**ABSTRACTS FOR REVIEW**

**e-Learning symposium 2016**

**21-22 Jan 2016**

1. **Gloria VISINTINI, University of Bristol,**

**Presentation**

**MOOC ‘Cultural Studies and Modern Languages: An Introduction**

The purpose of my presentation is to describe the University of Bristols MOOC Cultural Studies and Modern Languages: An Introduction. This was developed by a team of academics from the School of Modern Languages. It was launched for the first time in February 2015 and was hosted on the FutureLearn (FL) platform. The course is four weeks long and covers twelve topics. Each week focuses on a different theme --slogans, books, monuments and images -- with three academics teaching one topic within each theme. Our specific target audience is A-level aged students. However, when we designed the course we tried to make it attractive to all, as we were aware that a wide demographic participates in MOOCs.The main objective of the course is to explain to a wider audience what cultural studies are. While a degree in Modern Languages is about learning foreign languages it is also about learning the cultural contexts of the countries where those foreign languages are spoken. This is often something the general public does not know or realise. So with this MOOC we wanted to make the cultural studies aspect more visible and, in so doing, better promote the field of Modern Languages which is currently struggling nationally to recruit students. According to the data collected by FL and the comments posted on the course, learners enjoyed our course. They liked the range of topics and learning through different sources (videos, articles, comments/posts, quizzes, etc.). The majority said that the course met or exceeded their expectations. The bite-sized format was a particular hit with our learners. Most people seem to have liked learning in small chunks and having the opportunity to dip in and out of topics. Normally, FL MOOCs have one linear story running through a course; in Cultural Studies people had 12 mini-stories to engage with, which most learners seem to have appreciated. Our retention rate was also significantly higher than the average rate on a FutureLearn course. A lot of people engaged with our activities and enjoyed reading each others ideas. Learners also liked the multicultural nature of the comments, and thought that the posts were informative and thought-provoking.These and many other aspects of the course will be discussed in the presentation, unpacking our findings in detail and highlighting what makes our course different compared to other FL courses.

1. **Haifa ALBADRY, Newcastle University,**

**Poster**

**Is Mobile Assisted Language Learning Really Useful? An Exploration of Learner Autonomy Development in a College English Course**

This poster presents the experience of using iPads with a group of 21 students in a Saudi university over a period of one semester. Data was gathered through questionnaires, focus group interviews, learners diaries, think aloud protocols, and online tracker logs. The study focuses especially on the extent to which iPad and iPad-like devices can contribute to developing student autonomy in language learning. More specifically, it attempts to explore whether the multi-modal functionality and affordances of the iPad, when used in a Mobile-learning environment and introduced in a teacher-guided EFL (English for Foreign Learners) course, can encourage and motivate students to be more independent and take control over their learning. The exploration does not focus on students' language acquisition; rather it focuses on students strategies when learning English using the iPad device. The project is based on the idea of tool mediation presented by (Vygotsky, 1978) and investigates whether using the iPad can help learners achieve a greater level of flexibility and control over their learning, and increase their engagement and motivation.The study provides several contribution to EFL learning and practice. Findings of this study allow new understanding and knowledge concerning the integration of the iPad or any similar device before incorporating it into a course. It also has the potential to inform educational institutions and EFL teachers of the development of a language course that is technology-based to develop learners autonomous learning.The findings indicate that students used a wide range of cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies when working with the iPad, and there was a statistically significant increase in students reported use of language learning strategies by the end of the project. The study also provides evidence that the use of the iPad when integrated carefully into a language course, and with the teachers instruction, can have positive effects on students attitude and learning. There is evidence that these effects extended beyond the end of the course, as post course interviews suggest that students continued to develop certain types of autonomous behaviour: most students seemed to be more independent and confident. They displayed a strong desire to learn English despite the difficulties they encountered in the course. In addition, most students planned to do more practice outside classroom, collaborate with other students, contribute to the course materials, and reflect on their personal beliefs about language learning. Based on these findings, there seem to be clear benefits to integrating the iPad into language courses.References: Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

1. **Consuelo DE ANDES, University of Plymouth,**

**Presentation**

**Feedback on writing tasks using synchronous technology in the classroom**

An exploration and reflection of digital synchronous and asynchronous interactions with feedback on writing task within a Spanish Language Course for CEFRL level B2 and above. This paper aims to gain insights into how the feedback on writing tasks using technology in the classroom might help to enhance students feedback experience. The group of students are an interdisciplinary body of students at the Plymouth University Final Year Spanish. The paper reflects on students perceptions of the feedback received, their course of action and the journey to improve their strategies and acquisition of writing skills. The digital writing tools and mode operandi used for the interactions will be presented and evaluated both by the teachers and students. This course experiences may help teachers develop efficient writing interactions for the digital language learning environments and consequently to enhance students writing competence.

1. **Anna ROLINSKA, University of Glasgow,**

**Presentation**

**Glasgow-Gaza Collaboration across Borders**

This presentation reports on a number of technology-enabled innovations introduced to a science, engineering and technology (SET) subject specific strand of a 5-week pre-sessional course at English for Academic Study (EAS), University of Glasgow, in August 2015.As previously the students had to research an engineering problem and present feasible solutions to it in form of an extended essay and an academic presentation. However, this time the scenario was made more authentic by introducing close collaboration across borders.We piloted a tele-collaboration project between engineering students at the Islamic University of Gaza and pre-sessional engineering students at the University of Glasgow, the so-called EAST Project (https://www.easttelecollaboration.wordpress.com). The students from Gaza submitted engineering scenarios which the students in Glasgow had to investigate. Throughout the research and write-up process, the Gazan students acted as critical friends and kept providing constructive feedback on the pre-sessional students' findings, having been trained in doing so via a brief online activity sequence prior to the commencement of the course. In the final stage, the pre-sessional students reported on their mini engineering studies during group presentations, which Gazan students listened to and commented on via a video link. The innovations to the course would not have been possible without the use of technology. We used a range of tools throughout the project to facilitate communication and collaboration between the students and coordinators, the main ones being WiziQ, Google Docs, Skype and Facebook. As before, the project allowed the students to work on a range of academic skills related to research and academic writing. Adding the telecollaborative element enhanced the opportunity to develop transferable soft skills too, such as communication, collaboration, task and time management, intercultural awareness and digital literacies. What the Glasgow students appreciated was the opportunity to engage with real-life global issues in a region many of them had not been very familiar with and this authenticity of the project seems to have had a positive impact on their motivation and learning. What the Gazan students were grateful for was to possibility to give voice to their situation and forge relationships with the students living outside their restricted environment. The presentation aims to report on the project, evaluate its effectiveness of technological innovations from the teaches and learners' point of view, discuss the opportunities and challenges related to leading tele-collaborative projects in general as well as outline possible future developments and applications.

1. **Sahar ALZAHRANI, University of Southampton,**

**Presentation**

**Impact of the online mode in a blended course on the development of language learner autonomy**

This study reports on a longitudinal experiment conducted to investigate the effect of the online mode of teaching in a blended course. The aim of the teaching was the development of language learning autonomy. The study was conducted in a semester-long undergraduate Medicine ESP Course. Supplementary materials were designed following the task-based approach. The materials emphasize the provision of learner training specifically on the use of language learning strategies. Medical English content as a relevant content to the Medicine Discipline was selected for the material to increase the students motivation and engagement. A variety of learning approaches were also deployed in the design of the interactive and engaging tasks for the course content. Three groups of Medicine students with three different conditions took part in the experiment (i.e. online, offline, and control). The blended course was taught to two groups (online and offline). A learning management system (LMS) with its different in-built tools was used in the design of the online element of the blended course to be delivered to the online group. The offline group were using the supplementary materials in a paper form. Students in the treatment groups were offered opportunities for reflections on learning, interaction in the target language inside and outside of the classroom, and information exploration. A self-rating questionnaire focusing on the aspects of learner autonomy was designed for the students to rate themselves before and after the study. Results show that the online students made a bigger change in their learner autonomy and in their use of technology.

1. **Robert COLES, Regents University,**

**Presentation**

**Introducing a Custom VLE for Lexical Retention**

Introducing a Custom VLE for Lexical Retention, will be a presentation on the progress so far on a lexical retention VLE (Virtual Language Environment) project first mentioned and introduced at LLAS in 2015. It will be in trials at Regents University, London from the early part of 2016.Codenamed 'Wordiser', the VLE employs the latest in NLP (Natural Language Processing) technologies to allow for the synchronisation between in-class and autonomous learning content. Providing an enhanced blended learning experience, lesson notes and revision word lists can be shared, both by language professionals and their learners. Learner revision is conducted through automated online testing which is scheduled for optimal retention. Reviews may be initiated by the learner themselves or through the sharing of word lists and/or lesson notes. The platform assesses passive to active skills, including spelling, pronunciation, form, meaning and usage, and displays real-time statistic s.The presentation will, in addition to outlining the state of the project and milestones achieved to date, discuss future developments in terms of core skills such as reading, writing and speaking, and how far the platform could go towards providing useful CAL (Computer Aided Learning) tools and solutions.

1. **Andrea ZHOK / Marcella OLIVIERO, University of Bristol,**

**Presentation**

**Insegna cosa impair : a peer-teaching & technology enhanced grammar project Teaching & learning Italian grammar for first year post-a level students at Bristol**

How can we make grammar relevant to our post students in their first year and take them through a thorough revision programme without alienating them and making them feel that they are doing the same topics for the umpteenth time? This was our challenge in the face of repeated criticism from students coming to study Italian with us as qualified entrants. We answered it by completely overhauling our first year curriculum and embracing a truly student-centred and task-based approach, and one where the use of technology would be integral and totally embedded. We also wanted students to take more ownership of their learning and to make collaboration more meaningful - a peer-teaching project seemed appropriate on all these levels. Students, in small groups, are asked to research and author short grammar tutorials created with the Xerte open source toolkit and teach them in class. The technology allows students to use a variety of techniques, texts and activities, which enhance students engagement with the language learning process in a creative and interactive way. Students receive technical training and academic support and supervision from the tutor with tried and tested scaffolding devices that help them circumvent their inevitable lack of experience in their new role as teachers. Our belief is that this approach has important motivational elements and contains a range of pedagogic benefits, in terms of the acquisition and development of a wide range of transferable skills that go well beyond the specific learning objective grammar revision however central those may remain.This paper illustrates the projects background, rationale, planning and workflow and the study of our findings after its first year of implementation, feeding into a re-evaluation of its impact and effectiveness. The changed roles of both students and tutors are also addressed and evaluated.We hope that our response to a specific local need can be of interest and applied to other situations and inspire in colleagues the desire to innovate.

1. **Sascha STOLLHANS, University of Nottingham,**

**Presentation**

**Teaching through the target language: How can technology support CLIL?**

'Content and Language Integrated Learning' (CLIL) is an umbrella term for teaching and learning methods which seek to combine the study of a language with the study of subject knowledge (e.g. history, culture, linguistics or politics). CLIL promotes the use of the target language in classes other than specific language classes. In the context of Modern Foreign Language degrees at UK universities, there are conflicting views on the suitability of CLIL as a method. These views refer back to the idea that there are two major pillars to an MFL degree, commonly referred to as 'language' (i.e. the acquisition of linguistic skills) and content (i.e. the study of the target culture and e.g. its history, literature and politics). Traditionally, these two areas are regarded as independent entities, and content subjects are often taught in English rather than in the target language. In this paper, I will discuss the potential benefits and constraints of CLIL and examine how technology can help us teach content through the target language in a more efficient way. I will take as examples two of my own content modules, one on German culture and one on linguistics, and demonstrate how I have been using technology to encourage participation and collaboration in order to improve students understanding of the subjects as well as their language skills. In doing so, I will argue that CLIL can be a successful teaching and learning approach for MFL degrees, while technology can serve as a very useful and supportive complement. Simple tools, such as wikis and online glossaries, can have a huge effect in that they encourage autonomous and collaborative learning, and make students feel more comfortable being taught in the target language. I will show and discuss student-generated online content (wikis, podcasts and video tutorials) from my modules to exemplify and support my arguments.

1. **Elena MARTA-N-MONJE, Universidad Nacional de EducaciÃ³n a Distancia,**

**Presentation**

**A redefinition of the teacher and student roles in Language MOOCs: The example of How to succeed in the English-B1 Level exam"**

Seen by some as a disruptive educational initiative for Higher Education (Jackson, 2013), considered by others a true media phenomenon (Pappano, 2012), MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) have now established themselves as a sound and valid option for self-directed learning in Higher Education. According to the Gartner's Hype Cycles (Cabero, 2015) MOOCs would have reached the productivity plateau in 2015. After the peak of expectations (2013) and the abyss of disappointment that marked the year 2014, MOOCs would have climbed the ramp of their consolidation process. Within the hundreds of MOOCs available, the field of Humanities and more specifically Foreign Languages have somehow lost pace in this educational frenzy. There are comparatively few courses available (BÃ¡rcena & MartÃ­n-Monje, 2014) and very little scholarly work published to date (Dixon & Thomas, 2015; MartÃ­n-Monje & BÃ¡rcena, 2014), although some notable contributions have started to map out the Language MOOCs (LMOOCs) scenario.This paper has taken the work of Castrillo (2014) and Beaven et al. (2014) as theoretical baseline to reflect on the new roles that instructors and participants have been led to take in this new methodological model and has put it into practice in the instructional design of the new LMOOC How to succeed in the English-B1 Level exam. This course has been created following the sMOOC typology, a social and seamless MOOC designed by the ECO Project, based on network learning practices, with the aim to improve quality, access and equity in education and trying to reach out to those language users (both inside and outside university contexts) who need to prepare for this language test. The analysis of data extracted from the first edition of this MOOC will show to what extent the new instructor and participant roles can enhance the aim of engaging students that would not normally take this kind of test to prepare for it and eventually successfully take it.

1. **Olga HELLY, Regents University London,**

**Presentation**

**Using Discussion Boards in teaching advanced-level Russian**

My paper will address the way in which Discussion Boards can improve writing skills and encourage autonomous learning. At the same time I will also examine the intended outcomes for languages for the Advanced Level Module and analyse the gap between these outcomes and the students real achievement, suggesting possible reasons for underperformance. My intention is to share my experience of using Discussion Boards in teaching Russian at advance level at Regents University London and discuss issues around their use and solutions to make this tool more effective in a mixed class environment. I will be presenting concrete examples of the Discussion Boards created by my students, analyse students attitude to this VLE tool and address the question as to why Discussion Boards have not, so far, produced the desired result. One reason for the relative low level of Discussion Boards use among students is the undeniable fact that their usage gains no separate credit or percentage points for their users, making this useful learning tool unattractive to students despite the obvious and measurable benefit to their Russian literacy. I will, therefore, conclude my paper by addressing this problem and suggesting ways of raising the students interest in this highly beneficial online activity.

1. **Nicola HALENKO, University of Central Lancashire,**

**Presentation**

**Preparing learners for a study abroad stay: Use of virtual role plays to enhance spoken requests.**

Following trends to enhance learning environments with computer-assisted language learning (CALL) tools, this study aims to determine the efficacy of virtual role plays for improving the spoken communication skills and raising cultural awareness of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners prior to, and during, a UK study abroad experience. The motivation for this study was twofold. First, as the availability of UK study abroad preparation courses is limited and since many ESL learners do not capitalise on opportunities to interact with native speakers during their study abroad stay, focussed language practice in the classroom is still required (e.g. Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2010). Secondly, given the trends for many learners to be involved in gaming as a social activity outside of the classroom and calls for practitioners to embrace digital technologies inside it (e.g. Taguchi & Sykes, 2014), the aim of the virtual role plays was to enhance learner engagement. The data were captured from 50 undergraduate Chinese learners of English. Prior to coming to the UK, the experimental group (n=25) participated in five hours of explicit instruction on the linguistic and cultural aspects of making requests when interacting with staff at a British Higher Education institution. A pretest and posttest measure was linguistically analysed to determine instructional effects, measured against a control group who received no instruction (n=25). A follow-up delayed-test was conducted during the UK study abroad experience to determine long-term retention and perceived benefits of the instruction.Results showed that explicit instruction was highly effective between pre and posttests and learners retained a high proportion of the linguistic and cultural knowledge at the delayed-test stage. Further, participants found the virtual role plays to be a motivating tool and viewed the at-home study preparation programme positively for confidence-building and raising cultural awareness. The outcomes suggest practitioners should consider the types of instructional materials employed in pragmatic interventions and the positive benefits of study abroad preparation programme s.

1. **Cathy MOLINARO, Cardiff University,**

**Presentation**

**Integrating language learning and Facebook groups.**

Although the use of Facebook groups to interact with language students, and students generally, can already be seen as a useful tool, successfully, integrating language study and social networks can bring challenges.Over the last 3 academic years, we have piloted and developed the use of a specific Facebook group for our core language module (French language as well as translation into English) in the second year. From this experience, we have drawn lessons and found new ways of making full use of this social media in French Language learning. In this presentation, we will focus on the following points:- The use of a Facebook group in language modules: why?- Challenges : privacy (fom students and tutors points of views)- What sort of group? (public, closed, or secret?)- Rules and regulations: the do's and the donts- How to encourage student participation: from the classroom to the wall- The use of the wall as a language learning tool: what can be used?- The use of the wall as a TL cultural tool: how to go beyond the language- A revision tool: planning your module assessment- The teachers involvement: how much do you need to do?- Can we call it a success story?We will be using our own Facebook group in order to illustrate and explain the points above, so that participants can see Social media language learning in context, and decide for themselves the relevance to their own teaching. Questions on any of the points raised will be welcome.

1. **Serpil MERI YILAN, University of Southampton,**

**Presentation**

**An Exploration of Learners Interaction with the Tools in a Self-directed E-learning Environment**

Learners are supported in different learning environments such as in classrooms, online or blended learning environments. In those environments, they are supposed to interact with their fellows, tutors, media or tools; thus, they can be encouraged to improve their learning. However, there has been a growing interest in providing online learning resources and computers or laptops in educational settings (e.g. Collins & Halversont, 2010; Garrett, 2009; Selwyn, 2003; Yang & Chen, 2007). In e-learning environments, learners have the flexibility to advance in their learning (Lee & Gibson, 2003; Oladoke, 2006). Together with the flexibility, anytime and anywhere access can be offered to learners, which is the substantial advantage of e-learning environments rather than in classroom-based learning environments (Rhode, 2009). In order to reach the high level of learning in those self-directed e-learning environments, the interaction between them and tools should be provided, which indicates learners experiences in using online resources (Hirumi, 2006). In the meantime, designers should be informed about their learning experiences in those environments as they are the ones to determine and set up the learning design (Hedberg and Sims, 2001). Considering the importance of the interaction between learners and tools in e-learning environments, and the little research on that issue despite many studies about the interaction between learners and their fellows or instructors in those environments which show that it has a substantial impact on their learning (Angeli, Valanides, and Bonk, 2003; Fung, 2004; Johnson, 2006; Topper, 2005), this study explores the interaction between learners and tools in e-learning environments. For this, it analysed and interpreted the findings from three-time observations and follow-up interviews with 10 international students who wished to improve their learning of English by using the EAP toolkit. They did learning activities for 15 minutes with the applied think-aloud protocol method during observations. Afterwards, they were interviewed in each time in order to gain a deeper understanding of their learning experiences in the toolkit and other online learning resources. Data from both observation and interview finds out that there is a substantial indication of the interaction between learners and tools in e-learning environments and how they perceive about their learning, which helps designers to consider some aspects while they are setting up and improving the tools and online learning resources. In addition, the results provide more issues to discuss.

1. **Billy BRICK / Tiziana CERVI-WILSON / Sylvester ARNAB, Coventry University,**

**Presentation**

**ImparApp: an Italian Language Learning Game**

This presentation will report on the development and testing of an introductory (CEFR level A1) Italian Language Learning app designed with MITs TaleBlazer software together with colleagues from the Coventry Universitys Disruptive Media Learning Lab (DMLL). By situating games in the real world, mixed reality and location-based games aim to engage learners in an array of experiences that combine real landscapes and other aspects of the physical environment with additional digital information supplied to them by mobile devices. Players interact with virtual characters, objects, and data as they move around their real location. The TaleBlazer editor is browser-based, requiring no local installation and uses a visual blocks-based scripting language, which makes it easy to create rich interactivity. Users can create accounts allowing them to save game files to the cloud, which can then be download directly to a player's digital device. Learners are required to move around Coventry Universitys campus completing exercises and collecting items for their inventory with a view to solving a time travel mystery. Specific tasks are triggered by learners Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates as the move around the campus. The app runs on both Android and iOS systems and is designed to be used in a blended mode: learners spend alternate weeks in the classroom and using the app in self-guided mode. The researchers were required to produce a wireframe which focuses on the available functions, the priorities of the information and functions, the rules for displaying certain kinds of information and the effect of different scenarios on the display. A dedicated programmer then incorporated the exercises and narrative into TaleBlazer and student helpers were employed to test the app and provide feedback to the researchers and programmer. Many of the exercises were created using the multiple choice function in Google Forms but additional functionality exists within TaleBlazer to incorporate more sophisticated tasks using technologies such as QR codes and augmented reality at a later stage. Students and tutors will also be able to monitor progress via a leaderboard and additional points will be offered to learners who complete additional exercises focussing on cultural issues.

1. **Julie WATSON, University of Southampton,**

**Presentation**

**Whose online course is it anyway? A study of student empowerment on an online course**

The drive towards educational transformation has pushed the concept of students as â€˜agents of change towards the top of the higher education agenda in recent times (Chatterton & Phipps 2015; JISC 2015). Underpinning the desire of institutions to involve their students much more in decision-making about educational choices and practices is a new form of student empowerment. The online freedoms and capacity for engagement and control which the social networking revolution has afforded to the individual may well have had a role in fuelling this development. However, this new scenario creates challenges for the online teacher/course designer. How to practically involve students in online course design? How best to design a course that relinquishes control and evolution to its student participants? What does course design actually mean in this context?This presentation draws on a study of a community of over 2000 international students left in charge of an (untutored) online course that had its first iteration in 2005. The online course aims to help prepare them for life and study in a UK university before they arrive. The study investigates the 2015 iteration of the online course, exploring participants in-course actions and post-course views and identifying how their empowered role is reshaping the design of the course year on year. Some tentative conclusions about the role of the international student community as change agent are drawn.

**References**Chatterton, P. & Phipps, L. 2015. Perspectives on changing the environment for change. Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change, Vol 1, No 2, 2015. Available at https://journals.gre.ac.uk/index.php/studentchangeagents/article/view/194 [Accessed 14 Oct 2015]

JISC, 2015. Case Studies: Change Agents Network (CAN). Available at http://can.jiscinvolve.org/wp/case-studies/ [Accessed 14 Oct 2015]

1. **Laurence GEORGIN, University of Southampton,**

**Presentation**

**Knowledge in the hands of students: Towards posthumanist education**

In a humanist vision of education, students are considered unfinished humans that teachers will bring up to their level of humanity (Snaza and Weaver 4). This understanding of humanist education will be the starting point of this presentation which will explore the potential of posthumanist education. This presentation will take the example of a digital learning object created by a student intern using Articulate Storyline as part of the Southampton Feedback Champions project in order to explore the posthumanist educational potential of this and similar examples across subject disciplines. In this respect, the presentation will focus both on a particular theoretical approach to education as well as a practical illustration of that approach. The first part will explain the Southampton Feedback project and how the learning object was created. The second part will ask the question: â€˜what do we mean by posthumanist education? and attempt to answer it by referring to the latest research in the field. Finally, I will draw parallels between the creation of the digital learning object and posthumanist education before exploring ways in which teachers and learners together can start developing a posthumanist approach to education and the advantages of such an approach. Given that posthumanism in the field of educational research is in its infancy, this presentation aims to contribute to a debate or reflection on what a posthumanist education could look like and is in no way trying to bring all the answers. Therefore, participation from the audience will be encouraged.

1. **Lorena LOPEZ / Ricardo MICHUE-BENDEZ, University of York / University of Leeds,**

**Presentation**

**Leeds-York project: using Padlet for collaborative learning and peer review (CEFR B1-B2 Levels)**

This project that is being implemented for the academic year 2015-16 is aimed at students taking a language module at B1-B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), that is, independent users who are able to communicate in everyday situations encountered at work, school and free time. The objective is to enhance student learning and performance through formative activities that focus on practising specific language tasks at appropriate levels of challenge. The nature of the tasks will emphasise key employability skills.Furthermore, students will have opportunities to learn from their peers and to reflect on their own learning.The following learning outcomes are expected to be achieved by the end of the academic year, and by January 2016, the outcomes of the first task and peer review can be presented in discussed at the 11th annual e-learning Symposium 2016 at the University of Southampton:- To improve students utilization of the four language skills.- To enable students to appreciate the value of peer feedback in developing awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

- To enable students to reflect on their own progress.

- To enable students to develop employability skills (working with peers, confidence in verbal communication, preparing job applications or job interviews).

MethodBy working collaboratively in groups of two or three, students will complete three tasks throughout the academic year. Upon completion of each task, students will read each others work and comment on a) content, b) grammar, c) use of language and vocabulary, and d) pronunciation and intonation when appropriate.Through use of the Padlet platform, students will post their work and add their feedback as indicated in each task.Tutor will provide constructive feedback to facilitate progress in meeting the desired learning aims and will be given within two weeks of submission to allow it to be useful.

Tasks:Task 1 (Written task) Writing a cover letter for a job application (09 November 2015)Learning outcomes: To understand and apply the structure(s) of an application letter in the Hispanic world.

Task 2 (Oral presentation) Delivering an effective presentation (08 February 2016)Learning outcomes: To plan, organise, structure and deliver an effective presentation including explanation of ideas and points of view confidently.

Task 3 (Written task) Expressing your point of view using social media on a subject and supporting it with evidence (18 April 2016)Learning outcomes: To enhance students ability to express their wishes, complaints, needs and to propose solutions to social and political issues using social media.

1. **Andrew DAVEY / Charlotte EVERITT, University of Southampton,**

**Presentation**

**Learning from the learner: Refreshing the design of an online MA programme**

The University of Southampton MA in English Language Teaching: Online welcomed its first cohort of learners in 2007. The format and delivery of the course have continued to evolve since then, and the course has expanded both in terms of student numbers and geographical reach. The last year has seen the global launch of the programme in partnership with the British Council, and its promotion through the recent MOOC 'Understanding Language: learning and teaching', led by Modern Languages at Southampton.

In an ever-changing global context of online distance education, the evolving and diverse needs and expectations of learners, and forces that are enhancing the delivery of English Language Teaching, the online MA team is faced with a unique set of opportunities and challenges in the refreshment and ongoing improvement of the programme.

In this session, we will present a snapshot of the current MA programme, highlighting the lessons learnt from a comprehensive process of refreshment of the four modules that make up Year 2 of the online MA. We will present the influences that have shaped our approach to the refreshment process, in particular those emerging from tutor and student feedback, and give an account of the challenges, discoveries and decisions that followed. We will highlight how we have redesigned some components of the course to enhance student collaborative activity and how we have integrated recorded lectures. The lessons learnt from this journey provide a firm basis for further developing and improving the online MA. This will pave the way to enhancing the learning experience for our diverse global student cohort.

1. **Marina ORSINI-JONES, Coventry University,**

**Presentation**

**Integrating a MOOC into the MA in English Language Teaching at Coventry University: innovation in blended learning practice**

This talk reports on the third iteration of a joint staff-student action-research-supported project carried out at Coventry University in Autumn 2015. The Futurelearn MOOC Understanding Language designed by the University of Southampton in collaboration with the British Council was embedded into the teaching, learning and assessment of the mandatory module Theories and Methods of Language Learning and Teaching on the MA in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics at Coventry University. The MOOC/Moodle blend had been successfully piloted in academic year 2014-2015, so it was agreed to carry out another action-research cycle in Autumn 2015.The module Theories and Methods of Language Learning and Teaching was already delivered in blended learning mode (face-to-face and Moodle) before the MOOC blend was introduced; the MOOC provided an amplified opportunity for â€˜global metareflection on language learning and teaching practice.The project also provided a unique opportunity to discuss the theme of autonomy in language learning and teaching and explore further if autonomy could be identified as a threshold concept. It also enabled all participants to discuss both new perspectives on online language learning and teaching and the trainee teachers beliefs before and after engaging with the course. Data was collected through a pre-MOOC and a post-MOOC survey using the Bristol Online Survey tool. The survey was jointly created by staff with the students who had taken part in the previous cycle of the blended MOOC project.The talk will discuss the way in which the participants engaged with this project, which became a blended learning community of professional development practice linked to the global community of practice on the MOOC, and present their perspectives on the pros and cons of integrating a MOOC as an Open Educational Resource (OER) into an existing curriculum.

1. **Ruth TRINDER, Vienna University of Economics and Business,**

**Presentation**

**Online informal learning of English: exploring students technology preferences**

Based on a recent survey, this talk compares student perspectives on the potential of technology for different skills with evidence from research, explains some apparent inconsistencies in learner beliefs and practice, and suggests how preferences in informal online learning and research evidence might be integrated to benefit language learning inside and out of the classroom. In industrialized countries students have easy access to a wide array of technologies, employing them regularly for entertainment, personal communication and information seeking. Downloading services and streaming make English-language films and TV series available; social media offer membership and interaction opportunities in international communities. With the proliferation of smartphones, tablets and netbooks, this means that students are increasingly exposed to English in informal settings.Given that opportunities for incidental as well as deliberate practice of English have thus multiplied and far exceed what can be done in more formal environments, â€˜Online Informal Learning of English (Sockett 2014) clearly deserves more attention. Despite the sizeable literature on learner perceptions of specific digital resources, few studies have investigated the unscheduled, impromptu, out-of-class use of technologies. I will present data on how Austrian university students practise informal learning using digital tools, focusing in particular on their views of the usefulness of some resources for specific language competencies and their reservations concerning some others.Arguing that insights into learner preferences, coupled with research evidence on effectiveness if available, can usefully inform pedagogical practice, I will suggest ways in which teachers might apply these research outcomes to their own contexts. Whilst it may not always be expedient to accommodate students preferences directly by integrating media into the classroom, raising awareness about the benefits of underused resources, exploring reasons for use and rejection, and developing/discussing strategies to better exploit digital tools are valuable steps towards promoting optimal use of technology for language learning. Sockett, G. (2014) The Online Informal Learning of English. Palgrave Macmillan.

1. **Anna MOTZO, The Open University,**

**Presentation**

**Italian OERs for dyslexic students: using, adapting and re-purposing OERs to widen participation in online language learning**

The learning difficulty known as dyslexia affects up to ten per cent of the adult population. Historically the condition has been a barrier to second language learning as traditional teaching approaches have proved to be largely ineffective with dyslexic learners. There is evidence that a multisensory structured language (MSL) approach which combines visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile pathways is the most effective language method for the dyslexic learners (Ganschow, Sparks & Schneider, 1995). In addition, there is evidence that it is actually highly effective for all types of learners. Research has shown how various approaches from restructuring/re-patterning the way information is presented to the colour coding of the visual field improves attention, retention and processing of information (Crombie, 2000). It is claimed that open educational resources (OERs) play a role in widening participation and in the democratization of learning. However, a review of existing language learning and teaching open educational resources (OERs) for languages shows that there is still little awareness of how to create dyslexia-friendly language learning materials. The relevant materials, although often delivered in novel digital formats, show little or no awareness of the MSL (or the neuro-linguistic principles that underlie them). It is proposed that this lacuna presents a challenge to language departments that requires the provision of specific teacher training.In my presentation, as well as identifying the problem, I offer an insight from the perspective of the practitioner on how to use, re-use and adapt existing open educational resources in ways that markedly improve the learning experience for dyslexic learners and simultaneously benefit non-dyslexic learners.

1. **Cathy HOWARD / Julia KERR, University of Surrey,**

**Presentation**

**Developing online resources to support students of EAP and BSL**

This presentation will outline the process of developing online self-access resources for both English for Academic Purposes and British Sign Language students at the University of Surrey, using a combination of Wimba Create and Articulate Storyline software.The EAP resources were created to provide students with self-access support in the basics of English grammar as an adjunct to either their in-sessional course in grammar for academic writing or their pre-sessional programme, with a view to enabling tutors to use class time more effectively to focus on the application of grammar in the context of academic writing.Similarly, the BSL resources were created to give students of this Global Graduate Award language programme access to self-study materials to accompany the course. They are primarily composed of videos to be used for reference purposes and vocabulary-based interactive exercises to allow students to perfect their signing skills. This also allows the tutor to spend class time on more complex content, such as BSL grammar structures. The presentation will include an explanation of how Articulate Storyline was used to supplement Wimba Create to produce more visually attractive and varied interactive course content, and some of the materials will be demonstrated.

1. **Julien HAMILTON-HART, Swansea University,**

**Presentation**

**From tutor to director: introducing pedagogies that interface between student engagement with online immersive technologies and oral production in the L2**

Everyone take-out your mobile and log into Twitter! It broke the ice and from there students began to engage more and more in social media for their studies and research. After years of teaching in labs I have noticed that students facing screens can quickly DISCONNECT. We need to engage our students in an environment where the results of the research or work undertaken online can be shared and discussed. This is purely to re-engage students in activities and give context so that students know what they are supposed to do. Currently I am leading a team of 8 French Erasmus Student assistants in a language lab and my aim is to introduce as much interaction between my native assistants and my students. My aim is to break-out of the loud SILENCE in the lab by using industry-inspired, journalistic or creative practices that connect members of a group. Each member has a specific role and a timeframe in which to complete a task.Not only are students engaged and creating their own web content using industry standards such as Twitter, Wordpress or Scribd, they are also participating in realistic team practices that increase oral production. In order to maximize students output on a web-based activity we need to create group dynamics and create scenarios that enable structured oral input at specific stages during project. To make these stages of oral production of the target language natural, logical, and to simulate a professional environment gives students time to prepare for oral production of the target language. Instructions can be given in relation to the role students have in a project with a view to gathering together in a group to receive further instructions on how to complete the project. This makes the action of producing the L2 indirect, since it is driven by a common project that can absorb individual input, and it indirectly gives shy students the opportunity to prepare their reaction.As a Language Tutor using technology to encourage immersion and production in the target language, I have come to notice that first and foremost the dynamics of participation have to be respected. In our evolution with CALL we already reap the benefits of online employability-rich activities and with MOOCS our content can become mass media. Yet we have to remember the â€˜human touch.Communication and oral production in CALL exercises are vital in order to keep the learning alive. With this presentation I hope to share my experience with student engagement in online activities that promote employability and transferability, as well as introduce suggestions for pedagogical structures necessary for CALL instructors to interface with students in the target language in team-driven dynamics.

Links to examples of student engagement with Social Media and URL-specific end-products:

Twitter: https://twitter.com/jhamiltonhart/status/653937140670287872Scribd: https://www.scribd.com/doc/244984021/Brochure-Touristique-Parishttps://www.scribd.com/doc/260125120/Edith-Piaf-Fiche-biographiqueWordpress: https://lamerestlibre.wordpress.com/a-propos/

1. **Marion SADOUX, University of Nottingham Ningbo China,**

**Workshop**

**Students as Agents of Change: how to harness Student digital Literacies to enhance navigational Design in a VLE?**

This workshop is based on the process and outcomes of an internally funded Teaching and Learning project which took place during the 2014-15 academic year in the Language Centre at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China.  A group of twelve Chinese students studying French, German, Japanese and Spanish worked in partnership with the Language Centre’s Blended Learning Coordinators to address a number of issues with the way in which Language tutors were using Moodle and more particularly to design a navigational architecture that would enhance the student learning experience and address potential issues of cultural cognitive digital skills among Chinese students for whom the standard Moodle vertical navigational design may clash with Chinese cultural web user ability and preferences. As many institution wide language programmes, the Language Centre at UNNC adopted the dedicated University chosen platform for blended learning as a repository for digital language learning resources without any focus on navigational design or without conceptualising a programme wide implementation plan. The effect of this oversight in strategic planning is a lack of coherent and harmonious practices, widely differing Moodle pages ranging from very few resources to an unwieldy amount of resources that students find difficult to locate and are unable to use to construct individual learning pathways. Moreover as our students progress through the ladder of our modules, they are faced with an inconsistent experience of the VLE – each year they need to readjust to a different layout, labelling and organisation which further detracts from our ability to use the VLE as an effective tool to enhance learning. On large modules where multiple language tutors need to use the same Moodle page, different structures also lead to varying levels of possible appropriation and limited individual development of successful distributive forms of language learning. This workshop will showcase the reasons why we sought to use students as designers and how we used their designs to produce a programme wide navigational architecture template and to define a coherent and cohesive development plan. Participants will be invited to jointly explore the current limitations they are faced with, to question issues related to navigational design within their own practice and to envisage ways in which they could involve and support their own students in playing a leading role in becoming agents of change.

1. **Suhail SHAFEA, University of Southampton,**

**Presentation**

**Promoting Learner Engagement with L2 Targeted Vocabulary Via Microblogging**

The notion of engagement with vocabulary (Schmitt 2010) and the Involvement Load Hypothesis (Laufer & Hulstijn 2001) suggest that more engagement and involvement with vocabulary lead to better learning and retention. Following Schmitt and Laufer & Hulstijin, this study propose that engagement with vocabulary via microblogging leads to better vocabulary learning and retention. It primarily focuses on investigating the potential ways of using Twitter to engage EFL learners with their L2 targeted vocabulary and its impact on vocabulary gain and development. A vocabulary-learning task with a total involvement load of 5 was designed and used for investigation. Connected mobile devices and Twitter were used to complete the learning task while outside the classroom. To track changes in learners knowledge of targeted vocabulary items, the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) was administered before and after the teaching intervention. Learners' total involvement load in the vocabulary-learning task was also measured. The preliminary findings of the study suggest that microblogging social networks can play an effective role to increase learners engagement with their targeted vocabulary which, as a result, leads to better vocabulary gain and development. The study concludes that microblogging appears to be a useful tool that language teachers can employ to encourage learners' engagement with vocabulary and develop their vocabulary knowledge.

1. **Jayne WHISTANCE, Southampton Solent University,**

**Workshop**

**Using Pinterest to develop independent learning skills**

This workshop is intended to be a practical demonstration of my Pinterest project to further develop the work presented at the MATSDA conference in June 2015 and published as a reflective case study in Southampton Solent Universitys peer-reviewed journal Dialogue in January 2015. The session will introduce the use of Pinterest as a social bookmarking tool in the higher education classroom. Participants will be able to experience first-hand the benefits of using it with students during in-class activities as well as to enhance students independent learning skills outside of the classroom. As well as considering what other universities are doing with Pinterest to facilitate learning, attendees will be able to discuss how they could apply it to their own context.

1. **Lorena LOPEZ, University of York,**

**Presentation**

**Improving Spanish students formal writing skills through online exercises based on common grammatical errors**

This project is the result of identifying a pattern of recurrent grammatical, syntactical and lexical errors prevailing among first-year Spanish degree students who come with Post A-Level qualifications corresponding to the B1-B2 Upper Intermediate levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL), and those taking the language as an extracurricular module at upper intermediate or advanced CEFRL levels B1-B2 or C1-C2. Essays in particular, allow more visibility of grammar mistakes as corrections and feedback are annotated on the scripts or summarised in a report which can be subsequently reviewed by students. In the year, the aforementioned set of learners is expected to produce substantial pieces of writing as part of both their formative and summative assessments. For instance, degree students in Year 1 are expected to write 1000-word essays and those taking a Spanish module extracurricularly, write a 450-word composition as part of their final exam. After seeing the same types of grammatical and use of language errors over time, it became necessary to resort to a preventive approach that will allow students to practise and reflect on their own grammatical weaknesses.The literature has widely supported the key role that error correction has in language learning (i.e., Corder, 1967, 1978; Hendrickson, 1978, 1980; and Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Hendrickson 1978; Carter, 1997). Therefore, the first step was the creation of a database of common errors made by students in formal writing which then translated into tailored exercises on the online platform EasyTestMaker.

The online exercises aim to improve the quality of formal writing in Spanish students and their marks. In addition, the time spent by the tutor on repeated production of feedback is to be reduced. Another perceived benefit is the fact that students can work independently completing as many tests as they want, and by having their errors highlighted, they can take their learning into their own hands and have an active engagement by searching information on their own (Lyster and Ranta, 1997).

The implementation of this project began this academic year (2015-2016) and after three weeks of teaching, it is evident that it has enabled a faster awareness of the common errors in formal writing and a and more effective improvement is expected for this cohort of students by the end of Term 1, when they will submit a formative essay which will provide more measurable results in terms of the errors made and the marks achieved.

Disseminating this methodology and access to the tests can be beneficial for language tutors, and feedback is welcome.

1. **Jonathan SMITH, University of Reading,**

**Presentation**

**Drag and drop, and EAP writing skills**

Students on Pre-sessional EAP programmes frequently have problems with sentence structure in academic writing. These problems range from understanding the basic subject-verb-(complement) structure of single clause sentences to understanding the way that different types of clause can be combined to construct complex sentences. One way to help students internalise the rules behind syntax is to have students manipulate chunks of text, for example by classifying or ordering these chunks, and technology has obvious potential in facilitating this. Having spent ages trying to identify drag and drop software that would provide me with the flexibility I wanted, but that was accessible to a teacher with limited technical expertise, I realised that the Activity Builder add-on to the SMART Notebook software I had been using in class for years could provide part of the solution.

In this presentation a trial project to develop a set of interactive learning materials to help students develop their understanding of basic sentence structure will be described and evaluated. Student response to the activities conducted in and out of class, with both automated and teacher/peer-delivered feedback, will be included in the evaluation.

1. **Jelena GLEDIC, University of Belgrade,**

**Presentation**

**On with the Old, If There Is No New: Technology in Learning Environments with Scarce Resources**

As technology advances, its use in language learning and higher education in general brings numerous advantages for educators, students, and administrators. However, reaping the benefits of technology and progress in this field are often hindered by the lack of support and material resources, in institutions, and low skills and enthusiasm, in potential users. Based on years of teaching Chinese language, literature and culture courses in an environment with such challenges, methods for circumventing the stated issues and bringing the benefits of technology into the learning process are presented.

From in-class exercises and lectures, over student assignments and projects, to testing and grading little more than a laptop, a projector, and sometimes an Internet connection can be used inspire, motivate, and educate. Suggestions of tools and processes for educators and students with low skills and basic technology are presented alongside examples of advanced software and methods and collaborations with professional tech-organizations. Special attention is given to the issue of having a class of students with uneven exposure to and experience with technology, including those with a strong preference for pen and paper. Peer support and a dedication to communicate with students throughout the learning process prove to be the best tools for problem-solving, while an education experience built on solid grounds including clear learning outcomes can overcome any challenge posed by technology, or lack thereof. Creativity, innovation, and enthusiasm are much more valuable than state-of-the-art gadgets and software, as ones drive and perseverance can help them master any skill and have tailor-made technology use in any course, in any environment.

1. **Juan GARCIA-PRECEDO, University of Exeter,**

**Presentation**

**Technology for a Reason: The Virtual Classes Experience at the University of Exeter**

UKs Higher Education System is currently adjusting to unexpected eventualities emerged in the recent past. The use of Internet as a learning resource has caused a clear impact in our teaching practices, and it has modelled the way in which nowadays students access knowledge. In language learning, the use of Internet has fostered in our students a solid sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency. Independent learning has consequently become more relevant, whereas direct grammar instruction is progressively been observed as obsolete. As a result, Internet has replaced the role of the tutor as the main source of grammar instruction to a certain extent. Nevertheless, the current socioeconomic intricacies derived from the consolidation of a self-aware 9k generation have brought the attention back upon the role of the language tutor in this regard. The unlimited number of grammar learning resources available online may feel unmanageable and, in this context, the tutor must again emerge as a filtering figure to discern and produce online contents that may still address learners preference for self-sufficiency. In addition to this, the fees increase approved in 2010 has strengthened the strict demands of students nationwide, who gradually request a more individualised teaching approach, a wider focus on guided independent study, and a greater number of contact hours.

ML at Exeter has taken action in this regard with the implementation of a successful experimental initiative, the Virtual Classes (http://www.jmg223.wix.com/mls2001). The Virtual Classes have been tailored to our Y2 Spanish cohort, and consist of a grammar video tutorial created with powtoon.com, a free online resource that creates animated videos for teaching purposes. The videos are then stored on a free access website supported by wix.com, a free web editor that complements the video tutorials with reading and listening comprehension activities, as well as writing and pre-communicative grammar tasks. These exercises are closely related to the cultural and linguistic aspects covered in the video tutorial, and have proved to be an engagingly effective guided independent study tool for self-study, class preparation and revision, with almost 10,000 visits since 2015. The Virtual Classes successfully maximise our students classroom time by guiding them through the preparation of the grammar and cultural topics to be covered in their language seminars, and by allowing them to focus on related communicative activities and practice inside the classroom. As a result, the Virtual Classes significantly alleviate students concerns on the number of contact hours they receive.

1. **Natanael DELGADO ALVARADO, University of Southampton,**

**Presentation**

**Students as drivers on the Highway of Lifelong Learning: Using a Process ePortfolio to foster Self-Regulated Learning at the undergraduate level in Mexico**

Living and effectively operating in the knowledge society at the dawning of the 21st century request learners to be involved in using new technologies and creating knowledge which ideally turn learners into drivers on the highway of lifelong learning. To this aim, learners need to become agents of their own learning, developing their self-regulated learning (henceforth SRL) (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998).

A review of theory and research on SRL and educational technologies revealed that sociocognitive models and process e-Portfolio, a specific type of Technology Enhanced Learning Environments (henceforth TELEs), could be useful in understanding how learners can develop toward the never-ending path of lifelong learning, as it will be justified in the following paragraphs.

 First of all, sociocognitive models consider that self-regulatory skills have a social origin and develop under the influence of the learning context (Hadwin and Oshige, 2011). In addition, models under the sociocognitive tradition, consider SRL as a goal-oriented process following similar phases of development, in connection with the groundbreaking, agreed understanding of this concept as metacognitive, motivational and behavioural (Zimmerman, 1986a, Pintrich et al, 1993).

Secondly, as empirical evidence has shown (Carneiro et al, 2005; Steffens, 2006; Beishuizen et al. 2007), TELEs such as the process ePortfolios have the potential to support SRL; accordingly, they can support the individuals learning management through processes that may have an impact on self-efficacy (Abrami and Barret, 2005).

In accordance with the previous rationale, and as part of the Ph.D. in Modern Languages at the University of Southampton, a research project was designed in order to explore the potential of the process ePortfolio as a tool for developing learning strategies in support of SRL. Accordingly, in the semester 2015 B, 34 students at the Computer Assisted Language Learning II Course, BA in ELT, at Juarez University of the State of Durango (UJED), Mexico, were taken as the target group for the pre-study stage of the research. For this purpose, a self- report questionnaire, a journal, rating scales and an observation form were adapted and applied in connection with a content course integrating the process ePortfolio under a sociocognitive cyclical model assuming SRL both as an aptitude and as an event (Winne and Perry, 2000). As a result, important challenges connected to task design, assessment and technological tools aroused.

1. **Elisabeth WILDING, University of Reading,**

**Presentation**

**MOOC-topia or MOOC-lear disaster? Can a massive online course teach the skill of academic writing to an international audience and can peer review succeed in providing useful feedback?**

In 2014, a team of specialists in teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) from the University of Reading designed an online course for the then-new Futurelearn platform. The result was A Beginners Guide to Writing in English for University Study, which aims to introduce international students to the basics of academic writing and help them write an academic essay of their own.

This was our first foray into the world of the massive open online course (MOOC) and to the reality of teaching language skills to thousands of students around the world.

This presentation will first report on what we did; in other words how we took our expertise in teaching writing in small face-to-face classes and massively scaled it up. Our goal was to deliver some information and content about academic writing and to encourage active student participation. We wanted students to actively produce written work at all stages of the essay-writing process: planning, draft-writing, giving and receiving feedback, and re-writing. For us, the theoretical, perfect realm (our MOOC-topia) was one in which our thousands of students would engage with the material and with each other, and in which they would practice and improve their writing skills. With only a limited educator presence, a reliance on peer discussion and feedback was the logical recourse.

On a basic level, the encouragement of peer interaction and engagement was built into the Futurelearn platform itself. Based on a social constructivist pedagogy, it prioritised learning as an enjoyable, social experience and offered the opportunity for discussion at every step of the course.

In addition, we took the decision to build in a system of draft submission and peer review in order to support learning and motivate students in a more formal structure.

Did we succeed in our possibly idealistic endeavour? The second part of the presentation will explore the extent to which the online reality has matched up to the ideal for which we were aiming. Using course data and an analysis of student comments, it will reflect on lessons learned and evaluate whether students engaged with the peer feedback process. Finally, we will invite the audience to help us decide how or whether we can measure our success.

1. **Steve WHITE & Manuel LEON, University of Southampton**

**Workshop**

**Choices for online mentoring in MOOCs**

MOOC platforms use various tools and learning designs for course delivery. It is widely agreed that once the design stage is complete, for many MOOCs the delivery stage needs to be supported with human mentors. An informed choice of the most suitable approach to delivery is critical to the success of the course. Mentors have an important role to play in fostering an engaged and well connected learning community via various forms of interventions, so the mentoring strategy needs careful planning and monitoring.

Another role mentors can perform is that of researchers. Mentors are those in direct contact with the learning community, and can generate valuable accounts of the interactions occurring there. They can also gather learner feedback in a structured manner so that course content can be adjusted in further iterations.

**Platform and course**

The workshop draws from a specific MOOC entitled ‘Understanding Language: Learning and Teaching’ on the FutureLearn platform, three iterations of which have run in 2014 and 2015. This course attracted a large number of active participants (around 30,000 and 20,000 respectively in the first and second runs), and both platform and course were designed to promote “learning as conversation” in which course mentors have a significant role to play.

**Aim and benefits to participants**

The workshop aims to expose participants to the choices available in designing a mentoring strategy which aligns with the affordances of a particular platform, course design and participant needs. It also aims to help participants explore ways in which mentors can contribute to research on MOOCs. Participants will engage in a practical task which encourages them to:

● Examine the challenges of social learning and mentoring on a MOOC

● Make choices in mentor selection, training and monitoring

● Explore opportunities to conduct research using mentor feedback

1. **Kate Borthwick, University of Southampton**

**Presentation**

**A peek behind the scenes: stories from the creation of the MOOC ‘Understanding Language’**

The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) ‘Understanding Language: Learning and Teaching’ ran in December 2014, April and October 2015, through the FutureLearn platform. The four-week course was a collaboration between a UK university and the British Council (BC), and it sought to introduce some key concepts in language teaching and learning, as well as offering a ‘taste’ of topics covered by a joint online Masters course run by the university and the BC. The three runs of the course have attracted over 145,000 joiners and 67,000 participants. The MOOC generated 7500+ expressions of interest in the online MA course and the next intake for that course saw a rise in applications.

This presentation will reflect on several aspects of the course: the role of the designer, impact and the results of the course as a marketing venture. It will describe the approach taken to the design of the course, and the constraints and affordances of creating this type of large-scale open course with multiple contributors and stakeholders, and it will illustrate how these factors impacted on and influenced course design. It will also outline the range of roles a MOOC-designer must be prepared to adopt in order to create and produce a MOOC. The presentation will conclude with comments on the impact of the course, on learners, contributors – and on the designer; it will comment on the impact of the course as a marketing tool, and it will outline the challenges and joys of being involved with this kind of large-scale course. It will suggest that the fusion of marketing and education present in a MOOC should not be resisted, and that MOOCs have the potential to play an important part in the evolving HE landscape of teaching and research.