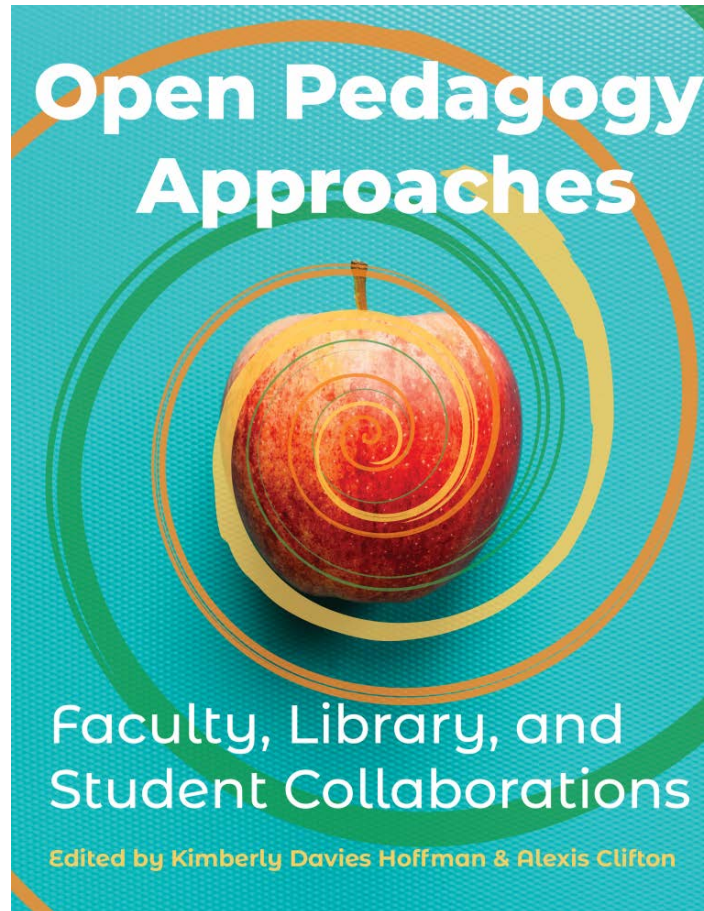# OPEN PEDAGOGY APPROACHES:
Faculty, Library, and Student Collaborations

Open Pedagogy
Approaches

Faculty, Library, and
Student Collaborations

Edited by Kimberly Davies Hoffman & Alexis Clifton

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https://tinyurl.com/OpenPedApproaches

APPROACHING OPEN PEDAGOGY IN COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION

Caroline Sinkinson and Amanda McAndrew

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Project Overview

Institution: [University of Colorado Boulder](#)

Institution Type: public, research, undergraduate, postgraduate

Project Discipline: Faculty/Staff Professional Development

Project Outcome: Faculty Learning Communities

Tools Used: Reclaim Hosting, Google Drive, WordPress, Omeka, LibGuides

Resources Included in Chapter:

- Planning and Scheduling Materials
- Recommended Readings

Introduction

In the 2008 *Cape Town Open Education Declaration*, signatories envisioned that openness in education would foster a "new pedagogy where educators and learners create, shape and evolve knowledge together" (Cape Town, 2008). Today, the global open education community continues to pursue these pedagogical visions. This was captured at a recent gathering of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) member state representatives, who work to encourage international collaborations to improve education, science, and culture. In a series of draft recommendations for open education, they affirmed the ongoing aim to realize pedagogical innovations that engage "both educators and learners to become more active participants in educational processes and creators of content as members of an inclusive knowledge society" (UNESCO, 2018). As we, a librarian and an academic technology consultant, increasingly participated in open education, these pedagogically-focused goals resonated with our professional roles and inclinations. Motivated to more fully explore these possibilities, we set out to expand local dialogue and awareness of open pedagogies. We invited a community of educators together to investigate the pedagogical possibilities of open education and to dwell on questions about learners' agency and ownership of their education.

In this chapter, we describe our partnership that formed through mutual investment in reshaping approaches to teaching and learning within our local university setting. We provide the theoretical background of the project as well as share the structure, essential elements, and strategies employed to form a series of faculty learning communities focused on open pedagogy.

Context

These learning communities were formed at the University of Colorado Boulder, which is a public research university that offers more than 3,900 courses in approximately 150 subject areas to over 30,000 students each year (University of Colorado Boulder, 2018). Across the campus, educators have individually pursued open education projects. Perhaps most notable is the Physics Education Technology (PhET) simulations (University of Colorado, 2019), which are interactive, research-based science and mathematics simulations developed by a cohort of faculty and researchers in the department of Physics. More recently, as statewide grant opportunities have developed, the University of Colorado System launched an open educational resources (OER) initiative that offers targeted educational programming about OER as well as faculty stipend opportunities for OER review, adoption, and adaptation (Colorado Department of Education, 2019). These programs, coupled with campus-articulated commitments to student savings, have increased the momentum and interest in open education across the campus community (Strategic Relations and Communications, 2017).

As the institution increasingly drew attention to the promise of open education, a partnership already existed that for a number of years leveraged the expertise of an instructional designer and a teaching librarian to create reflective spaces for pedagogical exploration. Amanda McAndrew is an academic technology consultant

within a department of the Office of Information Technology titled the Arts & Sciences Support of Education Through Technology (ASSETT), and has worked as a teacher, instructional designer, and educational developer for more than fifteen years. Caroline Sinkinson is a teaching and learning librarian in the University Libraries and has worked with information literacy education and related critical digital pedagogies for over ten years. We have commonly consulted with faculty, both together and individually, on learning design that centers on information and digital literacies as well as the integration of educational technologies. Due to these shared experiences and roles on campus, we began offering semester-long faculty seminars that introduced theoretical readings, instructional design models, and emerging technologies that held promise congruent with pedagogical aims. Throughout these collaborations, we frequently encountered complements and alignment between our respective fields that presented new opportunities for conversation with the campus community. This held true as we investigated open education and the pedagogical aspects therein.

Open Pedagogy

These conditions and our on-going professional relationship established the foundation for what would be a multi-tiered effort to expand campus conversations about open pedagogy. To begin, we dove into concepts of open pedagogy that would inform our approach and would strengthen a theoretical foundation to our project.

We were fascinated to find that the concept was not new but had emerged in the 1960's and 1970's (Barth, 1969; Mai, 1978; Paquette, 1979; Noddings & Enright, 1983). Early conceptions of open pedagogy developed as educators challenged dominant modes of schooling that they claimed reduced learners' participation, creativity, and ownership in their learning experiences (Barth, 1969; Paquette, 1979). Notably, these perspectives echoed the foundation of our work to explore methods for breaking down traditional educational structures that limit learner expressions. For example, we were intrigued by the potential for learners to connect with broader publics through technology and the possibilities of authoring for authentic audiences. Similarly, in years past, the open educators of that time questioned "traditional seats of authority, including the way classrooms and schools were organized and students were taught" (Cuban, 2004). As such, they developed strategies to open classroom structures in terms of time and space, to advocate for more flexible curricula that allowed individual or community directed learning, and to flatten relationships between learners and teachers. We located coherence between early notions of open pedagogy with critical and experiential pedagogies which have all often shaped our approach to learning.

As we looked to contemporary discussions of open pedagogy, we found some definitions that clearly attached the concept to production of OER and the capabilities enabled through open licensing (Wiley & Hilton, 2018). Others resisted definitions in favor of identifying guiding values and beliefs about learning, which echoed patterns in the past (Paquette, 1969; Hyland, 1979). Recurring themes throughout included increased access to education, learner-driven design of learning, connectivity with wider publics, and learner participation and creativity (Hegarty, 2015; Reynolds, 2018; DeRosa, 2017, Hendricks, 2017; Bali, 2017; Jhangiani, 2019). Our analysis of the historical and contemporary definitions of open pedagogy led us to

synthesize the essential values of open pedagogy from our vantage point. For us, open pedagogy signals a commitment to:

- **Access and equity:** reducing barriers that prevent equitable access to education, including economic, technical, social, cultural, and political factors.
- **Community and connection:** facilitating connections across the boundaries of learning experiences, viewpoints, classrooms, campuses, communities, and countries.
- **Agency and ownership:** protecting agency and ownership of one's own learning experiences, choices of expression, and degrees of participation.
- **Risk and responsibility:** interrogating tools and practices that mediate learning, knowledge building, and sharing that resist the treatment of open as neutral (Sinkinson, 2018).

Ultimately, we came to see open pedagogy as an ethos or as "a way of thinking, a way of acting" (Paquette, 1979: p. 2) when approaching learning and teaching in contemporary learning contexts. Our approach to open pedagogy became a means of continuing conversations with fellow educators that unveil beliefs and assumptions about the purpose of education as well as the relationship between educators, learners, and knowledge. In essence, we came to embrace DeRosa and Jhangiani's claim that open pedagogy is "a site of praxis, a place where theories about learning, teaching, technology, and social justice enter into a conversation with each other and inform the development of educational practices and structures" (DeRosa and Jhangiani, 2017).

Information Literacies

As we considered learning in open contexts, we were acutely aware that open networked technologies, while ripe with opportunities, also required careful interrogation on the part of teachers and learners. Opening up learning spaces that reach beyond gated learning management systems and closed-door classrooms present the opportunity for authentic interactions and contributions to broader knowledge communities, but these systems may also contain threats. Take for example some of the current realities and tensions in open spaces: surveillance capitalism, digital redlining, algorithmic-decision-making, among others (Stewart, 2019). Many learners, and teachers, already occupy these spaces in their personal and civic lives and make choices about their presence, participation, and sharing practices constantly, both knowingly and unknowingly. Therefore, an additional area of concentration for our programming was to ask how we might cultivate critical approaches to digital communities, information landscapes, and the knowledge commons—including the technical, social, economic, and political forces that shape them. For us, this involved encouraging educators to explore the tensions of open environments alongside learners and to collaboratively ask what literacies might strengthen negotiations of those complexities. In other words, we stressed the importance of integrating information

literacy into learning design so that it would provide opportunities for learners to cultivate critical decision-making about the information landscapes they inhabit.

Program Structure

Having established the theoretical foundations for our approach, we set out to respond to the energies in our community, our professional drive and interests, and a strong commitment to improving teaching and learning on our campus through the formation of faculty learning communities. The primary focus of this chapter is a faculty community formed in the fall of 2017, which directly introduced concepts and examples of open pedagogical practices while concentrating attention on the agency of learners and their ownership of learning experiences. Following this experience we built on the momentum and hosted two consecutive communities; the first of which was structured through informal gatherings where we explored tools and platforms that might support open pedagogy; the second of which extended exploration in a more formal structure and with a newly implemented instance of Reclaim Hosting at our institution, that was inspired by the Domain of One's Own initiative. The second and third iterations drew upon the foundations and values of open pedagogy to design the communities and the discussions we pursued.

Essential Components

Special Interest Groups

For each iteration, which we referred to as "Special Interest Groups" to match an existing professional development format, we designed conversations, participant interactions, as well as shared resources and readings with the aim of building community. Realizing that teaching can produce a sense of isolation and that changes to teaching approaches can be daunting, we hoped that conversations would reveal pedagogical questions and possibilities otherwise unrealized. We worked to establish spaces where teachers could comfortably examine and investigate their craft with fellow educators. We were influenced by Lave and Wenger's community of practice (CoP) model, that defines CoP as "people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better" and "engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). For that reason, we intentionally focused participant exploration with a statement that the structure would be characterized by an inquiry that was open to emergent, sometimes uncertain, dialog that might transform our approaches and assumptions. This communicated that the participants had the ability to move in directions meaningful to them and that as facilitators we would remain flexible and responsive to what we heard. Therefore, while we prepared materials for the sessions, if the participants pulled attention from our original plans, we allowed and encouraged those occurrences.

Interactivity

To foster community, we planned small and large group interactions, including strategies borrowed from liberating structures that work to enhance interactivity between participants (Lipmanowicz & McCandless). For example, during the first gathering, we invited participants to stand and mingle around the room while posing questions first to one partner, then transitioning to another, and so on. We suggested questions such as:

- What attracted you to this community?
- What do you hope to learn from members of the community?
- What do you hope to contribute to the community?

Another strategy we often employed could be described as think-pair-share, in which participants were given an opportunity to think in silence, then pair with another participant, and finally summarize responses with the full group. We took advantage of whiteboards, sticky notes, and flexible spaces to have small and large group brainstorms and cluster ideas or responses to learning.

Materials for Collaboration

Additionally, we used readings and shared digital spaces, including collaborative documents in Google Drive as well as a website that curated all content, to encourage discussion and collaboration between participants. For instance, we selected readings that introduced key open pedagogy concepts as well as case studies and narratives that relayed fellow educators' experiences implementing open practices (see Appendix A). We employed Google Drive heavily for interactive components of session discussions, for distributing worksheets, and for inviting collaborative authoring. All of the session materials were collected and made available virtually, either through a digital research guide or WordPress site (see Appendix B), where we also curated recommended tools and technologies that were of potential use to participants. Each of these components was intentionally designed to model good teaching practice and to mirror a student experience for faculty. The inclusion of online components maintained a transparent organizational structure for the participants by clearly outlining sessions and curating content. Additionally, it enabled reuse and future referencing of materials by all participants.

Student Voice

A final core component included in our latter two faculty cohorts was the perspective brought by a student assistant who co-led the sessions with us. Focusing on learners in all of our discussions and considerations of open pedagogy was vital to us and was aided tremendously by the student's participation, who was a paid undergraduate technology assistant. As we explored possible classroom activities and assignments, impromptu questions and dialogue between the student and faculty revealed insights and perspectives we may have

otherwise overlooked. He also brought a great deal of technological expertise that faculty relied on as they experimented with new tools. In this way, the student, the participants, and the facilitators shared the tasks of teaching and pursued collaborative problem posing, investigation, and play.

Session Details and Iterations

During Fall of 2017, the faculty learning community was titled *Cultivating Students' Digital Ownership & Identity* and consisted of four sessions intended to explore the following questions:

- Why value student agency and identity?
- What does agency look like for our students today?
- What literacies might strengthen agency & identity?
- What about our current practices inhibits students' identity and agency?
- How might open pedagogy help address these barriers?
- How might we use these conversations to transform our practice?

Session One: Agency, Identity, & Literacies

This session focused on setting the frame and scope of the entire community, providing logistical and informational details, and introducing the guiding themes. The content of the session focused primarily on defining and discussing the meaning of student agency and ownership. Secondly, we introduced information literacy through guiding definitions and the *Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)* Framework for Information Literacy (ACRL, 2015). Participants were encouraged to interact through an impromptu networking activity, borrowed from liberating structures, and participated in paired and large group discussions (Lipmanowicz & McCandless).

Session Two: Current Practices

In this session, we introduced the concept "disposable assignments" or assignments that lack application beyond the classroom as defined by David Wiley, and contrasted them with assignments designed for authentic audiences or lasting impact (Wiley, 2013). Through reflective writing exercises and reading discussions, the participants considered the merits and pitfalls of disposable assignments and examined their own assignment design. Finally, the facilitators supplied a range of open pedagogy examples framed as renewable assignments, which participants investigated in small groups, then returned to a full group discussion.

Session Three: Open Pedagogy Overview

This session introduced participants to the open education movement and an overview of open pedagogy.

Next, having collected examples of open pedagogy in action, we detailed those strategies such as collaborative textbook authoring, student-designed assessments, or collaborative annotation. Because these assignments transform traditional teacher and learner roles, we invited participants to describe the expectations and contributions of learners in these scenarios. Their brainstorming led to robust discussions that included an analysis of the readings.

Session Four: Transforming Assignments

In the final session, we briefly revisited the open pedagogy concept, values, and roles that the participants had generated in the previous session. Next, participants were invited to consider an assignment or a component of an existing course that they might workshop. First, on their own, and then in pairs, they evaluated how that assignment might be adapted with qualities of open pedagogy and transformed from a disposable to a renewable assignment. Finally, we ended the session with an invitation to continue participating in the learning community in the following semester.

The following spring, we invited participants to explore [Reclaim Hosting](#), an educational web hosting service, and to experiment with applications frequently used in open pedagogy projects: [WordPress](#), Wikis, [Scalar](#), and [Omeka](#). During this iteration of the community, we introduced the Domain of One's Own project that originated at the University of Mary Washington and discussed how student-owned domains facilitated ownership, agency, and active practice of literacies. We carried forward the tone set in the fall: to be a community invested in learning together through wandering inquiry. We met four times to experiment with the technologies available through Reclaim Hosting while imagining how they might shape future open pedagogical enactments. Indeed, participants have since begun working with [Omeka](#) for student designed exhibits and with WordPress to facilitate course communications or to curate student-generated content.

Next, during Spring 2019, we offered a series of sessions that centered on the newly available Reclaim Hosting instance at our institution, [BuffsCreate](#), and the possibilities it held to reach both personal and pedagogical goals for participants. Following an introduction to the project, the sessions guided faculty through the creation of a domain, a blog, and a [digital calling card](#). We chose these examples in order to model activities that might be of interest to learners. The blog served as a general introduction to [WordPress](#) and a prevalent communication form while the calling card demonstrated an easy template for creating a digital landing space for a professional identity. The culminating session focused pointedly on how these applications and capabilities could be applied to classroom practices. Inspiration for these sessions came from similar models at the University of Mary Washington, Muhlenberg College, Ontario eCampus, and the University of Oklahoma (University of Mary Washington, 2015; Muhlenberg College, 2019; Ontario Extend, 2019; Long-Wheeler & Stewart).

Program Logistics and Collaborations

We relied heavily on previous collaborative experiences to inform our approach to planning, design, and shared distribution of logistical tasks. Typically, during the early phases of development, we held extended collaborative meetings to allow for generative brainstorming and negotiation of methods for community building. Preceding the design of individual sessions, we located and determined readings that we perceived would resonate most with faculty while taking into consideration teaching experiences, time, and risk involved in changing teaching approaches. We have found that shared readings and discussion often brought to the surface participants' areas of interest as well as hesitations or concerns. We prioritized case studies and first-hand accounts of open pedagogy to offer student and faculty testimonies while also providing practical blueprints for adaptation or adoption. Planning individual sessions, our work-flow followed instructional design best practices of developing primary goals and outcomes and then outlining the activities and interactions. Although we met frequently throughout these planning and design stages, we also collaborated using Google Drive to curate resources, annotate readings, and author materials and presentations. As a result, we have built a repository of shared resources that assists us as we build subsequent iterations.

We shared logistical tasks such as recruitment, which we achieved through available communication channels including newsletters, blog posts, and email lists. Additionally, we sent email invitations to specific faculty who had indicated interest in related topics through previous seminars or consultations. The size of our communities tended to be small, ranging from 6-8, which we found ideal for generating conversation and cross-disciplinary interactions. Meeting the group in centrally located buildings, sometimes we alternated the lead facilitator role and other times we adopted a more conversational tone in which we were equally engaged. Generally, we would meet early in the space to intentionally arrange the seating, white boards, and other materials to match the planned activities and group work.

In addition to the formal group settings, we offered individual consultations to participants as they considered designing new class activities and assignments. As requested, we met with faculty to brainstorm possibilities, to locate resources, and to coach them through the design process. For example, we assisted a participant who was planning to digitize World War II library holdings in collaboration with students enrolled in a first-year history course. She, in collaboration with us and the University Libraries Special Collections staff, will be implementing an instance of Omeka to which students will contribute digitized artifacts and appropriate metadata over the course of several semesters.

Lessons Learned

These three cohorts revealed several areas for improvement and enhancement:

Increasing Learner Participation and Voice

While we were privileged to have a student assistant present in the latter two faculty communities, we would like to facilitate spaces where these questions and concepts are explored jointly by both faculty and learners. This might take the form of joint learner-faculty cohorts, annual symposia and celebrations, learner-led trainings for faculty, as well as having peer mentors available to assist faculty in learning design and implementation. Our appreciation of open pedagogy stems in large part from the importance given to learners' voice and participation in the learning process. In that spirit, we would like to actively include these voices in future learning communities.

Demonstrating Value of Labor Through Incentive Structures

We are aware of the competing demands on faculty of their time and the labor they extend above and beyond to participate in our cohorts over the last few iterations. We would like to obtain funding that would incentivize and award these dedicated teachers in their endeavors to improve learning. We hope to explore opportunities for funding participation with other campus groups, including the recently formed Center for Teaching and Learning. A more ambitious and long-term goal is to continue to advocate for stronger recognition of teaching excellence and innovation in the promotion and tenure process at our research-intensive institution.

Sharing and Circulating Reflections, Spotlights, and Stories

In the past, at the end of a semester-long seminar, we have requested that participants produce a reflective artifact or video, but did not do so for these communities due to timing and scheduling. Videos or textual reflections publically shared would serve to recognize open pedagogy champions and might amplify stories to inspire fellow educators. Therefore, we will incorporate these strategies in future iterations. They might take the form of personal blogs or curated videos as seen at the Ontario eCampus or video reflections from Coventry University's Open Web for Learning and Teaching Expertise Hub (Ontario Extend 2019; OWLTEH, 2018).

Learning from Fellowship Models at Other Institutions

We are interested in connecting with and borrowing from other institutions pursuing similar programs. For example, The City University of New York's Graduate Center Library (CUNY, 2019) hosts an open pedagogy graduate student fellowship that includes a bootcamp, a symposium, fellow generated guides and reflections. Kwantlen Polytechnic University hosted a faculty learning community on Open Pedagogy in 2018 that met virtually twice monthly to discuss readings concentrated on topics such as: OER to open pedagogy; diversity, equity, and inclusion; privacy, digital redlining, and educational technology; A Domain of

One's Own; and information environmentalism (Kwantlen Polytechnic University, 2018). Alternatively, we might draw from Montgomery College's emphasis on social justice within their faculty fellowship program (Montgomery College, 2019).

Maintaining a Critical Lens on Open Pedagogy

We are committed to the many benefits and opportunities afforded by open pedagogical practices, but we are equally aware of the complexities therein. In order to maintain coherence with the underlying goals of open pedagogy, we would like to cultivate spaces where faculty and learners critically confront barriers and bottlenecks, such as issues of inclusivity and risk in open spaces.

Expanding Participation and Experimenting with Modality

We have considered the potential of virtual offerings that might appeal to those not regularly on campus or even members of other campuses or communities. Additionally, while we had a few individuals who were able to participate in consecutive cohorts, thereby building upon knowledge from previous communities, these alternate modalities might afford more opportunities for ongoing participation and knowledge building.

Conclusion

Overall, the success of our partnership rests on the common purpose, mutual trust, and shared ownership that drives our collaboration. Through formal and informal meetings, we remain open to the insights, practical and theoretical, that each of us bring from our respective fields and experiences. Occupying unique roles in education development, we offer one another a partner with whom we can approach the challenges of facilitating faculty learning and affecting a campus investment in crafting meaningful learning experiences.

Readied by these initial experiences and invigorated by areas for improvement, we plan to persist in extending the exploration of open educational practices across our campus. Through good fortune, we will do so in an energizing partnership that is intent on pursuing a dynamic culture of teaching and learning. We intend to cultivate communities of learners, both faculty and students, to reflect upon the risks and rewards of working with open pedagogy and the possibilities for local enactments.

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Feedback, suggestions, or conversation about this chapter may be shared via our Rebus Community Discussion Page.

Appendix A

Sample Readings and Rationale for Selection

DeRosa, R., & Jhangiani, R. (2017). Open Pedagogy. In E. Mays (Ed.), *A Guide to Making Open Textbooks with Students*. Retrieved from https://press.rebus.community/makingopentextbookswithstudents/chapter/open-pedagogy

> *We selected this text because of its wonderfully phrased introduction to open pedagogy as well as the thought-provoking questions the authors offer. Additionally, the text gives a nice array of open pedagogy examples.*

Reynolds, R. (2018). Eight Qualities of Open Pedagogy. Retrieved April 1, 2019, from *Next Thought*. Retrieved from https://www.nextthought.com/thoughts/2015/02/ten-qualities-of-open-pedagogy

> *We selected this reading because it captures a number of the qualities and characteristics that might connect open pedagogy to teaching values already held by our participants. It was a useful pivot point to inviting participants to consider the roles of learner and teacher in learning settings.*

Wiley, D. (2013, October 21). What is open pedagogy? Retrieved from *Iterating toward openness* website: https://opencontent.org/blog/archives/2975

> *We selected this reading to introduce the concept of disposable and renewable assignments and to provoke participants' consideration of the types of assignments they readily design. Additionally, we hoped this reading would prompt a consideration of learners as knowledge creators, active participants, and active thinkers.*

Dean, M. (2016). What an open pedagogy class taught me about myself. In *Interdisciplinary Studies: A Connected Learning Approach*.

> *We selected this reading to capture a student account and experience of an open pedagogy course. An important aspect of our approach towards the faculty communities was always to infuse student voices, where possible, and to encourage an empathetic approach to learners in our classrooms.*

Appendix B

Online spaces and shared resources

- Libguide for Fall 2017 and Spring 2018: https://libguides.colorado.edu/cop/open
- WordPress for Spring 2019: https://sig.possibility.buffscreate.net/