A peek behind the scenes:

Stories from the creation of the MOOC 'Understanding Language'

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Southampton, FutureLearn and MOOCs

- FL MOOCs - 10 courses; 25 times; 355,896 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; 75 partners; over 2.5 million learners
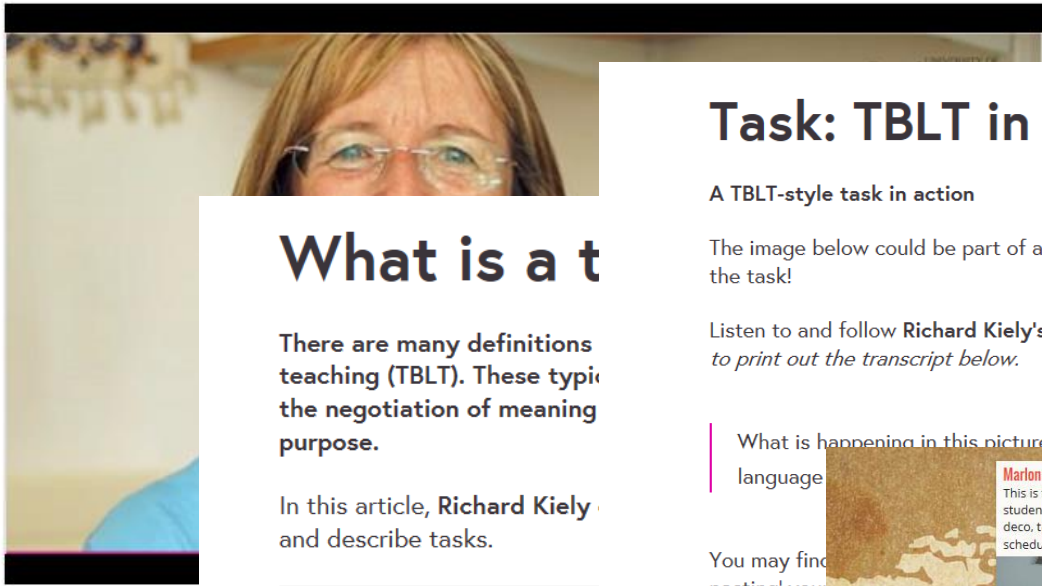
Understanding Language: learning and teaching

- 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 stats: over four runs - 170,000+ 'sign-ups' and 70,000+ learners

- C.7500 expressions of interest in the online MA

How do you make a MOOC?

- 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?

What is a t

There are many definitions
teaching (TBLT). These typi
the negotiation of meaning
purpose.

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

View transcript

What is a task?

One definition that is particu
focusses on the task as:

i) an activity managed by the

ii) an instrument used by rese
and processes of language le

'A task is a workplan that
pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome t
terms of whether the correct or appropriate pr
been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to
to meaning and to make use of their own lingu
the design of the task may predispose them to
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

Introd
Englis

In this video,
we will consid
world languag

Referenc

Jenkins, J. (20

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!

Listen to and follow **Richard Kiely's** instructions. *You may find it helpful
to print out the transcript below.*

What is happening in this picture? How could you use it to generate
language

You may find
pasting' your

Marlon Méndez - Colombia
This is the photo that i could take that covers mostly the classroom. In this day the
students were without the uniform and the miss was doing a reflexive activity. About
deco, the most relevant images are the pre-colombino figures in the columns, the
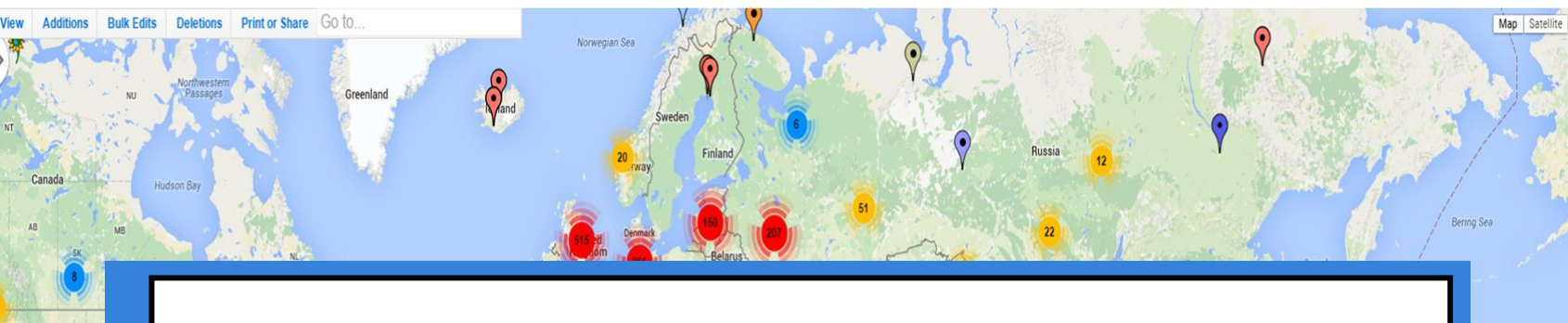schedule, anthem, mission and vission grass on the floor.

4 days ago

Kudakwashe Dhoro - My Classroom
This is my classroom where I teach students French. I like the U shape because it
allows students to see each other and the space in the middle is used for our role
plays etc.

Map | Satellite

ITY OF
pton

eLanguages.ac.u

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

Features of English as

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 (le:
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 lexico

Instruction

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

- [ ] 'Dropping' the third person present ten
- [ ] 'Confusing' the relative pronouns who a
- [ ] '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 ve
- [ ] 'Replacing' infinitive constructions with
- [ ] 'Overdoing' explicitness, e.g. saying 'bl

➕ **Show feedback**

Activity 2: Feature of ELF or

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

Instruction

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

≡ **You Tube** GB 🔍

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.

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0:03 / 1:01:30

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thinking goals, pr
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Course design

- Content and some activities reflect material on online MA

- Approachable and academic tone

- Linear but 'stand-alone'

- Encouragement for interaction

- Social with an emphasis on peer learning and teaching

- Balance between pre-recorded and live elements

- Promotional theme throughout

Nuts and bolts (the designer's job)

Course design involves a high level of project management and creative input.

Stakeholders:

- Academic / content contributors

- Legal services

- Library

- Media production

- Marketing

- British Council team

- MOOC programme board (group of very senior UoS staff)

Course designer's role

Course designer's role:

-producer/director, marketeer, project manager, diplomat, web designer, proof-reader, content creator, picture editor, legal advisor, trouble shooter, live event manager/techie and….educator

Considerations when thinking of a MOOC:

- Time / staff availability / Money / Purpose / content / audience / assessment / tutoring / technology

When the course goes live...

- 49,000 users signed up on day before launch

- 57,000 users were signed by the end of the first day

- 35,000 comments in the first week

- 35,000 comments in the second week

- 5 tutors

- Live interaction via Twitter and comments areas

[statistics from run #1]

Results and impact

- 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)

- 28 either withdrew their applications because their English wasn't good enough or because they were not a scholarship winner

- 40 confirmed starters for Sept 2015, half of whom are outside Mexico

- Course now has an international cohort

Aftermath and impact

- *Average engagement over 3 course runs – just under 50% of joiners: 67,000+ learners*

Youtube channel: 50, 700+ views

A sample of user comments:

"I cannot express enough my joy at having found www.futurelearn.com and being able to take part in this superb "Introduction to Language' course. This live panel discussion about using social media in language learning has been fascinating and highly rewarding. I am so grateful to the British Council and the University of Southampton for making this course free and available to thousands of learners throughout the world…"

"Thank you for this course…" "This course was great!"

Aftermath and impact: users

"This course has left me many things to consider and reflect upon. I think I have a new angle to look at my teaching practices, and also my students' needs and difficulties. I've really enjoyed this course..."

"I will definitely start over use more technology in teaching as well as teaching CLIL. The other issue I am going to focus on more deeply is ELF. Thanks for motivation ☺*"*

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Aftermath and impact: 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

Conclusion: is it worth the effort?

- MOOCs are positive celebrations of learning and research

- Appealingly learner-centred and able to open up HE research and teaching to a broader audience

- Potential 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

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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

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Future plans

- Analyse the data better to target markets with less coverage

- Seek ways to respond to the desire of learners for related 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