

Who are the mooc educators and what are their job tasks? A multi case study

Tina Papathoma

Slideshare:
<https://goo.gl/4RhUV7>

Work supervised by:

Dr. Doug Clow

Dr. Rebecca Ferguson

Prof. Allison Littlejohn

.....
Institute of Educational Technology

.....
Life-changing Learning
.....

Outline

- Main research question and RQ that came up
- Multiple case study
- Analysis:
 - Who are the people involved in moocs
 - What are their job tasks and how they describe their job tasks in moocs
- Challenges educators found during their mooc practice, how they acted, what can be done to support them
- Next steps in the analysis of this study

Main Research Question

How do **educators** **learn** how to **teach** in massive open online courses (**moocs**)?

Educators

People involved in the mooc design, run & facilitation

Learn

from training, in practice, in collaboration with colleagues, self-regulation (*integrative pedagogy*)

Teach

design, run and facilitate

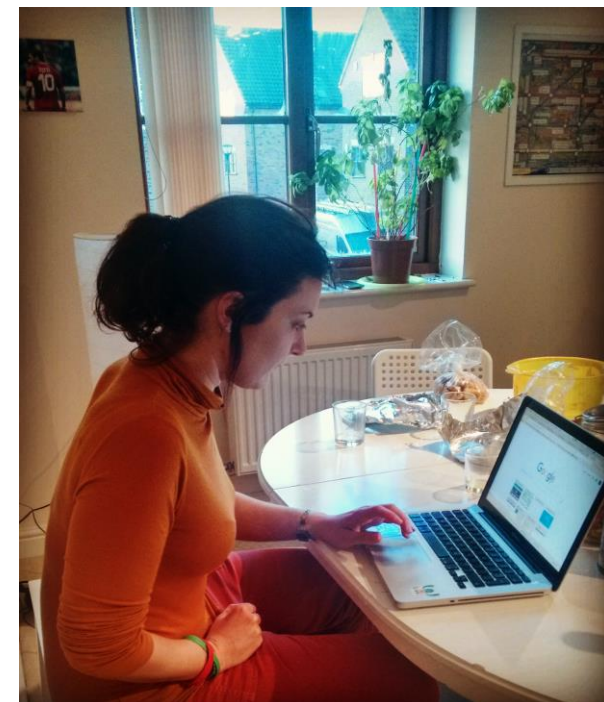
Moocs

courses offered via FutureLearn



Research Question that came up from the data

Who are the mooc educators and what are their job tasks?



Multiple case study



.....

Data were gathered through a multiple case study involving interviews with people involved in moocs

7 courses (4 in history, 3 in politics) lasting from 3-6 weeks

28 interviews in total with:

- 15 Professors & Lecturers
- 6 PhD students
- 1 librarian
- 5 Learning designers
- 1 member of staff of a specialist organisation



Who were the mooc educators?

Before Data Collection

Examples of potential participants who were contacted as educators include:

- People involved in the learning design of the mooc
- People who develop content or assessment for the mooc
- People who produce videos for the mooc
- People who facilitate / moderate the learners' discussions
- People who present mooc videos



Who are the mooc educators in this study?

After Data Collection

Case G

From the teams* involved in this mooc, 4 people were interviewed:

❖ 1 Digital learning team manager from digital learning team

- 30 years experience in face to face IT training
- 30 moocs experience the last 3 years

❖ 3 Professors from the academic team

- Over 15 years of experience in face to face teaching/ research in the mooc topic
- 1st mooc experience for all 3

Job tasks for Learning Design team- Case G



- **Learning objectives**
- **Choice of content**
- **Length of the mooc, Assessment**
- **Course outline**
- Decisions about purchasing content
- Decisions about images and music
- Video production, filming, editing decisions
- Training academics(script writing, using autocues)
- Repurposing the mooc for other audiences
(academics were NOT involved in this)

Quote on how LD manager describes tasks



*‘We would then work with **our** academics, so **our academics** would be **involved in every process** but **they** don’t actually get involved in creating the course on the platform. So **we** would start off by work with those academics to define what the **learning objectives** are for their course, what it is that **they** wanting students to learn, **we** would then look into breaking that down into a number of weeks, so that will **determine how long** the mooc was, so then **we** would take those learning objectives and divide them up basically over the number of weeks **we** felt appropriate and then **we** would start to build a **course outline** which **we** would then, the **academics would sign off** that **they** are happy with that course outline. **We** would then look at the **content** that **we** had to build that course and look at how **we would best represent that content**, whether it should be a **video**, whether it should be a **written** article or a **text** article that the learner can **read**, whether there is a need for the learner to **research** something or maybe **discuss** with other learners on the course, whether we need some kind of a **quiz** or a self-test to test understanding but also whether there is any more formal **assessment** if there is a formal test which is scored at all. So **we** look at all those different elements and **we** define the course outline’*

Job Tasks for Academics – Case G

- Learning objectives
- Choice of content, writing the script and being filmed presenting the course content
- Length of the mooc, Assessment
- Course outline
- Decisions about editing videos (lead)
- **Decisions about purchasing content**
- **Facilitation, (live) Q&A**
- To train PhD students to facilitate the course

Quotes on how academics describe tasks



Purchasing content

- *'I would think more carefully about the sources that were available [...] because I think I **didn't know what permissions were needed and what the cost would be [...]** because we couldn't get the stuff'*

026, Lead Educator, F

Facilitation

- *the **first one** we were quite heavily involved during live web chats for the 3 weeks, the **second one** we did some recorded chats and **the third** we didn't have much involvement at that stage*
- *'first week which was one of my lectures would run, **when I was expected to be online** [...] we were going away so I found myself in a hostel and 11 at night on my phone, responding [...]because I couldn't respond during the day cause I was with my kids..*

027, Educator, F

027, Educator, F

Difference between LD & Academic

*‘the mooc was a **collaboration** between ourselves, [university of X] and the Z [specialist organization]’*

025, Digital learning team manager, F

*‘so we were kind of **commissioned** to do this mooc really’*

026, Academic, F

Educators of all cases come from different backgrounds and expertise

- Academics (Lecturers, Professors)
- Learning designers (Project managers, Lead of digital design team)
- PhD students
- A Librarian
- A communication manager

Educators have **different types of expertise** such as

- Teaching
- Training in IT
- subject matter expertise
- learning design expertise
- project management

Challenges educators found during mooc practice and how they acted

- Educators learned tasks in practice as training was either limited or absent
- Educators collaborated with each other & provided short training to each other (script writing, autocue use, online presence, facilitation)
- Educators self-regulated by seeking advice from experts as well as observing how other moocs have run
- Educators worked outside working hours to facilitate the mooc

Educators' Roles

- Educators' roles were not fixed, they often moved from one role to another, they found themselves unprepared for the mooc but learned in practice or from others
- They were taking different responsibilities for which they often did not have the expertise to work on

What can be done to support educators

- to acquire a range of skills
 - to collaborate with others
 - to share each other's expertise
-
- ❖ Institutions, senior management and platforms may assist in that to encourage collaboration between experts and novices as well as to provide short training on: purchasing copyright material, video presentation, digital pedagogy, facilitation skills/tips

Next steps in the analysis of this study.....

- to analyse the power among the groups involved in moocs
- to analyse the differences in the vocabulary educators are using – academics / learning designers

Thank you 😊

Slideshare:
<https://goo.gl/4RhUV7>



Tina.Papathoma@open.ac.uk

 aktinaki