Going massive: Learner engagement in a MOOC environment

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What are we talking about?

- University of Auckland MOOC - *Academic integrity: Values, skills, action*
- Designing for engagement
- Role of the MOOC educator in facilitating learner engagement
- Reflections as MOOC designers and MOOC educators
Background

- AI MOOC - based on the University’s compulsory Academic Integrity course
AI MOOC Overview

• Developed by Libraries and Learning Services Mar-Sept 2014
• FutureLearn – UK MOOC platform provider
AI MOOC Overview

- 4 week course, 1 hour per week
- Offered 3 times so far
  - 2014 – Nov (run 1)
  - 2015 – Feb and Apr (run 2 and 3)
- Almost 11,000 learners enrolled in the course so far (Nov + Feb)
- 5 MOOC moderators (‘educators’)
Approach to AI MOOC design

• Informed approach
  o Researched literature on learner engagement in online courses and MOOCs
  o Explored past and present MOOCs (cMOOCs, xMOOCs)
  o Enrolled in FutureLearn MOOCs
Connectivism and the 4Cs

• **cMOOC** - learning happens within a network. Learners connect with content, each other & the learning community to create and construct knowledge (Siemens, 2004)

• **The 4Cs** (Littlejohn et al, 2011) - ways in which learners interact with people and resources in their learning environment:
  
  *Consume, Connect, Create, and Contribute*
Understanding our MOOC learners

• Challenge of MOOC - catering to diverse learners
• Addressing the challenge:
  o Created personae: ‘typical’ students
  o Usability testing
  o Ensure learners can connect content to their own lives
  o Used commonly understood language
Personae

Bo  Sophie  Josh  Ally
Usability testing

- Two rounds of testing
- The task:
  - ‘think out loud’
  - highlight words they didn’t understand

- What did students think:
  - liked the real scenarios - “I can absolutely relate to this”
  - could relate to the personae characters in the videos - “that’s me”
  - thought the course was interesting, clear, helpful
  - liked the quizzes
Designing for engagement in a MOOC

- Establishing and maintaining a community of learners
- Role of educator (moderator) in fostering engagement
- Specific design elements to engage
Establishing a community of learners

Meet the team

We are your course educators and we'd like to introduce ourselves. Click on our profiles to find out more about us:

- Dr Jason Stephens Lead Educator
- Dr Li Wang Educator
- Stephanie Cook Educator
- Tricia Bingham Educator
- Stephanie Reid Educator
- Dr Colleen Bright Educator
- Vanda Ivanovic Graphic Designer

We will be monitoring discussions and encouraging you to share your thoughts and ideas. We hope you enjoy the course and learn from your fellow learners' observations and experiences.

Hello Everyone in the Team, This is my very first course in futurelearn.com. Looking forward to learn a lot from the expertise.

Like · Reply

Follow 18 FEB

I am really glad to be with a wonderful team like you. Thanks for let me share this course.

Like · Reply

Follow 14 FEB

Hello! everyone in the team. Its my pressure to be under the guidance of such a great team and sure to learn new from your expert views.

Like · Reply

Follow 13 FEB

Great team members. Your expertise will be needed in guiding me through my PhD thesis.

Like 1 · Reply

Follow 12 FEB

Nice to meet you all. All of help me I will try this course.

Like · Reply

Follow 12 FEB
Establishing a community of learners

Tell us about yourself

Now that you know a little about our team, let's find out more about you.

- Tell us a little about yourself as well as something unusual about the country or city you live in.

Here's something to start you off from our Auckland-based team: New Zealanders are currently outnumbered almost 8 to 1 by sheep (Johnston, 2011).
Role of educator

- **Welcome**, include and encourage learners
- **Foster** a community of learners
- **Encourage** further reflection
- **Clarify** areas of confusion
- **Draw out** key threads
- **Summarise** key points
Role of educator

Stephanie Reid (Educator) made a comment
WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW? DISCUSSION

Some great comments here. Some of you are reasonably confident, others less so on some of the concepts. Hopefully the remaining steps in this week should bring clarity. Remember to speak up if something isn't clear. And feel free to share your thoughts with fellow students if they need help.

Jason Stephens (Lead Educator) made a comment
WHAT IS PLAGIARISM? ARTICLE

Hi all,
I've noticed that there are some questions arising concerning the concept of self-plagiarism, which is often a tricky one to grasp. Here's the short of it: Writers do not often retain ownership ("copyright") of what they have written. Almost everything you read is owned by the publisher—not the author—of the work. If I, for example, am writing an...
Role of the educator

Tricia Bingham (Educator) made a comment

Very interesting. I'm finding out about styles I've never heard of before. Is anyone using a style, specifically adapted for just their university of department?

Stephanie Cook (Educator) 10 FEB

Yes, that's right. It's ok to seek help, but the work you submit must be your own. For example, it's ok to ask a librarian for help finding suitable resources for your assignments.
Specific design elements to engage

- Videos
- Discussions
- Quizzes
- Text (articles)
Welcome to Week 2

This video presents a common situation that may occur at university. As you watch the video, think about what values are at play and what you would do in this situation.

it is a good and common situation all of us face it during academic life if I were in Sofia's place, I would like her, not let anybody to take my effort and time in just a second because this is an example of dishonesty and unfairness but I can encourage him to do the assignment by his own effort and just help him in collection of data which help him.

it's a great example, it is difficult to say NO, and more when is a friend. I II try to explain the question or the topic so he could understand better what is about and what he needs to do.
Discussions

Referencing styles

Referencing follows a set of rules and conventions known as a referencing style. These ensure references for similar types of items are consistently presented and include all the relevant information for the reader of your work to be able to find them.

There are many different referencing styles. Some examples include: APA, MLA, Harvard and Chicago. APA will be used as the main referencing style to demonstrate elements of citing and referencing in this course.

Some of you may have already used a referencing style in your academic writing but for some of you referencing will be completely new.

1. Have you ever used a referencing style? If so which one?
2. How do you think you could find out more about a particular referencing style?

Share your thoughts in the comments.

Why should you care?

This week we have looked at the values which form the foundation of academic integrity. Next week we will be looking at academic dishonesty. In preparation for this we’d like you to think about the following:

- Do you think that acting dishonestly or cheating at university can impact other areas of your life? If so, how?

Here’s an article to get you thinking (Cascio, 2014).

Share your opinions in the discussion, as well as any useful links you find which support your argument. Remember, if you see any discussion postings you agree with, you can ‘Like’ them.

This is the end of Week 1.

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Quizzes

Q5

In his history assignment, Matthew has used information and ideas from several sources related to the topic. He's acknowledged (referenced) where the information and ideas have come from. Is this acceptable?

☐ Acceptable

☐ Not acceptable

Correct

@Jason Stephens (Lead Educator)
Yes, this is acceptable. As long as Matthew acknowledges (references) the sources he's used he can use the information to support his own arguments in his assignment. This would not be considered plagiarism.

You may find 3.4 What is referencing? useful.

Q3

When Melissa sees the topics for the next History essay she is excited because she wrote about one of the topics in a History of Education course last year. Which course of action below shows that Melissa is researching with integrity?

☐ Melissa picks a new topic to research and write about.

☐ Melissa saves time by changing the title of her previous Education essay and handing it in.

☐ Melissa revises roughly half of her Education essay and hands it in as a new assessment.

Correct

@Jason Stephens (Lead Educator)
Correct. This is consistent with the values underpinning academic integrity such as fairness, honesty and trust. Melissa's actions are aligned with her desire to conduct her research with integrity.
Note-taking in lectures

The lecture format can be a complex way of delivering information. During a lecture you may be using several skills: listening to the content, analysing it for meaning, selecting the more important material and noting it down. It’s not simple but observing some basic techniques will make your lecture note-taking a whole lot easier.

Golden rules for note-taking in lectures

- Revise previous lecture in preparation
- Listen out for main ideas, not detail.
- Use a framework to organize your notes.
- Listen for verbal cues (words or phrases which indicate important points or ideas).

Golden rules for taking notes in lectures

Revise previous lecture in preparation
Get ready by revising the last lecture. It focuses you on the topic and it sets the new material in a framework of what you already know.

Listen for main ideas
Be selective and don’t try to get everything down. Listen out for main ideas and a few examples. PowerPoint slides can often help identify key points.

Use abbreviations
Use common abbreviations or make up your own for keywords and phrases in your area of study. Using abbreviations can save a lot of time.

Use a framework
Use a framework to guide your note-taking, like the Cornell System (as cited in Paul & Owens, 2005, pp. 207–212), linear framework or mind mapping.

Write up lecture notes promptly
Write up your notes the same day. It’s a way of keeping your material organised; and is a useful learning strategy. This will make it much less stressful when preparing for tests and exams.

Listen out for spoken cues
Listen for the lecturer’s signals. They may be verbal such as ‘another important factor’ (a related idea), on the other hand (a contrasting point), ‘in other words’ (rephrasing an important idea), and ‘in conclusion’ (a summary of the main ideas).

There are also vocal cues to listen for, such as slowing down for important information, pausing before main points, and increasing volume to draw attention to a key idea.

Follow this link for a list of signals.
Did learners engage? How?

• **With content** – completing quizzes, reading text, engaging with video narratives, reading other learners’ discussion postings

• **In discussions** – posting, commenting, replying, ‘Liking’ and ‘Following’

• **Through reflection and sharing** – reflecting on their own situations/environment and sharing

*Consuming...Connecting...Creating...Contributing*
Discussion posts

• Learners posted over **14,000 comments** across *first two* course runs (November and February).

• The highest number of comments were posted in **Week 1** *(over 3,000 for each run)* and the lowest number in **Week 3** *(around 1,000 for each run)*.

• The section receiving the highest number of discussion posts was “**Tell us about yourself**” *(822 posts - run 1, 846 - run 2)*.
Discussion posts

Number of posts Run 1 and Run 2

Week 1
Week 2
Week 3
Week 4

Run 1
Run 2
AI MOOC completion rate

- 28.7% completed *at least one* section - run 1.
- 48.3% completed *at least one* section - run 2.
- 8.4% completed *all* 4 weeks - run 1
- 11.8% completed *all* 4 weeks - run 2
Student comments

It was my first course at Futurelearn and I don’t deny being part of this great experience. I loved sharing, reading others’ posts and commenting them, watching videos, and learning new things. Thanks for everything!

Loved the end credits and seeing what happened to the characters we’ve been watching... final one really made me laugh!

I am so grateful that this course brought together so many people from so many places in the World.
It is truly encouraging to know that some people overcome so many obstacles to reach their academic AND human goals. The sharing aspect is my motivation.

How time does fly!
How four weeks gone!
Will miss you, honourable lead educator.
Will miss Josh, Bo, Ally.
Will miss all the peers.

Thank you, and please take care.
Challenges

As MOOC educators:

- Time and resourcing
- When and how to respond
- Accommodating late joiners

As MOOC designers:

- Platform parameters
- Engaging learners with dry content
Reflections...

- Personae and usability testing worked well
- Establish a community of learners early on
- Educator presence is important
- Include a range of activities to engage
- Connectivist approach and 4Cs aided designing for engagement
- Collaboration = quality course
AI MOOC Project Team
AI MOOC trailer

https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/academic-integrity