Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs

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Lecture 21

What is an LxT?

One of the biggest challenge while planning a MOOC is addressing diversity. This diversity can be thought of in multiple dimensions. For instance, the instructor has to simultaneously keep in mind need for learners' prerequisites as well as possible advanced topics that are associated with the content.

Some learners enroll for MOOC out of personal interest whereas others do so for tangible outcomes like certificates. The MOOC can also have a wide variation in the age and experience of the learner with several young and old accessing them, some being students and others being working professionals. These learners can come from various regional backgrounds with some well-versed in English while there can be others who are not proficient in English.

One possible way in which teachers try to tackle this challenge is by providing a lot of resources, or additional reading materials, or application scenarios. But do you think that this is sufficient? Now, you will see a screen having question. Once you have done answering then resume the video.

Now that you have reflected on the question given, let me try to explain the answer. A problem with only providing additional resources is that many a times the learners do not access these resources or it can also happen that the additional resources side-track them from the main content.

In the Learner Centric MOOC model, the element of Learning Extension Trajectories, that is LxT, is one way to aid a MOOC instructor in addressing the challenge of diversity. The Learning Extension Trajectories is about providing

learners with a wide variety of learning resources immediately followed by an assimilation activity.

The resources can be used to support the learner to ensure prerequisites or advance their learning, or support in the direction of their inherent motivation, or support the needs of learners with varying experiences along with taking care of their language or regional context needs.

A learning extension resource could be videos, it could be links to various web pages or documents that are already available, or it could also be even research papers that have been written about the topic being discussed.

The learners can access these resources of their choice based on their needs and interest. Following that, learners are required to answer the Assimilation Quiz activity which ensures that they have gone through the content in the provided resources. For example, in this figure you see a list of diverse resources from one of the MOOCs that we had offered earlier and along with that you will have an Assimilation Quiz.

The purpose of an Assimilation Quiz is only to give incentive for access to these resources. Hence the level of questions should be such that anybody who access these resource should be able to immediately answer it.

To summarize, like a list of resources or references provided, Learning Extension Trajectories enable the learner to increase the depth or increase the breadth of their existing knowledge or understanding, but in addition they cater to diverse type of learners and diverse levels of learning and is followed by a short activity to ensure that learners assimilate the key concept or knowledge intended from the resource.