Design of cope14 MOOC
From the first idea up to engagement and dancing with your learners

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Abstract

Due to technical progress it is now possible to manage more than a hundred thousand of learners almost at the very same time. Advanced web-literacy\(^1\) of internet-users encourages offering transboundary concepts as massive open online courses (MOOCs). Elite universities like the University of Stanford\(^2\) where one of the first in this field and many American universities followed.

But is it possible for a small European university to develop and offer a MOOC? In this article the authors document their approach to the preparation and development of cope14. Target of the article is to illustrate a MOOC concept as a base for further MOOCs.

Challenge and Planning

MOOCs (massive open online courses) are online offers from universities, private persons or teams which address a great number of learners. Since 2011 the team of ZML – innovative learning scenarios deals with this trend around academic teaching and further education in both roles as learners and experts. The team engages with didactic implications of various MOOC-Models. In summer 2013 the idea of offering an own MOOC at FH JOANNEUM arised. This MOOC should contain a bright variety of content to attract learners from very various scientific fields and from other universities and it should appeal people from a wide international community.

Designers of the MOOC are beside the ZML-Team the colleagues from study paths of business around of Doris Kiendl-Wendner plus the study path “information design” and “journalism and public relations (PR)”. The hybrid MOOC “Competences of Global Collaboration – cope14” combines elements from a connectivistic and a conservative didactic approach. It is a mixture of a cMOOC\(^3\)\(^4\)\(^5\) and a xMOOC. A cMOOC is based on connectivistic principles, as there are autonomy, diversity, interactivity and openness while xMOOCs are based on conservative settings where the learners are supposed to learn mostly on their own.

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The didactic design is built upon the competence of the ZML team in e-moderating as well as the teaching know how of the teachers. The MOOCs should enable networking from all over the world flashed over disciplines and cultures about global collaboration.

FH JOANNEUM and ZML pursue with the developed MOOC the following targets:

- Evaluation of the global trend “MOOCs” and try out of models to integrate MOOC-content into face-to-face lectures
- Offer to FH JOANNEUM students to learn together with students from other disciplines or universities or even students from all over the world to gain competences for life long (online)learning
- Offer to teachers, to become experts in the world-wide online trend of online-learning, to get to know a new method and to network

Development of the cope14-projectteam

The team were a group of 10 people. 3 of them have read about MOOCs, 2 did a little research so far, 2 did learn in the first weeks of a MOOC, 2 were active learners in a MOOC and one person was already involved in a conducting in a MOOC.

A great challenge for the team were building a common base of understanding for the planned MOOC, defining decisions around the implementation of the MOOC and all that at a very short amount of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Go</th>
<th>Project start</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Conduction</th>
<th>Reprocessing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Dec 13</td>
<td>Jan 14 – Apr 14</td>
<td>Apr 14 – Jun 14</td>
<td>Since July 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Project development
- Kick off
- Coordination in 5 Workshops
- Determination of technique and content
- Video creation
- WordPress Blog
- Questionnaire of evaluation

- Experts and moderators are active
- Weekly video conferencing
- Moderation in learning communities
- Awarding badges

- Analysis of two questionnaires
- Analysis of teachers’ behaviour
- Evaluation talk with teachers
- Scientific articles/presentations

Figure 1: time table of cope 14 MOOC

This common base of understanding was sharpened in 5 workshops during december 2013 and april 2014. Around 7 up to 10 persons were participating in the workshops.
**Kick-off Workshop**

The first workshop took place in December 2013 and started with a basic discussion about MOOCs. Participants exchanged their experience. Participants also exchange their thoughts and experiences learning in MOOCs and collected Pros’ and Cons about cMOOCs and xMOOCs. With this findings about MOOCs the team decided to try out a hybrid form for the cope14 MOOC.

Strengthening autonomy of learners and the support of a very open discourse among learners were aspects of a connectivist approach. Out of xMOOC the team took the implementation of videos as learning materials and the definition of clear assignments.

Out of experience from moderation of online-groups after the model of Gilly Salmon the concept of e-tivities for modelling the assignments (learning target – task – interaction) was used.

Another important discussion during the Kick-off workshop was developing a definition for the target group of the planned MOOC. The MOOC should approach a broad variety of learners, including students of the FH JOANNEUM and students from other universities, like partner universities, plus persons out of personal and professional networks from the team.

Advertising the cope14 MOOC was conducted on different levels. In close collaboration with the department for public relations „APA-notifications“ were written and used in daily papers like „Der Standard“ or „Die Presse“. Some learners stated they went for the cope14 MOOC because of those articles.

The 2nd stage of advertising were directed to the networks of the departments of the project members. Using these networks opened doors to three other universities which sent their students to participate in the cope14 MOOC.

The 3rd stage stayed internal at FH JOANNEUM, where convincing work was necessary to get as many students from different departments to participate.

As for the used platform both Novoed and a Wordpress-Blog were discussed. The operators of Novoed stated, that they „are not interested in the european market at the moment“. The decision for a Wordpress-Blog with external hosting was made. Access barriers should be kept rather small to make it possible for learners who would like to remain anonymous to participate. Furthermore, the content was developed as an „open educational resource“.

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The start of the cope14 MOOC was scheduled to Tuesday after the Easter holidays, on the 22nd of April 2014.

Workshop about the contents of cope14
The second workshop, which was held in February 2014, dealt with the contents and their presentation in the cope14 MOOC. The goal of the workshop was to find a consensus, that the basic and fundamental content of cope14 should be about connected and collective learning.10 Furthermore, it was decided that the learning materials shouldn’t be too intense, but include Links to further information about the topics. Ideas for the innovative presentation of tasks were brought up and there were discussions about the implementation of videos in cope14. At this point of the workshop, the first version of the website was already established and the tasks, which were formulated by the concept of Gilly Salmon, were already available for the first week.

Assignment 1.2: Plan your activities and get connected (week 1)
Purpose: To plan your activities and to get connected.
Task: Plan the next weeks and think about what you will achieve in this MOOC. Get to know somebody you didn’t know before. Connect in Facebook, in Google+ or with comments to the MOOC website. Tell us if you plan to write blog posts about your learning process.
Interaction: Look for other learners in the learner table, in the facebook community or the Google+ community, visit their blogs.
Tips: Read the texts How to learn in this MOOC and What to learn in this MOOC.

Workshop for fine tuning
The basis for this workshop, which was held in March, was a fully developed and in Wordpress embedded week of cope14. Whilst the second workshop dealt with the questions of content and structure, this workshop was about to discuss a consistent structure of the particular weeks, on the basis of an example, to make the transition from week to week as easy as possible for each learner. Content-wise, the discussions in this workshop spanned around the level of difficulty of the learning materials and the tasks for the learners, but also the necessity of technical terms and abbreviations was intensively discussed.

10 Mackness, Jenny; Mak, Sui Fai John; Williams, Roy (2010): The Ideals and Reality of Participating in a MOOC. In: Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Lone (u.a.) (Hg.): Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Networked Learning. Aalborg [o.V.], 266-274.
Week 2 – Legal cultures

Tuesday, 29 April – Monday, 5 May

Law has to be seen in context. The legal system of a country is influenced by numerous factors. It reflects the historical development, the social, political and economic system and the technological trends in a society. On the other hand, legal rules trigger and steer the behaviour of human beings and, thus, the law has an impact on the society. Law and culture in a country are interdependent.

In global collaboration persons, who come from countries with entirely different laws, interact. If they conclude a contract, a conflict of laws occurs. In their negotiations, these persons may have misunderstandings, unless they have an understanding of the difference in the legal cultures.

Welcome to “legal cultures”

Another important issue was the planning of video conferences with Google Hangout. This tool provides a platform to establish a video conference with up to 10 participants. The Google Hangout conference is also simultaneously streamed on YouTube and can be watched and downloaded there after the conference is finished. It was decided by the project team, to schedule the conference meetings always on the last day of the single MOOC weeks. In the case of cope14, that day happened to be a Monday.

How far learners should be involved in this Hangouts, was also reason for intense discussions. To create an access for every single learner would have led to a major technical effort, because such a Hangout must have been tested with every single participant. Additional, there would have been the question, who of the participants would be allowed to enter a Hangout and which of them had to be excluded, because of the limited number of Hangout listeners. One possibility to solve this situation would have been to include those participants in the Hangout, who were the first to log-in into the platform. Another possibility would have been to include participants who announce their interest in the hangout first, or to include those, who are the most active in the course. The project team decided to collect the questions for the experts before and during the Hangout, which were posted spontaneously on the different platforms and to include the questions in the Hangout.

Part of the Hangout were always the expert of the week and a moderator. By the end of every Hangout, the expert of the following week joined the conference, to introduce the topics of the following week. Another moderator was responsible to supervise the different websites of the
project: the cope14 site, Google+, the Facebook Community, as well as the channel on YouTube and Twitter. The specific task of this moderator was to scan those websites for new activities from the participants, to read the comments and questions and send them to the moderator in the Hangout.

Workshop before the start
The main goal of this workshop, which was held in April, was to check the contents of the website and to make a timetable for the period before the start of the MOOC. To increase the excitement for the MOOC, blog-texts and videos were already posted. Overall information about the cope14 MOOC, like timetable and further links and informations, were already activated and visible.

For the particular weeks on the MOOC site was only one page in advance visible, which displayed the active experts and moderators as well as the learning goals of this week. The night before a new week started, the contents, videos and tasks were active and therefore for learners visible.

The profiles of the active persons in this MOOC were also sharpened in this workshop. The experts, who had the name “facilitators” in cope14, each started their week on Monday afternoon in the video conference. They also write an opening post and a post during their week of expertise and discuss with the learners in their week in the comment section of the cope14 website. There is also the possibility for learners to get active in the forums of other platforms, that were created for this MOOC, like Facebook or Google+.

The moderators support the learners on the website as well on the Facebook and Google+ platform, they coach the facilitators, collect the questions of the learners, moderate the Hangout, design the site „Learnes’ links and materials“ and write posts about different topics like motivation or provide an overview for the learners.

Workshop at the end of the first week of cope14
This workshop was also held in April. The goal of this workshop was to collect and discuss the experiences of the first week. Due little or no complications in this first week, there had to be made only a few adjustments in the further course design and structure.

Implementation of cope14
By using the WordPress format it was possible to present the cope14-MOOC in a slim and modern website-design, that provided the learners with information on its main site, which was also regularly updated with information by the moderators and facilitators. With this approach it was ensured, that the project team was able to react very quickly to the activities and needs of the learners.

The content of the MOOC was well-rounded with videos that were created by the project team. The project team sees videos as a possibility to serve the idea of emergent learning and to use the
possibilities of the Web 2.0 in the best way possible.\textsuperscript{11} Videos can give a short insight into a certain topics and motivate the viewers to learn more about the content they have seen. To use that quality of informational videos it is necessary, that learners show an individual learning initiative and that they are able to organize their own learning structure and experience.

The video team included two persons, which were also involved in other parts of the cope14 project. One person was especially responsible for the technical Background of cope14 and for the creation and the maintenance of the blog. The other person was responsible for the moderation in cope14 and the open Facebook forum. Both persons were strongly involved in developing the main concept and in implementing cope14. During the production of the videos, the members of the production team were able to show their skills in instructional design and develop their skills by the experience of this project.

The videos were recorded with two static cameras, with an additional hand camera in some cases. The software that was used in the post-production phase was Camtasia. One major challenge and task for the video production was the coordination between the actors and the camera team. To support the teachers in the best way possible, the video team provided a short manual. This manual contained acting advices, e.g. how to begin a video (short personal and content-related introduction) and how to end a video (closing questions, a motivating ending). Before and after recording the different videos sequences the video team assisted with expertise and technical and content-wise recommendations. This assistance helped the teachers and experts to present themselves the best way possible in front of the camera.

After shooting the video, the material had to be cut and finished in post-production, to make the material as interesting as possible for the viewers. To achieve that, the material had to be viewed and selected in the first step, to decide, which clips are the best to use for the video. In the second step, the material was cut and a rough-cut was created. This rough-cut was viewed and checked by a person outside the post-production team. In a conversation after this procedures, the look of the final video was discussed and planed. It was important for the video team, that there weren’t any words cut off, that the perspective change wasn’t too rapid and that the video was overall interesting and pleasant to watch for the viewers. Some of the videos had to be cut several times to ensure, that the contents stay interesting for learners even in longer video sequences.

**Summary of the design process**

Goals of the MOOC and target audience

Before you start with a MOOC, you have to take into consideration, what the fundamental purpose of implementing and developing a MOOC is. The benefit in the area of university can be seen to fulfill the standard educational mission, to promote the development of competences in the context of life long learning and to make your own educational offerings more visible to an outside audience. Defining the target group, that means deciding on which group of persons should learn in a MOOC, is strongly connected with the characteristics of the target group itself. It is also important

to provide a plan to promote the MOOC. For a MOOC it is important to reach a large number of people and to achieve that it is necessary to develop a clear structured PR-Plan.

Didactics and contents
The decision to use a cMOOC, xMOOC concept or a hybrid of both, should be made in an early stage of the development process. In the case of cope14, the decision was made to use a hybrid of a cMOOC and a xMOOC design. Considering the content, it is necessary to decide, how deep the information of the content should be. That question is important, because the depth of the content also decides about the target group, that can be reached. If the content and information of a MOOC is very specific and detailed, you will get only learners who are already familiar with the learning topics and contents. Providing a MOOC with overall and basic information will attract a broader and more diverse group of people and learners.

Another question that has to be considered is in which language a MOOC should be presented and also how open the access to that MOOC should be. There has also the decision to be made, if the achievements of learners should be awarded with a certificate of participation and/or with a badge.

Open learning material can contain different forms of material e.g. Links or self-produced videos. The challenge in creating a MOOC or an E-Learning course, is to provide entertaining and fun learning materials on the one hand and long lasting und high qualitative information on the other hand.

Technical considerations
The decision for the right technical platform should be made on the basis of decisions that have been already made in creating the course concept. The basis for that is an acceptable amount of accessibility, the didactical design (learning in groups is easy in MOOC platforms, because they are similar to standard learning platforms) and the right amount of appreciation for learning achievements. The decisions concerning the design must include all platforms that are connected to the MOOC course, like website, contents and videos.

Process of discussion
The creation of a MOOC needs a collective and common definition for Massive Open Online Learning. To achieve such a common definition, it is necessary to plan in some time for that in the discussion process.

Summary and prospect
Within a short amount of time of almost four months all the questions towards the development and implementation considering the course were resolved, the contents of the videos were created, the platform was implemented and the PR-Activities were set up. The project team met in this time period five times for coordination and voting procedures on different subjects.

From the 22nd April to the 2nd of July 2014 cope14 was open to access. 537 teachers from 34 countries participated, about two thirds were students of the FH Joanneum. The teachers discussed on the website www.cope14.at with a big number of comments (2611) about the specific topics and created contents on their own, e.g. with their own Blog or Links, which were collected by the moderators an a website. They were especially in Facebook and Google+ active. Facilitators and
moderators accompanied the open learning processes. 15 percent of the learners received a certificate of participation.

The first results of the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the cope14-MOOC were presented at the 13th E-Learning day at the FH Joanneum. In the sixth and last week in the cope14 MOOC, 91.5 percent of the 90 learners, that fully completed the questionnaire, said that they have learned something useful, whilst 90 percent of the learners stated, that they learned new facts and concepts (strongly agree and agree). 84.7 percent stated, that they have gained new insights and perspectives. About two thirds of the learners said (68.8 percent) that they have learned something unexpected. A remarkable number of learners (72.6 percent) perceived the comments of other participants as interesting (strongly agree and agree) and 77.8 percent thought, that the videos were informative. Another 77.8 percent stated, that they thought, that the tasks were challenging (25.9 percent chose the category strongly agree, 51.9 percent chose the category agree).

In the online-reflection the learners stated, that the time flexibility was a big bonus of the MOOC. "...the basic idea of MOOC makes this possible... so you can do your learning whenever or wherever you want..." (Steve). The learners describe, that the cope14 attendance strengthened their competences in online communication: "Now I feel more confident posting my thoughts and experiences through the web...." (-Thomas), "...the MOOC influenced my behavior concerning comments. ...I tried to keep my comments short and reduced to the most important information, so that they stay interesting. ..." (-Anna).

The participants also reflected the MOOC platform as a new learning platform: "...For me it was the first time that I participated in a MOOC and it was very interesting to see a new method of learning.....But I didn’t regret to be part of this project. ... On the other hand you need a high degree of self-discipline because it is very time consuming to write the assignments and read all the other comments..." (-Andrea) and they saw the face-to-face learning processes from a new perspective "...Basically I once more realized that I prefer offline learning. ...I like paper and ballpens instead of sitting in front of my computer display for hours..." (-Stef).

The experiences of the learners in the cope14 MOOC were overall so positive, that a cope15-MOOC was implemented from the 13th of April to the 29th Mai. The goal of this new MOOC was to increase the number of learners that come from a not german-speaking university.

About the authors:

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Weblinks

cope15 MOOC http://www.cope15.at/
Information Ddesign, http://www.fh-joanneum.at/ind
How to learn in this MOOC http://cope15.at/?page_id=39
What to learn in this MOOC http://cope15.at/?page_id=38
Youtube Channel http://www.youtube.com/channel/UChKBSdyEAKE0GlKyk981nDFw