Heuristics & Cognitive Biases in Social Reasoning

Transcript

0:00:00:12 - 00:00:06:29
Riley: Heuristic and Cognitive Biases on Social Reasoning Project Author's Interview! Introduction.

00:00:07:08 - 00:00:15:18
Katia: My name is Katia Dilkina, I'm an open learning faculty member at TRU and in psychology. I have three courses in open learning

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Riley: Please introduce your project and how the true Open Press team was able to support you.

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Katia: The project is on, heuristics and social reasoning. So, ways in which we, quickly make decisions when we're in social situations about perceiving how we perceive people and how that affects our behavior. It's a topic that relates to one of my courses that I feel very passionate about it because even though it is a topic in my in course and it's covered in many psych courses, it's I feel like it's relevant to people, even if they're not taking a course on the topic, because most of us want to know about person perception. You know, how we perceive other people and ourselves and and it's it's relevant and why that happens the way it does and how it, you know, informs behavior. So I feel like it's relevant beyond just course material and TRU Open press was of course, you know, integral in getting this to life and pretty much from the start to the end, they build the website for me, provided a lot of help with finding resources, especially for the activities, the the learning activities that I had there. Jessica, actually built a GIF for me to visualize one of the concepts. So there was like a little animation that she made.There was, of course, all the editing of the written text and the videos and yeah, just lots of support and help from start to end.

00:01:40:07 - 00:01:45:06
Riley: What advantages and benefits did you gain and will students gain from this project?

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Katia: I feel like there's a little bit of an overlap between what I get out of it and what they do, in the sense that now that I have it there and it is in one of my courses, whenever I get a question from a student on, on anything related to this, or if I see in their assignment that they seem to be having some gaps in their understanding, then I can send them to this resource. And I have

received really great feedback about how accessible it is, how easy to understand, how useful to grasp all of these concepts. So that's great for me. And I think, I think great for them. I think that the reason I think that the benefits really come from kind of two main things that in the, in this OER.

One is that it not only explains the different heuristics and social and biases and cognitive biases that we have, but also explains why they occur. So that kind of underlying cognitive aspect of it. Because knowing what the heuristics are, you can get from any mainstream textbook and including the one that we use for the course, right. Like for example, the representativeness heuristic has to do with categorizing people based on superficial characteristics. There it is. You know, but starting to think about mental representations and memory and processing. How how do those come about? How are they acquired? How are they represented in the brain? How are they activated? Understanding those things gives you so much more solid understanding of the social aspect as well. And I think that's and that's something that's that this OER has that you don't often see in mainstream textbooks.

The second thing is that I, I made like a deliberate effort to include a lot of practical aspects of the OER's. So it's not just here is the information, but it is actually structured around different examples so that it's all these concepts are grounded in something that people can can relate to. You know, they are not just examples, but also different activities, different prompts for them to, think about a scenario or related to themselves. And that makes it much more of a sort of active learning process than just getting the information either through, you know, text or video. So I think those two things make it what it is. And I think that's what gives it the strength. And, good makes it a good learning resource.

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Riley: How thoroughly does the project address fairness, inclusion and accessibility?

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Katia: Okay. Well, of course, just by virtue of being OER, it already has a lot of accessibility. It's if you have a device and internet, then there it is. Which is a great thing about OERs. But even beyond that, I, again, there is, of course, the thinking about different modalities of learning. There's of course, all the text, which for people who are more verbal, that would be one way to, understand this. The concepts and the theories. Then there's also lots of videos, and like static, visual, content, which is for learners that are more into the sort of visual format of learning. And then again, I feel like the most valuable aspect is those activities and prompts and scenarios that are there that engage the learner to relate things to themselves, to apply the concepts, thinking, okay, well, how would this work in this scenario? How can I analyze this knowing what I just learned? And I find that to be again, some people are not very good learners unless they have this unless they have this active component. Sure, they read about it. Sure they watch a video, but then it's just gone. If they don't, you know, really kind of see something more concrete that they can relate it to. But even if, even if they can learn just by reading or watching a video, I feel like it is much more likely to have that long lasting retention and understanding if you do have that more active component. So I do feel like that relates more to, again, applying to appealing to all kinds of learners and not, and not just sort of the more traditional way, which is generally just, you know, reading the textbook. And actually, there's one more thing I wanted to say about this, which I feel that and again, that's part of my passion for this particular project. I feel that the content itself speaks to this, speaks to inclusion and inclusivity and accessibility, because, as I said, it's all about the way that we perceive people and and how, you know, our behavior is

based on, on these perceptions and these heuristics that we, that we use, which, are related to things like diversity and bias and discrimination. And so I think that that also makes it really, related to that.

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Riley: How sustainable is the project regarding funding, upkeep and continuous improvement?

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Katia: I feel that it's it's quite sustainable. I mean, it will need some maintenance over time, but, I think that currently what's there is, is quite, involved and in-depth. And I have included a lot of references starting from the 1950s with, you know, theories from then and up to the current, decades from the 2020s with more current research and, you know, studies that involve cross-cultural studies and, neuroscience, neuroscience with imaging and just more rigorous experimental research. But, you know, the general theory and the concepts have been around and the subject of study for a few decades. And the core things I don't think have changed very much. So I, I feel like it's going to be relevant, even if left as it is for a while. But as with any field, any scientific field, things evolve. And there's, you know, new theory and research coming up every, every year. So it will be good to maintain it and keep it current, keep it with what's currently coming out. Primarily in terms of the research and perhaps even new theories. Will will be there as well. The nice thing, though, about it being an OER is that doesn't have to be me doing that. You know, anybody could, could updated or even take bits of it and incorporate it into a new OER and so on. So I feel like it's quite sustainable in that sense as well.

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Riley: What might a future project scope entail?

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Katia: Well, if you if I continue on this with this particular project, it would be great to expand it for sure. I would love in both ways, both in terms of the social topics and the cognitive topics. It will be great to dive in more into the cognitive mechanisms and explain them in more depth. We're just like barely skimming the surface here. And, and same with the social aspect, right. There is a lot more social phenomena that, that are there because of the way that our brain works and the way that we process information. So it will be great to expand on that as well. And I feel like at least in psychology, based on what I have seen, I feel like most OERs are primarily targeted towards lower level courses. So they just kind of cover the basics, which is great because you want that foundational understanding to build upon in in higher level courses. But it would be great to also have all ya's that do have more depth and more complexity to what they explain, so that they could be used for upper level courses. And get rid of textbooks there if possible. So I'm really motivated to do that. So I feel like if I expand on this, I mean already this course that I'm using it for is a third level course, but I feel like we could really, add even more in terms of adding more complexity and beyond this project. Again, like for me, my background is primarily in, in cognitive psychology and in neuropsychology. So I would love to do something that's more kind of entirely cognitive in nature. And again, something that perhaps would be suitable for an upper level course. Again, because I feel like there's a gap to be filled there for OERs, at least in in my field.

00:10:13:12 - 00:10:16:27
Riley: How did you learn about true open press opportunities?

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Katia: I actually learned from Marie Bartlett. She is an instructional designer at TRU. I guess, among other things, because she seems to be doing a lot of different things. And, yes, I just happened to tell Marie that I was I was feeling I was missing kind of the development of educational resources and, and of course, content, as an OLFM compared to when I worked at other institutions before. And so she encouraged me to develop an OER on a topic from one of my courses. And so I did, and that's how it started.

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Riley: What was your experience like using TRU Open Press and receiving support from the team?

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Katia: the experience itself, was phenomenal. It was really good. I, I don't know what else I could hope for. They were, I mean, you know, Danny and Jessica and Kaitlyn they were, very helpful, very knowledgeable. The communication was very prompt and informative. I also felt that they were not just very professional and great at what they do, but they were also very kind and personable, which mean made working together, you know, just very enjoyable and and great to be part of this team. So yeah, I feel I feel very grateful for both the opportunity to do this, but also the experience itself, it was was great. I I'd love to do it again for sure.

00:11:37:17 - 00:11:47:05
Riley: How do you think open educational resources will improve education for faculty and students? How would the quality of education differ without OER?

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Katia: I think they make a huge difference. I think for the students, the main, benefit is accessibility and affordability. Right. I mean, a a textbook is $100 or more, and let's say in a semester here, if you're taking 3 or 4 courses, then you're looking at spending, you know, $400 for just the textbooks. And some people just don't have the means to, to do that, you know, semester after semester. And what does that mean? That means that either they are stuck registering for courses that they don't have the textbooks for, or spending a lot of money that then they have to be in debt or relying on, you know, friends or course, you know, other people in their course to, to get access. And it's just I think presents a challenge, not just in terms of their education and finances, but even like, again, thinking about this social aspect, right, in terms of their self-perception and social implications. So I think that it presents quite a bit of challenges in all kinds of ways. So having educational resources that are free and easily accessible is a great plus from a student perspective.

The other thing about textbooks is that these days, a lot of them are actually e-texts. So you don't buy the physical copy, but you pay, again, some obscene amount of money, and you only get access to this textbook for some limited amount of time, like, let's say, a year. So again, like you're paying, but you don't actually get something permanently. But more importantly, I feel that that just creates a perception of of education that as something like, as a, like a finite short term goal, like a discrete short term goal that you have, it's more like, oh, well, here, have these textbooks so you can get through this course and surely you're never going to look at it again, right. So why even have it. And I kind of resent that notion. It's it kind of it's not that's not what education should be about. Right. It should be about this kind of lifelong learning. And if I want to have this textbook and refer to it at any point, I should be able to do that. From an instructor's

perspective. Again, accessibility is great. I mean, it's just like a some keyboard clicks away and they're there. They are all yours. And you can you can choose. But I think flexibility is the best benefit, like the biggest benefit for instructors and and of course designers because you can again, as I was mentioning earlier with the maintenance, you can just, take a subset of the OER that are there, you can modify it, you can take it and then build on it and create a new OER you can combine OERs if you want. And that's amazing because then you can meet the specific learning objectives that you have for your course.

It's incredible to have OERs. Right, there's also the quality. I feel that quality actually increases because if you think about it, especially especially introductory textbooks. Right. And there's so many different topics that get covered. And usually you have one or just a handful of authors who create the textbook. And whereas for OERs the scope is usually much smaller and it happens to most, most of the time be the expertise field of the person who writes it. So you get a much better quality combining different OERs written by different people who know what they're talking about, about in really a lot of detail for each of these topics, I also think that because of this, being licensed under the, Creative Commons and this notion of, of editing and changing, it just creates a mindset, a much sort of healthier and more, I think, forward thinking mindset about education in terms of networking and collaboration and sort of I think the traditional way is much more focused on, ownership and really privilege, versus the notion that the focus is the learning and you want to create this resources and a learning experience that is, you know, something that can work for everybody and something that is there for people who are thinking of themselves as, lifelong learners as opposed to just course takers.

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Riley: What types of open educational resources would you like to see in the future?

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Katia: From a personal perspective, again, I feel like more in psychology, more OERs for higher level courses. And, specifically, at TRU in open learning so far in, in psych, we actually primarily offer developmental and social courses. At the higher level. There isn't actually currently any cognitive course, but they are being developed. So it would be great that as these courses get developed, there's OERs to to go with them. But more broadly, I feel like I'd like to see more OERs you know, full stop just in every, in every subject. And just generally, I'm hoping that, that's how education will move away from using the traditional textbooks to, more wide use of OERs in, in every discipline, if possible, or at least for starters, using them as sort of complementary to textbooks. And that way, at least providing students who are not able to afford the textbook at least have those learning resources, to scaffold.

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Riley: Thank you for the interview, Katia!