

Lifelong Learning for teachers via INTEF MOOCs

Mónica Vallín Blanco



Project abstract

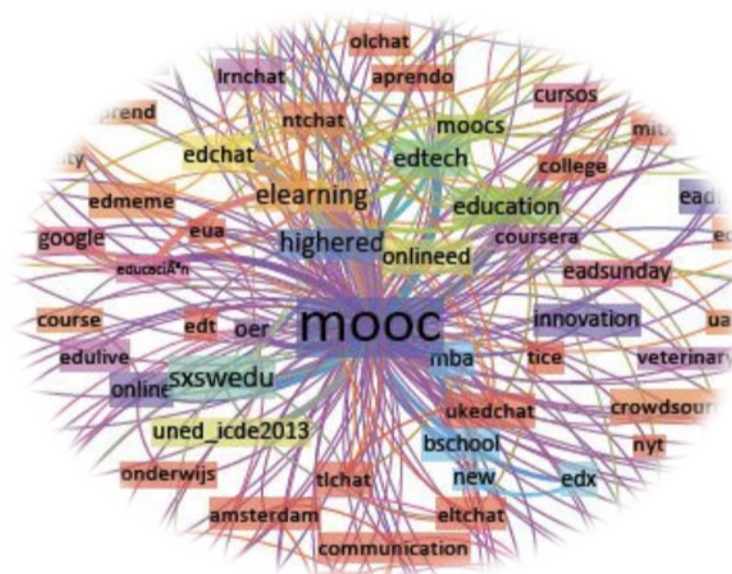
Supplying teachers with nothing else but ICT, or in the best case, with some knowledge of the tool, has proved to be insufficient for the effectiveness and improvement of the education system. Having as a starting point the personal process of learning, this PhD thesis intends to explore the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that are offered to teachers by the educaLAB, a platform created ad hoc by INTEF (Instituto Nacional de Tecnologías Educativas y de Formación del Profesorado). My work intends to **explore the impact these spaces have on our learning process.**

Objectives

Contextualization and definition of the term MOOC to value their role in the self-training learning of teachers: Due to its recent coining (Dave Cormier, 2008) and its spectacular growth, the first objective is to **devise a complete definition** through the compilation and updating of the immense bibliography that appears regularly. A central objective of my work is to **spread and share the many open resources that the net offers** as a way to broaden and improve our PLE (Personal Learning Environment). **To embody the impact of the MOOCs among Spanish-speaking users:** I concentrate on in the ones offered by INTEF, which are in Spanish.

Methodology / Materials

To value the role MOOCs play on the current teachers' lifelong self learning process, I make use of my personal experience and participation in different MOOCs and social networking platforms. I apply this known criterion of belonging to these communities of practice, as well as my experience as a user of this type of training. The most adequate methodology seems, therefore to be, **Investigation Action Participative (IAP):** A method of investigation and collective learning of the reality, based on critical thinking and the active **participation of the involved groups**, which is intended to stimulate the transforming practice of the implicated group and social change. This method **combines theory and praxis**, thus it fits into my professional profile perfectly. I am particularly interested in achieving the conjugation of the three elements that Eizaguirre & Zabala (2005 – 2006) point out about IAP: It is based on a thoughtful, **controlled and critical process**; the action is not only the ultimate objective, but it also represents a source of knowledge itself; finally, the participation means not only the professional researchers being involved, but also the addressed community studied, they are not considered mere objects of investigation but active subjects who contribute to knowing and **transforming their own reality.**



Findings / Research update

The majority of the participants on the INTEF open courses feel responsible for their training; there is higher motivation if the teacher is the ultimate person responsible for their training. They even put personal interest first rather than just on an official certificate. These teachers are permanently connected to numerous social networking platforms, especially Twitter as it is the most valued social network used by teachers. Despite the abundance of these open training resources and their indisputable potential, it appears there is a large dispersion and a poor exploitation of them, forming a well-built PLN (Personal Learning Network) would be the key. Most of the participants are not active. This type of teacher is still a minority within the entire collective. Professionals mention lack of time as the main cause for abandoning their courses (there should be more institutional promotion and support, there is not enough implication from the education establishment). There is a tendency towards the educational rhetoric.



Conclusions

Placing the student at the centre of the learning process (Connectivism), leads towards a radical change in the teacher's role. This implies, more than ever, the necessity of facilitating and promoting the lifelong self-training of teachers in virtual communities of practice. The result of my previous work (Vallín, M. 2012) indicates the suitability of this type of environment, which favours the long-term and on-demand learning of educators and, therefore, can have a positive impact on our praxis in the class. In addition, the explosion of these courses makes it necessary to assess their real value to determine their appropriateness for training teachers. The biggest challenge is the large amount of data processing involved in the MOOCs.

Bibliography

- Cormier, D. (2008). Rhizomatic Education: Community as Curriculum. *Innovate: Journal of Online Education*, 4(5), n5.
- Eizaguirre, M., & Zabala, N. (2006). Diccionario de acción humanitaria y cooperación al desarrollo. *Investigación-Acción-Participativa*.
- Vallín Blanco, M. (2012). Hacia la autoformación permanente de los docentes en las comunidades de práctica: los talleres de internet en el Aula.