. And so we were very adamant about, like, these are going to be well composed, well lit, well shot, well recorded interviews, right. And so some people might be wondering, like, well, why didn't you just do them on zoom? It's like, because we hadn't—especially at that time—figured out a good way to record a high-quality interview that we can then turn into, you know, maybe a clip that includes some footage of that person's reservation or home space, you know, some space that they want to share in terms of physical region. You know, really wanting to have some options to put in some extra sort of, I guess, you might say B-roll footage that provides that additional context.

Another was with Professor Ashley Kerr, and she was actually working on a Latinx survey course that was interesting because it's like a sort of history of Latin America, history of South America. It's a course that's actually in Spanish, so that added an additional element in terms of trying to identify OER. And she wanted to challenge the traditional text's really colonial perspective, you know. And so she had just a number of examples where she was like, "You know, this is really an anti-Indigenous perspective in the text. This is a very anti-woman perspective in the text. This is a very anti-queer perspective in the text." You know, and wanting to really kind of explode some of these, just norms in the traditional texts that were themselves very, sort of, colonial. And so I appreciated that she didn't call it "Decolonizing Latinx Spanish Survey History Course."

Because, you know, the whole kind of concept of a Latinx, Spanish history survey course is sort of inherently colonial. [*laughter*] But I think she did a really good job of taking that traditional text and basically replacing it with a lot of different types of assignments. And so they included things like some really innovative things, like particular political actors in history, and creating a Twitter account and trying to tweet from that person's perspective. You know, especially I think this was during the sort of Donald Trump presidency, and there was this like real learning opportunity. How do different kinds of leadership—totalitarianism, authoritarianism, etc, fascism—how does it manifest in a sort of rhetoric in this kind of format? And so I think she used that to sort of explore like, well, let's look at some of these, you know, Latinx survey history, let's look at that history and actually apply that sort of critical digital humanities perspective and allow students to, kind of, try something out there. And then I believe, we also identified a number of open resources from here and there, right, a lot of, sort of, searching on the web and finding things in Spanish that then we translated, or finding just raw materials, things coming from museums, even, where it's like examples like… barbaric, like, Spanish caste system stuff, you know. And being able to use sort of like original archival elements to say, like, "Oh, look at this depiction, that's like trying to sort out people by their skin colour and sort of rate different levels of interracial identity in colonial Mexico." And this is something that we want to like shove away, because it's so horrific and old and racist and gross. And it's also very deeply relevant, right? Because colourism is like a major, major issue in the Latinx community. And so taking sort of like raw archival objects, if you will, out of, you know, Mexican American Museum of History, you know, Cinidad of Mexico history kind of thing, and pulling that out and then having students work on digital assignment through that.

And then our two graduate students did work. One did work on an English 101 and 102, trying to make sort of more culturally responsive materials. She was a graduate student who'd worked a lot with English as a second language learners and had noticed that a lot of the cultural reference points in traditional English 101 and 102 texts didn't resonate for people, were actively alienating for people, were often racist. And so you know, she had sort of limited autonomy as a graduate student in an English department to rewrite these kind of fundamental syllabi, but she was able for her courses to actually

experiment with some different solutions that I don't know that you would necessarily call them exactly open, you know, things like using captioning on Netflix to allow people to, you know, have the captions in the language that they need, right? And so to say, like, okay, you know, making sure that it's just selecting something that she's checking through and saying, like, oh, is there actually Spanish caption on this to help facilitate this for English as second language learners, or things like that. And so that syllabus is really interesting, because, you know, it wouldn't pass anybody's five R's. But it did get the course cost down quite a bit for those particular sections. I think they were now like a $5 course, and she had found YouTube channels where she was able to actually have Spanish captioning and things like that. And so was able to find that and then have sort of supplemental things that people could do if they did have access to things like Netflix, etc, or, you know, the paid textbook. She couldn't change the curriculum at the fundamental level where they stopped using the English 101 text, but she said students could get through the course without it, because she was seeing students getting through the course without it and suffering. And instead, the course was now rewritten that it was like, yeah, it is actually optional. So like, if you don't do it, you're not actually missing out, and also, hopefully, we're not exposing people to so many of these, like really tired and racist cultural reference points.

And then the fourth project was with a graduate student named Rebekka Boysen-Taylor. She's a PhD student in the College of Education. And she's also a seventh-grade instructor at Palouse Prairie Charter School. I think it's K through 8. And that's a really interesting school. For me, I went to public schools, and so I'm like, "Is this a Montessori school?" because like, it's like, let the kids do stuff, like they don't have to sit in their desks, and you know, they do these interesting kinds of projects where they work with Indigenous communities. Like in sixth grade they like build a dugout canoe as they're sort of learning like the Pacific Northwest history. And so it's a very, you know, sort of open environment to try out different things. And one of the things that Rebekka was working with, is you know, they had a kind of standard unit on chattel slavery and abolition. Frederick Douglass was sort of central person of interest that often a lot of the curriculums that she was working with would sort of tell this story of, you know, the abolition of slavery using Frederick Douglass as kind of a central figure through that.

And, you know, one of the things that popped out for Rebekka was the sort of misogyny of this, you know, the kind of way that his wife Anna Murray Douglass, was basically referred to literally as "Frederick Douglass's wife," you know, and very little was said. But at the same time, you know, there's always this, like, very popular story told about how she is the person who makes his freedom possible, right. So she gets this like, shout out as the person who's like, critical to his emancipation early in his life in a very literal, logistical way, and then she somehow just becomes his wife and that's like, the end of her contributions. So Rebekka, you know, is a white, cisgender woman who is very interested in sort of developing her own anti-racist potentials, I would say. And so, you know, when I met her, she was working on, I think it's called, like, the white supremacy workbook? Not sure if you're familiar with that?

Josie: Yeah, I think so.

Marco: And now, it's like a book, I think that you buy. And at the time, it was like a PDF that you could sort of take on. And it's intended for non-Black people to kind of, you know, be a workbook that's like, here's a bunch of exercises and sort of thought exercises, I guess, you might say. And also practical writing exercises to help non-Black people unpack their anti-Black racism, and you know, hopefully address it. And so I had never heard of that resource, and that was like something she was working on. And I was like, oh, this is like, really interesting to see this like white women in Idaho is like, really, critically engaged around all this. Like, I'm sort of curious what's going on here. And basically, you know, it just turned out that she has this, you know, kind of intersectional feminist perspective. And as she was reading this stuff about Frederick Douglass and preparing this curriculum, she's just like, "What about Anna Murray Douglass? Like, this doesn't sound right, you know." And so she looks into it, and it turns out, Anna Murray Douglass is, of course, instrumental in Frederick Douglass' abolition. But she's also, you know, a noted abolitionist in her own right. She's a conductor on the Underground Railroad, she's responsible for the freedom of probably hundreds of people directly, as well as then all of these support in a million different ways that she provides Frederick Douglass. And not just a sort of, like emotional supportive wife that we tend to sort of want to feminize, but also very real, like, no, this is like a logistical, practical, strategic political operation of which she is a key part. And

so Rebekka knows that and then she really just kind of picks it up. And she ends up working with the Frederick Douglass family and working directly with the descendants. She ends up working with some of the sort of best-known historians of Frederick Douglass in terms of writers, as well as folks at the Library of Congress. And she starts basically to pull together all these primary objects that are these like digital archive objects. And we're wondering, like, how can we turn this into a curriculum that then supports this intersectional feminist perspective, without being really ham fisted about it, because we're still in North Idaho, right? And so that's kind of the launching point. And so for her first Think Open project, that's what she develops, is this kind of modular curriculum. And we actually try it out in this seventh-grade class with these kids. And it's, you know, it's pretty amazing the things that they're coming back, and that their parents are coming back and saying. And then this is also a curriculum that gets presented to education students in the college education at University of Idaho, saying, "Hey, these are the kinds of assignments you should be thinking about making in your classes, you know. You don't just have to teach these tiny, standard, limiting curriculums".

Josie: Yeah, I love how all of those different projects, like they have different levels of intervention. And they're also very localized, they're very specific to the context of the course. In the context that I work in, we're often trying to create resources that are very— like they're localized in the context of the province, but not very to like an individual class. And I guess that's because I work on a provincial level as opposed to in an institution directly with faculty, but it's so great to hear those examples. Like really prioritizing that localization and making the content really relevant. Yeah.

Marco: Well, I think for me, it's been kind of a natural fit, because, you know, I was doing what are sort of what we call like a lot of “boutique” digital humanities work. So supporting these smaller, individual projects—that are often what you might call like, a “micro” history. You know, they are very specific, and they're often focused around sort of a specific geographic region or a specific group of people, and so that's a really interesting observation. And I think probably something that for me, I was like, “Oh, yeah! They're like, you know, super nation-specific.” Although I do think sometimes, I have anxiety about like, okay, but how do we, you know... I feel like with

open there's always this feeling of like, well I should be making the next great thing that everyone can use. And it's like, well... I don't know.

Josie: Yeah, there's like benefits and drawbacks to both models. And like, I think that localization is a lot where the change happens on like an individual student level, an individual instructor level. Yeah, you know, like those OpenStax books that can be used all across... like multiple countries—they use them in Canada, too. Like, they're super powerful, but they don't have that, like, localized, you know, knowledge that students like, see their communities in.

Marco: Right. Which means that they almost inherently then can't be very Indigenous, or anti-colonial, right? Because it's like they've got to be...

Josie: Yeah.

Marco: Sort of that global... Yeah.

Josie: Yeah, we kind of get into the problem of like, how we understand what textbooks are, as these like, you know, "objective" narratives that present "truth." Right?

Marco: Right. [*Laughter*] As if. [*Laughter*]

Josie: So, kind of about your positionality, and how you fit into those projects. How does your positionality inform your work in those projects?

Marco: Yeah, that's a great question. You know, I think my positionality is something that is complex for me, especially because it's changed quite a bit fairly recently. So I am a Brown, transgender, queer, disabled person of colour, sometimes man of colour, in the academy, right. And so I say sometimes, because my gender identity is pretty complex. I lived my life for 31 years or something like as an out lesbian, right. And so it's, it's a very complex situation for me. And it's interesting, because I never quite know how things are reading, right. And so I think sometimes when I initially start talking to people who are wondering why this man is interested in working on feminist projects, you know, and there being this sort of, like weird contradiction of like, "Well, does it make more sense if you know that I'm a trans man, and I'm interested in feminist things?" Like and

is that a weird kind of like, transmisogyny? Like, you know, there's kind of like a lot to unpack there.

And so each of these projects I come into, these are all very new relationships for me. And so it's like, we're forming the relationship and the partnership as we're going, which does include getting to know each other. And so I think one of the things that does stand out for those four projects as compared to those other two—j that I'm sorry to say, I don't remember for that year, because we just didn't work that closely. I'm sure I could look them up. But they were more like a kind of just traditional textbook conversion. You know, these were the four projects that I worked closely with were people that I was out to in pretty much all of my identities. And so I think that that really opened us up to have more candid conversations and more honest conversations where I could say, “Oh, well, you know, I think this is actually sort of transphobic,” or “I think this is sort of queer phobic.” And it's not that I couldn't say those things without being out, but I do think that if you're sort of trying to be closeted, then there can be—which I again, I— that's sort of like inflammatory language. So not everyone has the option to be out—but I think if you're sort of like trying to preserve the “stealth-ness,” then it can be kind of tricky to be like, well, I'm not trying to let people know that I'm transgender, but I keep talking about like, well, where's the queer people in this resource? you know. And so I think with each of these projects that I've talked about more in depth, I found, you know, the person that I was working with, even though they didn't necessarily have a lot of the same shared identities—I think everybody's a cisgender, straight white woman that I was working with on these projects—I still think that we had a lot of the same commonalities in terms of those shared values around like feminism, around wanting a more intersectional perspective. And I think each person kind of coming to that with a sort of an awareness of their own privilege. You know, and so, me wanting to be mindful about not sort of taking up like “mansplaining” privilege kind of space, you know, and understanding the way that those kinds of pitfalls can manifest. And at the same time, also, sometimes needing to say, like, "Oh, I'm not sure that that's like, you know, the best idea." And so, I do think that it's like, you know, part of being a person of colour is you don't know what— you don't know what any other experience is like, right? So it's like, I do sometimes wonder, like, would a person who didn't have as many diverse

identities, would they have necessarily brought the same perspectives? Probably not. But I think that that's something where white people have an obligation—or people of privilege, whatever your privilege is, have an obligation to be developing those kinds of perspectives and interventions.

Josie: Yeah, I've been reading— as part of this project I've been reading different people who have wrote on epistemic justice, without using that terminology, but particularly recently found writing on white ignorance and ignorance that comes specifically due to white supremacy and racism. Which allows white people to not understand or to like, be ignorant of, either willfully or not, of the experiences of people of colour. So that's been really helpful reading for me.

Marco: Now, that you've said that, it does make me think that I should also mention that I do think that working on these projects was also very affirming because it was a place where I got to sort of be more open in these different identities, right. And faculty position is still fairly conservative in many respects. And so there's not necessarily as many places on campus where I feel quite as comfortably being open as I did and those partnerships. And I think it then partly showed up in these kinds of dynamic interventions, that I could be a bit more my full person in those spaces, and then that brought that additional perspective in.

Josie: Yeah, for sure. In your presentation at Open Ed 2020, you talk a little bit about citational practices, and like the intellectual genealogy—you don't use that word, but—

Marco: [*laughter*] I should have.

Josie: But, of open education scholarship, like who we point to as thought leaders or like the origin of the values that we claim in open pedagogy. So could you talk a little bit more about that?

Marco: Yeah, I will say I feel a little reluctant. Because I don't feel like I'm an expert on this by any means. I think there are probably other—I hope there are other people who know more. But basically, my perspective was, you know, as I mentioned, I was pretty new to open librarianship. So in 2019, I believe it was, I took the Creative Commons licensing course to learn how the Creative Commons licenses work and so on and so

forth. And, you know, they had a sort of typical introduction to open, you know, I now know is kind of the standard open narrative. But I remember reading it and it—and, no disrespect to any Creative Commons, authors who contributed to do the textbook or whatever—but to me, I was like, what I'm reading sounds like open education started in the 1990s. Like some white tech dudes invented it, and then like, some other white tech dudes were like, "Oh, yeah. This is great." And then some, like white education dudes were like, "Oh, yeah. We love this." And now here we are. And I was like, this is really weird, because, you know, as I mentioned, I've been working on this Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective. One of the big kind of sites of feminist activity in the 1970s, 1960s, 1980s, that timespan, is an education. And I was like, well, that's weird that you would… why is it like, "Open education starts in 1990 with XYZ cisgender white man," and not "It starts in, you know, 1970 Detroit, when Lucy Cruz is making her own museum to educate kids about Mexican American history because there's all these kids living in southwest Detroit—to the point that it's literally called Mexican Town—and they don't have any curriculum, you know, there's nothing. There's no curriculum that supports Mexican American history, and you have people in the community who are like, "That's fine. I got curriculum. I make it, I scan it, I give it out for free." She's got a museum, it's full of like, artifacts, you know, she's giving out tours. And I'm like, that, to me, is a genealogy—you know, as you say, an intellectual genealogy—of open education. And I am really not an expert in Black feminism, but the tiny bit that I know, I was, like, you know, education is where so much of the core Black feminist thought that we now think of as the Black feminist kind of ideological canon. I mean, that's where it comes from. So I was just like, I don't understand how you can have this history of open that ignores what systematically impoverished, poor people have been doing to make sure that we're educated. I didn't understand.

And so I thought, well, maybe there's something missing in the research. But I think, you know, unfortunately, it's the very kind of, this sort of meta thing, where it's like I'm talking about while the "standard narrative," right. And who's not in the standard narrative, and how the standard narrative really just serves to sort of uphold typical white supremacy power structures. And I was like, and here it was again, where we're talking about open education and acting like it's sort of a technological intervention

from the 1990s. You know, and also kind of ignores sort of, like, English open school stuff, you know, it's like a weird.... I don't mean to totally denigrate white folks, by any means, [*laughter*]. It's like, this kind of like, this sort of history that's like, so technology focused. I was like, this is very... It just feels very "of our time," that has a culture that has a very particular attitude towards technology and likes to think of it as being this very recent and very particular thing that sort of particularly mastered by particular people, which happens to be the same old people who we tend to think of as wielding power in this country. And so that was my just immediate and obvious criticism. And as I looked into it more, I was like, "Oh, yeah, it doesn't actually seem like this piece has really been connected." And for me, it's important for my work to be liberatory for me, personally, as much as that's possible within these very confining systems. And it just seemed natural to kind of connect those things. And, you know, hopefully seed some conversation in the community about the actual ideological history of OER.

Josie: Yeah, it really got me thinking a lot. I've been doing lots of reading on citational practices and like, particularly in the context of white feminism, and its appropriation and all of that. So I've been doing lots of that kind of reading and so when I heard you make that critique of open, I was like, yeah, our definitions do point back to not that long ago, mostly tied to the internet, mostly tied to open licenses, which are under Western colonial understandings of copyright, and...

Marco: Yes, yeah.

Josie: Yeah, so that was a big “lightbulb” moment for me, for sure.

[Theme music]

Josie: In the show notes, I provide links to the Chicana por mi Raza Digital Memory Collective and the article Marco published titled, "It's not just about the cost: Academic libraries and intentionally engaged OER for social justice." In this article, Marco draws on Sarah Lambert's three principles of OER and social justice to discuss the OER projects at the University of Idaho. He also draws on the work of bell hooks and Regina Austin to present a call to action to those who support OER projects to specifically and intentionally diversify the perspectives in OER. I will also link to Marco's recorded presentation that he gave on this paper at the OpenEd 2020 Conference.

You can learn more about this podcast at knowledgespectrums.opened.ca. On the website, you can find all episodes and transcripts, along with many other resources and information related to this project.

You can connect with me on Twitter @josiea_g and you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #OKSPodcast

I record this podcast on the traditional and unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples, where I am very greatful to live and work.

The theme song is "Cool Upbeat Hip Hop Piano" by ItsMochaJones on freesound.org and shared under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

This has been Open Knowledge Spectrums. Thanks for listening.

[Music fades out]

—End of Episode—