Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs

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Lecture 11

Introducing Reflection Spot

Introducing Reflection Spot:

An LeD or learning dialogue promotes concept acquisition through learner interaction. We have seen how to take a 1-hour lecture and chunk it into a sequence of multiple LeDs by identifying the pause points in the lecture. However, that's not enough. We still need to provide for learner interaction within an LeD.

Why is this important? This is because content transmission in a monologue form can result in learners getting disengaged with the content however short that content maybe. Hence, it is necessary to provide points where learners can connect with the content and interact. This is called a reflection spot.

The reflection spot in an LeD is a logical point where we provide the learner with opportunities for micro-practice, to assimilate what they have just learned as well as to express their opinion or interact with the content in some way. It's a structural point where the learners may get disengaged.

So at any point when we feel that the learner is likely to get disengaged, that is a good spot to introduce a reflection spot. Reflection spot can be implemented in multiple ways, in the simplest way it could be a multiple choice question or one or two line answer. Having said that, here is a reflection spot. Consider one of the LeDs that you have thought about for your course and identify one reflection spot that you will insert into the LeD. Once you have done this, you may resume the video.

So this reflection spot was about deciding the reflection spot in your LeD. Some of you may have thought about asking a question on the preceding content where the learner has to recall some fact that you have mentioned in that content. Or you may have thought of asking a multiple choice question where the learner may have to give a single answer which is also there in the preceding content. While both of these are good ways of creating a reflection spot, they primarily serve the purpose of structural engagement, wherein we break the monotony for the learner by making the learner interact to the video.

On the other hand, we also want to create points of logical engagement for the learner where the learner goes beyond merely recalling what was said in the preceding content, where we provide the

learner with some opportunity to micro-practice or express their opinion. For example, if we consider the same topic that we saw of CS101 of comparing between a for loop and a while loop. In that LeD one reflection spot could be to ask the learner to say when is a while loop preferred as compared to a for loop. Different learners would have different answers.

So even though both of them can be used in an interchangeable manner to a large extent it brings the opportunity for the instructor to bring out the different nuances of the differences between these two types of loops in the content that follows the reflection spot. Continuing with the same example, another reflection spot could be to show one or two lines of code of a loop and asking the learner to predict the output of that loop.

A third type of reflection spot could be to show one type of a loop and ask the learner to think about how it can be transformed into another type of a loop. In this way for the same topic of comparison of different types of loops, there can be multiple reflection spots that can be introduced in the LeD.

It's not necessary to introduce a variety of reflection spots in an LeD. All you need to do is to pick the one that you feel will connect most with your learners. Finally, what should be the content that follows a reflection spot? It should not be something new altogether but it should be a validation of the learner's responses. So the instructor needs to anticipate what could be the different responses that learners give and address them so that the learners feel connected to the LeD.

Another thing that could be done is a summary of diverse views that could be obtained for a given question or closing the micro-practice that has been provided for the learner. So, in this way, the LeD is complete with some content being explained in the beginning, followed by reflection spot where the learners are engaging with the content and finally we close the loop by responding to what the learners may have reflected upon during the reflection spot.