Cross-Cultural Mentoring in Tertiary Education: Enhancing Self-Efficacy in Online Teaching Through Collaboration and *Openness* in Professional Learning

Helen DeWaard and Rekha Chavhan

Abstract This chapter re-imagines continuing professional learning and development for tertiary educators through cross-cultural mentoring through the lens of the authors' experiences with the UNESCO Open Education for a Better World mentoring project. Professional learning occurred while engaging in the actions and processes in this mentoring project, thus improving self-efficacy, as the mentor and mentee collaboratively developed an online, open-access course on 'Instructional Design'. The authors' experiences of cross-cultural mentoring are informed by the theory of self-efficacy, thus highlighting mastery experiences, social persuasion, social modelling, and choice processes that impact continued professional learning and development. Framed by research on boundary crossing, the authors share their story of cross-cultural mentoring as an approach for re-visioning open, collaborative, continual, online professional learning and development.

1 Background

Emerging from the challenging times resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is ever more evident that tertiary educators should be engaging in networked, collaborative, and cross-boundary learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020; Nerantzi, 2018; Rowe, 2020). Research suggests that awareness of the need for collaborative learning is lacking (Burns et al., 2020) and that cross-institutional and cross-boundary academic development is a potential way forward (Nerantzi, 2019). Yet this is an under-developed area of study

H. DeWaard (✉)
Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, Orillia, ON, Canada
e-mail: hdewaard@lakeheadu.ca

R. Chavhan
Department of Education, SNDT Women's University, Pune, Maharashtra, India
e-mail: rekha.chavhan@educationmumbai.sndt.ac.in

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(Nerantzi, 2018). Research literature imparts a few examples where tertiary educational contexts provide space, specific instruction, or motivations for collaboration (Rowe, 2020). We suggest that one mechanism for continuing professional learning and development (CPLD) is available within the Open Education for a Better World (OE4BW) project landscape. Building capacity can occur through participation in intercultural collaboration and conversation (Nascimbeni, 2020) and by shifting CPLD into diverse online mentoring communities such as OE4BW.

In this chapter, we share how our CPLD was shaped by participation in the OE4BW global mentoring program. This open and collaborative mentoring experience impacted our self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993, 2012) as tertiary educators. The purpose of this mentoring experience was the design and delivery of an online course to introduce instructional design theories and principles to educators in India, aiming to improve awareness of online teaching while integrating and using open educational resources (OERs). This project was developed by the mentee in order to address a problem, in that few educators in faculties of education in India had awareness of online instruction or the use of open educational resources (OER).

First we reveal details of the OE4BW international online mentoring program that was developed to unlock the potential of open education in achieving the United Nations sustainable development goals (Urbančič et al., 2019). Second, we explore literature in the area of CPLD and cross-cultural mentoring as it relates to OER and open educational practices (OEPr), and perceived self-efficacy (SE). Third, we apply Nerantzi's (2018) cross-boundary open learning model to frame our cross-cultural mentoring experiences. Finally, we provide insights into cross-cultural mentoring as a form of CPLD and the impact on our online teaching practice.

1.1 Open Education for a Better World

OE4BW (https://oe4bw.org/) is a free, international, online, mentoring program established in 2017 to expand the potential of open education by shifting toward inclusive knowledge societies as outlined in the *Ljubljana OER Action Plan* (UNESCO, 2017). Inclusive knowledge societies, one of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) key objectives, involve globally connected and empowered people(s) in transforming their world through the creation, preservation, dissemination, and utilisation of information that sustains human and economic development (Souter, 2010). Core features of knowledge societies include free and open access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy, and ethics, grounded in a global, sustainable, Internet framework (UNESCO, 2015).

The OE4BW mentoring program is designed with a cross-cultural, collaborative framework (Urbančič et al., 2019) that involves a sustained, intentional, and reciprocal relationship where participants share perspectives and mentoring experiences (Crutcher, 2014). Networking within OE4BW was integrated in 2018 to support the growing numbers of mentoring teams (Urbančič et al., 2019). Mentoring within

OE4BW is based on dyadic relationships, supported by regional geographic hubs. This is reflective of boundary-less mentoring as suggested by Starr-Glass (2020) whereby participants experience an open, fluid, and diverse environment within a transitory, networked organisation. The OE4BW mentoring ecosphere re-envisions how mentoring can occur openly in today's global and culturally diverse learning arenas. We suggest the OE4BW mentoring design can enhance how CPLD occurs in tertiary education.

1.2 CPLD and Cross-Cultural Mentoring

CPLD for instructors of online learning has become a primary issue for tertiary educational contexts due to the rapid pivot to online instruction resulting from the global COVID-19 pandemic. Saroyan & Trigwell (2015) outline factors that positively impact CPLD such as reflection, small-scale and voluntary participation, situated learning to facilitate transfer, and learning within communities of practice. Many of these CPLD features are evident in cross-cultural mentoring experiences within OE4BW projects (DeWaard & Chavhan, 2020b). For our OE4BW mentoring experience, our learning was focused on developing OER for online learning modules for educators in India. This project began with an application of a proposed course design, submitted to the OE4BW organisation (see Fig. 1). This was followed by the matching process of the mentor and mentee and relationship building. The design and development of the open online course for teacher educators in India was the focus of this mentoring project and occurred from Feb to June. The course was delivered and deployed in June, followed by a formal presentation by the mentee in July in Slovenia. Engagement with OEPr and online teaching experiences enhanced our CPLD. Traditionally, the mentor provides the scaffolding to develop the mentee's confidence and academic skills. In our project, this occurred through our shared experiences with collaboration within shared files, folders, and documents to track all progress throughout the project. Through ongoing engagement, we continue to transform our online teaching and OEPr through reflections resulting from dialogue about our experiences (DeWaard & Chavhan, 2020b, c).

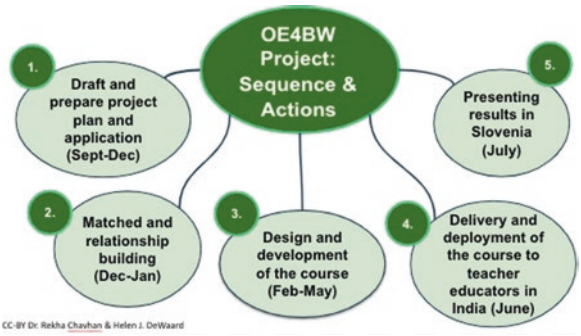

Fig. 1 OE4BW: Project sequence and actions

Mentoring is an approach to learning that connects to cognitive apprenticeship, whereby learning is centred on guided experience and metacognitive processes (Starr-Glass, 2020). Openness in mentoring allows for possible connectivity, accelerating involvement, and potential synergism (Starr-Glass, 2020). This openness within mentoring is not only an internal frame of mind that encourages participation but also an externally focused, structurally open system available to others around the world. The OE4BW project infrastructure has architecturally evolved towards more openness and visibility as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with shifting practices evident on their website and the creation of the Eduscope event (*OE4BW*, n.d.), which celebrates the mentoring projects created and completed by educators around the globe.

Mentoring theory suggested that mentoring relationships evolve over time through phases of initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Daniel et al., 2019). Mentoring can focus on self-efficacy (DiRenzo et al., 2010) or self-regulation (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). By finding common ground, as we did within the creation and implementation of OER, mentors and mentees establish foundations for trusting, caring, and supportive relationships (Crutcher, 2014). The attributes of selflessness, active listening, honesty, nonjudgement, persistence, patience, and comfort with complexity and diversity (Crutcher, 2007) are valuable assets to mentoring and thus are important considerations for the success of OE4BW mentoring experiences. We believe these same attributes apply to tertiary educators' CPLD when sharing in open mentoring experiences such as the OE4BW project.

Technology facilitates new models of mentoring that stretch beyond static boundaries of time and space (Kochan & Pascarelli, 2003). Collaborative tools have gained primacy in mentoring communications (DiRenzo et al., 2010; Loureiro-Koechlin & Allan, 2010) with the advent of a plethora of digital resources beyond email, text messaging, and video chat. Cross-cultural mentoring is impacted by the affordances and constraints of the digital tool or resources selected, the digital skills and fluencies of the mentoring dyad, and the shifting notions of temporality within rhythms of participation (Loureiro-Koechlin & Allan, 2010). Foundational to any successful mentoring relationship are ethical considerations (Johnson, 2017) and developing trust, which can be challenging within cross-cultural mentoring relationships (Crutcher, 2014).

We propose cross-cultural mentoring and openness as an effective strategy to enhance the CPLD of teachers in tertiary education. Our focus, because of our own contexts, is on teacher education, but the experiences we share can inform the practices of cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural CPLD in other tertiary education contexts. Learning to teach online requires individuals and institutions to carefully consider CPLD opportunities that support tertiary educators' current and pressing needs for competency development (Nascimbeni, 2020). In the next section, we examine the concept of self-efficacy as it connects to our CPLD and OE4BW experiences since this supports clarity in Nerantzi's (2018) cross-boundary, collaborative, open learning framework.

1.3 Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1993) suggested that perceived self-efficacy (PSE) is a contributor to an individual's cognitive development and impacts affective, motivational, and selection processes when learning. Like Bandura, we'll refer to PSE as self-efficacy (SE). Bandura (1993) posits that a teacher's SE impacts the learning environments they create, suggesting that SE could also impact the CPLD environments in which tertiary teachers learn (Donohoo, 2018; Hall & Trespalacios, 2019). According to Bandura (2012), the teacher's belief that they can motivate students and stimulate learning is developed in four ways: mastery experiences, social modelling, social persuasion, and choice processes. We share how these SE beliefs relate to personal motivations and decisions about CPLD.

Mastery experiences, described by Bandura (2012) as resilient self-efficacy, requires overcoming challenges through persistent effort and using failure as a learning opportunity. Bandura (1977) hypothesised that "expectations of personal efficacy determine whether coping behaviour will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles" (p. 191). Changes in teaching behaviours of tertiary educators can result from the experience of mastery (Bandura, 1977) derived from CPLD within effective mentoring moments.

Bandura (1977) posits *social modelling* as an element of SE when the persistence and success of others raises an individual's beliefs in their capabilities. Observational models and supports such as those provided by a mentor can become catalysts for improving SE. Cross-institutional and cross-culturally connected opportunities for learning can link, stretch, and amplify CPLD (Oddone, 2019; Walker & Forbes, 2018).

Social persuasion occurs when individuals are encouraged to set goals and measure success in personal improvement within "cognitive, motivational, affective, and decisional" actions (Bandura, 2012, p. 13). As suggested by Bandura (1999), this observational learning "conveys rules for generative and innovative behaviour" (p. 25). The application of electronic technologies across social systems allow individuals to extend beyond the boundaries of their current contexts (Bandura, 1999). OE4BW projects, enabled through diverse technologies, support social persuasion within mentoring experiences.

Choice processes impact SE through the range of choices, as well as the decisional results, at key points in an individual's life paths (Bandura, 2012). For example, deciding to become a mentor, deciding to apply to be mentored, seeking CPLD opportunities, and sharing information openly are dependent on an individual's SE. Decisions to pursue CPLD in tertiary contexts can be dependent on an individual's SE.

As we share in the next section of this chapter, SE can impact CPLD. Since SE is an essential component when connecting and collaborating for OE4BW projects, the mentors' and mentees' previous experiences with online technology skills and fluency should be considered. Technological SE is an established concept in

literature research (Barton & Dexter, 2020; Hall & Trespalacios, 2019; Tondeur et al., 2016) and indicates that SE with technology has a positive relationship to how it is used and the perceptions of its ease of use and usefulness within mentoring tasks.

2 CPLD and Cross-Boundary Open Learning

> I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another … [E]very internal experience ends up on the boundary (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 287).

As Bakhtin suggests and research reveals, boundaries are a place of learning (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Nerantzi, 2019; Tur et al., 2020). Learning occurs when a boundary is crossed from unknown to known, or from novice to expert. The challenge in tertiary education, specifically in learning to teach online, is that boundary crossing necessarily occurs from physical to digital spaces, from time bound to timeless teaching, and from localised to globalised possibilities. The opportunity to co-create and collaboratively deliver an online course using OER, through the OE4BW mentoring project, was a boundary-crossing experience (DeWaard & Chavhan, 2020b).

Nerantzi (2019) describes boundary crossing that brings together an unconventional mix of individuals, from different cultures, sectors, professional status, and disciplines and practices. This mirrors the community structures we experienced within the OE4BW mentoring ecosphere. Nerantzi (2019) provides a framework that can inform CPLD within cross-boundary mentoring. This notion of boundary, as it relates to our CPLD experiences in the OE4BW project, bridges physical and virtual locations (place and space), while unbinding time and geographic zones. Nerantzi (2019) describes cross-boundary learning through four categories: modes of participation; time, places, and space; culture and language; and diverse professional contexts.

2.1 Modes of Participation

First, Nerantzi (2019) identifies that participants in her research focused on personal and professional motivations, curiosity, and interest for self-development as an altruistic motivation for engagement. This is also true for our OE4BW mentoring journey since our motivations and curiosity for open education and global connections were the impetus for our engagement. For the mentee, motivations for signing up for OE4BW project work resulted from curiosity initiated through local workshops in the use of different technological tools (e.g. LMS), then gaining experience in course development while learning more about OER. This precipitated her collaboration in a WhatsApp group with others in departmental professional

conversations and engaging with others who provided the spark for the OE4BW project design.

The OE4BW mentoring project provided valuable CPLD as we, mentors and mentees, worked together within a project-based framework, focused on providing an open online course for teacher educators in India. Our SE, specifically our sense of mastery through observational learning, was enhanced as a direct result of the multiple, mixed modes of participation, i.e. using video screen-sharing, creating learning modules within shared documents, and exploring various technological tools such as the MooKIT learning management system (LMS). A sense of mastery in the use of video conferencing technology was gained through our experimental explorations of effective tools. We started by using Skype to meet and talk, but migrated to using Google Meet and Zoom due to affordances within these software tools. This also shifted our practice with the participants in the open course we developed, as well as extending to other work we both do in our own faculties of education. As a result of the pandemic, video chat with screen sharing has become a commonplace practice, often used when discussing professional projects or meeting with students to discuss course work. Our pre-COVID experience ensured we were proficient users prior to the online pivot resulting from the global pandemic, suggesting we had already crossed the boundary to fully online and video-enabled teaching and learning.

2.2 Time, Place, and Space

Second, Nerantzi (2019) reveals that participants in cross-boundary learning courses experienced feelings of disconnection and that learning occurs as a continuum through time, place, and space. While the research shows that feelings of being lonely and isolated within professional learning are commonplace (Nerantzi, 2019), our personal experiences throughout the OE4BW journey did not feel disconnecting or isolating. Throughout the project, we established a routine to meet and talk at a regular time and place – Sunday morning in Canada and evening in India. We used WhatsApp communications due to the ease of connectivity to support a quick, responsive collaboration between mentors and mentees, which became a mechanism for ongoing CPLD and enhancing our SE through social persuasion and choice processes. We did however feel disconnected from other OE4BW project teams since, at that time, there were no pre-established means of collaboration between project teams. This has since changed in the OE4BW project architecture with the initiation of regional hubs (Urbančič et al., 2019) and gathering spaces such as the Eduscope Conference.

2.3 Culture and Language

Third, Nerantzi (2019) suggests that cross-boundary learning for participants should consider culture and language as both a barrier and as a source of enrichment. SE is impacted when learning occurs outside of comfortable language and cultural contexts (Bandura, 2012). One factor that impacts cross-boundary learning within the OE4BW projects is a confidence with shared language (e.g. English). In our case, language and understanding were not barriers since English is a common language for academic use in India, our common backgrounds in teacher education, and our intentionality in focusing time and energy on ensuring understanding through attentive listening and asking probing questions. Confidence and morale were boosted by these OE4BW conversations, care was enacted (DeWaard & Chavhan, 2020a, c), and SE was enhanced, which positively impacted our CPLD. For example, presenting about the OE4BW projects at international conferences such as OER20 (DeWaard & Chavhan, 2020a) and the Eduscope event (DeWaard & Chavhan, 2020b) augmented the mastery experiences for both mentor and mentee. By presenting at these international events, our choice processes (Bandura, 2012) were enhanced due to the emotional response resulting from feelings of success.

OE4BW projects provide opportunities for social modelling and social persuasion (Bandura, 2012) by connecting CPLD for individuals in different countries and cultures. This OE4BW opportunity enriched our experiences, by openly sharing our unique contexts for learning, and stretching us out of our comfort zones. We were motivated to learn about online learning within our geographic contexts, first by getting to know each other, learning about each other's cultures, exploring how things worked in each other's contexts, and also by sharing teaching experiences and practices with online instruction. For example, explaining how online teacher education is structured in India and comparing this to structures in the Canadian context, particularly in terms of online course design and offerings, supported our mutual understanding. This became relevant when issues of access to the LMS for the online course being designed needed to be resolved. Opting for an openly available LMS designed for the Indian context ensured that open access for cross-institutional participation was enabled since this was one of the goals of this OE4BW mentoring project.

2.4 Diverse Professional Contexts

In the fourth category for cross-boundary learning, Nerantzi (2019) identifies initial discomfort in cross-boundary learning within diverse professional contexts. The participants in Nerantzi's (2019) research experienced initial discomfort due to their perception that tertiary education was of a higher status, with perceived hierarchies, resulting in a lower sense of SE for some research participants. When considering cross-cultural mentoring as a means of CPLD, a flattening of hierarchies is

essential. In our specific case, hierarchy was not an issue, as we both work within the field of teacher education. Although degrees of accreditation (e.g. PhD status) could be perceived as a hierarchical barrier, our common vision, values, and backgrounds removed any barriers. Our shared experiences within teacher education, along with shared beliefs in constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, provided common ground for understanding the online course we collaboratively developed.

When considering cross-cultural mentoring as a mechanism for CPLD, mixing and pairing individuals from different geographic regions and different professional backgrounds should be considered. In the OE4BW matching process, this is an established practice (Urbančič et al., 2019). Participant control over the matching process is not essential (Walker & Forbes, 2018). It is the exchange of creative ideas as well as feedback (Walker & Forbes, 2018) that enhance social modelling and social persuasion (Bandura, 2012). For example, the OE4BW Eduscope conference opened opportunities to catalyse CPLD by engaging diverse voices and project plans, many of which focused on the development of online instructional materials that are shared openly and contribute to global repositories of OER.

3 Discussion

Our experiences within the OE4BW mentoring project are one model for tertiary educators (Walker & Forbes, 2018) to enhance CPLD within online learning and teaching. Since research suggests that an instructor's practical experiences in online teaching improved student learning outcomes (Martin, 2017), our cross-cultural mentoring experiences, supported by ongoing and open conversations about the design and development of online teaching, enhanced our teaching practices.

The attributes of boundary crossing as described by Nerantzi (2019) and for quality online teaching (Lenert & Janes, 2017) suggest several factors that were considerations for the OER and OEPr within the online course we collaboratively designed for the OE4BW project. We see communication between learner and instructor as a critical factor in online learning. Through this OE4BW project, we co-designed pre-course, mid-course, and end-of-course surveys, as well as course announcements in multiple media formats. These were new practices for the mentee, resulting in a change in OEPr and conceptions of engagement with learners within online teaching. Through modelling and choice processes, the mentor was able to impart experiences for online course design and delivery to ensure participants felt welcome and became engaged with their instructor, the mentee. Using strategies such as an instructor welcome video, creating an introductory activity on a Padlet, and using shared Google docs for weekly activities were some of the ways that the course design mirrored the mentor/mentee CPLD experiences. What was modelled and used within the mentoring moments and experiences were extended and applied to the online course design, thus enhancing the CPLD of the mentee. Additionally, the process the mentor used to provide ongoing feedback to the

mentee was openly discussed, resulting in the mentee taking a lead role in sharing course assignment feedback. By using and working within collaborative and shared digital spaces, such as using shared files, folders, and documents to capture meeting minutes and assigned tasks, this practice has become the norm for the mentee's online teaching practice.

Mentoring is one model that incorporates many of the features of high-quality CPLD suggested by Osmond-Johnson et al. (2019) and Saroyan and Trigwell (2015), including factors such as active and variable learning, collaborative learning, situated learning, engaging in apprenticeship of teaching and learning, and external supports. By examining our OE4BW cross-cultural mentoring experience, we have illuminated how our CPLD has been enhanced by the SE factors of mastery experiences, social persuasion, social modelling, and choice processes. Cross-cultural mentoring, we believe, provides a unique opportunity to enhance a tertiary educator's individual cognitive development and potentially impact their affective, motivational, and selection processes when learning. This has the potential to influence systemic change in tertiary CPLD.

Mentoring such as that done within OE4BW can do much to "restore in people a sense of efficacy that they can make a difference" (Bandura, 1999, p. 37). Just as Bandura envisioned that "macrosocial applications of socio-cognitive principles via the electronic media illustrate how small collective efforts can have huge impacts on urgent global problems" (Bandura, 1999, p. 37), the OE4BW cross-cultural mentoring projects provide opportunity for CPLD that is positioned to have a positive impact on the global challenges in education as we collectively emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Socially constructed networks of CPLD, as created through the OE4BW mentoring experiences, has the potential to increase the outcomes for educators aiming to openly compare their own teaching with others and collaborate more with colleagues (Perryman & Seal, 2016). Opportunities for tertiary teachers to transact experiences, as shared stories, are powerful catalysts for achieving change (Black, 2015). OE4BW and cross-cultural, cross-boundary mentoring provide time to talk, work through challenges of translating principles of learning into practice, and encourage interactive, cross-cultural, cross-institutional, digital dialogues (Black, 2015; Nascimbeni, 2020; Nerantzi, 2019; Walker & Forbes, 2018).

4 Recommendations

While our focus is on individual CPLD, we are aware of the potential of collective self-efficacy (Donohoo et al., 2018) as a future direction for mentoring projects. Mentoring with OE4BW is currently limited to bringing dyads together to learn within personal experiences through social modelling and social persuasion. The consideration of perceived collective efficacy in future mentoring group dynamics may expand collective action and learning (Bandura, 2000; Donohoo, 2018; Starr-Glass, 2020).

One caution is that there is no one-size-fits-all version of CPLD for tertiary educators, or that mentoring will be the best CPLD solution for everyone. A problematic perception is that cross-boundary learning, the application of OER in education, or cross-culturally connected tertiary educators will become effective solutions to all the world's educational needs. Likewise, perceptions that the global north is a benevolent supplier of expertise and mentors, while the global south provides the context and needs for development (Perryman & Seal, 2016), should be critically examined and explicitly challenged. CPLD should be unambiguous about how reciprocity and collaboration can occur when learning within mentoring relationships. CPLD through mentorship can enhance cross-cultural awareness within a relationship based on a receptive attitude and reciprocal learning. An explicit emphasis on an ethos of caring (DeWaard & Chavhan, 2020a) can avoid re-colonizing learning to the detriment of the SE of mentors and mentees in global south contexts.

The exponential growth of digital technologies, exacerbated by the pivot to online learning resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic, provides an opportunity to enable people to become familiar and immersed within cyberworlds. This "growing primacy of the symbolic environment and the expanded opportunities it affords people to exercise greater influence in how they communicate, educate themselves, carry out their work, relate to each other, and conduct their business and daily affairs" (Bandura, 2012, p. 12) will continue to impact how CPLD can occur. Our story is one example of how CPLD in open, collaborative, cross-boundary mentoring experiences can become an opportunity for tertiary educators to enhance, support, and sustain SE in online teaching and learning.

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