

# Zines in the Open

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## ABSTRACT

This creative work is a zine series collaboratively written by a library science professor, a librarian, and a library science student to share ideas around decolonizing pedagogies. As educators, we asked our students to be uncomfortable by producing a zine as a creative work instead of a traditional written paper. We now ask ourselves to be uncomfortable and ‘walk the walk’ by creating a zine series around the conference theme. Are we willing to put ourselves in this state of discomfort for the potential opportunities we say it presents? You will find out when you read our zine series.

A zine is a physical, printed, folded pamphlet. By design, zines are self-published, noncommercial, portable and low budget. They are an expression of the do-it-yourself culture and are designed to foster community between all who engage with the zine. One way to explain what a zine is is that “zines are not blogs” (Freedman, 2005, title) and are like “a real-life version of an Instagram carousel post” (Bobrow, 2025, para 3).

The creative process of zine making is inherently focused on the original and idiosyncratic nature of the self, outside the boundaries of traditional academia or publishing. As an expression of self and story work, zine-making can also be seen as a creative pedagogical tool in the field of open education, whose principles encourage flexibility in learning experiences. As celebrations of individual diversity and authentic lived experiences, zines can foster a link between traditional academic content to the lived experiences of students and their learning styles. In providing space to design zines, library science instructors can promote open educational pedagogies that honor students' lived experiences and perspectives, encouraging them to see themselves as creators of knowledge valued in an academic setting that could otherwise feel unattainable (Bobrow, 2025).

Together, we created a zine series for faculty who are interested in decolonizing their teaching, which incorporates healing, empowerment, reflection, and connections to place and community. Inspired by works like *Let this Radicalize You* (Hayes & Kaba, 2023), *We Want to do More than Survive* (Love, 2020), and *Teaching to Transgress* (Hooks, 1994), we chose three themes for the series which are meant to foster a safe and open environment for discussion about power structures, knowledge systems and power structures within education. The zine series speaks to multiple audiences, including students and faculty in an LIS program, which is a

program growing in both registration and diversity. As women scholars of European descent working and learning in a predominantly white institution, the authors undertook this project as allied educators.

To construct the zine series, the authors engaged in collaborative learning, reading, curating, and reflection before creating the creative works. First, the librarian and professor authors co-learned about open pedagogies as participants in the Certificate of Open Pedagogy (Open Educational Network, 2025). Then they co-read about zine creation (Duncombe, 1996; Piepmeir, 2008), decolonizing learning (Hopkins et al., 2024; Iseke-Barnes, 2008; Patel & Appleton, Tuck & Yang, 2012) and co-curated a collection of inspirational zines on a shared drive. Then, each author wrote notes, reflecting on the theme of decolonizing pedagogies. Finally, the zines were developed in their current form (intentionally with low-end production value: sometimes ridiculous, sometimes opinionated), which was a process that involved using commonly available materials and fits in between a letter and a magazine (Duncombe, 1996). Essentially, the zines became the self-published, print work of what might be a presentation on the topic of decolonizing learning for a faculty audience at our university.

[The final zine series](#) (includes 5 numbered zines, with No. 1 as both the first and last issue: No. 2 Mo's Mutual Aid, No. 3 Community of Inquiry, No. 4 Everyone's So Creative, No. 5 Ethics of Care in Libraries, No. 1 Decolonizing Learning is Not a Metaphor. No. 1 Decolonizing Pedagogy is Not a Metaphor is an introduction to the foundations of decolonized learning. It provides a broad overview and a few examples. No. 2 Mo's Mutual Aid is a campus-specific resource guide for support services to address food insecurity, mental and physical health, transportation, and other student services. It was inspired by a campus book group on mutual aid, and its production follows the tenets of mutual aid as discussed in *Let This Radicalize You* (Hayes & Kaba, 2023) that the group read. No. 3 Community of Inquiry (COI) presents the COI model (Garrison et al., 2000) as a framework for engaging students in critical discourse. This zine includes 5 teaching activities that LIS professors can use in online or face-to-face classes to engage students in these conversations. No. 4 Everyone's So Creative is a very introductory explanation of Creative Commons licensing for open educational practices, such as a student zine assignment or an open syllabus. No. 5 Ethics of Care in Libraries deconstructs how librarians operate with community as a core value. The zine series is available here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1H9F1wP6UgyOm4ye01cD2nEaTVSMDOH0P>.

## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Pedagogy, Information ethics, Social justice

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

Zines; Open education; Decolonizing pedagogies

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