UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Lessons learnt: MOOC design, implementation and evaluation

A closer look at 'Understanding Language: learning and teaching'

Kate Borthwick
Senior Enterprise Fellow, Humanities, University of Southampton, UK
ChinaCALL, Qingdao, China, 22 – 23 July 2016

Southampton, FutureLearn and MOOCs

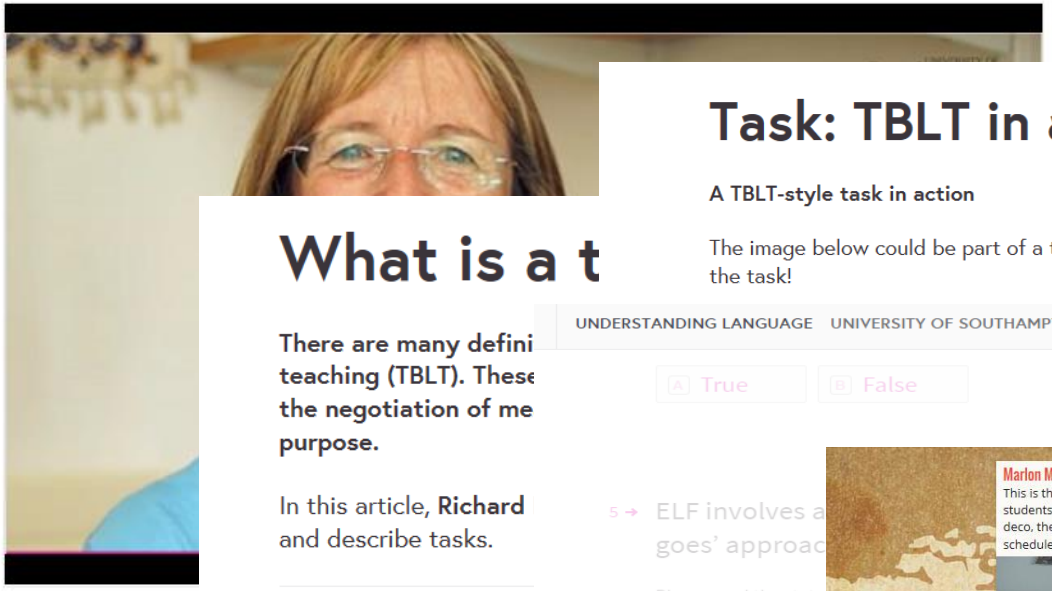
- FL MOOCs - 12 courses; 35 times; 200,000+ learners
- Topics: web science, ocean science, archaeology, history, digital marketing, writing research projects, contract management, language teaching
- Explore ways of reaching new audiences of learners; raise awareness of teaching and research; experiment!
- FutureLearn: private company owned by the Open University; 91 partners; over 4 million learners
- **Modern Languages (UoS):** online MA in ELT (with BC); online pre-sessional study skills for international students; online study skills materials; 'Get ready for Southampton' (free Moodle course)

Understanding Language: learning and teaching

- Collaboration with the British Council
- 4-week course: language learning, language teaching, teaching and technology, Global English
- ‘taste’ of key concepts in language learning and teaching
- Promote joint online MA in English Language Teaching
- Four course runs: Nov 2014 , Apr 2015, Oct 2015, Apr 2016
- Headline statistics: over four runs - 160,000+ ‘sign-ups’ and 70,000+ learners
- C.7500 expressions of interest in the online MA

How do you start?

- Platform: FL design ‘learning as a conversation’
- Content – existing? Original? How much? Learning objectives and outcomes
- Audience – who are they? General audience? Specific group? A large unknown…
- Tone and level – approachable content; reconciling Masters level with free content
- Interactivity, motivation, engagement
- Purpose – educational? Marketing?
- Tutoring – what will the tutor role be?
- Assessment – formative? Summative? Peer review?



View transcript

What is a t

There are many defini
teaching (TBLT). These
the negotiation of me
purpose.

In this article, **Richard**
and describe tasks.

What is a task

One definition that is p
focusses on the task as

i) an activity managed

ii) an instrument used b
and processes of langu

'A task is a workplar
pragmatically in ord
terms of whether th
been conveyed. To t
to meaning and to n
the design of the ta
A task is intended to result in language use th
direct or indirect, to the way language is used
other language activities, a task can engage p
and oral or written skills, and also various cognitive processes' (Ellis

Intro
Englis

In this video,
we will consic
world languag

Referenc

Jenkins, J. (20

UNIVERSITY OF Hampton

Task: TBLT in action

A TBLT-style task in action

The image below could be part of a typical task in a TBLT-style lesson. Do the task!

UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

A True B False

5 → ELF involves a
goes' approac

Please read the state

A True

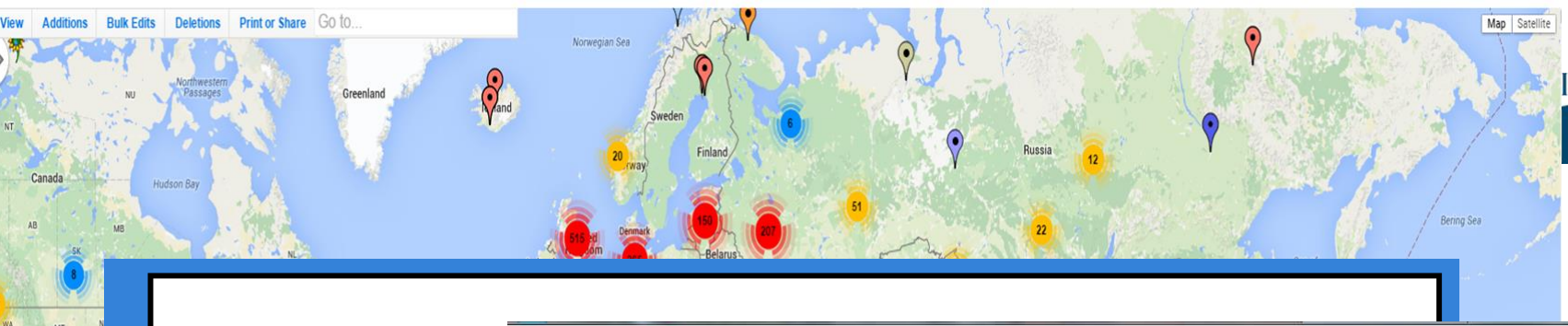
6 → What is accept
decided by the
speakers.*

Please read the state

A True

7 → Native speake
communicatio

Please read the state



ITY OF
pton

eLanguages.ac.u

Research and development team
creating online courses and learning resourc
at the University of Southampton

Features of English as a

Millions of people across the world use English a
language. While ELF communication is highly va
researchers have worked to identify these comm
ELF communication are words and grammar (lex
VOICE corpus (Vienna-Oxford International Corp
some of the features of the lexicogrammar of E

Activity 1: Features of ELF le

In this activity you are going to think about
You are going to examine some of the lexic

Instruction

What do you think? What features h
lexicogrammatical features which y

- [ ] 'Dropping' the third person present ter
- [ ] 'Confusing' the relative pronouns who
- [ ] 'Leaving out' words like 'a' and 'the' wh
- [ ] 'Failing to use correct forms' in tag que
- [ ] Inserting prepositions where they are
- [ ] 'Overusing' certain verbs which are ver
- [ ] 'Replacing' infinitive constructions witl
- [ ] 'Overdoing' explicitness, e.g. saying 'bl

Show feedback

Activity 2: Feature of ELF or

In this activity you are going to look at some
lexicogrammar and pronunciation features.

Instruction

Study the examples and decide whi
Mark with a tick if you think the ex

YouTube GB

Analytics | Video Manager

Understanding Language #3 Live Discussion: Global Engl

UoS/BC Understanding Language MOOC

Channel settings

626 views

Add to | Share | More | 19 | 0

Streamed live on 12 Nov 2015

This live discussion is part of the FutureLearn course 'Understanding Language: learning and teaching, ' 3rd edition. Professor Jennifer Jenkins, Dr Will Baker and Dr Ying Wang answer questions about ELF - English as a lingua franca - and global English. Date: November 12th 2015.

SHOW MORE

Up next

Understanding La
by UoS/BC Understa
1,109 views

Understanding La
by UoS/BC Understa
558 views

How to learn any
Chris Lonsdale | T
by TEDx Talks
6,630,838 views

Understanding La
Review 1
by UoS/BC Understa
2,331 views

Grey Matters: Unc
by University of Calif
64,164 views

5 techniques to s
Efromovich | TED
by TEDx Talks
2,202,268 views

Understanding La
Review, May 201
by UoS/BC Understa
1,259 views

ROBIN WALKER:
thinking goals, pr
by British Council Sp
2,294 views

Course design

- Content and some activities reflect topics and material on our UoS/BC online MA in English Language Teaching
- Approachable and academic tone
- Linear but 'stand-alone'
- Encouragement for interaction
- Strong social emphasis on peer learning and teaching
- Balance between pre-recorded and live elements
- Promotional theme throughout (i.e. explicit link to online MA)

Complex, collaborative and rich

Course design involves a high level of project management and creative input. A FL MOOC is a complex collaboration.

Stakeholders:

- Academic / content contributors; Legal services; Library; Media production; Marketing; British Council team; MOOC programme board (group of very senior UoS staff)

Course designer becomes:

- Educator, but also…producer/director, marketeer, project manager, diplomat, web designer, proof-reader, content creator, picture editor, legal advisor, trouble shooter, live event manager/techie and so on!

Results and impact

- Learners from 174 countries, 91% outside the UK.
- 58k MOOC learners (first run)
- 105 applications for online MA received (60 via the MOOC)
- 45 offers made for Jan 2015, sem 2 intake (27 via the MOOC)
- 17 students enrol (12 via MOOC)
- 40 confirmed starters for Sept 2015, half of whom are outside Mexico
- Course now has an international cohort

Comments from learners who went on to the online MA

- *"… the MOOC offered a nice introduction to current fields of research in ELT. After I started the MA Online, I realized the MOOC served as an overview of the program giving just a taste of what we study in the MA. The MOOC is like an appetizer course."*

- Online MA student working in Russia

'The MOOC offers a brief outline of some of the topics dealt with in depth in the MA; I believe it serves the purpose of whetting appetites and initiating a reflective journey, "giving a taste of postgraduate study in the field,"…. That's at least what happened to me, I reached a point in my life in which I felt the need to study more, so I started taking MOOCs and realised I wanted more - that's when I learned about the MA and decided to enrol; and I'm glad I did…I've enjoyed every single aspect of it'.

- Current online MA student from Uruguay

Aftermath and impact

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Average engagement over 4 course runs – just under 50% of joiners: 70,000+ learners

Youtube channel: 64, 420+ views

General user feedback:

•Huge amount of gratitude at the opportunity to take such a course for free

•Huge number of positive comments along the lines of 'the course was great!'

•Comments from learners indicated that the knowledge acquired on would influence their teaching practice or research areas

Aftermath and impact: our own staff

- Clarity of communication

"...it stretches the individual academic because they have to think of presenting their work in an accessible and engaging way. This is always the goal of academics or at least it should be." – staff member A

- Meeting new learners

"Above all, I really enjoyed reading the participants' comments – thousands of them!...many of them seemed genuinely excited by the topic and some said really perceptive things. it was great to feel I'd caught their imaginations." – staff member B

Aftermath and impact: staff

- Reflection on f2f teaching

"The opportunities to see little nuggets of pedagogic performance was a real learning experience…the idea of the value of teaching in such nuggets has stayed with me. I have prepared 5-minute inputs for students in masters classes now, telling them I was setting out to explain something in five minutes, with a concept, an example…as a prelude to a discussion or task…I feel they benefited from the essentialisation of the input…I think my teaching will evolve more like that…" – staff member C

Future plans

- Improve analysis of data to target new groups of learners
- Seek ways to respond to the desire of learners for related, similar courses
- Experiment with using the MOOC as an instrument to collect data from across the globe in a research project on Global English
- Explore paid-for courses using FutureLearn leading to accreditation/certification from Southampton
- Continue to encourage the increased use of online/blended learning approaches at Southampton

Conclusion: why make a MOOC?

Pros:

- MOOCs are positive and exciting celebrations of learning and research
- Potential to open up HE research and teaching to a broader audience
- To mix open online with closed f2f classes and learn from MOOC pedagogy
- MOOCs are altruistic and potentially open education to those who cannot access through traditional means
- Marketing tool with potentially wide reach; raises 'brand' awareness and academic profiles
- Range of platforms available (not just FutureLearn)
- Once a MOOC is created, it can be re-run at low cost or disaggregated and the different elements used elsewhere

Conclusion: why make a MOOC?

BUT:

- Costly to create in staff time and money for materials creation
- Time- intensive to make
- Sustainable business model? A work in progress…
- Use of established platforms has mixed benefits
- Staff training needed
- How do we deal with so much data? How do we maximise the benefits of reaching such a large number?

References and links

- Futurelearn www.futurelearn.com
- Understanding Language #5 – sign up! https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/understanding-language
- University of Southampton MOOCs: http://www.southampton.ac.uk/courses/free-online-learning.page
- Get Ready for Southampton (another kind of MOOC): https://www.elanguages.ac.uk/get_ready_for_southampton.php
-