Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs

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Lecture 27

Orchestration Dynamics in LCM

Hello and Namaste!

The Learner-Centric MOOC model with the four structural elements helps an instructor to design a Learner-Centric MOOC. A question to be asked at this point will be, is this sufficient to start the MOOC or are we missing something? The straightforward answer is the knowledge of structural elements are not sufficient to offer a MOOC. You need to think of instructions to learners for engaging in the course, monitor the learner performance, support learners in case of difficulties, and add or modify content based on the learner feedback.

You may have thought of all these in a classroom scenario, however, in a MOOC setting, this becomes all the more important due to the transactional distance and massive scale. A MOOC setting allows learners to access the course flexibly. Hence, you need to provide common instructions for all the learners on how to proceed in the course. The learners in MOOC are more in number and are at physically distant locations compared to a classroom and hence it is important to monitor their actions to ensure that they are progressing along the intended learning path.

The learners attracted to a MOOC are of diverse abilities. Hence, you need to provide support for each set of learners especially those who face difficulties. The scale and diversity also makes it essential to get periodic feedback from learners and make modifications in the content, if necessary.

Orchestration dynamics is the way in which a MOOC instructor achieves all of these. Orchestration in a normal classroom involves teachers guiding and managing the various activities of the learner inside the classroom. In the MOOC setting, orchestration by the course team ensures that learners get guidance on the learning paths that they are taking to progress in the course.

It is essential at each and every point during the implementation of a Learner-Centric MOOC. So, let us now look at how orchestration dynamics is in a Learner-Centric MOOC. Orchestration dynamics requires you to first set up a course management protocol that is the instruction set up by the course team for navigating various learning path during the course. For effective orchestration, the next important feature required is the analytics provided by the MOOC platform.

Analytics get created by tracking the relevant learner actions in the course and helps the course team to monitor the learner engagement and performance in the course. Now comes the most important element within orchestration dynamics. This provides the learner centeredness to it. It is the dynamic adaptation based on the course team's interpretation of analytics information and can result in augmentation of existing content to explain some of the contents in detail or revising the course plan to increase learner engagement or specific actions to enhance learner connect.

Before moving on to the explanation of each of these, let us now do a reflection spot activity that will help you to understand the idea of dynamic adaptations little better. Given here are three possible actions that are taken by the instructor dynamically during the course run. Can you try to match them with the appropriate purpose? You can pause the video here for a moment while you try to answer this question.

The correct mapping is shown now. Whenever the course team extends due date of submission then they are actually revising the course plan. The reason for doing such an action is to ensure that more learners attempt the activities in the

MOOC. One example that immediately comes to my mind from our own MOOCs in IITBombayX is the idea of catchup week provided at the end of second week in a six week Teacher Professional Development MOOC that we conducted. During this week, learners had minimal additional activity and focused on completion of assignments that were due in the first two weeks.

When the course team sends personalized emails to learners, reminding them of their progress in the course, they are doing specific actions to increase the learner connect. In a Skill MOOC that we ran for 3D animation, we had attempted a similar action by sending emails to participant reminding them of quizzes that they have not attempted till now and their current performance status.

This was highly appreciated by many of these participants who received such emails as this enabled them to complete activities in time. When the course team creates a new assignment around a most commonly discussed topic then they are augmenting the content to explain the topic in detail. Again in the same skilling course of 3D animation, we had seen engaging discussion around animation of chess board pieces.

After looking at the discussion, the course team had asked all participants to put up multiple ideas for creating a knight piece or horse as it is most commonly called and post screencast of its making. This again generated a lot of buzz among the participants and it was one of the most active discussion thread in the course. So the key takeaway while implementing orchestration dynamics is to ensure that we acknowledge every learner action, and inaction, and utilize analytics to provide dynamic adaptations.