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Moving Beyond MOOC Mania: Lessons from a Faculty-Designed MOOC

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Special Issue on MOOC Design and Delivery: Opportunities and Challenges

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MOVING BEYOND MOOC MANIA: LESSONS FROM A FACULTY-DESIGNED MOOC

Julia Parra
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ABSTRACT

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) have attracted fame, perhaps even notoriety, in recent years. However, we have yet to articulate clearly the purpose and potential for MOOCs. Moreover, we lack established best practices in the process of designing MOOCs. We lack models for practical use by faculty and early career instructional designers, whose group members function with limited resources but would like to engage in the intriguing process of MOOC design. The first goal for this case study is to demonstrate how a MOOC titled Adventures in Learning Design, Technology, and Innovation (#LDTIMOLO) was developed following the ADDIE framework and theoretical perspectives of heutagogy and connectivism, and how that MOOC was evaluated with an emphasis on learner engagement. The second goal is to discuss the purpose and potential power of MOOCs and to reveal the surprising impact on graduate students that resulted from “wrapping a course around a MOOC” (Bruff, Fisher, McEwen, & Smith, 2013). The study explores questions regarding:

1. How was ADDIE used in the design of #LDTIMOLO?
2. What does engagement look like in #LDTIMOLO?
3. What are the design lessons learned from evaluating #LDTIMOLO?
4. What is the purpose of a MOOC?
5. What are the reasons that participants took this MOOC (#LDTIMOLO)?
6. What is the role of a MOOC instructor/facilitator?
7. What is the impact of #LDTIMOLO on the participating graduate students?
8. What is the best course of action for me moving forward with faculty-designed MOOCs?

KEYWORDS: ADDIE, connectivism, heutagogy, learner engagement, MOOC, MOLO, online course design

MOVING BEYOND MOOC MANIA: LESSONS FROM A FACULTY-DESIGNED MOOC

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THE PURPOSE OF MOOCs

“[L]earning something new, challenging oneself, setting goals and achieving them should be something natural in human life, for it is only through continuous growing that progress happens. Doing the contrary is equal to getting lost. If you stop dreaming, you stop living.”
(Mouloud Kessir, in Sokolik & Zemach, 2014, Chapter 6, Section 3, para.8)

Consider that there are many purposes of MOOCs. However, scholars have found it challenging to develop a clear listing and categorization of the purposes of MOOCs. While MOOCs have many purposes, scholars have found it challenging to develop a clear listing and categorization of those purposes. One reason for this might be the diversity of stakeholders invested in MOOC development including various types of educational institutions, MOOC providers, educators and researchers, any individual with an idea or skill to share, and a literal world of learners eager to access high quality online learning opportunities. So, why do a MOOC? Yuan, Powell, & CETIS (2013) answer the question as follows:

The motivation for some MOOCs is a philanthropic one and for others a business proposition,” and that “in both cases, there is the challenge of finding a viable model that allows for sustainability of MOOC provision.
(p. 3)

The literature identifies two primary models of MOOC design: 1) a cMOOC based on connectivist principles and delivered via open and social means, and 2) an xMOOC of the type usually developed at universities, considered an eXtension of the university course, which therefore adheres to the dominant pedagogical approach (Yuan, Powell, & CETIS, 2013). However, it is important to note that theorists have begun the process of further identifying differences among MOOCs along with their purposes. For example, Curt Bonk (2012) provides a comprehensive list of Twenty Types, Targets, and Intents of

MOOCs. George Veletsianos (2012) identifies two overarching philanthropic purposes for MOOCs, 1) democratizing education and enhancing societal well-being, and 2) improving specific skills.

Bernard Nkuyubwatsi (2013), a MOOC learner and researcher from Rwanda, focuses on the role of MOOCs in democratizing education. First, he identifies MOOC constraints including low tutor (instructor) to student interaction (i.e. thousands of learners and one instructor), a “low level of Internet ubiquity and reliability,” and interoperability issues. However, Nkuyubwatsi (2013) also sees MOOCs’ potential for “improving the quality of access to higher education” through the affordances of openness, flexibility, and 24/7 access. Regarding the xMOOC, Nkuyubwatsi (2013) notes the empowering aspect of the model’s “recruitment, delivery and assessment modes”; the maximal and meaningful interactions; and the contribution to “mitigating financial constraints and the shortage of higher education teachers” (p. 345). Of cMOOCs, he notes, “they can help academic and advanced students develop networks with their global counterparts” (p. 345). Nkuyubwatsi proposes that “academics and educational decision makers in Rwanda could themselves experience xMOOCs and through them, possibly create opportunities for learners who wish to study but are not served by the current higher education system” which thereby could “help in the development of a socio-economically inclusive higher education to transform the country into a knowledge-based society” (2013, p. 345).

I served as the designer, instructor, and faculty-researcher for the MOOC under qualitative investigation in this article. My goal was to develop an xMOOC with cMOOC principles to serve the purposes identified by Veletsianos and Nkuyubwatsi above:

- improving specific skills
- developing student networks
- democratizing education and enhancing societal well-being¹

I write to share the first steps of my journey to identify a viable model that will enable the sustainability of MOOC provision. In the design process for the MOOC I discuss, I used the ADDIE model. As a result of the evaluation process, I propose the concept of “wrapping a course around a MOOC” (Bruff, Fisher, McEwen, & Smith, 2013) as one strategy to evolve a viable model worth further research.

¹ I placed these in the order (from least to greatest) of, what I believe to be, the importance and complexity of these purposes.

BACKGROUND

CONTEXT

I am an assistant professor of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at New Mexico State University (NMSU). I teach online and blended courses for a graduate certificate program that I co-designed for online teaching and learning, as well as learning design and technology courses (LDT) for our masters and doctoral programs. I am a Quality Matters Peer Reviewer and two of my online courses are Quality Matters Recognized². In 2013, based on several years of instructor-student interaction, I concluded that masters and doctoral students in our learning design and technology program were not conversant in the principles of systematic learning design. For example, they were unable to identify or discuss their own models for learning design and had never heard of ADDIE. Therefore, I redeveloped an existing course to fill that gap. In fall 2013, I provided the needed intervention by covering the basics of instructional design within an advanced curriculum design course, while retaining the usual concepts covered in that curriculum course. Ultimately, the concepts from this redeveloped advanced curriculum design course became the foundation for a faculty-designed MOOC. The MOOC was delivered alongside the fall 2014 version of the course. This was done to give the 19 graduate-level students³ in the fall 2014 LDT class the opportunity to experience a MOOC as part of their studies. I took this approach based on the idea that a MOOC should be considered a form of advanced curriculum design.

Identical assignments were posted to the university online course environment to give students the choice to participate or not participate in the MOOC experience. All students chose to participate in the MOOC. Each student kept a portfolio of selected activities related to the MOOC to bring back and share within the university online course environment. Bruff et al. (2013) refer to this blended learning type of MOOC as “wrapping a course around a MOOC” or “wrapping a MOOC.” Technically, this term has been used to refer to instances in which instructors use someone else’s MOOC in their course. This article refers to the MOOC being discussed by the abbreviated title, “#LDTIMOLO.”

² Quality Matters (QM) defines itself as an international organization whose “quality assurance processes have been developed to improve and certify the design of online and blended courses.” (See <http://www.qualitymatters.org>)

³ This course was taught hybrid and was cross-listed for masters and doctoral students. There were 19 total: six face-to-face doctoral students, three face-to-face masters students, and 10 online masters students (started with 11, one dropped).

PURPOSE

The first goal of this case study is to describe the experience of using ADDIE as a model for the design and evaluation of a MOOC delivered during fall semester 2014 as part of a course in Learning Design and Technologies (LDT) for graduate students at New Mexico State University (NMSU). The second goal is to investigate this same faculty-designed MOOC with a set of questions in mind. I was able to share the research potential for this MOOC with the graduate students who took the LDT course with MOOC. As budding learning designers and researchers, they helped me review the existing survey questions and develop the eight overarching thematic questions addressed in this study. Interested in the specific MOOC at hand, #LDTIMOLO, I focused on questions related to design, engagement, the impact on my graduate students, and how I could best move forward as a faculty member designing MOOCs. My graduate students were especially interested in what participants thought both about the purpose of a MOOC and about the role of the instructor/facilitator in a MOOC.

The section of the paper titled #LDTIMOLO AND ADDIE addresses the following questions:

1. How was ADDIE used in the design of #LDTIMOLO?
2. What does engagement look like in #LDTIMOLO?
3. What are the design lessons learned from evaluating #LDTIMOLO?

The DISCUSSION section addresses the following questions:

4. What is the purpose of a MOOC?
5. What are the reasons that participants took this MOOC (#LDTIMOLO)?
6. What is the role of a MOOC instructor/facilitator?
7. What is the impact of #LDTIMOLO on the participating graduate students?

The CONCLUSION section addresses the following question:

8. What is the best course of action for me moving forward with faculty-designed MOOCs?

DATA COLLECTION

For this study, I collected data via field notes, learning management system analytics, and surveys.

FIELD NOTES

I used Google Docs to keep field notes, including “#LDTIMOLO Field Notes” in the titles so that I could easily find them in the search process. The field notes that I used for this study include 1) my application of the ADDIE design process to create and modify #LDTIMOLO, 2) my weekly class conversations with my 19 graduate students⁴, 3) the graduate student-created #LDTIMOLO portfolios and their graduate course final project artifacts, and 4) continued conversations that I participated in with these graduate students during the year following #LDTIMOLO. These field notes were used as needed to provide clarity and accuracy for this study.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ANALYTICS

The learning management system (LMS), Canvas Learning Network, hosted #LDTIMOLO, and LMS analytics data was accessible for use to provide context discussed later in the IMPLEMENTATION section. This included information such as total number of students enrolled, number of active students, and number of discussion entries added. However, I did encounter discrepancies and ended up manually counting the discussion entries.

SURVEYS

Three surveys were used for this study. Canvas Learning Network designed and implemented two of the surveys using the built-in quiz feature. The first was a pre-course survey titled “Welcome to Canvas Learning Network Survey” that all #LDTIMOLO participants had to view to move forward but were not required to take. The second was a post-course survey titled “User Experience Survey,” sent by Canvas Learning Network to all participants at the end of #LDTIMOLO, which was not a requirement. These surveys were adequate for general course/MOOC evaluation; however, I had some additional questions. I used Survey Monkey⁵ to administer an additional optional post-course survey titled “End of #LDTIMOLO Survey.” This survey was sent after the end of #LDTIMOLO via the messaging system to all participants.

⁴ We met as a class once per week. We had two class meetings prior to the start of the MOOC and discussed MOOCs and #LDTIMOLO including the research questions of this study. During the five-week MOOC implementation period, after Google Hangouts that were conducted during the class-meeting time frame, I met with the students who showed up on-site to formatively discuss MOOC progress. Post-MOOC, for an additional eight weeks, we continued our regularly scheduled weekly class meetings and our MOOC conversations continued.

⁵ Survey Monkey is a formal survey tool with better analysis capability than an LMS course quiz tool. In the case of high participation, this would be a better survey tool option.

DESIGNING A MOOC (#LDTIMOLO)

*“Why, sometimes I've believed as many as
six impossible things before breakfast.”*
(Carroll, 1920)

The MOOC at the focus of this case study was titled “Adventures in Learning Design, Technology, and Innovation.” The social media hashtag and shortened descriptor for the MOOC was #LDTIMOLO. “LDTI” served as the short form for “Learning Design, Technology and Innovation.” For reasons described directly below, I avoided use of the acronym MOOC, instead coining the term, “MOLO” to stand for “Massive Online Learning Opportunity.” Although #LDTIMOLO was potentially massive (with a cap of 2,500) and online, the first iteration of the course was located behind a password in a learning management system (LMS). #LDTIMOLO was hosted on the LMS being used by my NMSU graduate students. Access to #LDTIMOLO on the university LMS was provided to members of the public at no cost, yet given any barriers to access, such as enrollment and closed modules, I was unwilling to describe the learning opportunity as “Open.” Additionally, #LDTIMOLO was not a full-blown “Course.” Rather it was part of a course wherein I used the concept of “wrapping a course around a MOOC” or “wrapping a MOOC” (Bruff, et al., 2013). For all these reasons, I adopted use of the term “Learning Opportunity” and thus the acronym MOLO for the massive online learning opportunity I designed, delivered, and researched for this case study. Of note: The content of #LDTIMOLO, along with the full survey data summarized in this case study, are available at an open access, accompanying wiki reachable via <https://ldtimolo.pbworks.com/>.

#LDTIMOLO AND ADDIE

ADDIE is one of the most common instructional design (ID) models used and is considered a prescriptive instructional systems design (ISD) model. ADDIE is an acronym for the five elements or stages of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (Hodell, 2011). In this section, I draw upon the related literature and my field notes to address the first question of this study: How was ADDIE used in the design of #LDTIMOLO?

ANALYSIS

In the ADDIE model, analysis is the stage in which the instructional designer gathers all relevant and necessary data for the development of a learning intervention, including identification of content needed by the learners (Hodell, 2011). As noted above, by 2013 it became evident to me that masters and

doctoral students in our learning design and technology program were not conversant in the principles of systematic learning design. Thus, I redesigned a Learning Design and Technologies (LDT) graduate course I was slated to teach in fall 2013 to provide the needed learning intervention to address my graduate students' knowledge gaps. The concepts from this redesigned LDT course became the foundation for the MOLO that I delivered, a year later, in the fall of 2014, alongside that semester's version of the LDT course.

DESIGN

In the ADDIE model, design is the stage in which the instructional designer creates the blueprint, roadmap, or storyboard for the project including development of objectives, construction of basic course content, and the overall plan for the course design (Hodell, 2011). Though #LDTIMOLO was to be a professor-centric and therefore an xMOOC-like learning opportunity, I attempted to design and implement #LDTIMOLO from cMOOC, heutagogical, and connectivist perspectives.

Part of the content for this #LDTIMOLO was already developed, however. To adapt it to MOOC format, I attempted to understand, design, and develop it for learner engagement with both my local graduate class and a potential global audience. Heutagogical and connectivist principles emphasize learner engagement and address MOOC purposes previously identified by Veletsianos and Nkuyubwatsi regarding democratizing education and developing student networks. The following subsections include concepts that impacted design of #LDTIMOLO-taxonomies of learning engagement and methodological perspectives; and provide key course design outcomes: the final #LDTIMOLO catalogue description and the initial outline for the five modules.

Learner Engagement

A common concern related to MOOCs involves a low completion rate “which averages no more than 10%” (Breslow, Pritchard, DeBoer, Stump, Ho, & Seaton, 2013, p. 21). The majority of research conducted in relation to this MOOC retention issue and in the allied area of learner engagement focuses on participation models. Two prevalent taxonomies for participation are discussed in the literature. The first and most discussed taxonomy identifies four patterns of student behavior in MOOCs (Hill, 2013):

1. Lurkers (or Observers) are people who enroll in an open course but just observe or sample a few items at the most. These students form the majority of xMOOC participants. Many of these students do not even get beyond registering for the MOOC or maybe watching part of a video.

2. Drop-Ins are students who become partially or fully active participants for a select topic within the course, but do not attempt to complete the entire course. Some of these students are focused participants who use MOOCs informally to find content that help them meet course goals elsewhere.
3. Passive Participants are students who view a course as content to consume and expect to be taught. These students typically watch videos and perhaps take quizzes, but tend not to participate in activities or class discussions.
4. Active Participants are the students who fully intend to participate in the MOOC, including consuming content, taking quizzes and exams, taking part in activities such as writing assignments and peer grading, and actively participating in discussions via discussion forums, blogs, twitter, Google+, or other forms of social media.

The second taxonomy identifies five engagement styles (Sharma, Jermann, & Dillenbourg, n.d.):

1. Bystanders are students who register, but don't engage much. They may never log in at all, or they may poke around, but then disappear.
2. Collectors are students who mainly just download and watch the lectures, but don't really participate in the course.
3. Viewers are students who watch the lectures, and participate minimally in the course; they might contribute to discussions, but don't do many of the assignments.
4. Solvers do the assigned work, but don't necessarily watch the lectures.
5. All-Rounders achieve a balance of watching lectures and doing assignments.

Ideally, as a learning designer, I strive to create learning environments that promote learners taking on the roles of Active Participants and All-Rounders.

Methodological Perspectives

When designing learning environments, the designer must choose from among a variety of methodological perspectives. In the design of #LDTIMOLO, heutagogy and connectivism served as the methodological framework for creating a curriculum and learning environment that was intended to support optimal learner engagement. Heutagogy does not discount pedagogy or andragogy (Blaschke, 2012); rather, as “the study of self-determined learning, [it] may be viewed as a natural progression from earlier educational methodologies—in particular from capability development—and may well provide the optimal approach to learning in the twenty-first century” (Knowles, 1970, para 1). Though heutagogy is in the early stages of development, its significance lies in (a) its attempt to organize and “draw together” key ideas and approaches that

“address the changed world we live in,” and (b) its “attempt to challenge some ideas about teaching and learning that still prevail in teacher-centered learning and the need for ‘knowledge sharing’ rather than ‘knowledge hoarding’” (Hase & Kenyon, 2000, para. 5).

Conversations regarding methodology have been taking into consideration “the impact of technology and new sciences (chaos and networks) on learning” (Siemens, 2005, p. 5). Existing learning theories are valuable and not discounted but may be inadequate for teaching and learning in the modern world. Viewing established learning theories through technology, for example, raises many important questions. The natural attempt of theorists is to continue to revise and evolve theories as conditions change. At some point, however, the underlying conditions have altered so significantly that further modification is no longer sensible. An entirely new approach is needed (Siemens, 2005, p. 5).

Like heutagogy, connectivism (Siemens, 2005) is an attempt to challenge existing ideas about teaching and learning and address the complexities of technology and new ways of learning. Connectivism allows for a learning trajectory wherein diversity, connections and networks, artificial intelligence, and the Internet are valued as part of the learning process.

With concerns about learner engagement and retention and with the above pedagogical framework in mind, the final description and outline for #LDTIMOLO emerged as follows:

Explore the exciting learning technology landscape that has been created by unlimited access to information, online tools perfect for collaboration, and the rapidly changing technology all around us.

In this five-week adventure, we will use connectivist and heutagogical practices to explore 1) how to be a successful learner, 2) the best strategies for collaborative learning, 3) the basics of learning design aka instructional design, and 4) current innovative models for learning design.

This course is perfect for both K-12 and higher ed instructors. Students will have the opportunity to learn from me and from each other through Google On Air Hangouts. In addition the course will rely heavily on course participants to contribute to the social learning environment.

I hope that you will join me for this GREAT ADVENTURE!

The initial outline⁶ included these five modules.

1. Module 1: Preparing for the Adventure. In Week 1, we will prepare for our learning adventure with a variety of activities including Create your Avatar/Superhero Introductions, Google Hangout, developing our personal learning environments and networks, and other engaging introductory activities.
2. Module 2: In Week 2, we will use a Google Hangout to discuss the week's topics, and we will practice group collaborative activities called Quests with a choice of digital literacy activities (Twitter Top 5, Memorable Memes Mania, Curation Nation, etc.)
3. Module 3: In Week 3, we will use a Google Hangout and other engaging collaboration-based activities to explore key concepts related to pedagogy, learning theory, and learning design with technology.
4. Module 4: In Week 4, we will use a Google Hangout and other engaging activities to explore innovative learning design with technology (models and strategies). Learners will choose Quests to learn about models including Online Models, Blended/Hybrid Models, Game-Based Learning and Gamification Models, and Critical Pedagogy and Technology (aka Hybrid Pedagogy) Models.
5. Module 5: In Week 5, we will use a Google Hangout and other engaging activities to bring it all together and reflect on learning and action plans to continue on the path of innovative learning design with technology.

DEVELOPMENT

In the ADDIE model, development is the stage where course materials are produced and pilot testing is recommended (Hodell, 2011). Miller (2015) identifies six best practices of online teaching and learning that I drew upon for developing #LDTIMOLO: 1) strong instructor presence, 2) creation of learning community, 3) construction of collaborative experiences, 4) invitation to reflect, 5) use of formative assessments, and 6) adding a synchronous element. Thus in this development stage, I worked to develop curriculum that included hands-on practice, experiential learning, and learner choice as primary strategies. Specific learner and learning-centered strategies used and modeled included technology-based projects; online discussions/conversations; and collaborative group work. Instructional methods included live/recorded meetings, facilitator-created video and audio resources, brief tutorials, collaborative knowledge building via sharing of learner-based research and learner-created materials, discussions/conversations, reflection, and more.

⁶ I say initial because later, during Implementation, I collapse modules 4 & 5.

In support of strong instructor presence and the creation of learning community, I developed an introduction discussion forum activity that included the creation and use of avatars and superhero identities. Additionally, in a previous online course that I taught, students provided feedback that we could increase their engagement by using a more authentic and active language to describe our activities. Specifically I referred to course “modules” as “adventures,” and used the terms “debate” and “reflection” in place of the LMS term “discussion.” I also thought of the engagement inspired by massive multiplayer role player games and wanted to tap into that type of language. Thus, for #LDTIMOLO, collaborative, technology-based activities were titled Quests, collaborative Google Doc worksheets were called questsheets, and teams were called guilds. I referred to the use of avatars and authentic curricular terminology as “gamification,” the term I used in survey questions. As related to #LDTIMOLO terminology, this is indirectly supported by empirical research. Bedwell, Pavlas, Heyne, Lazzara, and Salas, (2012) created a taxonomy that linked game attributes to learning; their game attribute of “game fiction” was linked to “the nature of the game world and story” (p. 13). In a blog post, Richard Landers (2015) provided an example of gamification for teaching thus: “lectures, tests, and discussions are renamed adventures, monsters, and councils, respectively” (para. 11). Alternately, Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, and Nacke, (2011) note that “[g]iven the industry origins, charged connotations and debates about the practice and design of ‘gamification,’ ‘gameful design’ currently provides a new term with less baggage, and therefore a preferable term for academic discourse” (p. 14). Thus, excluding the related survey questions, the term “gameful design” is used hereafter.

IMPLEMENTATION

In the ADDIE model, implementation is the stage of course delivery (Hodell, 2011). #LDTIMOLO ran from September 2 - October 7, 2014. (The MOLO host site was opened one week prior and stayed open one week later). The graduate students had preparatory course work for two weeks prior to the implementation of #LDTIMOLO. Based on formative assessment (a discussion with the nine face-to-face graduate student participants who joined me on-site for the Adventure 2 Google Hangout), Adventure 2 was extended for an additional week. To keep within the five-week timeframe, the activities schedule for weeks/modules/Adventures 4 & 5 were collapsed. Adventure modules were not all released at once; they were released the day before the next module started. I did this for two reasons. First, I was trying to minimize confusion by keeping us all on track together. Second, I was hoping to address poor retention in MOOCs, and I thought this might keep people coming back for more. In retrospect, I would have done this differently and released them all at once.

The following participation data, derived from the learning management system analytics, the surveys, and my field notes, demonstrates learner activity from the implementation of #LDTIMOLO.

- There were 724 participants enrolled. Of these, 126 took the next step and completed the “Welcome to Canvas Learning Network Survey”, which was required to view to move forward and participate in the course, but participants were not required to take it.
- There were 19 discussion opportunities provided with 416 discussion posts created (my posts included):
 - During Week 1, the “FAQs and Help Forum” had 22.
 - In Week 1, Adventure 1, there were three discussion forums available. Introductions and Sharing Your Avatar or Superhero Identity had a total of 183 posts (this was the most active discussion); Set Up for Success had 26 posts; Increasing Opportunities for Success had 29 posts.
 - In Weeks 2 and 3, Adventure 2, there were four (4) discussion forums available. Strategies for Guilds and Quests had 28 posts; Complete a Guilds and Quests Agreement had 26 posts; Choose, Complete, and Share Your Quests had 13 posts; and Adventure 2 Reflection had 19 posts.
 - In Week 4, Adventure 3, there were four (4) discussion forums available. The Basic Rules of the Game had one (1) post; Set Up Guilds for Adventure 4 had zero (0) posts; What does a Learning Designer aka Instructional Designer Do? had 35 posts; and Adventure 3 Reflection” had ten (10) posts.
 - In Week 5, Adventure 4, there were seven (7) discussion forums⁷ available. There were five (5) where learners would choose one to focus on: Online Models had zero (0) posts, Game-Based Learning and Gamification had Models had three (3) posts, Critical Pedagogy and Technology zero (0) posts, and Experiential Learning had two (2) posts. LDTI Mashup Machine had six (6) posts; and the Reflection of Our Awesome Adventures had ten (10) posts.

There were five (5) recorded Google Hangouts. Google Hangouts is a free web conferencing technology that can be complicated for learners to use. Although the number of live viewers was not recorded, Google viewing data suggest a

⁷ As a reminder, Adventure 4 included both Adventures 4 & 5 due to the need to devote additional time to complete Adventure 2.

significant drop-off of participation in the Hangout over time. Specifically, Google views indicated that the first Hangout drew 197 views, the second drew 105 views, the third drew 36, the fourth drew 24, and the fifth drew 38 views.

EVALUATION

In the ADDIE model, evaluation is listed at the end, but Hodell (2011) recommends that it be used formatively (throughout) and summatively (at the end) during implementation and that the entire process be embedded in evaluation. The LMS analytics data, the surveys, and my field notes provided evaluation data for formative, summative, and design information and guidance for the #LDTIMOLO. The following is a snapshot of the survey participation data for #LDTIMOLO.

- Of the 724 enrollees, 126 took the next step and completed the “Welcome to Canvas Learning Network Survey”; viewing it was required to move forward, but participants were not required to take it.
- 24 participants took the Canvas Learning Network “Exit User Experience Survey” that was sent to all participants at the end via the messaging system.
- 25 participants took my “End of #LDTIMOLO Survey” that I sent after #LDTIMOLO ended.
- There was an exit evaluation provided in the quiz tool at the end of Adventure 1 with 53 completions and at the end of Adventure 2 with 22 completions.
- As previously noted, 20 graduate students participated in the #LDTIMOLO, each of whom may or may not have taken the surveys.
- One participant from a local community college used #LDTIMOLO participation as part of her promotion and tenure folder. She kept and completed a portfolio and I provided a memo of completion via regular email for her evaluator.

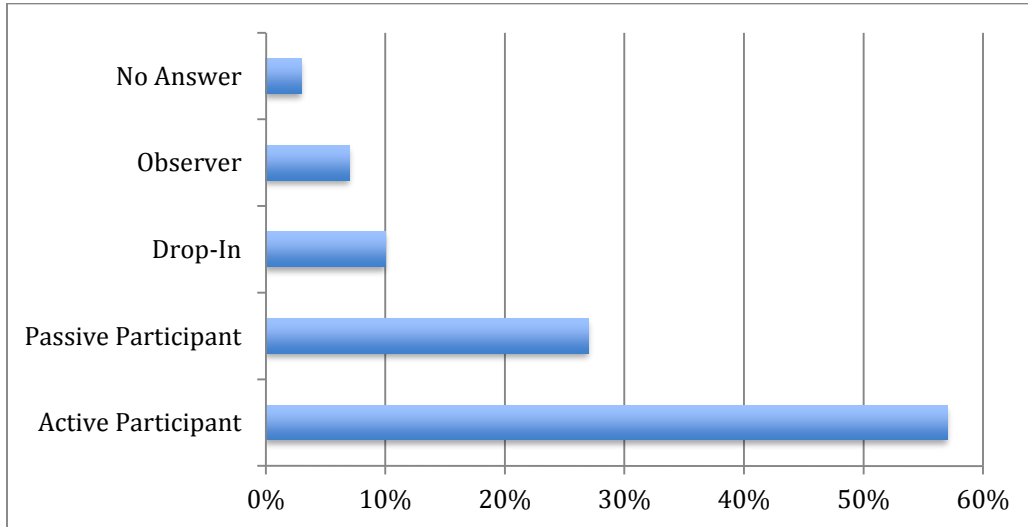
The following 12 data sets from the surveys address the following questions in this study: 1) What does engagement look like in this MOOC? and 2) What are the design lessons learned from evaluating this MOOC (#LDTIMOLO)? Design lessons are summarized immediately following these data sets.

What does engagement look like in this MOOC?

Data sets 1-4 are from the pre-course survey, “Welcome to Canvas Learning Network Survey,” and my post-course survey, “End of #LDTIMOLO Survey,” and focus on the MOOC Participation Model taxonomies. Data sets 5-8 are from the two post-course surveys and focus on questions of engagement.

Data Set 1.

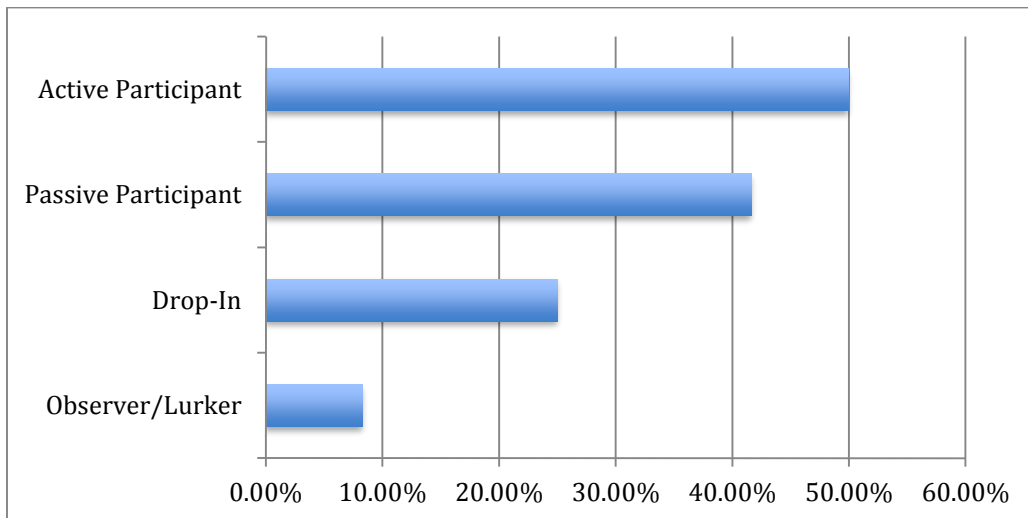
In the Canvas Learning Network Welcome Survey, 122/124 participants responded to the question, “Which type of online learner describes you?”



Data Set 2.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, 25 participants responded to the question, “Based on this Participation Model, what type of participation did you engage in with this MOOC? Pick all that apply.”

It is worth noting that the percentages for perceived engagement are very similar to the percentages in the pre-assessment question graphed directly above.

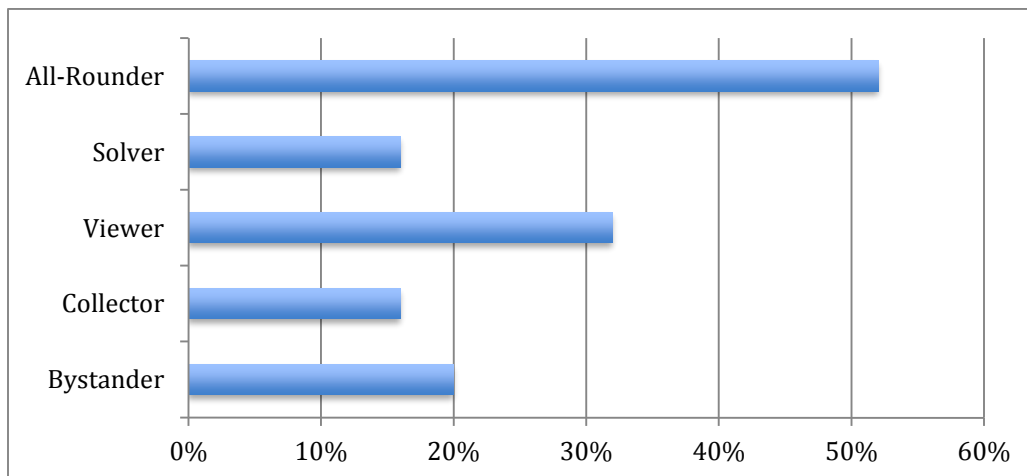


Students had the opportunity to comment:

- I always have hope I will be a stronger participant, but work comes first.
- I really like the idea of Active Participant; however, there are some tasks that I would select instead of using all of them. For instance, peer grading. If the instructor provides an orientation of guidelines (or even develop that with the participants), I think it can be a powerful learning experience. The thing is that some instructors (not saying my current MOOC instructor), even in regular face-to-face courses assume that peers know how to provide constructive feedback. Then, if not all students are aware of how to provide feedback, there will be an imbalance in rewarding from the peer feedback experience. On the other hand, peer grading / feedback / review can be time consuming, since we need to fulfill the requirements of all activities and on top of that, we also need to spend time going through our peer's work. In the case of MOOC, it's a whole course involved, not only one activity, so peer grading is something to be negotiated within the amount of activities we already have throughout the MOOC.
- Again I felt that there should be another option here. I participated in about 75% of the course but didn't really finish the last activity.

Data Set 3.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, 25 participants responded to the question, “MOOCs have participants who engage in varying types of participation. Based on this Participation Model, what type of participation did you engage in with this MOOC? Pick all that apply.”



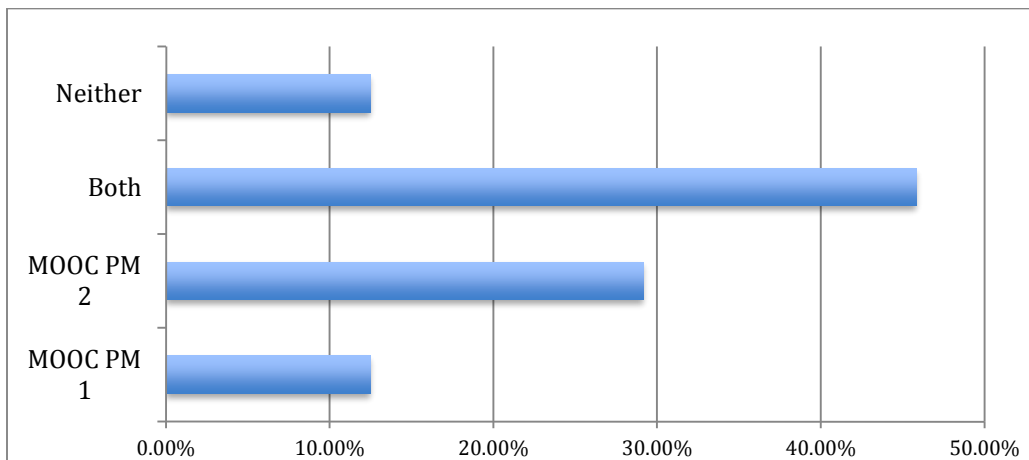
Students had the opportunity to comment:

- I always have hope I will be a stronger participant, but work comes first.⁸
- The thing on MOOC is that somehow I travel through all types of participants since we have this flexibility. But this is a personal matter of organization and priorities. My goal is for an eventual online course such as this one, accomplish the weekly assignments within the week assigned.
- Leader (initiating work for group activities)
- Although my original intention was to be an “All-Rounder,” the technology was too intimidating so I backed off to the “Viewer” participation point. I am continuing to “play” with the tools introduced in the course, but on my own. If offered again, I hope to bring more confidence with some of the tools so I can increase my participation level.
- There isn’t a role here about doing some of the assignments/activities, so I pick two that I would have been in between.

Data Set 4.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, 24 participants responded to the question, “Which MOOC Participation Model do you prefer?” For this question, participants were provided these Participation Models:

- MOOC Participation Model (PM) 1: (All-Rounder, Solver, Viewer, Collector, Bystander)
- MOOC Participation Model (PM) 2: (Active, Passive, Drop-In, Observer/Lurker)



⁸ Note: One survey respondent repeated here, verbatim, the same statement the individual provided as an open comment reported upon above in the section titled “Data Set 2.”

It is worth noting that, although participants were being asked to pick a preference, they continued to focus on their own participation when asked to comment. Also, the majority chose “Both” as a preference. Perhaps they were interested in learning about the different models.

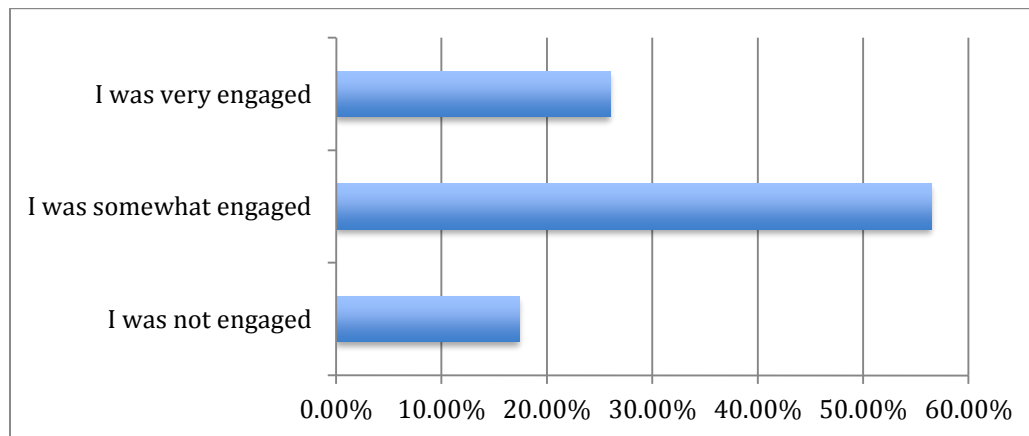
Data Set 5.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, 10 participants responded to the open question, “If you were someone who entered the course, then left and never came back, why did you leave?” The following comments can be summarized as addressing time constraints, navigation issues, curriculum issues, and lack of accountability.

- Time consuming and constraints.
- I had no time.
- Structure was confusing /hard to follow / lack of group participation
- Too much work.
- I would leave for lack of time to develop all the resources we have available online. Every tool is new for me and it takes time to figure out how to use those online devices. I didn't feel that my peers want to take time to teach me something, but I took time to teach them since I am used to the teaching assistance. Yet, I also want to say that the reasons my peers were not very receptive to my wish to collaborate. They may also be in learning themselves how to use the devices and expect that somebody else will tell them how to go through each step. When, in truth, I perceived the MOOC structured for us to assist each other unconditionally. MOOC is also an amazing source of information, but it is valid if one's track focus on technology, which is not my case. But it was still a valid experience since I got to know a different world (and I love it).
- Because it is not what I was looking for, because I didn't have enough time to follow it or because is difficult to follow.
- Lack of time and lack of participation.
- I stayed until the last session!
- Course content curated but not edited for focused study.
- I was very interested in the MOOC and its topic and the instructor. I also really wanted to experience my first MOOC. However, aside from the first week when I was at least able to dig around a bit, I never seemed to find the time to participate and not having to be accountable for attending or not, I found myself doing what I felt were higher priority items over participating in MOOC activities.

Data Set 6.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, 23 participants responded to the question, “This MOOC was specifically designed to promote learner engagement. How engaged were you in this MOOC?”

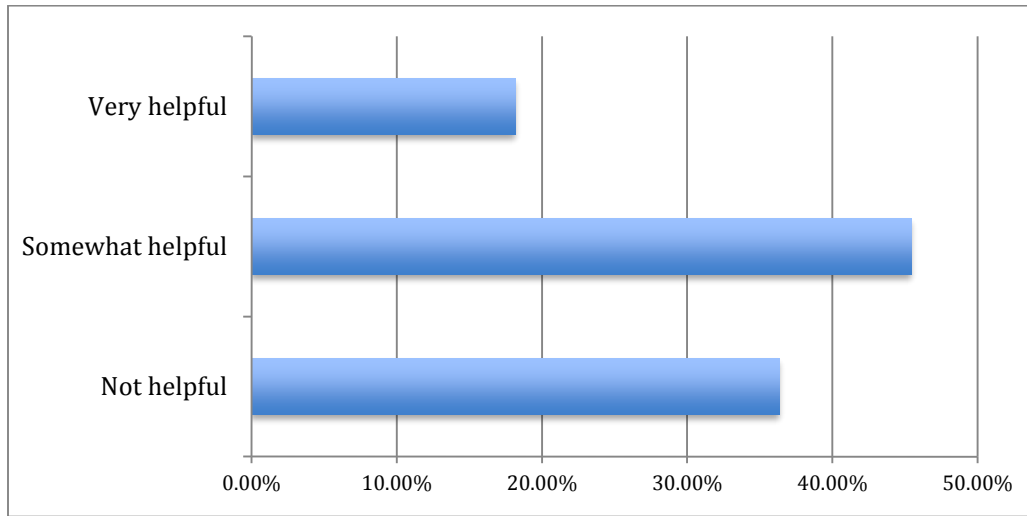


Students had the opportunity to comment:

- The e-mail that came via Canvas gave me a sense of being connected, but sadly I rarely got beyond that.
- The timing of our online meetings were mainly the reason I was only somewhat engaged.
- It was a new experience but an exciting one.
- Because there is no formal certificate and because many learners are dealing with competing priorities for their “time”, I think many people drop from a MOOC if there is no “What’s in it for me?” (WIFM). I was tempted to drop out when things got busy in my work and home life, but I feel that being in a small guild helped me persist. Some type of extrinsic reward (certificate, etc.) I think would also help with learner engagement.
- I experienced challenges with trying out some of the tools at which time my participation waned. Subsequently, I have been playing with the tools on my own so I can retake the course with more technical confidence.

Data Set 7.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, 22 participants responded to the question, “This MOOC made a limited attempt at gamification with the language used for learning. For example, Adventure instead of Module, Quest and Questsheet instead of Activity and Worksheet, etc. Was this helpful?”

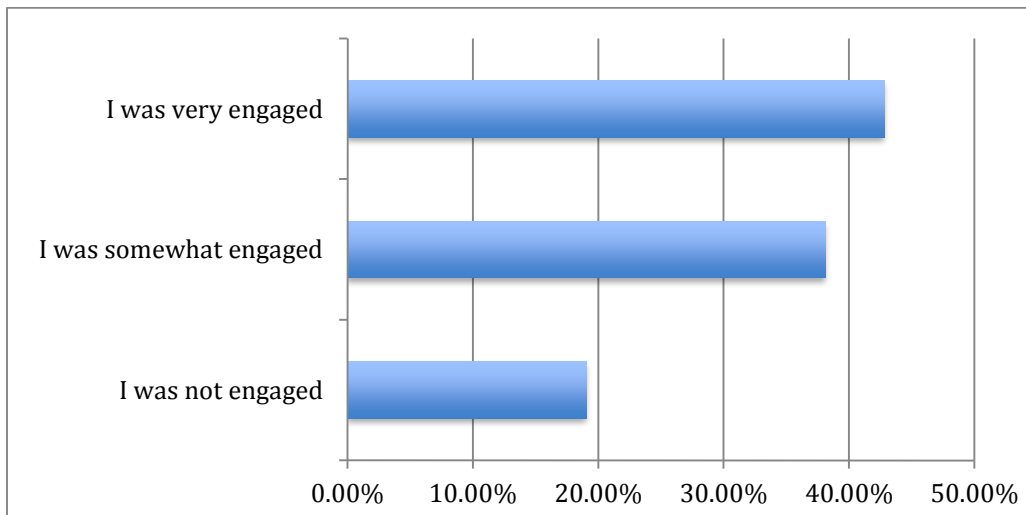


Students had the opportunity to comment:

- Really did not like it. Gamification isn't about just using terminology, it's about creating a gaming experience.
- It was helpful in a sense that we started using the terms in this field. I think this is one of the challenges: we had to learn a new language.
- I understand why this would be helpful. I'm just not sure it is necessary for graduate students.
- I was not familiar with gamification and was just confusing.
- Sometimes slanting the language to make the experience more fun can be helpful and more inviting. Not as stuffy and sterile as terms like "Module" and "Worksheet."
- Initially not helpful because I was already new to the gamification language. Now that I am adopting this new language, I can appreciate the creativity of the use of "Adventure" and "Quest" more.
- If I wanted to play a game, I wouldn't participate in a MOOC.

Data Set 8.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, 21 participants responded to the question, “In this MOOC, the introduction activity was gamified with avatar creation and superhero perspective. Did this engage you?”



Students had the opportunity to comment:

The creation of the avatar had no connection to anything else.

- I did it, but I still didn't get the meaning of that.
- It showed us a way to engage our future students and broadened my horizon on apps that could be helpful.
- I loved this activity, help me to create my avatar and think about my online identity.
- Yes, this was good just to experiment with technology in a safe environment. I work in higher ed and feel that creating superheros wouldn't be well received, though, in for-credit classrooms.
- Too much, too soon for this rookie. It took me too long to figure out how to find and add an avatar. A quick instructional video would have been helpful but I appreciate that I could have sought out the same on my own as well. I simply decided not to spend the time on that task as it was not a priority for me at the time.
- More like roleplay where you assume another identity. Much like the early days of the internet.

What are the design lessons learned from evaluating this MOOC (#LDTIMOLO)?

The following data sets, 9-12 provide specific information for improvement in MOOC/MOLO design.

Data Set 9.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, participants were asked the open-ended question, “What concepts addressed in this MOOC will you take with you?”

- The regular contact by the instructor was impressive to me.
- I’m only sorry I could not reciprocate.
- Educational tools
- I learned some new tools!
- That group work is very difficult especially if the people are not interested and just on lookers.
- Flexible learning!
- More than concepts I learn a lot about the use of technology in education, and I get new skills about to create presentations, infographs, videos, comics, etc., also I discovered many web pages about education that I will certainly use [sic]
- Engagement with online as well as face to face students was interesting.
- You could watch the video any time and you do not miss the class announcement.
- Learner-focused educational model
- Introductions, Avatars, use guild for adventures, etc.
- The concept of giving student “choice” in assessments was great.
- Collaboration rules and ideas for virtual teams
- Infographics

Data Set 10.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, participants were asked the open-ended question, “What have you liked most about this MOOC?”

- Meeting new people around the world learning new tools in networking
- The experience ... Just being part of it.
- The resources provided by the instructor and the way she structured it.
- Google Docs
- I did not like the Mooc
- Interaction!

- Learn about the subject
- Online class participation
- Vital teacher presence
- Be part of a big participation course.
- Exploring new cloud learning technologies and connecting with peers in higher ed
- Energy and encouragement to try out the myriad of tools available for teaching
- The course was well put together... I just felt it was too much info for 5 weeks.
- Aspirations of instructor to pull off something extremely intense and complex with multiple communication channels.
- I thought the instructor was very engaging, and I liked that she used several forums to contact the students.

Data Set 11.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey, participants were asked the open-ended question, “What have you liked least about this MOOC?”

- It was frustrating to have to access multiple places to complete work.
- The peer collaboration. It’s gambling. We never know who we are going to interact to. We all have different backgrounds and agenda, so it would be interesting that we all have the conscious to take advantage of the differences.
- I had a hard time with all the different modes of communication. Great access, but I would’ve liked to have it more focused on one or a couple.
- All of it
- Nothing!
- The format
- N/A (not applicable)
- So open-ended that there was no core
- It was confusing at the beginning but was excited at the end.
- Seeing students drop out
- Nothing
- Too many group projects... I was burned out by the end of the 3rd adventure...
- Complexity and confusion that resulted from gamification and multiple communication channels.

Data Set 12.

In the Survey Monkey End of #LDTIMOLO Survey participants were asked the open-ended question, “What are your recommendations and suggestions for changes that would be helpful for the next version of this MOOC?”

- More explanations for the group working
- A simpler format.
- To put more emphasis on the importance of honesty while collaborating among peers. However, it’s hard to deal with that in a MOOC since the amount of people can be huge to moderate it.
- Some consistency as to where we find certain things as far as communicating.
- Better organized and be straightforward with what is needed to be done.
- It was good!
- Evaluate the way the information is presenting, identify better objectives and paths, enlight specific concepts
- N/A (not applicable)
- It is my first one and I can not give any suggestion.
- I would have used the “calendar” tool in Canvas to keep the large course on task. A few times I was confused when I should get things done. I realize there were some general date ranges for the Adventures on the main page (next to each module/adventure title), but I ended up creating a calendar for our small private guild to keep us on track. It would have been nice to have everything due in the MOLO on a Course Calendar too.
- None at this time
- Perhaps if the course was spread out and each adventure had two weeks for collaboration.
- Provide visual graphic representing paths through the learning process.

MOOC/MOLO DESIGN LESSONS

With the ADDIE model, as with most instructional/learning design models, it is important to use evaluation data to revise, re-envision, and reconsider what happens next. From the 12 survey data sets previously shared and my field notes related to weekly class conversations with my 19 graduate students, the following design lessons for this MOOC have emerged:

- First, it must be clear what the purpose for the MOLO is. For example, this #LDTIMOLO was designed to serve two audiences, the LDT graduate class and potential global learners. From the graduate class perspective, described below, the #LDTIMOLO was successful. From a global learner perspective, using completion rate as a metric, the #LDTIMOLO was not a success.
- In traditional online courses, it is important to level the playing field and scaffold learners into the skills and content of the course. A MOOC/MOLO might not be the place for this. Two conclusions can be considered: 1) create a MOLO just for these beginning skills, and 2) make it very clear for whom the content is intended and be explicit about the skill levels are required. Additionally, using the previously discussed concept of “wrapping a course around a MOOC,” which is how I intend to continue to engage with MOOC/MOLO design, the university course could be used to scaffold learner skills prior to MOLO engagement.
- The pedagogical perspectives used to design #LDTIMOLO have been successful as part of my own regular online course design. They did not translate as well for #LDTIMOLO design. There was too much content, too many goals, and too much curricular activity going on in terms of learning objectives. In retrospect, I also realize that I over-built the course in relation to the role of MOOC instructor/facilitator, as I discuss later. In the future, design needs to be more focused, specific, and discrete. I learned a lot from what participants did and did not do and from all of the evaluation data.
- The graduate students recommended creating a MOLO for each of the Adventures.
- Gameful design with the use of avatars and changes in terminology had mixed responses.
 - The Introductions and Sharing Your Avatar or Superhero Identity had mixed responses but was the most successful activity. I will use this activity or a modified version of this activity in future classes and MOLOs.
 - Gameful design of curricular vocabulary had mixed responses. I will reconsider this in light of related MOLO content. Changing the vocabulary for group work was mostly just confusing to participants, especially the ones already struggling with English.
- Current LMSs are not conducive to massive collaborative group projects as I design them. Collaborative group projects will not be a part of my design for the next MOLO. A MOLO just about collaboration is possible but collaboration, as part of the MOLO learning design, still needs work.

DISCUSSION

This discussion section addresses the following questions:

4. What is the purpose of a MOOC?
5. What are the reasons that participants took #LDTIMOLO?
6. What is the role of a MOOC instructor/facilitator?
7. What is the impact of #LDTIMOLO on the participating graduate students?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A MOOC?

As part of this study, participants who completed the MOOC were asked to share, in their own words, what they thought the purpose of a MOOC should be. This was a general question developed by my graduate students. The response size of 16 is not statistically significant and thus the data are not fully generalizable; however, there were enough responses to identify three potential overarching perceptions of the purposes for MOOCs: 1) to learn, 2) to interact, share, and develop networks, and 3) to engage with the potential of the online experience. Of note, these participant-identified purposes share characteristics and align with the purposes identified by Veletsianos and Nkuyubwatsi as improving specific student skills; developing student networks; and democratizing education and enhancing societal well-being.

WHAT ARE THE REASONS THAT PARTICIPANTS TOOK THIS MOOC (#LDTIMOLO)?

As part of this study, MOOC participants were asked at the end why they enrolled. Fourteen reasons for enrollment were provided for participants to choose from and all were chosen as applicable to some extent. Highest rated were 1) general interest in topic, 2) for personal growth and enrichment, 3) for fun and challenge, and 4) to experience an online course (MOOC).

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A MOOC INSTRUCTOR/FACILITATOR?

As part of this study, MOOC participants were asked to share in their own words what they thought the role of the MOOC instructor/facilitator should be. This was a general question posed by my graduate students. Again, though a minor response of 19, and not generalizable, there were some themes that arose: 1) traditional role, the same as in a regular classroom, 2) role of instructional or learning designer, 3) one who guides, supports, and facilitates, 4) promoter of life-long learners, responsible learners, and critical thinkers, and 5) human evolution.

There was only one person who noted “human evolution” and it is uncertain if this is a serious response, but these two questions and response

themes illustrate that with a world of potential MOOC participants, there are a multitude of reasons, purposes, and expectations of MOOCs and MOOC instructors. It should be noted that it might be difficult to engage in successful instructional design when the audience has such variation. From my perspective, the idea of doing a MOOC with a global audience was so daunting that I continually second-guessed myself and kept adding content to address my concerns. As noted in the previous design lessons, I over-built #LDTIMOLO.

In addition, when thinking about the role of instructor/facilitator it is interesting to consider Sebastian Thrun's expectations when he left Stanford and started Udacity. When Thrun was at Stanford delivering one of the most memorable and popular xMOOCs, the *Artificial Intelligence* MOOC, alongside his Stanford class, MOOC learners were taking an already popular Stanford course with a renowned Stanford professor. This is a very different perspective from learners taking an artificial intelligence MOOC created and delivered by Thrun's company Udacity or a learning design and technology MOOC by relatively unknown faculty. This is something to think about when considering the reasons that inspire people to take a MOOC.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THIS #LDTIMOLO ON THE PARTICIPATING GRADUATE STUDENTS

As previously noted, I consider this iteration of the #LDTIMOLO to be unsuccessful as a MOOC. However, the impact of learning about MOOCs and participating in a MOOC on the participating graduate students has been of increasing interest to me. In noticing that some students had seemingly gone beyond my expectations in ways I had previously not seen, I caught incredible glimpses of student embodiment of democratizing education, a key purpose of MOOCs previously identified.

I have been teaching a variant of the advanced curriculum design course that I used to wrap around #LDTIMOLO at least once per year for five years, and I have always required my graduate students to complete final projects related to their own needs as educators. The majority of final projects have traditionally included the creation of websites for personal use or for curation of thematic content, and the creation of classroom learning plans from a learning design and technology perspective. On rare occasion, a couple of students have engaged in online or blended course design.

Upon completion of the 5-week #LDTIMOLO that involved "wrapping a course around a MOOC," the 19 graduate students returned to regular class participation. As part of their continued class experience, they completed final projects related to their own needs as learners and educators. From the course discussions and my field notes, I compiled the graduate students' final projects

and some of my thoughts about those projects. In addition, I related these projects and my thoughts to the three purposes of MOOCs previously discussed (abbreviations provided for brevity): P1) improve specific student skills, P2) develop student networks, and P3) democratize education and enhance societal well-being. And finally, I provided a follow up discussion about those glimpses of student embodiment of democratizing education that I referred to earlier.

1. Two students shared their personal learning networks including development of LinkedIn profiles. This was a new use for the final project but was not a new project for my students to complete. These final projects evidenced P1 and P2.
2. Three students created classroom websites that were similar to previous final projects and evidenced P1.
3. Six students created personal websites that were similar to previous final projects, which evidenced P1. Additionally, two of these students shared that they would continue with thematic websites for educators in their fields. This provided conceptual evidence of students understanding that they can participate as designers of P3.
4. Three students created thematic websites (one with content for educators and two were specifically in support of teaching English to their own populations). Two were similar to previous final projects and evidenced P1 and P3. Additionally, one was extraordinary and there was evidence that he participated as designer for P1, P2, and P3.
5. Three students participated in online course design. These were similar to other final projects and evidenced P1 and designing for P3. However, these students expanded their projects further than any previous students: One student applied ADDIE as she designed her first online course, one student revised her online course using the Quality Matters rubric, and one student created an online course for a MOOC provider, Udemy.
6. One student completed an activity plan to be completed by a district-wide Professional Learning Community (PLC). This project was very different and evidenced P1, a modified P2 (developing teacher/professional networks), and perhaps a modified P3 (democratizing professional development).

Seven of the 19 graduate students were international students, four of whom embodied democratizing education. One of the students from Saudi Arabia, who created a personal website, shared during a face-to-face class conversation that an additional goal for him was to create a site with resources about autism for his population, as they have very limited resources in this field. One student, literally the only student at our university from his country, shared during a face-to-face class conversation that the Internet access in his country is inaccessible and that

his hopes were that when it becomes more available, he wants to be ready for his people with resources for teaching and learning English. This student has made incredible progress, coming from a country where he had no access to the Internet to recently being hired as a K12 technology coordinator. Another student from China shared his project in class for teaching English via his website of integrated and interactive resources. This was not something I had seen a student do before and the actual engagement between the student and his audience provided evidence that this student was, himself, designing for P1, P2, and P3. His site includes a qq chat room (the most popular instant messaging tool in China) , a Weibo (Chinese Twitter) that has almost 20,000 fans, and an ESL Podcast channel with almost 20,000 subscribers. He is currently creating online courses in China and has aspirations of creating a MOOC. Finally, one of the students from Saudi Arabia, who revised her course using the Quality Matters rubric, shared in a conversation the following semester that she had been considering researching English Language Learners in a MOOC. This was interesting because she was initially uncertain about participating in #LDTIMOLO.

CONCLUSION

“If we profs can be replaced by a computer screen, we should be.”
(Davidson, C., 2013)

MOOCs are both a) online courses and b) not online courses. They are online courses because for the most part, that is how they are currently being designed. They are not online courses because of the “massive” and “open” characteristics of MOOCs. I believe that we have successful strategies for designing traditional online courses involving methodological practices, but when the characteristics of “massiveness” and “openness” are added to courses implemented in learning management systems not designed to support massive collaborative group work, I struggled. Moreover, when the open nature of MOOCs engages learners with a multitude of reasons for participation, expectations, and levels of effort and capacity to participate, I did not find it practical to design for collaborative group work. I suspect I’m not alone in this regard.

In part because there are challenging methodological and design issues with which we must contend, MOOCs have sparked interest and debate, but they have shown promise to expand learning opportunities and therefore deserve continued research. However, if institutions of higher education are going to explore the full potential of MOOCs to improve specific student skills; develop student networks; and democratize education and enhance societal well-being, faculty members need richer support programs and access to more resources and

design strategies to participate successfully in MOOC development and delivery. We also need design process transparency and models that can be replicated.

The priority for this article has been to demonstrate my use of the ADDIE framework of instructional design to develop the MOOC titled “Adventures in Learning Design, Technology, and Innovation” (#LDTIMOLO). I developed #LDTIMOLO based on heutagogical and connectivist principles and chose evaluation methods that emphasize measures of learner engagement, including completion rate. Of note, if MOOC completion rate is the metric for success, this first MOOC/MOLO iteration cannot be deemed successful. However, I conclude that, as a wrap-around MOOC experience for graduate students in my LDT course, #LDTIMOLO had a decidedly obvious and positive impact, and especially so for some of my international graduate students. Based on the experiences shared in this article, and in anticipation of support from a student of mine who wants to continue researching MOOC concepts, I am planning a part two of #LDTIMOLO. I intend to continue with the model of “wrapping a course around a MOOC” (Bruff, Fisher, McEwen, & Smith 2013). I provide this statement as my answer to the final question left to answer in this case study: “What is the best course of action for me to continue with faculty-designed MOOCs?”

MOOCs probably won’t be the earth-shattering game changers they were once prophesied to be, but they bring a sense of challenge and intrigue into higher education, an arena that needs to re-envision its role in the world. It is important for faculty members to take on challenges, to seek to design learning opportunities that will intrigue and engage learners, no matter how imperfect, chaotic, and out on a limb the circumstance of learning might seem. Perhaps that’s how we do avoid being replaced by computer screens.

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