

Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs

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Recommendations for effective LbDs

Here are some recommendations to design learning by doing activities. One recommendation is to design a variety of LbD activities in our course. This variety can be in terms of the format of activities, for example, multiple choice questions, true or false, long answer questions, drag and drop, depending of course, on the platform.

However, this is a fairly obvious way of providing variety. A deeper way of thinking about variety is in terms of the complexity of the questions. The questions, or the LbD activities, can range from recall level questions, to simple or routine applications, to more integrated or synthesized activities, which require the learner to integrate knowledge and concepts from various parts of the course.

Another recommendation is to provide LbD activities frequently, and intersperse them throughout the modules and throughout the course. That is, these are not exercises that should be kept only for the end of the course, but they appear to the learner often, frequently, throughout and as well as in the end of the course.

A final recommendation is to give feedback to the learner on each activity. Now this feedback should be something that the learner should be able to act upon, in order to revise their performance, to improve their learning and so on. That is the feedback should be constructive, and as far as possible, the feedback should cater to the various types of learners. It should cater to the diversity that we have in our course. That is, we recommend that the feedback be customized as far as possible.

Now, it's not possible to customize feedback for every individual, even in a face to face class of 50. So, how do we do it in a MOOC which has thousands of learners? If one group of learners gives a certain response, the feedback that we design for that response can be coded into the multiple choice question feedback that we have to design.

Similarly, for a different response of that question, we design a different feedback. Here we are utilizing technology, which gives the feedback to the learner when they answer the multiple choice question, and see the feedback that automatically comes to them from the MOOC platform or, one can also customize feedback in terms of categories of performance levels, by means of descriptive performance rubrics.

Following these recommendations will help us design effective LbDs in our MOOC.