Who teaches in MOOCs and how do they learn to do this?

Tina Papathoma – PhD researcher

Institute of Educational Technology

Supervised by
Dr. **Rebecca Ferguson**
Dr. **Doug Clow**
Prof. **Allison Littlejohn**

The Open University

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
Existing MOOCs Research Focus

2. RESEARCH FOCUS
Educators' perspectives / Research Question

3. METHODOLOGY
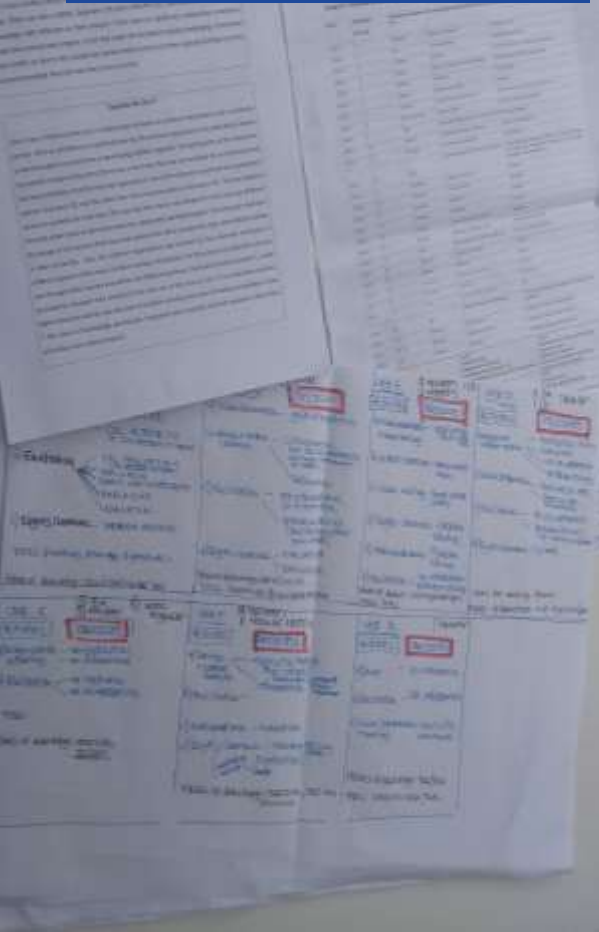Multiple Case Study

4. WHO TEACHES?
Teaching Activities / Supporting Activities for Teaching

5. HOW DO THEY LEARN TO TEACH?
Processes of Knowledge Building/Forms of Knowledge

6. LESSONS LEARNT
Best practices

The Open University

INTRODUCTION

Existing MOOC research focus is:

- Rich in Learners' Perspectives
- Limited in Educators' Perspectives

RESEARCH FOCUS

Research Question:

Who teaches in MOOCs, and how do different educators involved in MOOC teaching learn to do this?

This Research Uncovers:

- Roles of people who carry out the teaching
- Wide variety of ways of teaching in MOOCs compared with conventional teaching
- Ways people learn to work on teaching activities

METHODOLOGY

- **Multiple Case Study** (Yin, 2014) : 7 Courses-Cases in History and Politics of FutureLearn (FL)

- **28 Online Interviews** with participants with teaching roles/responsibilities

- **Data analysis** followed the following strategies: theoretical propositions of Integrative Pedagogy (Tynjälä et al, 2014) model, data from the 'ground up', plausible rival explanations

- **Analytic technique of 'Cross Case Synthesis'** - each case is separate

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research : design and methods* (5th Edition).
Tynjälä, P., Häkkinen, P., & Hämäläinen, R. (2014). TEL@work: Toward integration of theory and practice. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *45*(6), 990–1000.

The Participants

EDUCATORS   MENTORS   COLLABORATORS

16 Educators
6 Mentors
6 Collaborators or *MOOC Related collaborators*

'EDUCATORS'

'An academic with a specialist knowledge of the course subject' (Coleman, 2016)

Educators, Co-educators

Academics/Academic Team/ Academic Staff

Teachers, Lecturers, Tutors, Instructors, Librarian

Service Providers,

Subject Matter Experts

'MENTORS'

'an academic with a good understanding of the course subject, who can help with guiding discussions'(Coleman, 2016)

Facilitators, educators
Mentors, moderator, Editor,
Post Graduate Student,
PhD students, Translator
Lead Facilitator

'COLLABORATORS'

Everyone else who supported the teaching activities but was not expected to interact with learners directly in a formal capacity

Learning Designers, NON-academics, 'the technical people', Multimedia developer, Educational Technologists, MOOC team, Technology specialists the digital learning team, 'the university' MOOC Organiser Digital Learning Team Manager Head of MOOCs

WHO TEACHES?

- Teaching activities

- Supporting Activities for Teaching*

*_Pedagogical decisions may be involved_

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Design & Content Creation
- Presenting videos
- Editing videos
- Facilitating discussions
- Extending educators' role outside FL
- Repurposing MOOCs

- Ensuring Rights Clearance
- Securing funding
- Choosing the workforce
- Creating the course on FL

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Securing funding   EDUCATORS COLLABORATORS

- Choosing the workforce   EDUCATORS

- Design & Content Creation   EDUCATORS MENTORS COLLABORATORS

- Ensuring Rights Clearance   EDUCATORS COLLABORATORS

- Presenting videos   EDUCATORS MENTORS COLLABORATORS

- Editing videos   COLLABORATORS EDUCATORS MENTORS

- Creating the course on FutureLearn   COLLABORATORS

- Facilitating discussions   MENTORS EDUCATORS COLLABORATORS

- Extending educators' role outside FL: blogging, using social media or other websites   MENTORS EDUCATORS COLLABORATORS

- Repurposing MOOCs   COLLABORATORS

WHO TEACHES?

Although participants had primary roles of designing, creating content, presenting content, editing content or facilitating comments in discussions, the teaching activities were distributed and it cannot be argued that one role did everything, perhaps **'MOOCs Educators'** would be a more inclusive title

HOW DO THEY LEARN TO TEACH?

Processes of Knowledge Building

- **Collaboration**

- **Explication**

- Problem solving

- Dealing with uncertainty

- Reflection

- Evaluation

HOW DO THEY LEARN TO TEACH?

Forms of Knowledge -Integrative Pedagogy Framework *Tynjälä*

Theoretical Knowledge- limited related to Copyright Law

Practical Knowledge- gained skills, trained each other on-the-job in different areas when they needed certain skills

Sociocultural Knowledge- shared knowledge and transformed their ideas

Self-regulative Knowledge: reflected on their own activities, evaluated and changed their practice

Best Practice

- work in teams with experts from various fields and offer training to each other

- have a shared understanding and get a sense of the purpose of the MOOC

- meet systematically

- use collaborative tools that offer transparency in how teaching is developed

- take other MOOCs before teaching one

- reflect & evaluate teaching and change what does not work

CONCLUSION

- Educators are not only the professionals with the 'official' FL title but also the professionals who take pedagogical decisions with underlying approaches to teaching

- MOOCs teaching activities are different from conventional teaching and diverse thus, they cannot be completed by a single individual

- Professionals learn to teach better when they work together and when they learn on-the-job

These findings can help us design better Continuing Professional Development programs and more effective MOOC learning journeys.

Thank you ☺

@aktinaki

The Open University