

Teacher roles in MOOC design processes – experiences from a Chalmers MOOC

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Background

An increasing number of universities around the globe produce and conduct Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Chalmers has followed this trend by starting to develop two MOOCs in 2014 that are going to be published on the EdX platform. Unlike early adopters, latecomers (including Chalmers) tend to provide extensive resources and support structures to MOOC instructors (see Janssen & Stöhr 2015).

In this talk, we address the question how the role of the teacher can be characterized within the MOOC development process. With an increasing number of actors involved in the development process, this question becomes particularly relevant. However, with few exceptions, the discourse on MOOCs “typically focuses on the student or the technology, but is silent on the matter of the teacher” (Ross et al. 2014:1).

Scope and methods

In this talk, we will reflect upon the role and perspective of the teachers involved during the design and early development of the course. We will focus on the MOOC “Sustainability in Everyday Life” (SiEL) that is currently developed at Chalmers. We will share first experiences regarding the design and early development of the SiEL MOOC and identify different role(s) of teachers during the course design and early development process.

The investigation uses a participatory action research approach (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Central data sources include interviews with the project team and written reflections about all project related meetings. The interviews and teachers’ narratives were analysed and systematically reflected upon in relation to the research question.

Results

We identified three different types of processes that teachers are engaged in the:

1. Pedagogical design process
2. Production process
3. Interaction process with other actors

During the talk, we describe each of the three processes and characterize the interactions and dependencies between them. In relation to those processes, we further identified six roles that the teachers took during the early development process:

1. Owners,
2. Teachers,
3. Learners,
4. Designers,
5. Developers and
6. Negotiators.

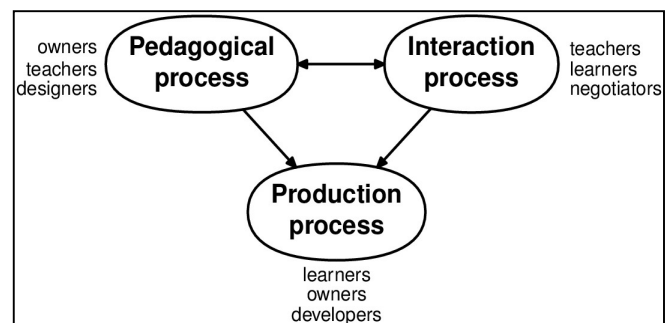


Fig. 1: Development processes and teacher roles during MOOC design

These roles had different “weight” in each process, but have been instrumental to make the overall development process run smoothly. We present these roles and their importance in each of the processes (see figure 1).

Conclusions

Based on the experiences of the SiEL MOOC, we conclude that for teachers, it is critical to be able to:

1. fulfil different roles in the relevant processes,
2. switch between different roles in order to interact with other stakeholders, and
3. maintain a strong feeling of ownership within the design and development process.

References

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