Chapter 47
Transforming Online Learning Beyond the Digital Data:
Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for Blended Learning

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ABSTRACT

Experiential Online Classroom (ExOC) for Introduction to Business Presentation under the English 1 module at Taylor's University has expanded the landscape of blended learning from self-directed learning to experiential learning through participation in an online learning environment (OLE). The ExOC has been completely modernised and humanised to shape students' skills in a business presentation by building intangible elements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR), which are character building, higher order thinking, soft skills, and lifelong learning. Human touch to technology-based content encourages students to build a community virtually, which naturally gives a deep learning experience with greater engagement. This chapter explains the design and development Introduction to Business Presentation MOOC as a modernised and humanised blended learning method that transformed online learning. Finally, the preliminary impacts of students' participation and engagement in using the MOOC are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Blended learning is one of the most common and flexible teaching and learning methods which is applied predominantly in most Higher Learning Institutions. Lecturers are required to perform some pre-set-up such as uploading all the required learning materials and learning activities for relevant topics into the Learning Management System (LMS) or other online learning platforms. In blended learning

sessions, students are free to set their own learning time to complete the given tasks. During this period, they can learn from virtually anywhere and anytime. Due to this flexibility, many students prefer to have blended learning embedded in their course structure (Prakash & Samu, 2018). However, there are circumstances where blended learning creates dissatisfaction among students, particularly amongst those with low levels of perceived self-efficacy (Kintu, Zhu, & Kagambe, 2017). Moreover, the poor instructional design of the e-learning content in the online platform will significantly drop the students' learning progress (Hsiung, 2018) as well as will lead to a feeling of isolation, lack of discipline and low retention rates. According to researchers, one of the factors that cause a feeling of isolation is the lack of social presence in the online learning environment (Richardson et al., 2015). The absence of social presence causes student engagement rate to drop as students would tend to view the online learning platform mainly as a digital data repository.

With the emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), the traditional blended learning approach is humanised through online experiential learning, in spite of the heavy reliance on technology. The Experiential Online Classroom (ExOC) for Introduction to Business Presentation was created as a unit under the English 1 course for students enrolled in the Foundation Studies. The course was developed to expand the landscape of the blended learning approach from self-directed learning to experiential learning through participation in an online learning environment (OLE). The ExOC has revolutionised traditional blended-learning practices into a new learning method which is aligned with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0). This allows students to overcome the challenges faced in delivering business presentations in the digital age.

There are various advantages of the ExOC as it is able to shape students' skills in business presentation, build higher-order thinking skills and promote lifelong learning, which assists them to be more in tune with the 4th Industrial Revolution. Moreover, adding the human touch to technology-based content encourages students to build a community and develop emotions in the virtual land. It is able to transform the perception of online learning as purely a means of learning in the digital platform into a humanised virtual community. The platform gives users a more in-depth learning experience with greater engagement via participation. As a result, the sense of isolation and dissatisfaction, which is common in a typical online learning setting is significantly reduced. With that, the feeling of community and a sense of belonging in OLE will be achieved (Beevi, Sukri, & Ayub, 2019).

The Design and Development of Blended Learning as MOOC

The initial project started in 2015, aligned with the institutional-wide pilot MOOC development project (Ayub & Leong, 2015). In this project, lecturers in the institution were introduced to MOOCs using the "Open Learning" MOOC platform through a series of 'How to develop a MOOC course' workshops. Figure 1.0 demonstrates the TU MOOC Development Lifecycle. In the first three stages, MOOC was introduced to the campus through talks and sharing sessions held during the "Campus-Wide Mooc Campaign" and the "Mad about MOOC Festival". Subsequently, the lecturers attended the MOOC hands-on workshop to learn the implementation of MOOC through the OpenLearning platform. Moving forward, in stage five, the lecturers worked closely with the in-house Instructional Designer (ID) to develop their promotional video and design the online learning structure that is suitable for a massive open online course.

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