

Running up that Hill

Cross-course continuation on an Irish language MOOC

Conchúr Mac Lochlainn

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S20

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28th ICDE
World Conference
on Online Learning

3-7 November 2019

Convention Centre Dublin, Ireland

ONLINE COURSE

Irish 101: An Introduction to Irish Language and Culture

Get an introduction to Ireland's culture by learning the basics of the Irish language.

[Overview](#)

[Topics](#)

[Start dates](#)

[Requirements](#)

[Educators](#)





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Irish 101 and Fáilte ar Líne

- Blended cultural and language learning courses.
- Part of the wider Fáilte ar Líne project, co-funded by the Irish Government, Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht, under the Twenty-Year strategy for the Irish Language, with support from the Irish National Lottery.
- Currently running eight live courses teaching to level A2 proficiency, under the Common European Framework of Reference.

MOOC dropout and completion

- Important theoretical (see Khalil and Ebner, 2014) and discorsal (see Murray, 2019) debate relates to completion on MOOCs but the topic is clearly complex.
- What learners want may vary hugely, both from each other and from course designers...
- Some signs of research movement towards considering relative goals/intentions as more immediately relevant (Henderikx, Kreijn and Kalz, 2018).

Continuation and persistence

- ‘Serial’ or persistent MOOC learners are important empirical cases which are underexplored.
- General gap in knowledge: the role of stratified series of courses on continuation.



Practical importance – learning design

- Assumed persistence has a clear role in learning design – are learners truly up to date on later courses?
- Rise of staggered, multi-MOOC courses (such as Irish 101-108) makes question of direct practical relevance.
- To what degree can (or should) churn be accommodated?



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RQs

RQ. 1 – Given our interest in sustained learning, what patterns of prior engagement are visible amongst learners on each MOOC?

RQ. 2 – Amongst those who have continued, what specific factors appear either motivating or de-motivating?

Data collection

- Survey placed at start of each course, measuring psychometric properties, primarily.
- Surveys placed in Irish 101-104 and Irish 108.
- Total responses **n= 1,153** (majority on Irish 101).

Example of survey instrument

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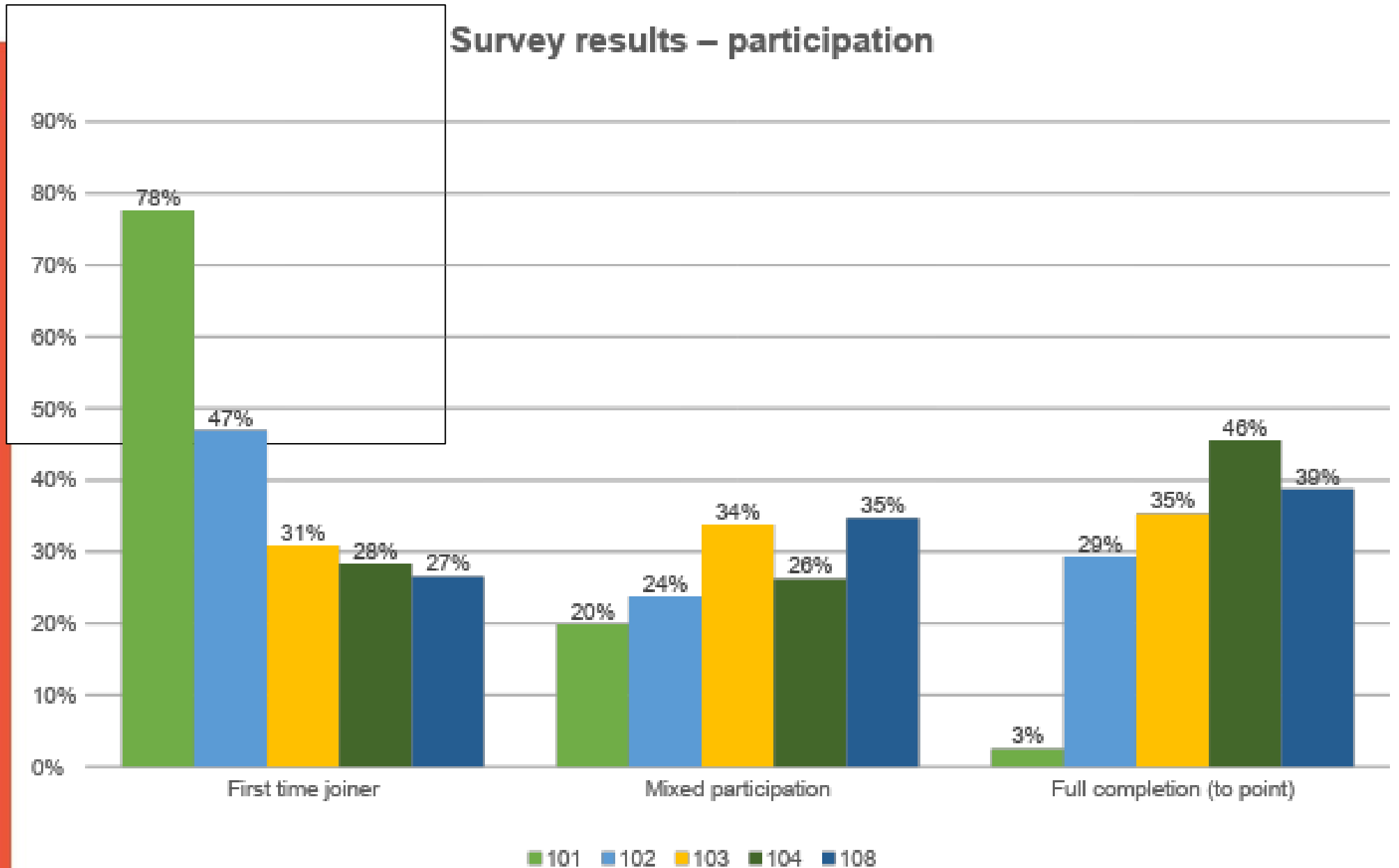
Have you previously taken any of Fáilte ar Líne's courses on the FutureLearn platform? (tick all that apply)

- I have completed Irish 101
- I have started but not completed Irish 101
- I have completed Irish 102
- I have started but not completed Irish 102
- I have completed Irish 103
- I have started but not completed Irish 103
- I have completed Irish 104
- I have started but not completed Irish 104
- I have completed Irish 105
- I have started but not completed Irish 105
- I have completed Irish 106
- I have started but not completed Irish 106
- I have completed Irish 107
- I have started but not completed Irish 108
- I have completed Irish 108
- No



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Survey results – participation



Answer Diversity – Irish 104

- I have completed Irish 103
- I have started but not completed Irish 103
- I have completed Irish 101,I have completed Irish 102
- I have completed Irish 101,I have completed Irish 103
- I have started but not completed Irish 101
- I have completed Irish 101,I have completed Irish 102,I have started but not completed Irish 103
- I have completed Irish 102,I have completed Irish 103
- I have completed Irish 101
- I have started but not completed Irish 101,I have started but not completed Irish 102,I have started but not completed Irish 103
- I have completed Irish 102,I have started but not completed Irish 103
- I have completed Irish 101,I have started but not completed Irish 101,I have completed Irish 102,I have started but not completed Irish 102,I have completed Irish 103
- I have completed Irish 101,I have started but not completed Irish 102
- I have completed Irish 101,I have started but not completed Irish 101,I have completed Irish 102,I have started but not completed Irish 102,I have completed Irish 103,I have started but not completed Irish 103
- I have started but not completed Irish 101,I have completed Irish 103
- I have started but not completed Irish 101,I have started but not completed Irish 102,I have completed Irish 103

Learner experiences

- Plenty of examples of motivation increasing **due** to participation, or expansion of initial goals:

In general my motivation has increased. I originally started Irish 101 with the intention of learning a little ABOUT Irish, rather than studying the language in any depth. But I'm still here (beginning 104) so I'm obviously taking the subject rather more seriously now than I expected to. – Learner A.

You provide not merely a single course, but a sequence of courses. I find this quite encouraging and challenging. – Learner B.

The question of time...

- *It was more difficult than I initially thought, but I enjoyed learning Irish and I'm determined to finish all the courses and at least have some knowledge of the language. I rushed through Irish 101 because I'm behind schedule and that didn't help, but I'd like to review the content as soon as I catch up. I think once I let the content sink in it'll be a bit easier and I'll enjoy it even more. – Learner C.*
- *I would have liked to have more time with the previous online course, but it was enjoyable and a refreshing change from book-and-worksheets based learning. – Learner D.*
- *I am one week behind. I find there is too much to cover when I have a full time job as well! – Learner E.*

Implications for learning design

‘a more complex picture emerges of students refining their course commitments over time, shedding some and investing in others.’ - (Veletsianos, Reich and Pasquini (2016: 7)).

- Learners on suites of MOOCs arrive to specific points through very different paths.
- Catering to these diverse goals/experiences reflects the challenge of scale.
- Clear temporal issues effect continuation, in keeping with literature on issue (for example Zheng et al, 2015, Eriksson, Adawi and Stohr, 2017)

Limitations and future research

- This sample are likely more motivated or engaged than the typical MOOC learner on Irish 101-8, by virtue of completing the survey.
- Much more research needed at a more contextual level, including in depth-qualitative studies.
- Understanding those who drop out in more detail may be the key....



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