MAKING MOOCS AND CHANGING OPEN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Czerniewicz, L.;Deacon, A.;Walji, S.;Glover, M.;

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Making MOOCs and changing open educational practices

Laura Czerniewicz, Andrew Deacon, Sukaina Walji, Michael Glover

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Czerniewicz, L., Deacon, A., Walji, S. & Glover, M. (in press). OER in and as MOOCs.
In C. A. Hodgkinson-Williams & P. B. Arinto (Eds) Adoption and Impact of OER in the Global South

This study

This study investigates whether and how the integration of OER in the design of MOOCs impacts upon educators' OEP

The particular rationale for this study concerns how and in what ways adopting OER in and for MOOCs has an impact on educators' practices as regards openness

The underlying assumption of the study is that the adoption of OER for integration in an open course will lead to a transformation of educator practices

This study

Overarching question: How does MOOC making with OER adoption influence educators' OEP?

1. Why do educators create MOOCs?
2. How do educators understand openness in education?
3. What are the contextual dimensions which shape open educational practices?

4. How does MOOC design help, or not help, educators achieve their objects?

5. How do educators understand and express copyright, licences, and the legal dimensions of openness?
6. How do educators use and re-use OER beyond the MOOC?

7. How is pedagogical openness experienced and expressed as an OEP in MOOCs (in terms of) the educators' objectives?
8. How is financial openness expressed?

About the MOOC Project

The project: 12 MOOCs, 2 platforms, funded by the VC Strategic Fund, bidding process

Goals

To give exposure to African content and knowledge
To profile key postgraduate programmes and research areas aligned with the university's strategic goals
To support students in academic transitions
To make UCT's knowledge resources globally accessible
To develop models and expertise in online learning that could be deployed in mainstream degree programmes.

UCT MOOCs to date

Education for All: Disability, Diversity and Inclusion

UCTMOOCs
FREE ONLINE COURSES

coursera
https://www.coursera.org/uct

Future Learn
https://www.futurelearn.com/partners/
university-of-cape-town

Climate Change Mitigation in Developing Countries

Becoming a changemaker: Introduction to Social Innovation

Medicine and the Arts: Humanising Healthcare

What is a Mind?

Julia Scientific Programming

Understanding Clinical Research: Behind the Statistics

MOOCs in this study

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The Literature: OER

Despite shared interest in open education, generally the literature on MOOCs and OER is distinct

Meanings of "open" often differ

OER infrequently mentioned in MOOC literature

MOOCs more likely to be mentioned in OER literature

The Literature: OEP

An evolving concept, 1st mentioned 10 years ago, more formally 2011

Developing an OEP conceptual framework involves disparate sources for OEP as there is a lack of a holistic repertoire of practices currently observable in the field (Masterman 2016)

Differentiation between (a) OER and legality-focused definitions of open practices, and (b) broader conceptions of open practices which incorporate these OER aspects but include open pedagogies, open learning and sharing (Cronin 2016)

The Literature: OEP

Features of open practices (Hodgkinson Williams 2014)

1. Technical openness – e.g., interoperability and open formats, technical skill and resources, availability and discoverability.
2. Legal openness – e.g., open licensing knowledge and advice.
3. Cultural openness – e.g., knowledge and curriculum
4. Pedagogical openness – e.g., student demographics and types of engagement
5. Financial - should OER be free or come with a modest financial price tag

Beetham et al (2012)

1. Opening up content to students not on campus/formally enrolled
2. Sharing and collaborating on content with other practitioners
3. Re-using content in teaching contexts.
4. Using or encouraging others to use open content
5. Making knowledge publicly accessible
6. Teaching learning in open contexts.

Understanding open practices in context and over time

Activity Theory

Developed activity systems and identified contradictions
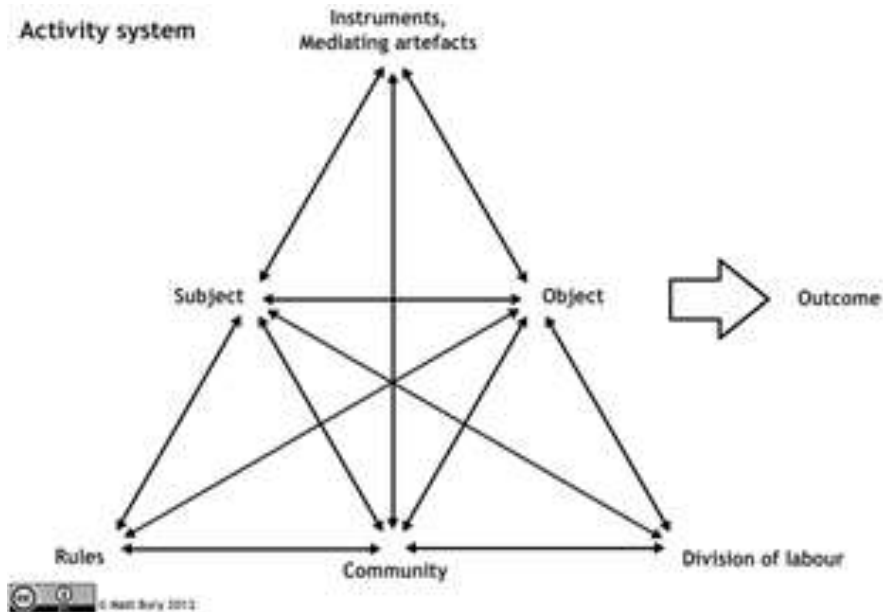
Methodology

Data

semi-structured interviews with MOOC educators

interviews with lead educator's assistant

focus group discussions with MOOC educators and MOOC learning designers

observations of the MOOC-making process

proposals submitted to the MOOC Advisory Committee

monitoring and evaluation reports

promotional videos created by the educators

institutional policies and strategic plans

permission forms for MOOC content rights

artefacts of course content

Methodology

Each of the four MOOCs lead educators interviewed at three time intervals: just before the MOOC was launched (T1), after the first run of the MOOC (T2), and ten months after the launch (T3).

Three activity systems developed and articulated against the three interview phases (T1, T2, and T3).

Interviews:

    19 interviews were conducted with MOOC lead educators

    two focus groups with the MOOC implementation team

    three post-course reflection sessions

Analytical framework

Context of the MOOC educators' practices, particularly those which might shape and influence those practices becoming open. - Activity system -

> **Rules** - the contract between the university and the MOOC platform, MOOC platform rules, the university MOOC project strategy.

> **Division of labour** refers to lead educators, lead educators' assistants, the MOOC design and implementation team, the MOOC project manager, and the intellectual property lawyer.

> **Community** the MOOC design and implementation team, the lead educators' assistant, and the community of MOOC learners.

The Object in an Activity system aligns with why educators make MOOCs.
The Tools in an Activity system which mediate the educators' achieving their object is our concept of **MOOC design -** defined to encapsulate the tools involved in making a MOOC and relevant to OEP -

Licensing tools relate to the Creative Commons licenses for educational resources that were suggested to lead educators by the learning designers. Open licensing recommendations relate to the policy environment at the university, where open licensing is encouraged.

Conceptual tools relate to different pedagogies that inform ways of structuring the course, presenting materials and assessment methods available in the MOOC platform to the course development team.

Analytical framework

OEP: drew on Hodgkinson-Williams' dimensions as the overarching frame. Those we use are **legal openness**, **pedagogical openness**, and **financial openness** noting that practices exist in relation to the educators' objectives and the study focuses on MOOCs, not all online teaching or even teaching *per se*.

Legal openness draws on understanding and engaging with copyright; using legally open content; making content legally open in different ways; open licensing expertise and advice (Hodgkinson-Williams, 2014).

For **pedagogical openness** integrated Beetham's Hodgkinson-Williams' definition and the data: communicative aspect — i.e. the communicative strategies with which educators ; structuring and assessment of course content. The MOOC mode requires a careful structuring of course content and compels educators to consider the importance of selecting and arranging their learning materials in ways that facilitate learning for open audiences.

Financial openness - narrower view. focus is on specifically to the view and actions of the educator regarding costs and affordability for course participants, esp on low cost funding arrangements.

Research matrix

Research questions

Conceptual resources

Analytical categories

Data sources

Findings

Why educators make MOOCs

Two cases - growing respective disciplinary fields

Two cases - professional development and capacity building

Educators felt their goals had been achieved on the whole through the MOOCs

Also felt that they had developed more critical perspectives

Later - integration of the MOOC and classroom teaching, educating themselves, partnership and community building aspects

Note - OER/open courses not an ultimate object

Why educators make MOOCs
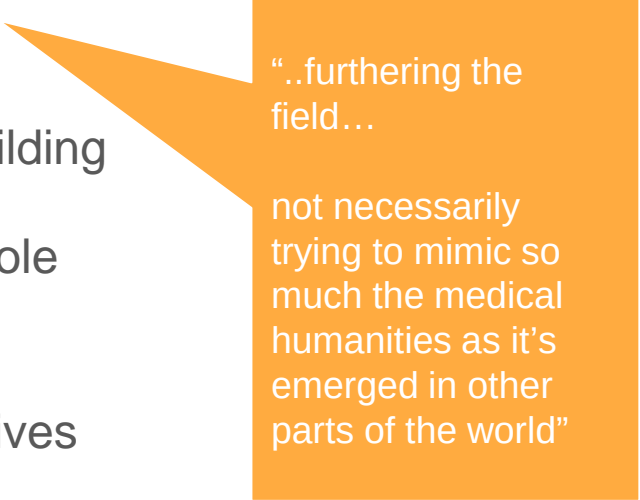
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"..furthering the field…

not necessarily trying to mimic so much the medical humanities as it's emerged in other parts of the world"
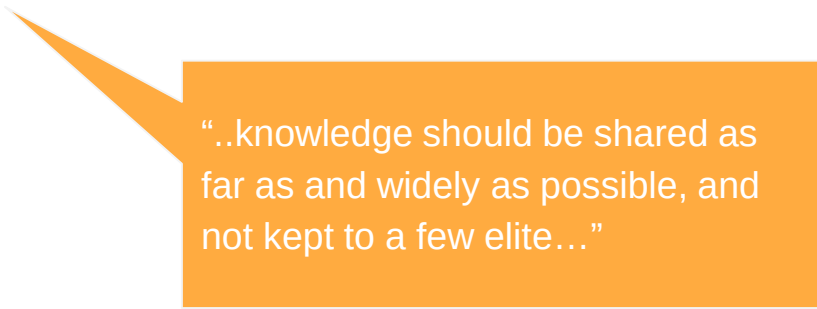
How educators understand openness in education

With one exception educators' understandings of openness in education was nascent

One educator a long standing open education advocate

Generally understood as access and reach

They were not averse to openness

"..knowledge should be shared as far as and widely as possible, and not kept to a few elite…"

Contextual dimensions shaping educators' practices

An enabling institutional environment regarding openness in education

While the MOOC Project not conceived of as an OER project, the MOOC design team made the decision that the default would be OER
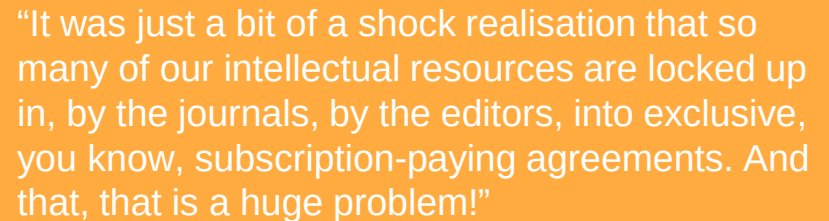
Platform terms allowed/did not restrict OER release

Legal openness

One MOOC with 17 presenters, 2 academics withdrew because of copyright concerns regarding their materials when they went beyond the traditional classroom, 2 decided against CC licences for their videos

Academics shocked that they could not use their own academic texts in their MOOCs as they had signed away their copyright

One wondered if not being able to include copyrighted texts had an effect on the quality of the MOOC

"It was just a bit of a shock realisation that so many of our intellectual resources are locked up in, by the journals, by the editors, into exclusive, you know, subscription-paying agreements. And that, that is a huge problem!"

Legal openness

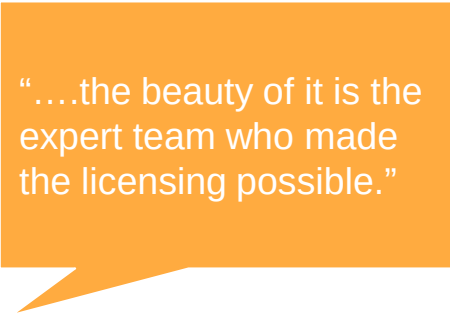MOOC making raised awareness about open access and Creative Commons

Became aware of university repository

Design team had to be risk averse regarding copyright

Legal issues also raised ethical and privacy issues

Educators generally disinterested in the "technicalities" of open licensing

It is clear that educators need to be aware of the "value proposition" of OER, after which the technicalities follow. Educators often in favour of re-use and of the opportunities that open licensing therefore make possible

"….the beauty of it is the expert team who made the licensing possible."
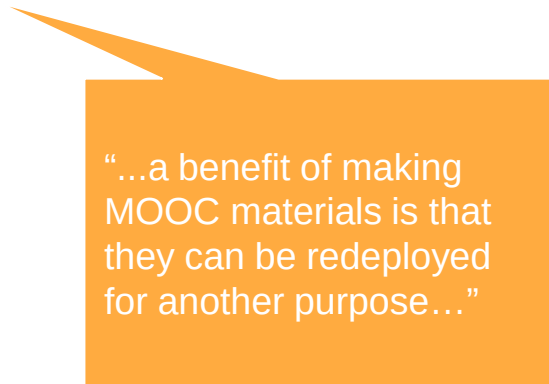
Re-use beyond the MOOC

Open licensing means permissions upfront so re-use hard to track

However, a few cases known:

Re-use of videos in formal classroom settings at own institution (by educator and by others)

Re-use of resources for different projects, formal and informal

Re-use of videos in formal classroom settings by other academics at other institutions

"...a benefit of making MOOC materials is that they can be redeployed for another purpose…"

Pedagogical openness

Strategies of pedagogical openness for large and diverse groups of MOOC participants, an issue for all educators
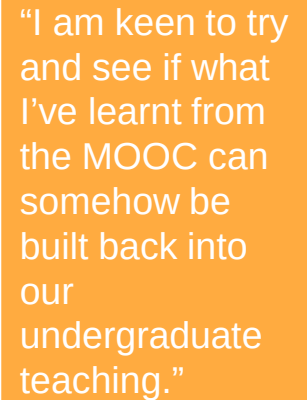
All became aware of the need for structuring content and assessment

Steep learning curve regarding video making and peer review

Awareness of the role of mediation, and of learning designers

Led to reassessment of teaching practices in general, including community formation online and face-to-face teaching

New levels of clarity required

"I am keen to try and see if what I've learnt from the MOOC can somehow be built back into our undergraduate teaching."
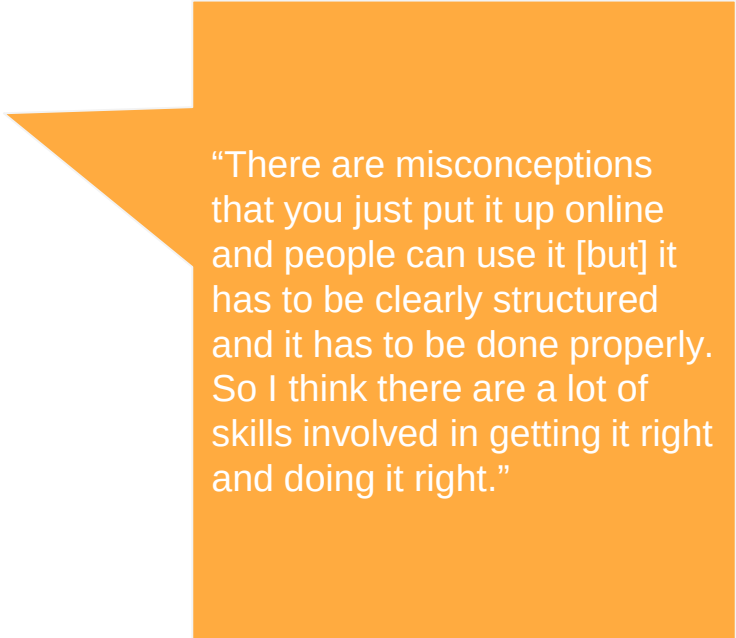
Teaching and learning in open contexts

Shifts in the role of the learner

Concomitant shifts in the role of the educator

Relations become flatter and more egalitarian

Open and online affords "real engagement"

Diversity as enriching

"There are misconceptions that you just put it up online and people can use it [but] it has to be clearly structured and it has to be done properly. So I think there are a lot of skills involved in getting it right and doing it right."

Financial openness

Our study revealed one case where an educator redefined his sense of openness to pragmatically understand open access as resources accessible to those who cannot afford them but involving a monetary cost to those who are able to afford access in the interests of longer term sustainability.

Educator engaged with the issue of MOOC business models and sustainability

Openness-as-affordable

Pay for certificate or get assured financial aid

In conclusion

MOOC making as a stimulant for OER adoption. For many new practices came first, leading to an appreciation of the power of OER (rather than the other way round)

Although educators were at very different starting points, they all came to appreciate and exploit forms of pedagogical openness in the form of a range of new pedagogical strategies which were also used beyond the MOOC

Technical expertise regarding copyright and OER must exist somewhere in the team; generally not an interest of educators

Relationship between OER and OEP
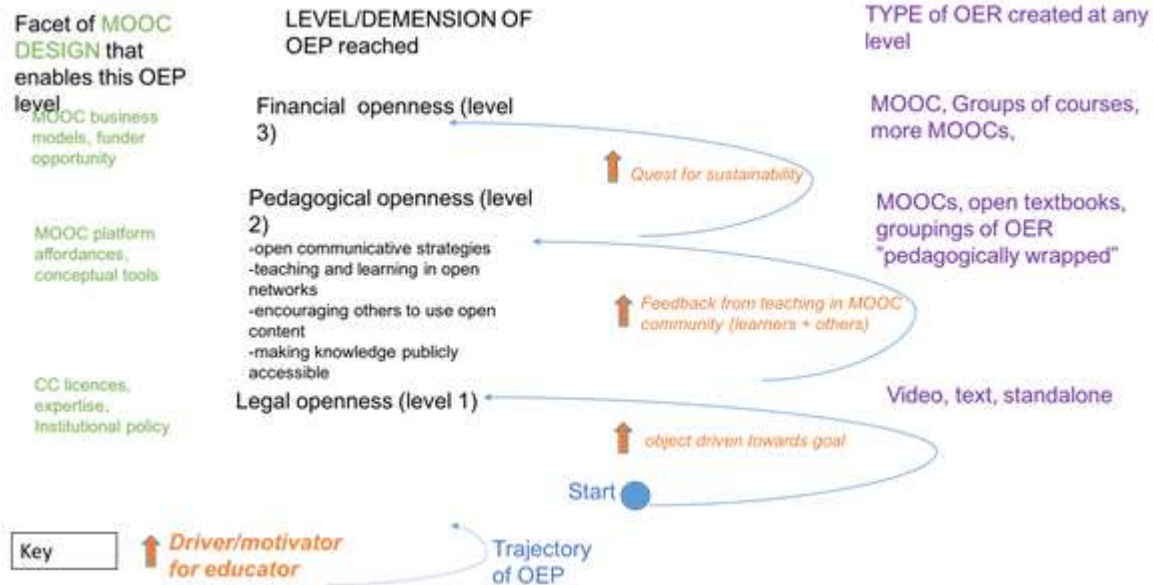
Find out more

Czerniewicz, L., Deacon, A., Glover, M., Walji, S. (2016). MOOC – making and Open Educational Practices. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, Special Issue on Open Education. Postprint at https://goo.gl/r84zsm , view Version of Record at http://rdcu.be/nzlw

Project web page: http://roer4d.org/sp10-3-impact-of-oer-in-and-as-moocs-in-south-africa