

WS CoFeeMOOC· ECTEL2020

Follow up

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The Workshop on Designing Contingent Feedback for Massive Open Online Courses (CoFeeMOOC 2020, <https://sites.google.com/view/cofeemooc2020/home>) was held during the 15th European Conference on Technology Enhanced Learning (EC-TEL 2020). The workshop's objective was to explore the design of contingent feedback for personalized scaffolding in MOOCs.

MOOC participants often tackle problems that, if unsolved, can lead to course disengagement and dropout. Usually, students report problems in the course's discussion forums, but they do not get the attention they require due to - among others - MOOC-specific aspects, such as a) the high instruction-learners ratio, b) the population's diversity, and c) the instructors' high workload.

The high interest in MOOCs and their current adoption from primary to tertiary levels due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak require careful design and application on the provision of appropriate feedback practices. This workshop aimed to:

- familiarize participants with the current identification of learners facing difficulties, feedback and support techniques regularly applied in MOOC contexts;
- highlight the importance of addressing potential student problems together with the learning design of the course, and;
- reflect on specific feedback strategies based on learners' behaviour evidence.

Summary of the Event

During the workshop, participants were introduced to a set of 4 commonly reported problems that learners face in MOOC settings. Namely, we focused on the following:

1. *misconceptions of the presented course concepts;*
2. *lack of coordination in group activities;*
3. *difficulties in understanding due to lower participants' background knowledge;*
4. *self-regulation/ time-planning issues.*

Afterward, workshop participants were asked to discuss and propose appropriate support for each problem, acting as MOOC instructors.

To demonstrate each problem, we developed four scenarios in which learners communicated their problems in various ways, such as discussion forums or emails. Contextual and data analytics information was given to provide information about the problem to workshop participants. At the end of each scenario, we followed up with a set of 5 to 6 questions aiming

to explore the role of contextual analytics and to gather participants' input regarding personalized support in situ.

Aftermath

Participants' previous experience regarding the enrolment and provision of online courses and MOOCs, allowed the exchange of interesting ideas and thoughts.

In 3 out of 4 scenarios, the provision of learners' data analytics seemed critical to provide insight regarding the problem and to decide for an appropriate feedback strategy. Participants' proposals regarding feedback aimed at:

- a) The provision of support on different levels;
- b) The creation of critical points for the instructor;
- c) The consideration of learning design when delivering feedback.

More specifically, participants proposed the provision of different levels of support (ranging from generic to personalized one) according to learners' prior practice and background knowledge. Participants pointed out that the configuration of critical-checkpoints during the design phase in the different course modules can be a rich source of information for the instructors regarding learners' overall progress without the need to individually check multiple learning indicators during course run-time.

Except for the data analytics, a reflection on the course learning design (i.e., the connection of each module with the next one, or the course videos with the assignments) was considered an important factor that should be taken into account. In the case of big audiences, participants proposed the creation of policies during the design phase of the course with pre-established feedback options for the learners.

Finally, alternative strategies of feedback regarded the preparation of additional activities for learners targeting their learning background and the application of various learning paths for learners with different goals and needs.

Overall, the workshop gave us the opportunity of fruitful discussion on the topic of feedback in MOOCs and set the perspectives for future research work. We would like to thank all the participants who joined, the ECTEL Workshop Chairs and the ECTEL and DELFI Organizers for making this possible.

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