Notice to Authors

Due to the overwhelming number of submissions to *IRRODL*, the journal has already met its publication quota for 2019. As a result, for a period that will not exceed six months, *IRRODL* will no longer be accepting submissions after May 1, 2019. In order to improve our service to the academic community, and to ensure a six month review to publication cycle, *IRRODL* will be moving to a regularized publication schedule in 2020. More information will be provided later this year.

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Research Articles

Supporting professional learning in a massive open online course

Colin Milligan
Glasgow Caledonian University

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Abstract

Professional learning, combining formal and on the job learning, is important for the development and maintenance of expertise in the modern workplace. To integrate formal and informal learning, professionals have to have good self-regulatory ability. Formal learning opportunities are opening up through massive open online courses (MOOCs), providing free and flexible access to formal education for millions of learners worldwide. MOOCs present a potentially useful mechanism for supporting and enabling professional learning, allowing opportunities to link formal and informal learning. However, there is limited understanding of their effectiveness as professional learning environments. Using self-regulated learning as a theoretical base, this study investigated the learning behaviours of health professionals within Fundamentals of Clinical Trials, a MOOC offered by edX. Thirty-five semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed to explore how the design of this MOOC supported professional learning to occur. The study highlights a mismatch between learning intentions and learning behaviour of professional learners in this course. While the learners are motivated to participate by specific role challenges, their learning effort is ultimately focused on completing course tasks and assignments. The study found little evidence of professional learners routinely relating the course content to their job role or work tasks, and little impact of the course on practice. This study adds to the overall understanding of learning in MOOCs and provides additional empirical data to a nascent research field. The findings provide an insight into how professional learning could be integrated with formal, online learning.

Author Biographies

Colin Milligan, Glasgow Caledonian University
Research Fellow in the Caledonian Academy at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Allison Littlejohn, Glasgow Caledonian University
Director, Caledonian Academy at Glasgow Caledonian University.

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Learning analytics in MOOCs can be used to predict learner performance, which is critical as higher education is moving towards adaptive learning. Interdisciplinary methods used in the article allow for interpreting empirical qualitative data on performance in specific types of course assignments to predict learner performance and improve the quality of MOOCs. Learning analytics results make it possible to take the most from the data regarding the ways learners engage with information and their level of skills at entry. The article presents the results of applying the proposed learning analytics to a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC /məˈküː/) which is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials, such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets, many MOOCs provide interactive courses with user forums to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants (TAs), as well as immediate feedback to quick quizzes and assignments. MOOCs are a recent and widely researched development in distance education.