MOOC Educators: who they are and how they learn

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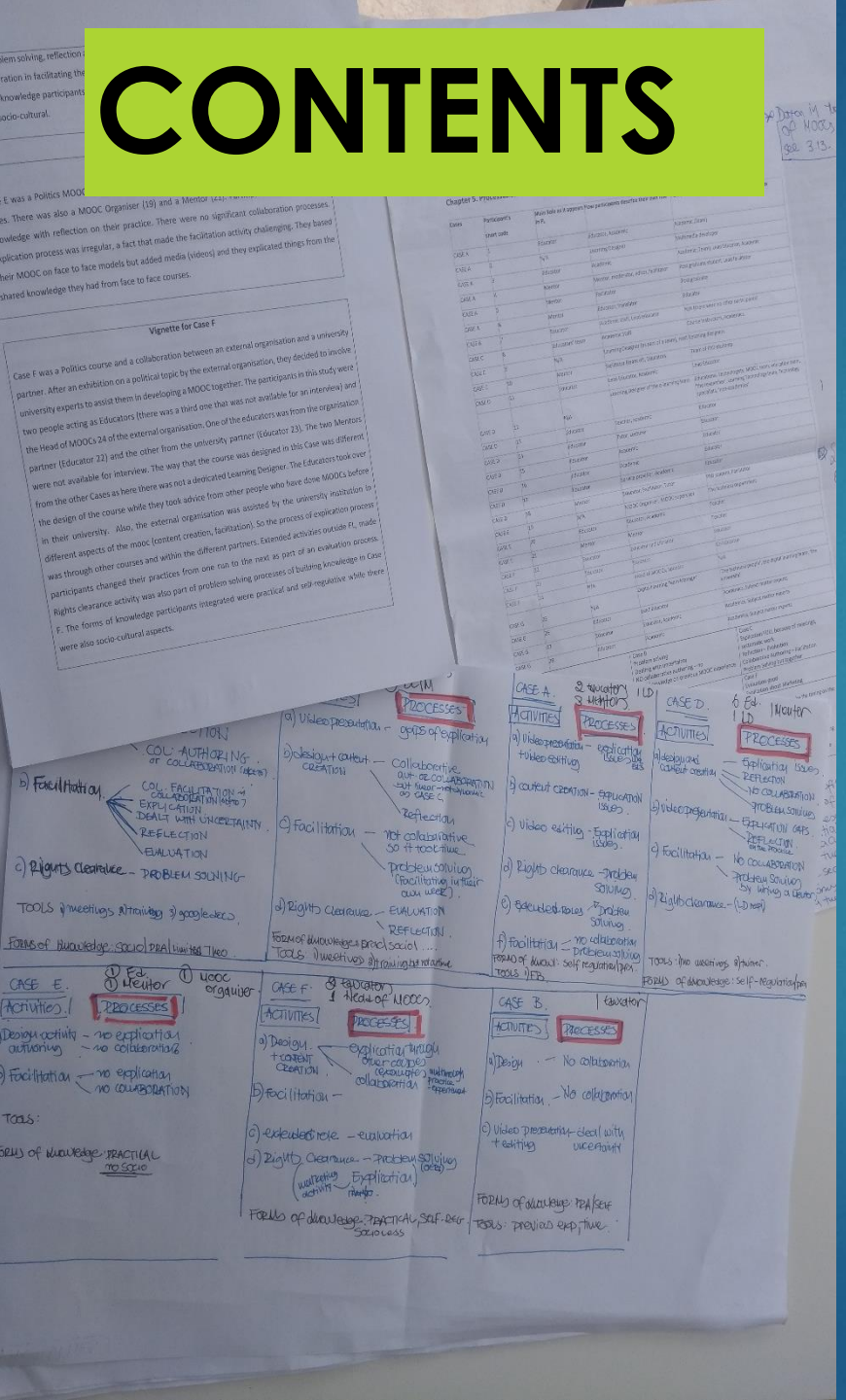
CONTENTS



- Research Motivation
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Research Motivation- Background

- Increasing involvement of universities in MOOCs worldwide (Ferguson, Scanlon, & Harris, 2016)
- Rich evidence of the perspectives of learners but little empirical evidence of the perspectives of educators (Zhu, Sari, & Lee, 2018)

Aims

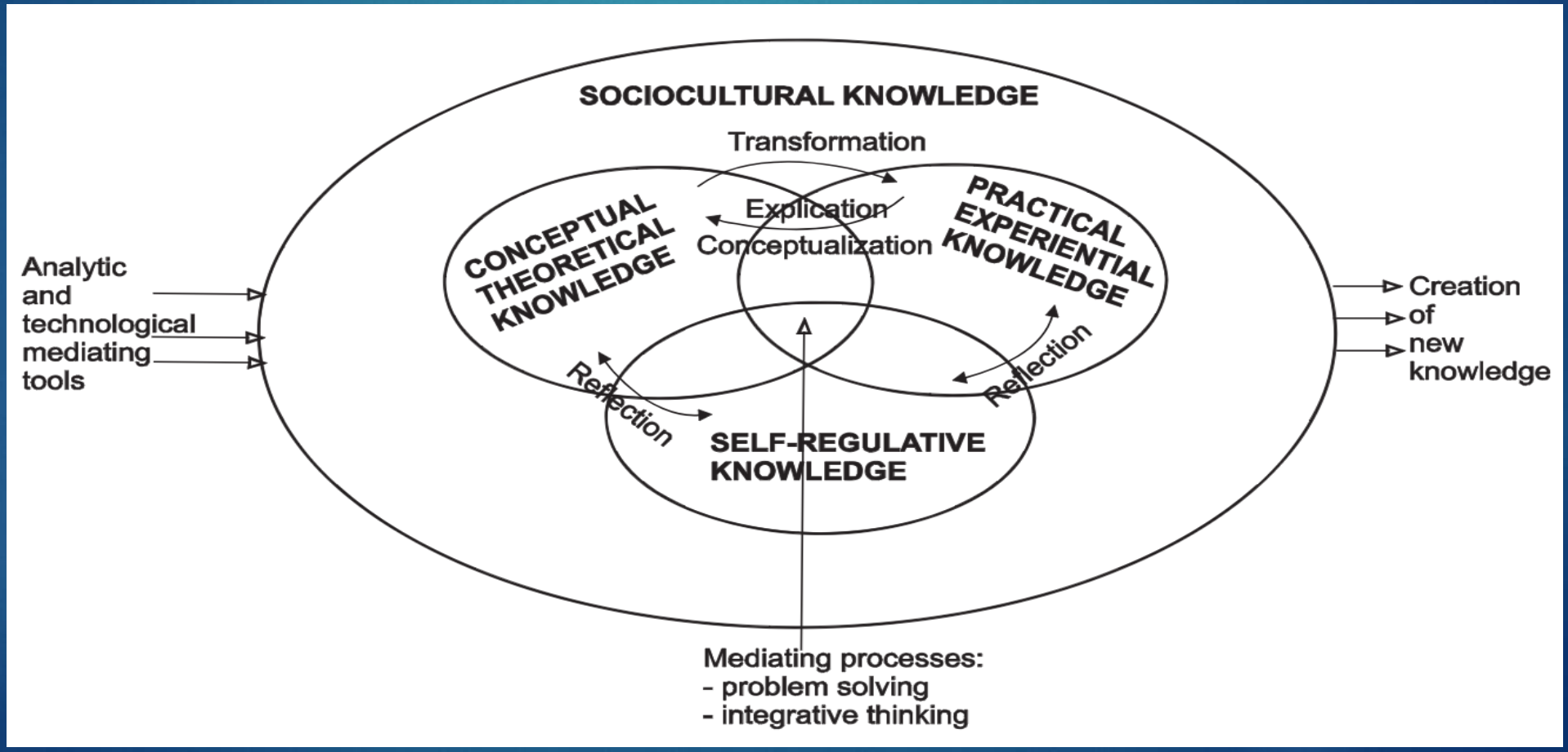
- To **uncover MOOC Educators' roles**, and the **variety of activities** they engage in
- To explore **the ways they learn** to teach
- To develop **recommendations** for effective MOOC development

Research Questions

1. Who teaches in MOOCs?
2. How do these different educators learn to teach in MOOCs?

Integrative Pedagogy

A theoretical model for bringing together key elements of learning and the development of professional expertise (Tynjala et al, 2014)



Methodology

- Multiple Case study (Yin, 2014)
- 28 online interviews with participants with teaching responsibilities on **7 FutureLearn** courses-cases of History and Politics
- 3 **strategies** for analysis: ground up data, theoretical propositions, rival explanations
- Analytic technique of '**Cross Case Synthesis**' (Yin, 2014)

The Participants

EDUCATORS

MENTORS

COLLABORATORS

16 FL Educators
6 FL Mentors
6 FL Collaborators

Who teaches in MOOCs?

- Analysis started with **participants' profiles** from the seven cases followed by an exploration of what the MOOC **teaching** activities involved.
- Although participants had some central responsibilities as part of their roles, they were given titles that did not fully correspond to those roles

‘FL EDUCATORS’

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

academics, educators, co-educators,
teachers, lecturers, tutors, instructors,
a librarian,
service providers,
subject matter experts

‘FL 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 students,
PhD students, translator,
lead facilitator

‘FL 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

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Securing funding EDUCATORS COLLABORATORS
- Allocating work EDUCATORS
- Design learning EDUCATORS MENTORS COLLABORATORS
- Ensuring Rights Clearance EDUCATORS COLLABORATORS
- Presenting videos EDUCATORS MENTORS COLLABORATORS
- Editing videos COLLABORATORS EDUCATORS MENTORS
- Creating the course on FutureLearn COLLABORATORS
- Facilitation MENTORS EDUCATORS COLLABORATORS
- Extending educators' role outside FL: blogging, using social media or other websites MENTORS EDUCATORS COLLABORATORS
- Repurposing MOOCs COLLABORATORS

How do they learn to teach?

- Analysis explored the **gaps** in knowledge in their teaching that prompted them to engage in '**processes of knowledge building**' and the different forms of knowledge they integrated, as well as the new forms of knowledge that resulted from these processes

Gaps in MOOC Educators' knowledge and Processes of Knowledge Building

Gaps

- Learning design
- Video presentation and editing
- Rights clearance
- Facilitation

Processes of knowledge building

- Collaboration
- Explication
- Problem solving
- Dealing with uncertainty
- Reflection
- Evaluation

10 Recommendations for effective MOOC development

1. Establish a shared vocabulary in the MOOC context
2. The use of different experts
3. Identifying gaps of knowledge through meetings
4. Design as a process to reflect on
5. Consider time needed for design and facilitation
6. Awareness about OER
7. Division of labour and the use of collaborative tools offering transparency
8. Educators to facilitate their own learning materials
9. Take other MOOCs
10. Reflect and change the MOOC

Contributions of PhD research in practice

1. It clarifies the different roles & the processes of learning
2. It generates new insights into the nature of teaching in MOOCs & how this is distributed and unbundled
3. The findings of this PhD research can be applied to online learning more broadly

Emergent themes

- Power and hierarchy
- Language used by educators to refer to MOOC roles, titles and processes of MOOC development
- Time and the different reasons that this becomes an issue in people's work

Conclusions

- Teams developing online courses need to work **collaboratively**, **share expertise** not only about the subject matter area of a course but also about learning design, presentation and editing, legal matters and to **become aware of pedagogy** when teaching online

- Teaching involves academics and collaborators, therefore **professional learning should include everyone** to gain understanding on online learning environments, technical skills and subject matter

- MOOC Educators learned to teach more effectively when they had **a shared goal, worked in transparent ways and involved interdisciplinary teams in a timely manner**

- These findings can help institutions and platforms to design **better Continuing Professional Development programmes and, ultimately, more effective MOOC learning journeys**

Thank you! ☺

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