MOOCS AND OPEN PRACTICES: AN ACTIVITY THEORY VIEW

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

© 2018, CZERNIEWICZ, L.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction, provided the original work is properly credited.

Cette œuvre est mise à disposition selon les termes de la licence Creative Commons Attribution (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode), qui permet l’utilisation, la distribution et la reproduction sans restriction, pourvu que le mérite de la création originale soit adéquatement reconnu.

IDRC Grant/ Subvention du CRDI: 107311-001-Research into Open Educational Resources for Development
MOOCs and open practices: an activity theory view

Michael Glover, Laura Czerniewicz, Andrew Deacon, Sukaina Walji

30 March 2016,
Teaching and Learning conference,
University of Cape Town

Michael.glover@uct.ac.za  @mjgresearch
Research question

How do educators’ openness-related practices and attitudes change or not change after teaching on/creating a MOOC?

What is a MOOC?

**Massive** (thousands of participants)

**Open** (no entry requirements)

**Online** (digitally mediated)

**Course**

- 6 week course, each week divided into steps
- Videos, text, links, quizzes, peer-reviewed assignments, comment section on each step
Welcome to the course
We welcome everyone and consider why it is important to ask the question: What is a Mind?
Introduction to What is a Mind?

Mark Solms - Professor of Psychology, University of Cape Town

When I was six years old, I began to question the Christian religious beliefs that had been fostered in me through attendance at weekly 'Sunday School', and I started wondering about life after death. I realised that I needed to develop an understanding of the mind.

As a neuropsychologist, I have researched the links between the clinical findings of psychoanalysis and research findings generated by the neurological sciences.

I welcome you to this course that presents a current understanding of...
What are open practices?

Beetham et al 2012

Opening up content to those not enrolled

Sharing and collaborating with other practitioners

Re-using content Using or encouraging others to use open content

Making knowledge publicly accessible

Teaching learning in open contexts
What are open practices?

Hodgkinson-Williams 2014

*Pedagogical openness* – e.g. student demographics, engagement, imagined audience. e.g. pedagogic strategy
Methodology

Qualitative

Activity theory (framework)

**Semi-structured interviews**, group interviews, reflection sessions

Artefact analysis

Longitudinal: *just before MOOC goes live, 10 months later*

Coding themes with Nvivo 10

[Link to Annotated bibliography]
Methodology

Activity Theory, Engeström 1987

Heuristic

Object-directed systems

Track and describe the effects of introducing new mediating artefacts characterised by tensions, contradictions, disturbances
Locate opportunities for change

Link to poster illustration of Activity Theory use
Object: advancing interdisciplinary field

“my pedagogical goal always is... how do I make the neuroscience accessible to the psychologists, and how do I make the life of the mind accessible to neuroscientists.

I think that this MOOC is trying to do the same thing”
What is the “mind”? 
A neuropsychoanalytic approach

Mark Solms

1. Introduction
1. Since our engineering colleagues’ ultimate aim seems to be the construction of an artificial mind—and since they wish to use our (neuropsychoanalytic) knowledge in this regard—it is an ideal opportunity to address the question I have framed in my title: what is a “mind”? In the process of addressing this question, I will of necessity also consider two related questions where do minds occur in nature? (localization), and why do they exist? (function).
2. It is one thing to address such questions, and another to do so neuropsychoanalytically. What is special about the neuropsycholytical approach? For an introduction to the neuroscience of subjective experience.

What is the “mind”? 
A neuropsychoanalytic approach

Mark Solms

The Brain and the Inner World
In introduction to the neuroscience of subjective experience

Mark Solms

The Neuropsychology of Dreams

Mark Solms
Mediating artefacts

1) MOOC design
   learning design aspect

   MOOC platform characteristics (e.g. 7 min video)

2) Creative Commons licences
Activity System T1

Figure 1: WIAM MOOC at T1

Mediating Artefacts
Creative Commons Licenses
MOOC design

Subject
MOOC lead educator and academic assistant

Object
Rende two discrete disciplines (with same subject matter) accessible to each other so as to advance a new interdisciplinary field

Rules
Supportive open environment at the university. Contract between university and MOOC platform. University MOOC strategy. MOOC’s marketing requirements. Use of licenced materials by formally registered students in formal courses only.

Community
Academics; academic assistants; MOOC design and implementation team.

Division of labour
Academics; academic assistants; MOOC design and implementation team; Project managers; MOOC advisory committee, IP lawyer.
Activity System T3

Figure 2: WIAM MOOC at T3

- **Subjects**: MOOC lead educator and teaching assistant

- **Mediating Artefacts**
  - Creative Commons License
  - MOOC design operationalized

- **Object**
  - Render two discrete disciplines (with same subject matter) accessible to each other so as to advance a new interdisciplinary field

- **Rules**
  - UCT Open access Policy
  - Berlin Declaration of Openness
  - Contract between UCT and MOOC platform
  - UCT MOOC strategy
  - MOOC’s marketing requirements
  - Use of licenced materials by formally registered students in formal courses only

- **Community**
  - Academics; academic assistants; MOOC design and implementation team; Thousands of MOOC participants

- **Division of labour**
  - Academics; academic assistants; MOOC design and implementation team; Project managers; MOOC advisory committee

---

**Mecnaung Aruafacts**

Mometrica

Mecnaung Aruafacts
T1 is just before MOOC goes live

T3 is 10 months after MOOC has gone live
Difference in Activity Systems T1 & T3

1) Thousands of participants have entered the system

2) MOOC design and CC licensed materials now live and accessible
MOOCs and CC licences @ T1

*Subjects had never taken or taught a MOOC*

*Not knowledgeable of CC licences or legal aspects of openness*

“a dawning realisation that...the ownership of this intellectual property is antithetical to what we are trying to do”
Findings @ T1

Benefits of online open mode
- Multimodal affordances

“readings and additional materials” can be “immediately accessible”

You can see little case studies, and read selected publications...you could never do that as a mere human being (pedagogic openness)
Findings @ T1

Sharing, reuse, publicly accessible

the material is there, once it’s open access, you can multiply [the] effect (reuse, opening up, sharing,)

if... they distribute that or use it, it’s just more bang for your buck, (reuse, sharing)

“the more the merrier” (sharing, publicly accessible)
Findings @ T1

What is a Mind? – pedagogic strategy

you with a point of entry into the more technical, complicated aspects

remove resistances by making it simple, conversational, and of general applicability
What happens 10 months later (T3)?
Findings @ T3

_In Advancing the field_

really everywhere I go in the world I'm surprised at how many people A, have taken this course, and B, have appreciated it.

very few people in this specialised sub-field that I'm working in, neuro-psychoanalysis there are very few people who really can teach in that domain now... _This has taught me, and encouraged me, to use online platforms for teaching people in and about that field._
Findings @ T3

Reuse

Something...you’ve recorded for one purpose can then be redeployed for another purpose (e.g Talking Heads project).

[a professor of psychiatry at the University of Arizona] used it as an introductory seminar for his psychiatry registrars.

[Ask Mark] too much of a good resource to waste (assistant)
Findings @ T3

**Teaching and Learning in Open networks**

clearly getting a message across to those disparate audiences
clarity of thought...to convey complex...things to a non-technical, non-specialist audience (pedagogic, audience)
you have to really pare your ideas down to the core essential content
When you have to teach in that way, it clarifies your own thinking process
Findings @ T3

Teaching and Learning in Open networks
Talking Heads project is taking an entirely different shape...because of what we’ve learnt in the MOOC (reuse)

I would say the vast bulk of what we do, especially at undergraduate level at the university, I don’t see why it can’t be done in this format. I don’t even see why it can’t be enhanced by this format. Or versions of this format. So I'm all for it. That’s speaking about it in general
Conclusion

Advancing the field
Include more learners
Real learning can take place
Multimodal affordances
Reuse
Learn to communicate ideas
Hope for a future use at UCT?
References


Hodgkinson-Williams, C. Degrees of ease: Adoption of OER, Open Textbooks and MOOCs in the Global South OER Asia Symposium 2014.
What is a mind?

An interactive audiovisual introduction to the mind

BY MARK SOLMS

START EXPERIENCE

This site is processor intensive. For an optimal viewing experience please use an updated browser and shut down other programs and close unnecessary tabs if you can.