

# Library hosted open access journals as tools for teaching publishing practices

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## Abstract

We will discuss teaching publishing practices and different forms of student participation in three open access journals hosted by Helsinki University Library's *Editori*-service, two of which are from a field of neurosciences. As a theoretical framework, we will distinguish between classroom journals (with students providing the content and teacher acting as an editor), student-led journals (students acting in both roles) and mock journals (which are like classroom journals, but the journal remains unpublished). Our discussion is founded on interviews of journal editors and analysis of student roles in the journals. In addition, we will mention one previous experiment of a mock journal in *Editori*-service, related to a Doctoral School working seminar in Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Key words:** neurosciences; neuropsychology; open access journal; academic training; publishing.

## Introduction

Scientific publishing involves a lot of practical learning. The author should be aware of submitting practices, style requirements, referring practices, relevant publication channels and argumentation. Open access publishing introduces additional requirements, such as knowledge of different article versions concerning self-archiving, open access licences, persistent identifiers and promoting one's open publications.

Learning these best practices can be supported by libraries and learning organizations in various ways. They can be taught in doctoral schools, in connection to seminars or through other colleagues. In this article we will discuss student participation in library hosted (open access) journals. As case studies we present three different open access journals hosted by Helsinki University Library where students are involved in various ways. We will also mention one project related to a non-open journal hosted by the library.

## Open journals as forms of open pedagogy

Helsinki University Library started an open access journal hosting service, titled *Editori*, in 2019 (1). It can be seen, in addition to open access journal service, as an educational tool that can be used for open pedagogy. The basic idea of open pedagogy is that it in-

creases the awareness of open access of students in the sense that they are both creators and contributors of knowledge (2). Thus, open pedagogy transforms the traditional roles of teachers and students – both can participate and work towards a common goal which can be an open publication.

In literature, there has been discussion of at least three different ways this can be done. The first is a *classroom* or *course journal*. In this model students are involved in the production of an online open journal within a classroom context. They write papers which are published in the journal produced. The students can peer review other's papers and revise their own papers after receiving feedback from other students. The open access journal featuring these articles is edited by the teacher and the students form the editorial board. The journal remains the same from one course to another but the editorial board changes regularly (3). In addition to peer review practices, the teacher can also provide advice and teach practices related to open access publishing in the context of the journal produced.

The second model can be called an open student journal. It is like a classroom journal, but it is entirely edited and produced by students. Student-led journals can be hosted by libraries which can also provide technical support (4). The student journal can be related to a certain discipline or even to a faculty, but also spe-

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cialize in certain topics in which case they are most probably produced by Ph. D. students, post-doctoral students, or both. In this case open access practices are learned by the students themselves, but the library can help, for example, by giving tutorials, acquiring persistent identifiers to articles, and informing of changes in publication practices.

In the third case the journals produced can be mock journals, which are fictitious and open only to students of the course and their teachers. The library can also host these journals — the journal is created but not made visible. With mock journals in the classroom context, scholarly communication and publishing concepts, including open access practices, can be taught (5). The mock journals are like the classroom journals, but there is no end-product. These different types of journals and educational settings serve different pedagogical needs.

### Open journals of the *Editori* service and their pedagogical aspects

In this section, we take a closer look at three open access journals hosted on the *Editori* service. We look at the pedagogical dimensions of the editing and publication processes of these journals. The account is based on an analysis of the journals and interviews with journal editors in April-May 2022.

*Journal for Reproducibility in Neuroscience (JRepNeurosci)* (6) is a peer-reviewed international journal that joined the *Editori* service in February 2020. *JRepNeurosci* publishes peer-reviewed articles that attempt to replicate research or individual experiments in the field of neuroscience. The journal's editorial board includes researchers ranging from principal investigators to Ph. D. students and master's students; the editor-in-chief is researcher Plinio Casarotti. The master's and Ph. D. students on the editorial board bring an educational aspect to the journal: they participate in the journal's editorial work, such as handling the manuscript process and copyediting. However, the focus of the journal is on scientific publishing, not education.

"Students were part of the editorial board and had an active role in the definition of the journal's scope. Some students have experience studying in English-speaking countries, so we used their skills as copyeditors. [Students are] supervising handling and assessing manuscripts submitted to the journal. The whole process was supervised by an experienced editor. The stu-

dents had an active role in the journal and learned how the journal operates and the workflow of the articles" (7).

*Neuropsy Open* (8) is a non-peer-reviewed journal that joined the *Editori* service in December 2019. *Neuropsy Open* publishes final diploma papers of the specialisation programmes in neuropsychology as well as research and brief reviews of recent dissertations in the field of clinical neuropsychology. The diploma papers have been evaluated and approved as part of the training programme, but they have not been peer-reviewed. The diploma papers are systematic literature reviews, and they are seen as necessary from the point of view of disseminating information because they "provide valuable up-to-date information on clinically relevant topics" (9). *Neuropsy Open* has been established specifically for the needs of the University of Helsinki's (UH) specialisation programme in neuropsychology and for the publication of systematic literature reviews. The editorial board of the journal consists of teachers and researchers from the department, with Laura Hokkanen, Professor of Clinical Neuropsychology at UH, as the editor-in-chief of *Neuropsy Open*.

"Students in specialisation programmes in neuropsychology are not involved in editorial work but they produce the journal's content. Once the final diploma paper has been approved and the credits have been registered, the student will be asked whether he or she consents to the publication of the work in this journal. If written permission is obtained, the paper will be edited to fit the journal, and the author will receive the proof version to check out. They are not required to do anything else. Systematic literature reviews address topics that arise most commonly from clinical work. Thus, the amount of information collected by the reviews and its synthesis is beneficial not only to the student herself/himself, but also to other clinicians who encounter the same question in their work. If literature reviews were left only on students' or examiners' computers, it would not develop the professional field. Through the *Neuropsy Open*, literature reviews also reach other members of the profession, outside the university. The quality of the literature reviews was pretty good even before *Neuropsy Open* was founded, and that was also an important reason to set up the journal. The journal has such a short history (since 2020) that I dare not say whether the quality of literature reviews has increased with the journal. The stu-

dents themselves have a very positive attitude towards the journal. Between 2019 and 2021, 21 students completed their final diploma papers, that were not published elsewhere, and 15 of them, or 71%, gave permission to publish their work at the *Neuropsy Open*" (10).

*Lumat-B: The International Journal of Maths, Science and Technology Education* (11) is a peer-reviewed international journal that joined the *Editori* service in 2019. The journal publishes congress and seminar presentations on the topics of teaching mathematics, science, and technology. The journal is published by the Luma Centre Finland (established 2003 at the University of Helsinki), a national network focusing on science education in LUMA subjects (i.e., mathematics, science, and technology). The editor-in-chief of the journal is Professor Maija Aksela (Department of Chemistry, UH) and the corresponding editor is University Lecturer Johannes Pernaa (Department of Chemistry, UH). At *Lumat-B*, the students conduct the peer review, and the editors evaluate the outcome. In this way the journal has an educational aspect. It is also used to publish articles written in an UH course for master's students, "Tutkiva ja eheyttävä kemian opetus" (Exploratory and integrative chemistry teaching).

"The aim [of the journal] is to learn how scientific publications are evaluated. This competence completes the 5-year studies in chemistry teaching, which provides a good basis for pursuing further studies. Basically, writing an article has been seen as a scary and cumbersome task, but once the article is ready and published, it has been remembered as a positive experience" (12).

### The many forms of student participation in *Editori* journals

At the beginning of this article, we described three ways to integrate pedagogical perspectives in scientific journals: 1) classroom or course journals, 2) student-led journals, and 3) mock journals. The journals operating on the *Editori* platform are not unambiguously structured in any of these classifications, but they are closest to the classroom or course journals in the sense that students are involved in the workflows of the journals with the guidance of more experienced researchers and teachers. This feature is evident in *Lumat-B* and *Neuropsy Open*, where students are primarily involved in producing content. In *Lumat-B*, students also partic-

ipate in peer-reviewing the articles. In both cases, the journals are also directly linked to teaching at the University of Helsinki: *Neuropsy Open* to specialisation programme in neuropsychology and *Lumat-B* to a course for master's students.

*The Journal for Reproducibility in Neuroscience* has some features of a student-led journal because there are students on the journal's editorial board. In other words, students are involved in editorial decisions, and they participate in editorial processes. However, none of the journals operating on the *Editori* service is a solely student-run journal; researchers and teachers have a guiding role in journals as principal editors.

All journals discussed above are open, so there are no mock journals among them. However, an interview with *Neuropsy Open*'s editor-in-chief provided more information on the journal's possible future plans. Teachers in the specialisation programme in neuropsychology have discussed in thesis using seminars the *Editori*'s Open Journal System (OJS) -based platform for collecting peer-reviews from students. However, the final publication would still be openly available.

"The platform of the journal could also be used as a tool for supervising the thesis, in which case peer-review from fellow students in the seminars could take place within the framework of the journal, and the threshold for finally granting permission to publish would be further lowered. There are no plans to move on to this yet but maybe later. Giving feedback per se needs to be developed, there seems to be a pretty big threshold for it, and students are reluctant to give their unfinished work to others to read" (13).

Although *The Journal for Reproducibility in Neuroscience*, *Neuropsy Open*, and *Lumat-B* are all open access journals, in 2019 *Editori* was also used solely for training purposes as an in-course (closed) journal. This experiment on a mock journal involved a doctoral school working seminar where Ph. D. students of philosophy, social sciences, art studies and literature presented papers or thesis chapters. A mock journal was created for the seminar and the teachers acted as editors. The students submitted their papers to the journal in *Editori* and downloaded an assigned paper of another student from the created mock journal platform. An external reviewer (usually from another university) was also assigned to review the paper. Before a certain date both the students and the external reviewers were obliged to

submit their reviews to the journal. Thus, the journal acted as a platform to distribute the papers and collect the reviews.

In the closing seminar of the doctoral school the students presented their papers and responded to the reviews, reflecting on how to improve their papers. The enterprise was thought to be very useful, as most students had not written peer review reports before or received detailed reviews of their work. The journal and therefore the papers were not published, but in theory this one-off project could have ended up as being a volume of a journal or an open collection of papers (14).

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## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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