

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 pursuing, 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 were 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](https://twitter.com/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 ləkʷəŋən Peoples, now known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and the territories of the WSÁNEĆ Peoples.

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—End of Episode—



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