The ACT MOOC

Massive training materials: Possibilities and challenges

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IO 4 – The ACT MOOC

- The aim of the MOOC is to create a **training course** for the function of **"accessibility manager"**.

- The MOOC will be **complementary learning material** for the course which will be designed by the partners of the project

- The MOOC is an **open** course MOOC which targets any interested person who wishes to be **informed and trained on media accessibility**

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The Different Types of MOOCs

Literature predominantly makes a distinction between two main types of MOOCs (Guàrdia, L., et al. (2013); Lackner, E., et al. (2014):

- **xMOOC**: more traditional approach. Teacher = most important source of knowledge.

- **cMOOC**: based on the principles of 'connectivism' = knowledge created and generated through learners' networks and personal learning environments.

=> Distinction focuses on **HOW** knowledge is generated & transferred

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The Different Types of MOOCs

"If you are not designing for someone, then you are designing for no-one" (Mor & Warburton, 2015)

- **Academic MOOC**: (primarily) aimed at **undergraduate** students who (primarily) want to acquire credits in a degree course
- **Professional MOOC**: (primarily) aimed at **professional** learners who work on their (continuous) professional development

=> Distinction focuses on **WHO** the knowledge is aimed at

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The ACT MOOC

- **Professional MOOC** aimed at people who work in cultural venues and want to develop the necessary skills to become an accessibility manager

- **Combination of xMOOC and cMOOC**: some knowledge transferred by instructors, but to a higher extent relying on the existing knowledge, experience (and curiosity) of the participants themselves

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Challenging Issues - Attrition

Drop-out between 85% & 97% [(Fidalgo-Blanco, et al. (2014)); (Gütl, et al. 2014)]

Academic reasons
- Programme was **too difficult** or **not challenging enough**;
- Classes are **poorly taught**;
- Course is **poorly designed**;
- **No or insufficient support and feedback** on assignments and assessments

Learning environment reasons
- **Not enough interaction** with instructors;
- Learning environment was **not personalised**

Personal reasons
- **Not enough time** to complete the MOOC

(Gütl, et al. 2014)

Challenging Issues - Contact

$\Rightarrow$ MOOCs regularly attract 10,000s (up to even 150,000) participants [(Mackness, et al.2013), Boyatt, et al. (2014)]

$\Rightarrow$ Implications for contact between instructors and participants on various levels

$\quad \Rightarrow$ Online so no face-to-face contact;

$\quad \Rightarrow$ Extreme instructor-participant ratio: no or very little personal feedback

$\quad \Rightarrow$ Feeling of a lack of social presence, no real "teacher presence"

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Challenging Issues - Assessment

=> Assessment often named the 'weakest point' of the MOOC [Bali (2014); Gütl, et al. (2014); Luo, et al. (2014)]

⇒ Quizzes as the only form of assessment: only test recall, not understanding or higher order thinking (cf. Bloom's Taxonomy)

⇒ No feedback at all on assessments (cf. Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (Chickering and Gamson (1987));

⇒ Peer grading without clear instructions

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Solutions on the Macro Level

- Provide clear guidelines from the outset

    $\Rightarrow$ General guideline on what to expect from a MOOC;

    $\Rightarrow$ General document explaining the structure & pedagogical design of the MOOC;

    $\Rightarrow$ General guideline on (peer) assessment;

    $\Rightarrow$ General guideline on netiquette (use of forums and blogs)

- Provide a scaffolded design

- Create "progress bars" in the participants' profiles

- Lower the workload by presenting 1 unit every two weeks (rather than every single week)

- Provide for biweekly "online office hours" / "online seminars"

- Provide dedicated forums and blogs (with weekly digests)

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Solutions on the Micro Level

- Allow participants to determine their own learning path / objectives

- Capitalise on diversity (previous knowledge and experience)

- Stimulate discussion within and outside the MOOC

- Allow participants to reflect on the knowledge gained in the course and apply it to their work practice

- Maximise productivity by setting authentic tasks, creating groups of learners with similar backgrounds and groups of experts coaching less advanced learners

- Stimulate Bloom's higher levels of learning through key MOOC activities (aggregation, remixing, repurposing, feeding forward)

(based on Littlejohn & Milligan (2014, 2015), Mackness, et al. (2015))

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An Example from the ACT MOOC (I)

Module 'Communication' – WEEK 1

Activity 1 – The ACT Video

Participants watch a scene from the ACT video telling the story of a disabled person going to a live event. A visually impaired person went to a live event and tells his deaf friend about it, who is surprised because he didn't know about the event and wanted to go.

Assignment 1 – Reflection

What are the possible reasons the deaf friend didn't know about the event and how can they be solved?

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An Example from the ACT MOOC (II)

Activity 2 – Instructional Video

Watch the instructional video "Communication for Access" which explains what has to be taken into account when communicating with/for disabled people.

Assignment 2 – Knowledge Quiz

During and after the video participants answer multiple choice questions on the topic of the module.

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An Example from the ACT MOOC (III)

Assignment 3 – Individual Inquiry - OPTIONAL

Go to the website of your venue (or a venue of your choice) and see what it says about accessibility. What elements are mentioned and what are still missing? Is the website in itself accessible?

Activity 3 – Further Reading

Participants are referred to documents and/or websites dealing with accessible websites (e.g. www.anysurfer.be – or equivalent)

An Example from the ACT MOOC (IV)

Module 'Communication' – WEEK 2

Activity 4 – Online Seminar/Office Hours

The participants take part in a synchronous live online session in which a) an expert or a user talks about the particular topic of the Unit (i.e. communication) and b) participants can take part in a Q&A session on the topic/concepts of the Unit.

Assignment 4 – *Group Work*

Create a 'communication checklist' that makes sure you (can) reach all the different target groups.

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