June, 2017

Dear colleagues,

We are excited to invite you to submit a proposal for a chapter in our edited book, ***Ecologies of open: Inclusion, intersections, and interstices in education***. We intend to approach Athabasca University's open press for publication in 2018. A description of the scope and intent of the book is presented below, followed by submission details:

Thinking about "open" almost automatically calls forth thinking about "closed" as if we must think in terms of binaries – closed/open, good/bad, black/white. But there is also another way.

"Open." "Openness." "Opening." "Opened." In the context of postsecondary and tertiary education, each of these nuances or forms/degrees of "open" / "openness" / "opening" / "opened" can refer to, inter alia, admission requirements, registration periods, flexibility in choices, open pedagogy, curricula, professional development, curriculum resources, assessment practices, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and research.

While it is possible to see "open," "openness, "opening," and "opened" as processes or statuses, we can also understand them in terms of multidimensional relationships and networks, where the status or process of "open," "openness," "opening," and "opened" evolve in relation to other, often mutually constitutive or incommensurable factors in overlapping ecologies. We propose understanding ecologies of "open" in education as existing in the nexus of political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal frameworks and agendas and as entangled with contestation, incongruities and obstacles. Ecologies of "open" rest on and flow from shifting and often colliding tectonic layers of how we understand the world and humanity's role in it, and how we define, teach and share our understanding of knowledge. However contradictory it sounds, ecologies of "open" do not only include but also, by definition, exclude.

It is easy to think about how the evolution of distributed education and open universities celebrated offering opportunities to those who did not have access or the resources to attend postsecondary or tertiary education. Policies at the Open University in the UK, Hong Kong's Open University, India's Open University, UNISA, as well as open universities in Canada, Portugal and around the world have presented new learning opportunities to millions of learners. There is also an educational consortium of more than 30 institutions world-wide (OERu) permits the transfer of university and college credits among its institutions.

Openness in education often comes at a price. Despite the hype surrounding Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) evidence suggests that those that benefit the most from these courses are those who already have social capital as whites, male and graduated. Some of these MOOCs'

resources are locked behind copyright regimes and their assessment/accreditation of successful completion of the course comes at a price.

In the field of the dissemination of research findings, evidence suggests that there has been an increase in the number of open journals that no longer rely on paid subscriptions to permit access to their contents. Open publishing houses present monographs online for global access. Open educational resources (OER) foster the creation and development of myriad learning tools that are available to all. Individual researchers increasingly use blogs, micro-blogging and a range of social media to share research findings. These "open" spaces are not, necessarily without discrimination and risks for scholars and practitioners who are from marginalised communities based on race, gender, geopolitical location and culture. In such cases, participating as scholar in these "open spaces" increases vulnerability and even personal safety. "Open," "openness, "opening," and "opened" can be risky business.

How do we therefore think about "open," "openness," "opening," and/or "opened" in the context of the scholarship of teaching and learning and research? In an updated version of Boyer's seminal work on scholarship, *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate* (2016), the word "open" does not appear in the index, although the "probing mind" (p. 70) of the researcher is deemed a vital asset to academia, and scholarly "investigation, in all the disciplines, is at the very heart of academic life, [such that] the pursuit of knowledge must be assiduously cultivated and defended" (p. 70). In this sense, *being* "open" implies an *ontological* turn that has implications for how we see not only the scholarship of teaching and learning, but also disciplinary knowledge, inter, intra and transdisciplinary research and practices, curriculum design and pedagogy, and the validation of knowledge claims.

In "Open Access: Toward the Internet of the Mind," Romanenko (2017) identified communication as "the essence of science" and congratulated the Internet on its ability to foster and enable global communication. Open Access, he wrote, "is simply a way to express the cross-fertilization of the very culture of science with new technologies to create the optimal communication system science needs," while at the same time recognizing the complexity of "open's" newly-expanded possibilities. The authors of Scholarship reconsidered agree: "It is through 'connectedness' that research ultimately is made authentic" (p.70).

While we agree with the foundational statements expressed above, we hold that a tension exists between the notions of openness, connectedness, and their by-product, community; we hold that a culture of interstices often separates researchers and academics from their intentions. And, without demonizing this state of divisiveness, we propose to examine it under the working title *Ecologies of open: Inclusion, intersections, and interstices in education.*

A prime focus will be on the gaps that separate us ideologically in research, epistemology, and in resulting occasions of academic engagement. In support of this contention, we invite you to look further at the status of open data, open initiatives, and open research in current research enterprises.

The following are some of the questions to which we invite your response:

- Who/what are the gatekeepers in the discourses on "open," "openness," "opening," and/or "opened"? How do they impact on the future of "open"?
- Are researchers separated from each other, from colleagues, from … ideas? In what ways? Why? To what extent do university rankings and the race for citations skew/sustain/expand inter- researcher networks and relations?
- How can a culture of openness be fostered within institutions? Within programs? Within cultures? Among researchers?
- What design innovations/strategies will foster a culture of openness in research and scholarship?
- What is the role of disciplinary identity within institutions? Within scholarship?
- What constraints do inter-disciplinary researchers face?
- How can inter-disciplinary researchers attain success?
- What role do funding programs play in promoting or discouraging openness or inter-disciplinary movement?
- What types of leadership skills are required to further the interdisciplinary agenda?
- How can communication practices – personal and institutional – foster openness and connectedness? Within institution and beyond?
- What assessment tools/practices can best address open environments/learning/ communities?
- What is the value of a culture of openness to individuals, to community, to society?
- What innovative technologies can promote, initiate, or sustain a culture of openness?
- Is disruption essential for the development of a culture of openness?
- What is the role of MOOCS in the future development of a culture of openness?
- MOOCS…and then what? Do you see a post-MOOC openness?

Boyer, E. L., updated and expanded by Moser, D., Ream, T. c., Braxton, J. M & Associates (2016). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate.* San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass.

Romanenko, A. (2017). Open Access: Toward the Internet of the Mind. Retrieved April 30, 2017 from: http://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/open-access-toward-the-internet-of-the-mind

We hope that this timely project excites you as much as it excites us! We have included some brief biographical information below. Submission details also follow.

Sincerely,

[signed] Dianne and Paul

Dr. Dianne Conrad
Dr. Paul Prinsloo

Who we are

Dianne Conrad

I have been a practicing adult and distance educator for over 35 years. During this time, I developed and taught undergraduate and graduate courses at several universities across Canada; coordinated and managed undergraduate and graduate programs in adult and distance education and communications; and, most recently, managed the prior learning assessment process at Athabasca University (AU) in Canada. I am currently the co-editor of the *International Review of Open and Distributed Learning*; serve on several international editorial boards in the ODL field; and teach in the masters and doctoral programs at AU. My research interests include the fields of open, distance, adult, continuing, professional, and online learning; and the recognition and assessment of prior learning. I am officially retired. My first "in-retirement" book, *Engagement and Authenticity: Assessment Strategies for Online Learning* (co-author, J. Openo*),* is currently in publication at AUPress.

Paul Prinsloo

I am a Research Professor in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in the College of Economic and Management Sciences, University of South Africa (Unisa). My academic background includes fields as diverse as theology, art history, business management, online learning, and religious studies. I am an established researcher and have published numerous articles in the fields of teaching and learning, student success in distance education contexts, learning analytics, and curriculum development. My current research focuses on the collection, analysis and use of student data in learning analytics, graduate supervision and digital identity. I was born curious and in trouble. Nothing has changed since then. I blog at https://opendistanceteachingandlearning.wordpress.com/ and my Twitter alias is @14prinsp

Submission Details

Important dates

September 15, 2017: Proposal Submission Deadline
October 15, 2017:   Notification of Acceptance
January 15, 2018:   Full Chapter Submission
March 30, 2018:   Review Results Returned
April 15, 2018 :   Final Acceptance Notification
July 30, 2018 :   Final Chapter Submission

Target audience

We anticipate that a varied audience for this publication will include instructors and their students; researchers; program and curriculum developers; and higher education and ODL administrators. The open-access publication of this book will increase potential readership.

Proposal length should be maximum 600 words, not including references

Chapter length should be 7,000 to 10,000 words.

Submissions will be:

- submitted in Microsoft® Word
- in English
- double-spaced, in 12-point font
- written in objective third person point of view throughout (Use "the authors" or "the researchers" NOT "I" or "we")
- original, not previously published, not submitted for publication elsewhere, and not revised from a previous submission elsewhere

Peer review

- Double-blind
- Authors of accepted chapter proposals will be asked to review two other submissions

Please submit to Dr. Dianne Conrad at diannec@athabascau.ca

Format details to follow upon proposal acceptance