

Evaluation of the OLDS MOOC curriculum design course: participant perspectives, expectations and experiences

Dr Simon Cross

Institute of Educational Technology
The Open University (UK)

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Introduction

This report presents an evaluation of the Open Learning Design Studio MOOC (OLDS MOOC) that took place between January and March 2013. This evaluation focuses on the experience of those who registered, participated and actively contributed in the public course space. In particular the evaluation focuses on participant expectations, a detailed analysis of participation rates, use of the course space and technologies, and the effectiveness and challenges presented by collaborative group working. The evaluation also looks at how participants understood and used the series of nine badges on offer. Throughout, a broad evidence base of qualitative and quantitative information is used including data from pre- and post-course surveys, from page view and contributions data available in the public spaces and from hundreds of participant blog, discussion forum and social media posts.

The writing and facilitation of the MOOC was undertaken collaboratively by staff from seven universities: The Open University (lead partner), Goldsmiths, University of London, London Knowledge Lab, University of Greenwich, University of Leicester, University of Oxford, and University of Georgia. Intentionally, the course used only open and freely available technologies and a condition of funding was that the Cloudworks be used as part of this mix. The sequence of the course sought to reflect the authentic process that practitioners follow in designing a course by asking each participant to undertake weekly learning activities in respect to a course they were or wanted to develop and maintain a portfolio or similar of this design work. This meant that whilst each week formed a discrete unit of learning with activities led by one of the contributing universities, overall the weeks daisy-chained together to form a nine-week design arc. By focusing on project working the course also encouraged participants to work collaboratively in groups and join online discussion. It was felt that this format would be attractive to the principle target audience of UK education institutions, professional bodies and the existing Cloudworks community and would help raise the visibility of learning and curriculum design approaches, resources and tools amongst practitioners.

The course design began in June 2012 and key moments in the process have been documented in the project blog. Course development included writing approximately fifty hours of learning activities, creating appropriate web pages and threads in the technologies being used, and recording video introductions for each week, and producing new resources such as video tutorials for the OULDI design packs, slides about OER and prototypes, and a document about Learning Design and Formative Evaluation. The course also brought together a range of existing design resources including the OULDI Course features Cards, OULDI Course Map and Profile, Personas and Force Maps, Ecology of Resources and 7Cs Frameworks, Pedagogical Patterns Collector and the Heuristic Evaluation Protocol.

The course launched with a synchronous event held in several locations and broadcast online yet from then on interaction was expected to take place online with regular facilitator summaries, weekly synchronous video 'convergence' sessions, and daily support by the designated week leader and other facilitators. The experience of both course design and delivery are themselves valuable subjects for study, however, the central interest of this evaluation will be the participant perspective.

In the first week approximately 250 participants actively contributed to the MOOC with more still participating by reading and watching others contributions. This initial interest demonstrates the MOOC succeeded in reaching a good audience. After Week 2, participation stabilised at approximately 30-40 active contributors with a further 50-150 following at least some of the content or participant contributions. Some participants have reported how their engagement with the MOOC has resulted in changes of perception and the use of design tools and resources in their personal practice or institutions. Others report difficulties, and these too are examined in detail in this report. A summary of key findings is presented in the Concluding Summary section on p18 of the report.

Evaluation Strategy

Research and evaluation of open online courses can present significant methodological and interpretive challenges: not least how to properly analyse and represent qualitative and quantitative data from disparate sources, and how and on whose terms we determine if the course has been successful. Such analysis may be compounded because audiences are large and heterogeneous, and particular uses and articulations of technologies, pedagogy and support are often still to be properly proven in a MOOC context. This evaluation strategy has sought to review the data from the following six perspectives:

1. **Learner Compliance with the Design:** how well did learning take place according to that anticipated by and written in to the design? This compares what the course instructions asked participants to do, how many did this, and how well. Drop-out rates / course completion rates may be one such measure because they essentially record how many learners followed the course as directed (e.g. passed milestones, completed required tasks, etc.).
2. **Learner Deviation from the Design:** how far and how often did learners deviate from the course as it was originally designed? This requires examining the ways that learners altered, changed, or ignored what was asked of them by doing ‘their own thing.’ Arguably it is in the deviation that we find new ideas and pointers as to how a course design can assist participants in taking control of their own learning.
3. **Achievement of Design Goals:** how well the course has achieved goals set by the course author and designer, facilitators and any institutions or funders supporting the course. This requires articulation of goals and expectations prior to the course start.
4. **Achievement of Learner Goals:** how well learners achieved the goals they set themselves for the course (which may be very different from what the course author thought participants were expecting to achieve). This requires asking participants about their expectations and/or if they achieved the goals they set themselves.

5. **Measurement against established criteria:** how well did the course perform against quantitative measures that determine learner experience and satisfaction with a course (e.g. those used for quality assurance and benchmark purposes). In the UK, the National Student Survey is an example of such a measure.

6. **Measurement against emerging learner-defined criteria:** how well did the course perform based on what learners expected or what they feel is important.

The latter of these six - to evaluate the course in respect to how the learners/participants want it evaluated - is particularly interesting and relevant for open online courses such as the OLDS MOOC. To this end, the Pre-course Survey asked participants to suggest success criteria that could be used to determine how useful the MOOC had been for themselves or others. In all, 46 valid responses were given to this question. These are summarised in the following table (Table 1). The majority of these suggestions have been integrated into the evaluation strategy and are discussed later in this report. However, some have proved harder within the resource available: most notably determining if deep learning has taken place, the quality of final projects produced, and the quality of self-reflection. Furthermore, whilst participants wanted the course to be evaluated in respect to provision of self-assessment tools such as quizzes and self-assessment descriptor, the course did not include such mechanisms. Rather, self-reflection, blogging of experiences and peer review of some badges were encouraged. Future iterations of the MOOC could consider developing support and provision for some of the self-assessment methods mentioned.

Three key sources were used to capture the quantitative and qualitative data used in this evaluation:

1. Information created in or captured from the online public course spaces. For the OLDS MOOC this includes participant contributions of

Suggested criteria to measure success of the course	Number of respondents suggesting
Participation (level, longevity and nature of participation)	12
Course completion (completed projects / reached end of course / finished tasks / achieved the goals set by the course)	7
Successful use or implementation (have used or plan to use in professional practice)	7
Achieved deeper understanding (learnt more about the subject)	6
Self-assessment was supported (checklists provided, quizzes, self-assessment descriptors given)	6
Personal objectives and expectations met	5
Role or Use of Badges	4
Determine if plans to continue with projects past course end	4
If felt noticed and valued	4
Time spent on course and consideration of pace / timing	3
Quality of facilitation	3
Quality of materials / site	2
Quality of self-reflection	2
If felt fun and stimulating	2
Enabled successful networking	2

Table 1. Participant suggestions for evaluation

comments, clouds or materials to Cloudworks (links to contributions from over 200 people recorded), posts to the Google course forum (over 300 threads started), archived Twitter logs (over 3,000 tweets), posts to Bibsonomy, lists of badges awarded, facilitator comments and summaries, recordings of live sessions, and page view statistics available from some web pages.

2. Information from evaluations such as course surveys and feedback forms. The OLDS MOOC featured two course surveys: a pre-course participant questionnaire asking about expectations, personal goals, prior knowledge, and previous open online course experience; a post-course participant questionnaire asking about experience and achievement

studying the course, effectiveness of specific course features, impact and satisfaction. In addition, there were participant feedback forms; a course facilitator survey; data from the registration form; and data from an optional survey of registrants' previous experiences of other MOOCs (Table 2). In addition, a small evaluation panel was recruited prior to the start of the course in the hope that this group would include some who completed and some who did not complete the course (rather than just asking those who completed). However, less than half of those recruited at the outset responded to the interview invitation once after the course had finished. In some cases because the panel member had done little or nothing on the course and perhaps felt they had nothing to contribute. It has not been possible to include interview data here because out of necessity the analysis had to begin the interview process could be completed.

3. Information posted online by participants in places other than those directly associated with the course. For example, during the OLDS MOOC a rich collection of personal blogs, web pages and supplementary technologies emerged.

OLDS MOOC surveys	Responses
Registration form	2420 / 1541*
Pre-course Survey of Expectations	66
Previous MOOC Experience Survey	41
Post-course Survey	22
Feedback forms submitted during MOOC	31

Table 2. Survey responses. *Some additional questions were added to the form three months after registration originally opened so only new registrants were able to answer these.

Copies of the pre- and post-course survey questions are included at the end of the report. Responses to these surveys were broadly representative of the age of participants (see p5), however, compared to what can be determined of the overall MOOC group it seems a greater proportion of women and of those having taken a MOOC before responded to these surveys.

Participant Profile and Expectations

Data provided at registration and by those who responded to the Pre-course Survey indicate that the majority of participants were teaching and learning practitioners working in the Higher, Further, Secondary or private sectors. Consequently, over three-quarters rated their understanding and knowledge of learning design as moderate to expert (Figure 1).

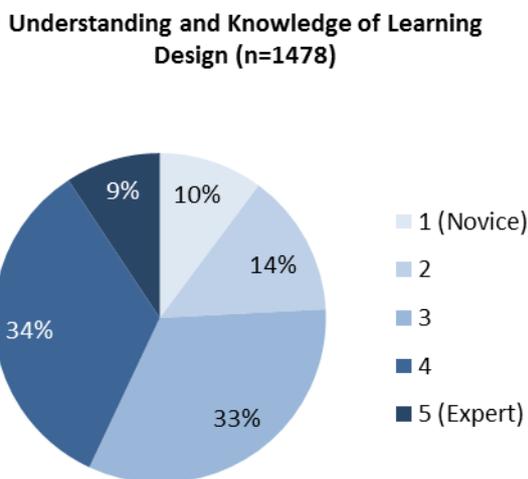


Figure 1. Understanding and knowledge of Learning Design at registration

The proportion of registrants who rated their understanding and knowledge of online Web 2 tools as moderate to expert shows a similar distribution (Figure 2).

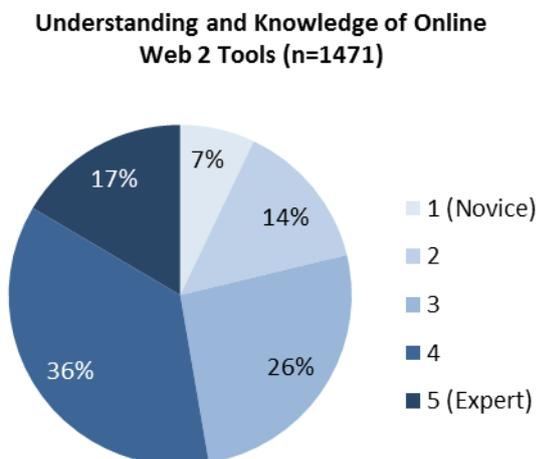


Figure 2. Understanding and knowledge of Online Web 2 Tools at registration

However, a smaller proportion of participants claimed to have a moderate to expert understanding and knowledge of MOOCs (Figure 3) and over half (57%) of registrants rated their knowledge and understanding of MOOCs as novice (1 or 2).

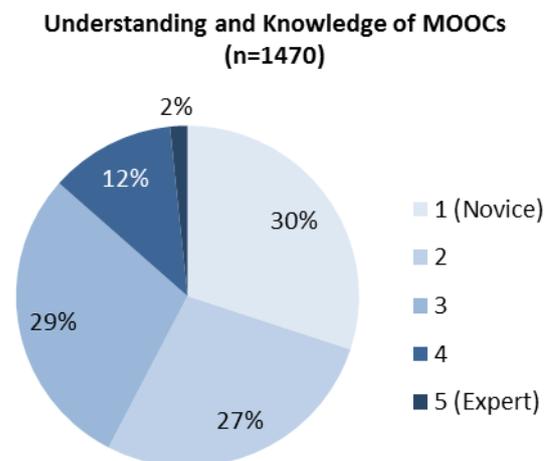


Figure 3. Understanding and knowledge of MOOCs at registration

Almost half (44%) of those registering for the OLDS MOOC had registered or participated in a MOOC before. The Previous MOOC Experience Survey reveals that this prior experience included: CCK, LAK, PLENK, Udacity and Coursera courses, Bonkopen, FSLT, ChangeMOOC, MobiMOOC, OPCO, DS106, GamesMOOC, eduMOOC, and Open Course Workplace Learning MOOCs, and that 74% said that they had been satisfied with the quality of these courses. An initial review of user feedback on other MOOCs was made earlier in the OLDS MOOC project and presented as a '40 Tips for running a MOOC' blog post (Cross, 2012).

Participants were asked about their personal and professional objectives for the course in the Pre-course Survey. Many different reasons for participating were given in the open text boxes provided in the survey with most falling into one or more of these categories: gaining personal experience of 'a MOOC' so as to inform personal practice or to use in research, building knowledge and skills of learning design and using online tools, interact-

ing and discussing with other people, achievement of course objectives (creating a design or gaining badges), forging contacts with other similar professionals, collecting the resources provided in the course materials or by other participants, gaining feedback on a design ‘without an exorbitant investment of time,’ as opportunity for staff development or to make time for staff development, and in parallel with or after more formal learning. In all, just eight of the 39 respondents expressly said that completing the course was an objective; although further work would be required to ascertain whether others considered completing an objective but did not, for whatever reason, write it down in the survey.

A further indication of the heterogeneity in participant objectives is given in the following quotes. Issues of the MOOC as an object of curiosity and as itself an object of study for professionals (to get ideas for how to design MOOCs) also surface in some of these:

- ‘I work at [a University], need to understand implications for our curriculum and students’
- ‘My personal objective is to have a good time and learn. This is my first MOOC so that in itself is a great experience. My professional objective is to update the studies I did a few years back...’
- ‘I would like to make a learning design for a MOOC that could be run in the University ... where I work. I’m very curious and eager to learn more about learning, collaborating and interacting in a MOOC.’
- ‘To learn a lot of learning design; to establish contacts with others; [and] to earn a couple of badges e.g. min 3 weeks, learning designer, reviewer’
- ‘To complete; to interact with others; to read all resources available; to use insights in future MOOC developments.’

Participants were next asked what they were looking forward to or excited about. Responses to this question often reflected the objectives already outlined. For example, participants were looking forward to interacting and discussing, networking, seeing what others produce, having a structure to explore their course design, seeing how a MOOC works (e.g. peer-to-peer learning and online assessment), having access to experts, ending with a finished design and ‘learning with people from a variety of backgrounds all around the world.’

The Pre-course Survey also asked about participant concerns and reservations about the course. The most common concern was whether they would be able to find time to participate and to participate well. This was mentioned by at least 15 of the 66

respondents. Other concerns (mentioned by at least 3 respondents) were:

- amount of time commitment the course was asking of them;
- the rigid structure of the course where ‘tasks are allocated to days [yet] I will have days when I can’t devote time’;
- the process of forming and working in teams and whether there would be anyone interested in their subject/course;
- appearing as a novice or ‘stupid’ to those experts also participating in the course;
- overload of too much information;
- reliability of the technology / choice of technology (several were not keen on using Cloudworks);
- too many communication and discussion channels; getting lost or not being able to navigate well enough;
- not understanding what they need to do; and ability to use the technologies.

Other had more specific concerns such as whether they could participate even if they did not have a design project to work on, if the MOOC would be as effective a use of time as simply reading about the subject, and slow internet connection.

Responses to the course surveys and activity in the MOOC indicates that approximately two thirds of participants were female, that almost half of the participants were aged between 45 and 54 and that around half were from the UK, and just over half of those who responded to the Pre-course Surveys knew at least one other participant (Figure 4). However, due to the changing nature of participation (see later) it has been difficult to determine the demographic profile of the MOOC at any given moment.

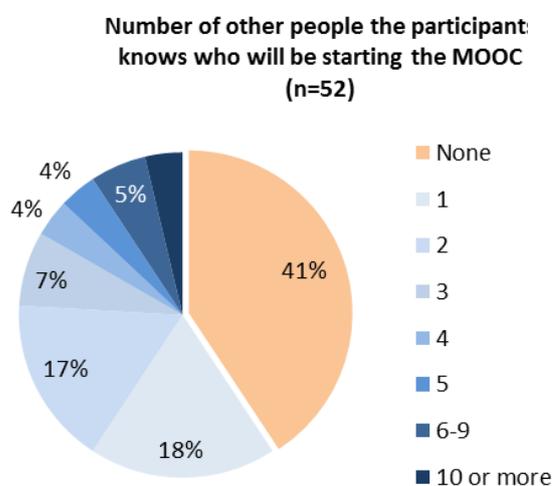


Figure 4. Number of other people known prior to MOOC start

Participation

This evaluation adopts the term ‘public course space’ to refer to the interlinked online spaces that collectively made up the space in which participants watched, read and contributed to the course. This term speaks to the concept of public space/s developed by Harbermas and others. For the purposes of this evaluation, participation in the public course space means being present - just ‘being there.’ However, the evaluation will also seek to distinguish those who ‘actively contribute’ – that is, those who add comments, designs, feedback or other material to the public course space.

Table 3 below shows the number of participants and contributors present at selected weeks of the course. Due to the nature of this course, exact figures of participation are impossible to determine so a range for the maximum likely participation is given. Contribution, however, can be determined from observations of activity in the course space.

Prior to the course start, registrants were asked about how much they planned to participate in the OLDS MOOC course. 1169 (48.3%) said that they ‘planned

to participate persistently throughout most weeks and completing most tasks’ whilst 416 (17.2%) said they planned to partially participate and 365 (15.1%) casually when time permitted. The remainder (19.4%) were not yet sure.

In the first week of the MOOC, 218 participants contributed to one or more of the eight formal discussion threads featured in Week 1. This included posts by 127 participants introducing themselves either in Cloudworks or on the ‘introduce yourself’ thread in Google Groups forum, 102 project proposals, 61 participants proposing or expressing an interest in forming or joining a study circle, and approximately 30 individuals commenting on a presentation featured in one of the activities. At the close of the week, 45 participants posted a reflection of their initial experiences and 68 participants applied for and received a 1 Week badge. On social media, 1279 tweets tagged ‘#OLDSMOOC’ were posted between 9 and 23 January by 210 different users, whilst the ‘DreamBazaar’ Cloudscape recorded views from 1197 different IP addresses and the ‘Study Circles’ Cloudscape

Stage	Participants	Contributors
Registration	2420 Register for the course	1169 Those planning to participate persistently
Week 1	575-1197 Range as indicated by unique visitors to two key Week 1 course pages	218 Contributed to one or more of the eight formal discussion threads featured in Week 1
Week 2	191-320 Range as indicated by unique visitors to two key Week 2 course pages	63 Contributed a scenario or comment post during the week
Week 3	116-452 Range as indicated by unique visitors to three key Week 3 course pages	30 Contributed a post or other material to the course space in the week
Week 6	140-253 Range as indicated by unique visitors to two key Week 6 course pages. On average, 65 people who clicked through from the main page to each of the user clouds added to the list.	20 Contributed a post or other material to the course public space in this week
Week 8	97-300 Range as indicated by unique visitors to three key Week 6 course pages. On average 130 clicked through to read each of the final participant posts	23 Contributed a post or other material to the course public space in the week

Table 3. Estimated participation. Selected weeks.

received 575 views (to 25 January 2013). These data show that the first week of the MOOC attracted significant attention and contribution.

In the later stages of Week 1 and in Week 2 there was a clear fall in the number of active contributors. This is shown in Figure 5 below. Week 2 asked participants to work in groups or on their own to contextualise their project by developing an initial scenario, posting this and commenting on other scenarios posted in the MOOC space. In all 63 people participated either by posting and/or commenting of who 54% had applied for '1 Week' badges (see later).

Week 3 focused on a range of tools and activities to help participants ideate or imagine a learning design. Thirty participants have been identified as active in the course space during Week 3. Data for specific activities indicate participants were selective in respect to which of the instructions to 'post' they followed: just 14 participants followed the Activity 1 instructions to post a response and only 18 design activity outputs for Activity 6/7 have been traced. Page view data indicates that the numbers who participated and contributed to Week 4 and Week 5 were similar to Week 3. For example, by 1 March 2013, 233 viewed the Week 4 'Pair Tutoring on Design Principles' page on Cloudworks and 286 the Prototyping cloudscape for Week 5.

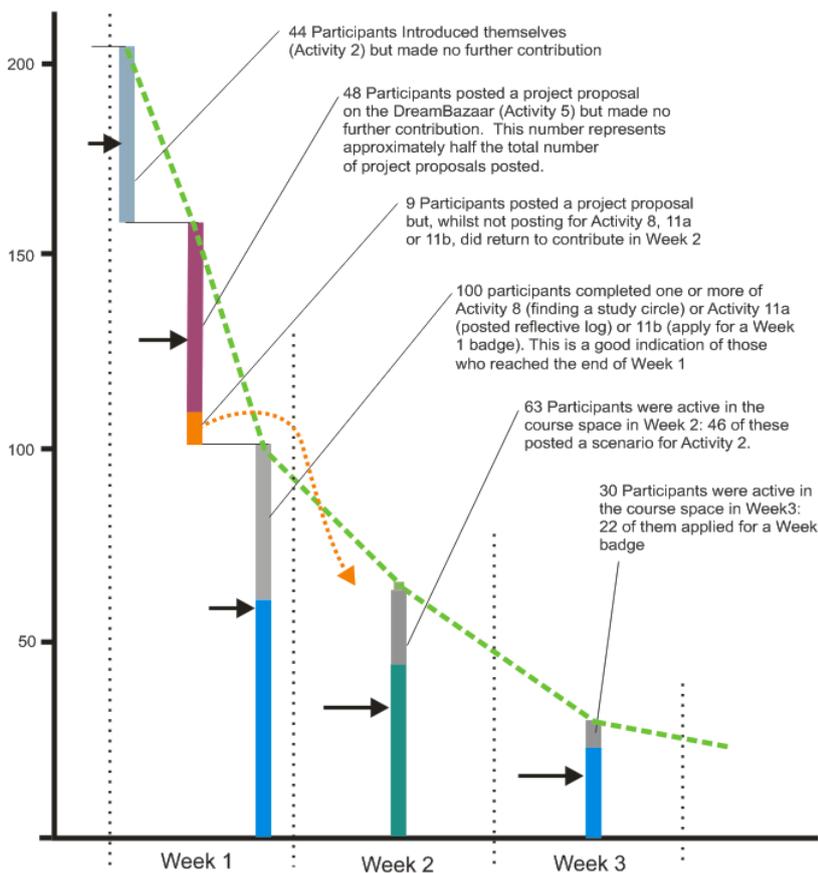


Figure 5. Fall in contributors during the first three weeks of the course

In Week 6, 13 reflective posts were made to the Seek and Deploy Cloudscape and yet, whilst 253 people viewed the Cloudscape webpage that listed and linked to participant posts, only around 30% on average clicked through to look at specific posts. Six participants contributed to a second sharing activity - 'Prepare To Launch' - and this received 140 unique views with, on average, 53 people viewing each of the participant's contributions. Resources created for the week included a presentation title 'What are OER' which received over 120 views. A similar amount of participation is seen in Week 7 and there were over 250 views of the initial presentation, over 200 views of the main Week 7 Cloudscape and over 100 views of the Evaluation Targets Cloudscape.

Week 8 included an activity that invited participants to construct a design narrative of their experience of the course. This focused on course experience rather than the learning design itself. By the end of Week 8, 300 people had viewed the Design Narratives Cloudscape page on Cloudworks and 97 had viewed the Design Narrative Cloudscape. Some 23 participants posted a narrative or commented on someone else's narrative and as of 30 April 2013 on average 130 people had viewed each narrative (i.e. opened the Cloud page the narrative was on). The ratio of people viewing pages in the course space to actively participating (contributing something) remains

between 4:1 and 10:1 (depending on the page). This is similar the ratio observed for earlier weeks and highlights the fact that for most of those entering the course space their relationship to the course remained one of consumption rather than active participation. Week 8 included an optional activity but this Cloudscape was viewed by just 23 people.

Week 9 featured a four-day showcase in which the facilitators chose the experiences of two participants to highlight and discuss. There remained less than 25 active contributors but the 'Final Reflections' Cloudscape web page was viewed by 143 people and 'Design [Experience] Showcase' page by 354 (to 8 May 2013). The higher number of people viewing the showcase suggests that the experiences of other participants in studying the MOOC may have been of particular interest to some of those just following or watching the MOOC.

Archived Twitter logs show that in the first two weeks of the course 204 people (in addition to the course team) contributed tweets to the course Twitter hashtag. Collectively 970 tweets were made in this period and of these 36% were posted by the course team. Towards the end of the course in Week 8, 365 tweets were made by 31 people (plus the course team) of which 38% were by course team members. The daily pattern of tweets comprised of a baseline with peaks on days featuring live video convergence sessions or the starts of new weeks. This is illustrated by the graph (Figure 6) that shows tweets made to the main course hashtag (blue) and the hashtag reserved for the live video sessions (red) between Day 4 and Day 14 of the course.

Bibsonomy was another site used by the course. Participants were encouraged to use this as a place to post and share references and links. In all, 142 bookmarks (to participant blogs, useful articles etc.) and 77 publications were added. However, most of these were added by the facilitators, with only 8 participants directly contributing.

The end of course survey asked participants to rate the quality of contributions by other participants and focused on the following four categories: comments posted by others to the course space; the learning design shared by others; peer feedback on their work; and social interaction and support.

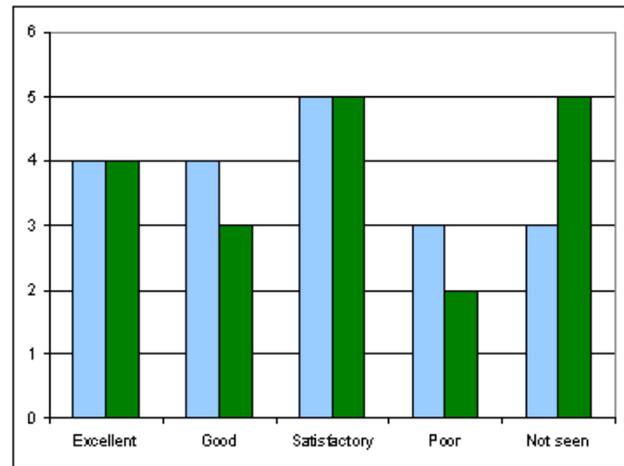


Figure 7: Quality of posted comments (light blue) and learning designs (green) as rated by end of course survey respondents

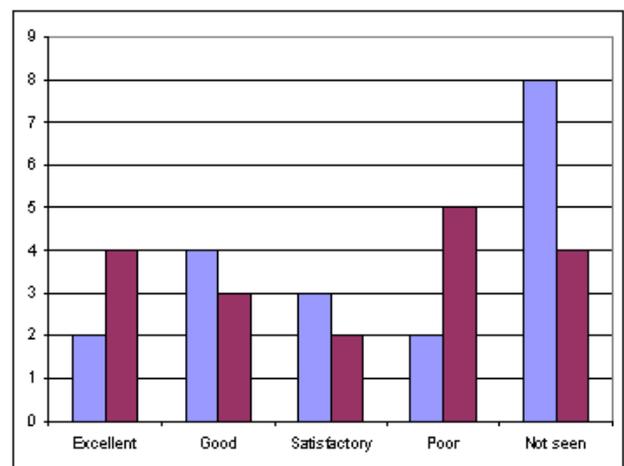


Figure 8: Quality of peer feedback (blue) and support (purple) as rated by end of course survey respondents

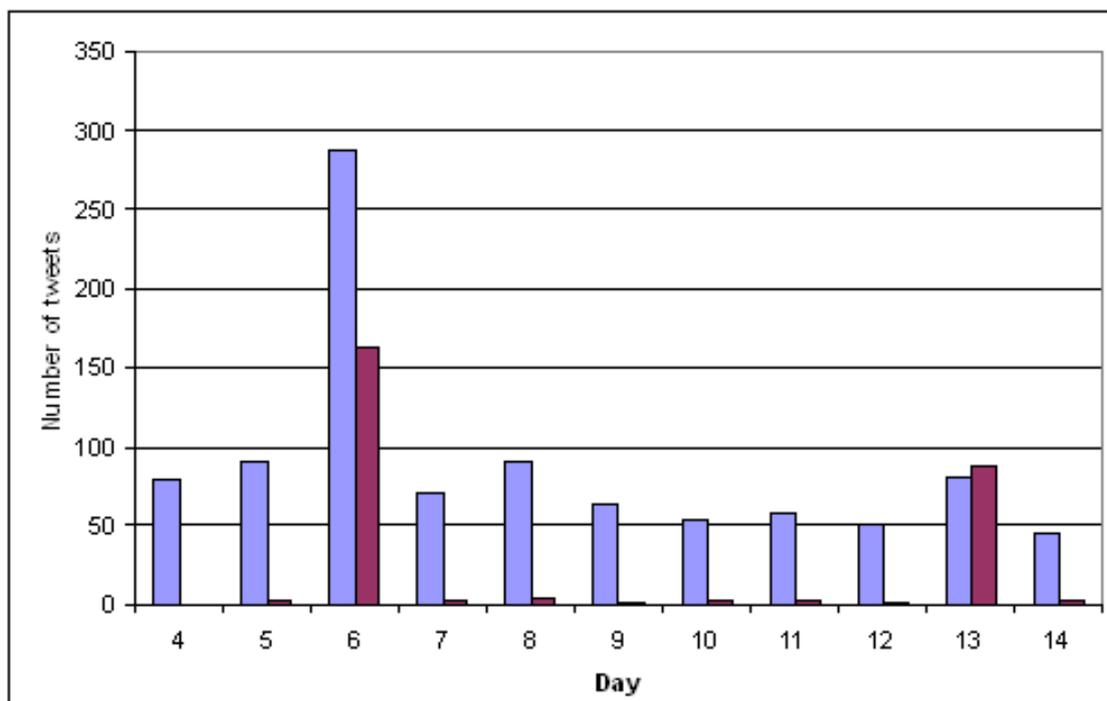


Figure 6. Illustrative example of a ten day period including the end of week 1 and week 2. Posts to main the main course hashtag (blue) and converge session hashtag (red).

Responses show that 14 of 20 respondents rated the comments and learning designs added by others as satisfactory or better (Figure 7). However, in respect to the quality of support, responses was more polarised with around a third rating it as 'poor' (Figure 8). Figure 8 also shows that 8 of 19 respondents claimed never to have seen any peer feedback; this suggests that they neither received any nor saw any on the site. Figure 9 unpacks this a little further by showing the number of comments posted against each of the 46 personas contributed in Week 2. It shows that approximately half of the personas shared by participants received no comments from others. Elsewhere in Week 6, six of the 13 contributions to the Seek and Deploy Cloudscape received no comments (46%).

The course survey asked participants how important 16 core features of the course were to their learning. The results are shown in Table 4. These have been ranked according to how many respondents scored the feature 4 or 5 out of 5 (where 5 was 'important' and 1 'unimportant'). In the case of ties the number of '3' and '2' scores were taken into account. The top three placed aspects were weekly summaries, the ability to opt out of group working and study by self, and having an authentic design process reflected in the broad course structure. Of note is the relatively low placing of features associated with social media and interaction. Responses to the Post-course

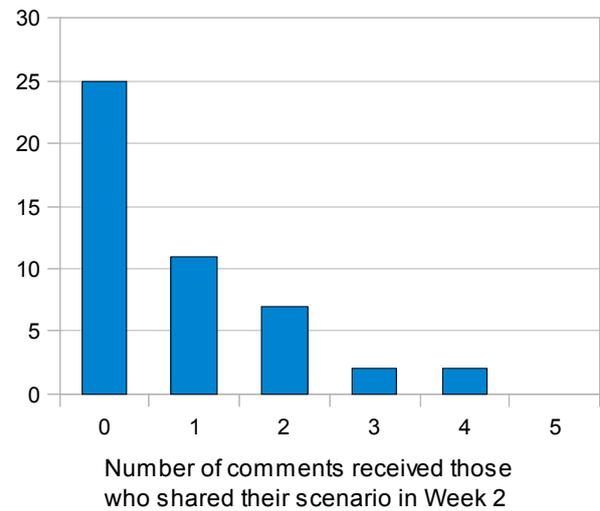


Figure 9. Comments received by those posting and sharing a scenario idea in Week 2

Survey also show that 64% were satisfied with the quality of the course and 50% felt that they had achieved their original learning goals.

Contributions to the course space were important to create the sense of community and as a resource for all course participants. As one survey respondent explained 'this [interaction] was invaluable... in looking to understand others, working through their meanings, my own became clearer [and] it helped with motivation.'

Rank	Course Feature	Number of survey respondents rating the feature as important to their learning*
1	Summaries by the facilitators	15
2	Ability to opt out of groups and work on own	13
3	Authentic design process structure	12
4	Timetabled weekly activities	12
5	Feeling part of a community	11
6	Convergence video sessions	11
7	Having well-known people leading the weeks	10
8	Having well-known organisations involved	10
9	Alternative shorter learning paths through a week	9
10	Working on a single project throughout	8
11	Opportunity to earn badges	8
12	Twitter [Hashtags]	8
13	Peer feedback	7
14	Forums in Google groups	6
15	Cloudworks website	5
16	Working in groups or pairs	3

Table 4. Ranking of importance of course features according to respondents given in the post-course survey

The Course Space

The OLDS MOOC course space was formed from a collection of open, freely available online public spaces and social media technologies. Each week of the course had a dedicated page in Google sites containing a summary of the week, introductory video, learning outcomes and instructions for each of the weeks activities. Hyperlinks from the page linked to activity pages containing embedded content (often a Cloudworks webpage or Google forum page). Each week also had its own page in Cloudworks, as did most activities that required participants' contributions or discussion. Participants could add their own comments to these or create and add their own pages (termed 'clouds') to the activity pages. Cloudworks was also suggested as a place for individuals to create their design portfolio, blog their experiences and create project team pages. Discussion activities sometimes had a parallel or similar thread in Google Forums although these facilitator threads had become somewhat lost in the hundreds of participant-created threads by the end of the course. There was a Twitter hashtag for the course, for the weekly live convergence events, and for each week. Facilitators usually tweeted from their own account although there was also one for the project. Similarly on Bibsonomy there was a course page and individual week pages. Convergence sessions were held in Google Hangouts, with Google Forms, Docs, and other third party applications used during particular weeks.

The three most common difficulties encountered by participants related to the quantity and nature of the time commitment required, the quantity and navigation between the technologies used in the design, and issues associated with familiarisation and use of the Cloudworks site to undertake course activities. Consequently, despite 73% of respondents in the Pre-course Survey having agreed that they were 'confident with the required technologies,' there were a substantial number of difficulties reported in navigation (both between project platforms and within both Cloudworks and Google forums), the terminology of Clouds and Cloudscapes used in Cloudworks, and using the technologies as directed in the course learning activities. Furthermore, most participants had had little or no experience of using Cloudworks prior to the starting the course.

Learning the technology itself was therefore often an objective in its own right for many during the first week, whether intentionally or out of necessity. Perhaps a typical experience was reported by one participant who wrote 'splitting the course between Google Sites, Google Groups and Cloudworks gave me usability friction burns. When I got to Cloudworks I felt lost. There were instructions on the main site, but the transition to an unfamiliar space made them hard to remember or apply.' Others reflecting at the end of the first week noted similar experiences, for example one wrote 'getting to know the Cloudworks system has been a major theme for many MOOC participants this week' whilst another observed 'I wasn't the only one overcoming obstacles to finding a way around Cloudworks.'

Participants spoke of feeling lost, disorientated, puzzled, short of time, and finding the first week 'overwhelming! Too fast, too intense, too crowdie.' It has been argued that such experiences are commonplace for large open online courses, especially those seeking a social constructivist engagement by participants, yet the experience was certainly stressful, confusing and frustrating for many. As one participant wrote:

'I... as have many others it seems, found the usability of the MOOC's design problematic, with its variety of independent platforms that don't integrate very well. For any online course to be successful... the technology has to be transparent – I've found it difficult to get past the technology this week and feel I've spent a lot of unproductive time as a result.'

Of those who persevered, some placed trust in the course design hoping that 'with some patience and practice ... its potential will become clearer in time,' others were already becoming familiar with the systems noting 'it was fine in the end,' whilst others appear to have continued to use the technologies by resolving to be more disciplined or selective in respect to the parts of the course space and course activities they engaged with; as one participant explained 'I did some tasks [but] not always at the right place or the right time.'

In their feedback, participants suggested ways that the course design could be revised to help better support learning. For example, some wanted: a diagram of the course space (a course map); more guidance on how to study; greater flexibility in respect to when activities could be completed; less 'over-prescription' of tasks; less need for synchronicity between activities; familiarisation with the technologies 'before embarking on the learning process;' greater length of time (i.e. number of days) so as not to fall behind as quickly; and a greater focus on the course at the launch event. Comments relating to group working and badging are considered later in this report.

Feedback also suggest that some felt the given estimates of time to undertake activities were too optimistic. Table 5 shows how long respondents to the Post-course Survey spent on the course and the estimated time as given in the course materials or by the lead author the week. Also shown are the estimated times for 'short routes' (suggested for those with more limited time). These data appear to support participant feedback that Weeks 2 and 3 contained a lot of material and that there was a heavy workload in Week 1. However, feedback also indicates that some simply did not do activities they saw as irrelevant so longer times may conversely indicate greater engagement. From the Pre-course survey it also emerged that whilst 100% of respondents (n=51) had looked at Week 1, just 16-25% had looked at Weeks 3-8. This appears to show the decision to start the course was made on their assessment of the first few weeks.

Despite these challenges many participants reported a generally positive first week experience. For

example, one participant said 'I have enjoyed week 1 - I met a lot of exciting people doing many interesting things with technology-enabled learning. Cloudswere new to me but I am beginning to feel familiar with the new technologies.' Others posted similar comments: 'this week has been really interesting and very demanding...I'm very happy about what I've read and learnt so far;' 'I think it's an amazing experience because it's an everyday challenge,' and 'I think that [it has] been time well spent.' Furthermore, some participants added to the course space, for example by forming a Facebook group, and a few did like the variety and complexity of the technologies provided.

Feedback on the facilitation was also generally positive with a majority of end of course survey respondents saying the weekly summaries (written by those facilitating that week), the Google Hangout convergence sessions, and the fact the course featured 'big names' were important or somewhat important to their learning. Indeed, some specifically liked the direct access the course space provided to the individual facilitators and the 'free expertise on learning design [the space] offered in terms of [both] facilitator and real-life experience of many of the (most active) participants.' The convergence sessions offered a sense of 'being there' and helped reduce the feeling of isolation, and, as the previous section demonstrates, many did manage to connect and share experiences with others. On the whole participants appreciated the very visible presence of facilitators in the course space (although a few thought there was a little too much) yet this also placed significant workload demands on those facilitating.

	Designed for / estimated length (hours). Shorter route (s/r) in brackets (hours)	Length of time end of course survey respondents said they spent on each week (n=16)					
		0 hrs	<1-2 hrs	3-4 hrs	5-6 hrs	7-10 hrs	>10 hrs
Week 1	11 (s/r 5)	-	1	3	8	1	3
Week 2	6-7 (s/r 4)	-	1	4	3	2	4
Week 3	6 (s/r 2)	2	2	3	1	3	5
Week 4	5	3	5	3	0	4	1
Week 5	4.5	5	1	5	3	2	1
Week 6	7	5	1	6	4	0	1
Week 7	8 (s/r 3)	7	2	4	0	2	1
Week 8	6 (s/r 3)	6	4	2	3	1	1
Week 9	3-9	8	6	2	0	1	1

Table 5. Designed for and actual length of time spent on each week

Impact and Changes of Practice

The open, optional and varied character of engagement in MOOC presents a challenge to determining the full extent and magnitude of MOOC impact. However, course surveys, forum posts, blogs and private correspondence provides case examples of how individuals have used the tools, whilst web logs give an indication of the audience reached.

Participants spoke of how the tools helped them take time out and “step back from the everyday of my organization [to] look at our delivery through a different lens”, to view the design from new perspectives such as “the learner perspective of things” and ‘insight into understanding my student groups”, and to ‘formalise many of the actions I previously did more haphazardly.’ For some tools, such as those developed by the OULDI project, these are known benefits - yet such response from a broader, international audience is important.

Comments indicate that the course helped change perceptions of learning and curriculum design for participants whether they spent just a few hours or followed for the full duration of course. Feedback such as “I became aware of how important [it] is to think and design a course in advance” and “[the course] has assisted me in ... being more confident of my assertion that even a 2 hour session cannot be ‘cobbled together’ but must be a cohesive design” was not untypical after the first week. And in many cases this has translated into plans to introduce further aspects of design into personal or institutional practice. It is therefore encouraging to note posts such as “my colleague and I are going to sit down and figure out how we can incorporate some of the ... ideas into our planning for the upcoming year” and survey responses such as ‘I [now] have an array of design tools that I now feel confident to use [although] I had never heard of any of them before’ and ‘[they were] immeasurably helpful in planning our own internal MOOC - because OLDSMOOC was a MOOC and the experience was gold dust.’ Elsewhere feedback indicates the course sparked deeper interest in the subject; with at least three respondents saying that the course had whet their appetite for deeper, Masters level study in the field.

In respect to specific tools, Week 3 featured a number of curriculum design resources developed by the OULDI project: a three year JISC funded project led by the Open University which developed and iterated a range of curriculum design tools and piloted these in seven universities. As part of the MOOC project the OULDI team also created several new video tutorials whilst the Course Features card resource and Course Map tool were also used in the design of the MOOC itself. Data shows that over 300 new people viewed the OULDI Course Features cloudscape during Weeks 3 and 4 of the MOOC and there were 280 views of a video explaining how to use the Course Features cards. There was similar exposure to the OULDI Activity Profile cloudscape with over two hundred viewing the page (taking total views to 826 by May 2013) and the now well established Learning Design toolbox cloudscape which was originally set up by the OULDI project to gather together curriculum design tools (total unique views now stand at over 3,600).



Screenshot of one of the newly produced OULDI videos created to accompany the MOOC

The following four case examples illustrate how the OULDI resources appear to have impacted the practice:

- A participant who was active for the entire course reported they had already used OULDI tools at their own university to help “other people who are designing online courses, many of them completely new to the principles of instructional and learning design... the course features card exercise has already proved very useful in helping course developers visualise the type of course that they want to create and the pedagogical values that they want represented therein”

- A participant who followed the course reported that their 'organization [had] had the OULDI cards printed and laminated. Our plan is to use them to start the conversation with instructors to design an online course for Jan[uary] 2014.'
- A participant writing on Cloudworks explained how they used the Course Features Cards in a Design workshop with 11 university librarians: 'I split the class into 3 groups and gave each a set of cards. We used the sample task on study skills. I asked each group to select about 16 cards that they would use and then rank them in a diamond shape. Each group summarised its diamond on a flip chart. Interestingly, two of the groups chose very similar cards while the third was completely different. We then went on to complete a course map...I got a very positive response from the class'
- A participant from the UK blogged about how they had used and combined the Course Features and Digital Literacy cards and completed the Course Map.

In Week 2, tools to reflect on who the course was for and to identify relationships between design variables were featured. Over 175 people viewed the Personas, Force Maps and Scenarios cloudscape during Weeks 1 to 3 of the course and the list of scenarios comprised contributions from 46 participants. Weeks 4 and 5 worked to create a useful resource around the Pedagogical Patterns Collector software and process for paper prototyping. This included re-edited materials, new video and the gathering and sharing of over a dozen participant patterns. Weeks 6 and Week 7 also form useful resources: pulling together a range of materials, featuring specially recorded video introductions and encouraging participants to add to existing tool boxes such as the Evaluation Instruments toolbox on Cloudworks as well as share their own evaluations.

The Post-course Survey asked participants which specific resources or tools they found most useful. Besides the OULDI resources, participants also mentioned: the ecology of resources (2), paper based prototyping (2), Cloudworks (2), scenarios (1), the evaluation tools (1), personas (1), OER (1), Twitter (3), 'the staff' (1), CompendiumLD (1), and 'resources shared by others' (1). This supports the view that there is no one tool for design, but that different tools in combination may suit particular individuals or design contexts.

In addition to the tools and resources introduced to the course by those who prepared the course

materials there were significant contributions of links, resources and references by participants themselves. Some of these were made within the original public course space and included the sharing of hundreds of links to resources and reflective blogs, additions to the Learning Design Toolbox cloudscape and uploads of over a dozen patterns to the Pedagogical Patterns Collector. Other contributions took place in supplementary public or semi-public spaces such as on the MOOC Facebook site which was set up by one participant and gained over sixty followers or in user formed Google forums or Hangout areas. To encourage sharing the course offered a 'resource gatherer' badge (see p16).

Aside from learning delivered through the course content and featured design tools, a proportion of participants seemed interested in learning about the MOOC experience first-hand (either through participating or observing) and/or about how MOOCs can be designed and delivered. This motivation is evident in comments such as "[this] has been invaluable in terms of helping to develop my thinking around MOOCs" and reminds us that, whilst not perhaps the primary intended audience, participants will make judgement about elements of the MOOC design, especially if the audience are educators themselves. In the case of the Post-course Survey, 5 of the 16 who responded to the relevant question (31%) stated that a key impact had been learning how 'not to do' a MOOC and only 56% said the pedagogy used had helped them learn effectively. Whilst this should be balanced by noting a greater proportion (75%) agreed or agreed somewhat that the course presented material in interesting ways and were satisfied with the quality of the course, such views underline the importance of understanding the often significant issues participants face.

Whilst often difficult to evidence, this evaluation found a good range of case studies to indicate the experience and the tools presented in the MOOC will be useful for many who participated. Indeed, the quantity of time many participants spent using tools and resources has been much greater than that possible in a one day workshop. Furthermore, participant comments suggest that the course has the potential to substantially impact on individual practice. As one very active participant blogged: My paradigms w[ere] shifted again as I was confronted with the idea that Learning Design (LD) is a much broader field than I originally anticipated. I was introduced to a number of new concepts like that LD can be pedagogically neutral.'

Colaborative Group Working

The MOOC course design sought to promote social learning by encouraging participants to collaborative in project working and study groups. Project groups were intended to coalesce around specific ideas for courses, with each project team then producing a curriculum design by completing the eight weeks of activities set by the course authors. Support groups were to be larger networks comprising of a number of project teams or participants with similar interests. These were intended to be the primary mechanism for learner support. Given that, as reported earlier, few participants thought group working had been important to their learning (and indeed, the ability to opt out ranked the second most important feature) it is important to understand the challenges participants faced in trying to make the collaboration as designed by the course work.

Project group formation began early in the MOOC on the second day when participants were asked to propose ideas for course designs that could be developed in collaboration during the MOOC. 102 participants followed the course instructions and posted a project proposal on the DreamBazaar web page in Cloudworks. This essentially created a list of 102 hyperlinked project titles (listed alphabetically by the software) and each could be clicked to view a further explanation of the proposal written by the proposer. Over 1,100 people viewed the page with the list of project proposals on it. Participants were expected to form groups themselves, yet despite this evidence that the proposals were looked at, participants reported a range of difficulties in joining, recruiting others to, and setting up effective group governance. Consequently, just over half of those who signalled an interest to work collaboratively by posting their project ideas failed to make any further contribution to the MOOC; thereby effectively withdrawing from active participation.

Of those who remained active in the course space after Week 1, the majority report difficulties in maintaining and collaborating in groups. Here are five case examples that illustrate the range of participant experience:

- *‘People settled into groups quickly in the beginning... once ideas started to appear in the DreamBazaar.*

The challenge was to move into the next stage while people moved around, disappeared, changed their minds, etc. In the end I went solo, [I] had interested collaborators but work, life, business, time etc got in the way”

- *‘One, then two, then occasionally perhaps three of us worked on the same project. It was very touch and go and after five weeks it fizzled out because the ‘team leader’ as it were who had been instrumental in galvanising a couple of us to join [left].’*
- *‘In the group with my colleagues, the only challenge was staying on track at work. We never did any of the activities together; we talked about them but engaged separately. The most rewarding part of working with a colleague was [discussing] incorporating [course] learning to our work.’*
- *It fell apart almost immediately. Too many differing objectives, too difficult to co-ordinate working time of so many in so many time zones.’*
- *‘Despite expressing interest in four other projects not one of these people came back in any shape or form...I pitched some ideas but was ignored.’*
- *I tried to make connections to [two] groups but found these petered out very quickly. Fortunately by the third week I was well on my way on my own.’*

When group working failed it seems most remaining participants elected to work on their own, although there are some cases of pairs working in parallel; completing activities individually but discussing work periodically. Participants said they would have welcomed more time to form groups and for group formation to happen later in the course (rather than on day 2) so as to allow opportunities and time to meet and interact socially first. Instead ‘Cliques formed very quickly... - and you were either ‘in’ or ‘out... I found it dispiriting.’ Others commented on the amount of time it took them to read the 102 project proposals, and then keep track of the fluid processes in which projects and study circles coalesced (e.g. across numerous Cloudscapes and Google forum discussion threads). As one participant explained ‘it was hard to keep up with which groups were forming [and where]. In the end, I opted out of any group discussion except these happening through Cloudworks.’

Comments by participants indicate some thought the MOOC design may have underestimated the quantity and clarity of instructions or support that was required to help them form groups. For example one participant mentioned that ‘the tiny description of this activity in the Team Up area [Activity 6/Week 1] makes it sound a lot easier than it actually is... would it be that easy,’ whilst another reflected that:

‘[because] the main activity is arranged for project teams ... there will be ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ as the teams self-select. If a project is something that you have proposed but that no-one else signs up for what happens then? For particular work reasons you may be committed [so] you come to a screeching halt OR (specifically not recommended) you continue doing the design work solo... I don’t think there is any easy solution but it [is] an issue for the design of this particular MOOC.’

Participants posted a range of questions in the first week which ranged from asking where to find links to asking facilitators for clarification about where to add the information about their teams or projects because some were posting to the wrong pages on Cloudworks; as one participant said ‘looking at the instructions, it appears that the team cloud and the Dreambazaar are not the same thing - or are they? It seems that a lot of them are and I’m now confused as [the facilitator told us] they weren’t.’ The potential for misunderstanding is also illustrated in the question of whether group working was a required component of the course. Whilst in general MOOC guidance stated people could study in groups or individually, there were some moments - such as Activity 8 in Week 1 which instructed participants to ‘complete your team and your study circle, [and] only when you are done go on to the next activity’ - where meaning was less clear and comments by several participants indicate they thought that group working was supposed to be a key part of the course.

Those interactions that did take place were often very positive and, even if the collaboration did not take place as expected, the networks and relationships built through communal working were thought important. For example, one survey respondent said ‘interacting with other participants was essential to my participation...[whilst] my experience was a mixed one,... the networking/expanding [of] my PLN was great and should continue beyond this MOOC.’ Yet in other cases, participants reported that the nature of the work required (to share their designs) excluded them from collaboration because

they were unable or not permitted to share details of the course they were working on. As a result, one participant suggested the course include some consideration of the ethical issues associated with sharing project working.

Alongside project groups, participants were asked to form study groups or circles. In the first week at least fifteen separate study circles were proposed, of which around half had more than two people join them. Study groups were formed around specific themes (e.g. Digital Literacies (9 joined); FE and Skills Online (2); Literature Technology and Collaborative writing (2)), around particular locations (study groups were proposed in Edinburgh (6), London (3) and Australia (4+)), and around purposes (e.g. successful stories of use). In addition, there was even one group formed for those without a study circle (joined by 12 people). There is no clear evidence that any of these study support groups as originally formed in Week 1 remained active beyond Week 4 and little to indicate these formed the primary mechanism for learner support. There may be several reasons for this: the perceived failure of group working to deliver sufficient value to justify effort; that by Week 4 there were only a few dozen active participants so the course space itself essentially became a single ‘support’ group (thereby negating the need for further support circles); after Week 1, no subsequent week included an activity that mentioned study circles by name; or that the technology provided by the course failed to adequately meet the needs of the nascent support groups. This latter issue was noted by one person in Week 1: ‘we really need some clarity here or we are in danger of going round in circles and losing participants simply because they do not know where the discussion is taking place.’

Collaborative group working as implemented in this course design did not achieve the desired performance. There is little evidence to suggest it improved retention, indeed, the challenges in working in groups and collaborating across projects had a deleterious impact on the experience of many. However, the active thirty or so who persevered with the course formed a more informal group; one where there was less, if any, expectation of collaboration and where comments and support were volunteered when individual felt able. This communal working appears to have performed well with participants building stronger relationships.

Badges

In light of recent interest in the potential for digital badges to help to engage, motivate and reward participation in open online learning we created nine Mozilla-compatible badges. This required additional technical development for Cloudworks and the writing of Badging strategy.

Following a review of possible roles and uses of extrinsic reward, three each of three types of badge were created to recognise: effort (length of engagement with the course), valued communal practices (i.e. how individuals supported each other), and achievement (reaching a level of competency). Whilst these were closely aligned with the course principles of participation, contribution and effectively putting learning into practice, the terms for an award were not tied to any particular week or prescribed approach. For example, to gain the 1 Week badge a participant would have had to complete any one week (be that the first week or the fifth), and the Learning Designer badge purposely did not specify which design methodologies should have been used but rather defined the expected level that an applicant should be able to demonstrate. Feedback indicates participants appreciated this alignment although there were cases of participants asking for more detailed marking rubrics (thereby perhaps suggesting they were expecting the course, not the community, to determine standards).

The process of badge award comprised two parts. First the applicant selected the appropriate badge and submitted a URL that provided evidence of how they qualified for the badge. Second the URL was then checked and approved. Several mechanisms for approval were developed: basic approval was made the course facilitator and more complex approvals required peer review (and approval) by one or several other participants. The creator of the badge determined which mechanism was to be used with the Cloudworks platform providing an interface to manage the submission and approval of badges and also for the display of badges on user Cloudworks profilers.

The table on the right shows the number of badges applied for (and awarded) and, where possible, an estimate for the number of participants active at the

Effort/Engagement Badges			
	Approval by	Number of badges applied for and awarded	Qualification criteria for badge
	Course Team	69	Completing any one week
	Course Team	21	Completing any three weeks
	Course Team	9	Completing any six weeks
Community/Practical Badges			
	Course Team	12	Contributing three or more items to Learning Design Toolboxes
	Peer (3 other users)	4	Working effectively in a learning design team or study group
	Peer (3 other users)	2	Reviewed and critiqued two or more learning or curriculum designs
Achievement Badges			
	Peer (3 other users)	8	Completing and sharing a learning or curriculum design
	Peer (3 other users)	4	Creating or remixing an OER and openly share it
	Course Team	2	Achieving all 8 OLDS MOOC Badges

Further details about the badges at: www.olds.ac.uk/badges

time to help put the badge approvals in context. At the one, three and six week points, approximately half of those active and contributing in the course space applied for badges. Rates for peer approved badges were lower with just two participants achieving the Reviewer badge. This in turn meant that only two participants qualified for the course completion badge (which required achievement of the other eight badges). Given attainment of the badges should have been possible with a large enough cohort following the course as presented, the low number of badge approvals may be indicative of difficulties arising from peer assessment or participants deviating from studying the course as written.

The end of course survey asked students to write about whether the badges helped to motivate or guide their progress and what they liked or disliked about the badges. The seventeen responses represent a range of personal experiences with eight respondents generally positive about badges, four negative and the remainder neutral or both positive and negative. These user case studies show that badges can be considered useful by many participants. Two reported that the badges introduced a sense of fun: 'they make me smile! Which is a good thing – learning should be fun and I think this was a fun element of the course' and two others mentioned badges were helpful in judging the progress they were making as a 'Learning Outcome type guideline.' A further two respondents stressed the value of the badge as evidence of learning: one explained how their institution had agreed to use them as evidence of engagement in professional development activity and the other liked the 'official "payoff" for the weeks that I'd invested [my time] in.' These latter comments contrast with a third respondent who seems to have weighed up the value of the badges in respect to their CV and concluded that if the MOOC was just 'going to be one line of my CV' then the badges were perhaps at too granular a level (although there was actually a badge for course completion). Another liked badges for their formative role within the course but admitted that externally 'I'm not sure yet if I'll really use them.'

Respondent comments also show badges could be useful in encouraging participants to try harder and produce a higher quality of work and two liked the idea of peer validation with one saying 'was great... -I got as much out of validating others badge applications as getting my own badges' although the practicalities of getting peer verification (with only 20-30 active participants) was mentioned as a problem. This said, respondents said they would have welcomed 'more of a rubric for marking the work [of others]

and more 'clarity of minimum requirements' with one appearing to have begun their own rubric to share with the course community.

Of the four respondents who were not keen on the badges, two alluded to the fact that they 'felt inadequate' or 'a childish smart' in not having (or choosing to apply for) badges and another mentioned that they seemed to be 'just another distraction.' The parallel with scouting or girl guide badges was made by one survey respondent who commented that 'not all of us have a boy-scout mentality' yet this dislike with the analogy contrasts with a Twitter post that read 'First #oldsmooc badge...what fun, feel like a Girl Guide again.' The issue of quality assurance was raised by one respondent who suggested badges may lead to conferring a status or 'misleading impression of knowledge' on someone.

In addition to the survey, the archive of Twitter posts for the course was searched for the term 'badge.' Several participants (at least five) seemed to enjoy the fun aspect of the badge and there are posts that allude to the value of the badge as a collectable, for example one tweeted '... and badges def. do work. I'm bagging as many as I can to show that I'm learning loads... I love #openbadges. See my #oldsmooc badges at [URL]. Tweets also indicate participants using badges to guide reflective comments, to build relationships within the community, and to build social capital as a communal topic of conversation. Indeed, at least two participants turned to Twitter to ask peers to review their badge applications. One posted 'Have applied for OER developer badge, pls verify <http://t...>' and another 'Hi Folks Just applied 4 my #oldsmooc collaborator badge [http://t.co/\[x\]](http://t.co/[x]) Could you do the honours?'

The use of Cloudworks as a platform enabled the course team to trial the use of badges at a time (mid-2012) when there was no clear third party technology available. Arguably only one badge was summative, the remainder were intended to reward achievement during the course. This more formative role did not completely align with the fact all badges awards were made public so in future offering participants greater control on which to display (or not) may be helpful. Unlike other courses where quizzes or other assessment is mandatory, this MOOC offered badges on a voluntary basis so it is noteworthy that perhaps 30-50% of active participants at the relevant stage in the course applied for the effort / engagement badge yet issues with gaining peer feedback appear to have impacted attainment of some of the others.

Concluding Summary

This evaluation has purposely sought to capture and represent the full range of participant perspectives on the MOOC rather than focusing on the experience of a particular group such as only those who completed the course. Radically contrasting experiences of the MOOC have been evidenced throughout the evaluation. This in turn has presented a representational challenge: how much prominence should be given to each perspective and how should balance be maintained?

The report has also sought to evaluate the MOOC from a number of perspectives including participant compliance and deviation from the design, attainment of design and participant goals, performance against measures, and being guided by some of the evaluation criteria suggested by the participants themselves.

- The evaluation has reviewed how participants complied with the course instructions (such as the number posting worked activities or viewing pages) yet also how and when they deviated. The example of collaborative group working has been a particularly interesting case study with evidence suggesting that whilst this was encouraged and built in to the course design (and indeed attempted by over a hundred participants), it did not work as envisaged so those who chose to continue did so by working by themselves but with the more general support of course community. There also remains the question of how to properly represent the experience of those who chose to follow or watch the course but not comply with course instructions to contribute and post. Page view data suggests this was a larger group than those 'visible' in the course space, but capturing their experience is a greater challenge.
- One central goal for the course was to raise awareness and promote the use of a range of learning and curriculum design tools, resources and practices. Data showing over 200 views for many resources featured in the course, along with case examples of use and impact at the personal or institutional level, indicates

this goal was achieved. Furthermore, with the course ending with approximately 30 active contributors and at least 30-60 other participants the project could be considered to have broadly met the original forecast (outlined in the bid document) of 50-100 completing the course.

- A second aim of the project was to trial the use of Cloudworks as a method for delivering a MOOC. Reports of issues in using Cloudworks (and indeed the other tools) in the way that the course design asked and in navigating the combination of online tools used by the course were relatively common. Also the use of unfamiliar technologies such as Cloudworks presented an additional challenge to many participants in the first week. This may have put those with moderate to expert knowledge and understanding of Web 2.0 tools at an advantage and certainly it seems a greater proportion (78%) of those completing the course rated their knowledge and understanding of Web 2.0 tools as moderate to expert that those who started the course (43%). Moderate to expert (prior) experience of MOOCs does not appear to have proved a similar advantage. The evaluation has identified some specific issues with the tools that could be addressed, yet perhaps the broader question this raises is about the suitability of present open and freely available tools to adequately support large-scale open online learning.
- With respect to the achievement of learner goals, the evaluation found a more mixed picture. For example, just 50% of those responding to the Post-course Survey said their original learning goals had been met. This may be lower than reported for other MOOCs because the survey respondents included those who did not complete the course and does not, of course, necessarily indicate that participants did not gain something from the course. Issues of time, timing, time commitment and timetabling were also mentioned as concerns and as presenting difficulties to study. Together, this feedback highlights the need for further research into what participant expectations and goals are for MOOCs and reflection on how MOOCs can better adapt and deliver to these.

- The evaluation included a couple of widely used measures for 'traditional' course review. For example, 63% said they were satisfied with the quality of the course and 72% were satisfied with the quality of facilitation. Again, these data are derived from a survey that included responses from both those who completed the course and those who did not. Indeed, with Post-course surveys such as this, capturing responses from just a few percent of those who actually register or begin the course it is perhaps essential that other, qualitative, data is also sought.
- Finally, the analysis has attempted to include an evaluation of the course according to participant-defined criteria including examining participation levels and lengths, on trying to ascertain completion and evaluating the impact. It also helped steer the evaluation of the role and use of badges. Nine badges were offered during the MOOC, using an additional feature added to the Cloudworks platform specifically for this project. Perhaps a third to a half of

contributing participants applied for the early badges indicating there was interest yet some later badges that required peer approval fared less well.

Looking forward, the website, resources and learning activities created by the OLDS MOOC team and supplemented by significant user contributions will now form a valuable and enduring online resource for educational practitioners. It has also raised many more questions than has been possible to respond to within the confines of this report and highlighted the need to better understand individual and communal expectations, perceptions, and experiences within public open online course spaces.

The author of this report can be contacted by email at simon.j.cross@open.ac.uk.

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Further Reading

The OLDS MOOC website will remain open and freely available after the course ends and all content is covered by a Creative Commons licence. The site has links, either directly or indirectly, to all the technologies, websites, web pages and discussion forums discussed in this report and can be found at: www.olds.ac.uk

For details about the Badging Strategy discussed on p16-17 see the OLDS MOOC blog posts at: www.olds.ac.uk/blog/olds-moocbadgingstrategy www.olds.ac.uk/blog/moocbadgingandthelearningarc.

For an analysis of the Previous MOOC Experience Survey responses prepared for this project see: Cross, S. (2012) *40 Tips for running an Open Online Course or MOOC from those who have experienced them*, Blog post: 20 September 2012, available at: tinyurl.com/40mooctips

Appendix 1

Questions included in the Pre-course Survey

1. How would you rate your current knowledge and understanding of:
 - a. Learning design
 - b. Open Educational Resources (OERs)
 - c. MOOCs / Open Online Courses
 - d. Online Web 2 tools
 [Options: 1-Novice, 2, 3, 4, 5-Expert]
2. How long have you spent so far looking at the OLDS MOOC website?
3. Which of the following pages on the website have you looked at?
4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the OLDS MOOC website?
 - a. It is easy to locate information I need
 - b. There is enough information to get me started
 - c. I feel confident about using the required technologies
 [Options: Agree, Agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, Disagree somewhat, Disagree]
5. What aspects of the MOOC are you currently looking forward to or excited about?
6. What reservations or concerns do you have?
7. Do you know other people who are planning on studying the MOOC?
8. What personal or professional objectives, if any, have you set yourself for the MOOC?
9. Can you suggest any success criteria that would help us determine how useful the MOOC has been for you and/or to others?
10. In future, how could we improve the website and initial course experience?

Appendix 2

Questions included in the Post-course Survey

1. What did you like most about the OLDS MOOC?
2. What did you dislike about the OLDS MOOC?
3. Did the MOOC meet your expectations? Please explain
4. How important were these course features to your study and learning during the course?
[See Table 5 (p9) for list of the 16 items included]
[Options: '1 (unimportant)', '2', '3', '4', '5 (important)']
 - 5a. The MOOC encouraged active participation on-line. Based on your experience, please rate the quality of contribution you have seen:
 - a. Comments posted by others
 - b. Learning projects shared by others
 - c. Feedback on your work by others
 - d. Social interaction and support
 [Options: 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Satisfactory', 'Poor', 'Not seen']
 - 5b. Use this space to comment further on your experience of interacting with other participants and whether this was valuable
6. Did you use a blog, cloud and /or cloudscape to share your activities with others? *If so, please give the address of your personal blog or cloud/cloudscape*
 - 7a. Did you work on some activities as part of a small group or pair?
 - 7b. How many in your group were
 - a. Existing friends or colleagues
 - b. People met for first time on course
 [Options: '0', '1', '2', '3', '4', '5 or more']
 - 7c. What did you find challenging and/or rewarding about the group working component of the course? (where relevant feel free to provide an example or link)
 - 8a. The MOOC included nine badges. How many badges have you applied for?
[Options: '0', '1', '2-6', '7-9']

Appendix 2 continued...

8b. Did the badges help to motivate you or guide your progress? (*please give details*)

8c. What did you like or dislike about the badges?

9. What impact will the course have on your practice, your students and/or your institution? (*please explain and give examples where possible*)

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the course?

a. The course presented the subject in interesting ways

b. I was satisfied with the support provided by the facilitators

c. I achieved all my original goals for joining the MOOC

d. The pedagogy used in the course helped me learn effectively

e. I was satisfied with the quality of the course

[Options: 'Agree,' 'Agree somewhat,' 'Neither agree or disagree,' 'Disagree somewhat,' 'Disagree,' 'Not sure']

11. Approximately how many hours did you spend on each week? (*add up the total time spend reading, working on activities, using social media and attending sessions*)

a. Week 1

b. Week 2

c. Week 3

d. Week 4

e. etc.

i. Week 9

[Options: 0, <1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5-6, 7-10, >10]

12a. In which country do you live?

12b. What is your age?

[Options: 'under 18,' '18-24,' '25-34,' '35-44,' '45-54,' '55-64,' '65 or over']

12c. Are you

[Options: Male, Female]

12d. Over the last two years, how many other MOOCs have you registered for?

12e. What is your job title or role?

13. How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following

a. Learning design

b. Open Educational Resources (OERs)

c. MOOCs /Open online courses

d. Online Web 2 tools

[Options: '1 (Novice),' '2,' '3,' '4,' '5 (Expert),']

14. Which specific resources or tools did you find most useful? (*please give details where relevant*)

15. how could we improve the MOOC for learners?

16. How did you find out about the course?