

Higher Education Lecturers' Lived Experience of Going Public in MOOCs

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Abstract

Academics in higher education are used to having their research publications reviewed and openly scrutinized. Teaching in higher education has traditionally been an individual academic's activity that has taken place in a closed classroom. However, the introduction of open education, particularly massive open online courses (MOOCs) has challenged this. In MOOCs, lectures are recorded and made public for thousands of course participants to view. This study investigates, via semi-structured interviews, how 20 lecturers of 10 MOOCs at six Swedish Universities have experienced this. All have joined the projects voluntarily, but a few have done so with some ambivalence. For them, standing in front of the camera, publishing material and, to some extent, losing control of the course content was scary at the beginning of the projects. Overall, the lecturers overcame this and thought that it was a good opportunity to reach many students, as well as a way to keep up with the changing requirements for teaching in higher education.

Keywords: MOOCs; Open education; Open Teaching; Openness; Higher Education

Introduction

Research in higher education (HE) is scrutinized, reviewed, published, disseminated, cited and continuously challenged by upcoming research. Careers and grants are based on the number of publications that a researcher has had published in highly rated publications with a high citations index. This is a standard procedure that is sometimes discussed but not seriously questioned. Teaching in HE, on the other hand, is a hidden activity - One teacher, one classroom, one class. Students can make their voices heard, of course, but standardized course evaluations are often collected without a credible analysis. Sharing and awareness of course material is not as common as could be expected despite the growing use of open educational resources (OER) (Belikov & Bodily, 2016; Cronin, 2017; Nascimbeni & Burgos, 2016). OER is described by Wiley, Bliss and Mary (2014, p. 781) as "educational materials either licensed under an open copyright license or in the public domain." With respect to publicity, the roles of the teaching and publishing academics are very different.

The introduction of open education and massive open online courses (MOOCs) changes the role of the lecturer in higher education. Open courses are dramatically transforming the teaching practice as lecturers are opening up their classrooms to the public. Their acting, presentations and material are open to course participants during a limited period but material put online can be saved, scrutinized and used by others without the lecturers' control. The lecturer's lived experience of going public in MOOCs is investigated in this study.

Background

Several trends are influencing teaching and the role of the lecturer in HE. One trend is the use of information technology (IT) when learning management systems (LMS) are used, as well as in online

courses where tools for synchronous web-meetings, social media, wikis, presentation and other such tools are utilized. Campus and online education have merged to a large degree, and it is common that blended courses on campus have some ingredients from online teaching and vice versa (Gregory & Lodge, 2015). Another trend is the introduction of OER that has its roots in the open source movement and open access publishing (Weller, 2014). Intertwined with OER are the more current development and launch of open education (OE), and for roughly a decade, the launch of MOOCs (Weller, 2014).

Teaching has a tradition of "the closed classroom door", and most lecturers have normally developed their teaching material themselves. Interaction with the students mainly takes place in the classroom setting, and interaction and activities are almost always hidden from the outside even when technology, such as an LMS, is used. Despite this, the use of technology in the classroom can change the teachers' role, which they can often perceive as a loss of control (McNaughton & Billot, 2016). Anything that threatens the traditional manner of classroom interaction is also seen as threatening the teachers' identity (Hanson, 2009). However, exceptions exist - the introduction of technology is welcomed by several teachers as a possibility to change the teaching activity. The use of OER and Creative Commons licensing is increasing (Nascimbeni & Burgos, 2016), but limited sharing and the inertia of adopting OER can be recognized in many higher education settings. In her study, Rolfe found that lack of time and IT infrastructure were barriers to sharing resources among academic staff from a Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. Boyer's claim "(...) on many campuses, is a climate that restricts creativity rather than sustains it" (1990, p. xii) has not changed dramatically (Boyer, Moser, Ream & Braxton, 2016). More important for the current study is Rolfe's remark about staff feeling insecure and protecting their work (2012). There is little guidance available for teachers wanting to design an open course or a MOOC (Alario-Hoyos, Pérez-Sanagustín, Cormier & Delgado-Kloos, 2014). The next paragraph will therefore focus on lecturers' experiences of sharing and wanting to be a part of the open education trend.

The introduction of open practices within higher education causes the lecturers' role to change. This is especially the case in MOOCs, where roles are reshaped when the lecturer is expected to produce marketing and course material, such as videos, that may be seen by thousands of people. One MOOC can attract more attendees than a lecturer has in class during their whole career. The intimacy and student interaction in a classroom are replaced by transparency and mediated communication. It is about making use of IT, microphones and cameras, speaking in a digital context with text and voice, and making proper use of the new genre. It is also about language skills, especially if teaching is required in a language that is not the language of the lecturer's mother tongue. There is higher demand for unambiguous information in an online setting than in a classroom. Mistakes in a classroom presentation can easily be corrected while mistakes in a MOOC can be unmanageable. In this sense, the lecturers' role in a MOOC differs a lot from most other educational contexts (Ross, Sinclair, Knox, Bayne & Macleod, 2014).

MOOCs are a possibility for academics to be more active in the public domain. In the current study, some academics in the MOOC setting were relatively unfamiliar with teaching. However, they quickly transitioned from relatively inexperienced lecturers to the main lecturer in a MOOC, which thereby made them more public in several ways. The motives for a higher education institution to be more public are to recruit talent, obtain a larger network and marketize the individual research group or university on a national and global scale. Another kind of ambition is to contribute to the idea that MOOCs are a possibility for more people to get access to HE. Regardless of ambition and motives for the HEI and the individual lecturers, the teaching activity will be public when offering open education.

In many descriptions of the open education context the xMOOCs are often described as teacher-centered as the teacher designs, prepares and records all course material before the course starts. On the other hand, the teachers' central role is different in the connectivist MOOCs' (cMOOCs)

student-centered environment (Rodriguez, 2013). The difference in x- and c-MOOCs is however an oversimplified discourse (Conole, 2014), as stated in the method section below, but it can suffice as a brief description. The research on the lecturers' role concerning theoretical perspectives is not straightforward. Ross et al. claim that HE is characterized by movement and disruption at all levels, and that scaling up to the MOOC level will increase levels of complexity. One example is a paradox (Ross et al., 2014) when comparing the teachers' role in MOOCs when the design is based on a connectivist perspective (cMOOC) and another design with a stable teacher-defined structure and content (xMOOC). The participants in the former will develop new questions, add ideas to the learning space and create their personal learning environment, all with the teacher in the background and in line with the connectivist perspective. Ross et al. notice the paradox that "teachers have often been the major participants in cMOOCs" (2014, p. 61) despite the connectivist perspective.

Lecturers' willingness to teach online courses has been examined in many studies (Pundak & Dvir, 2014), but few studies have taken this perspective when studying MOOCs and open courses (Janssen, Nyström Claesson & Lindqvist, 2016; Lang, Zhang, Li & Sun, 2016; Nascimbeni & Burgos, 2016; Ross et al., 2014; Siemens, Gasevic & Dawson, 2015). A recent review of theses and dissertations has been conducted by Bozkurt, Keskin and de Ward (2016) where similar results were found. Current research regarding MOOCs and open education focuses mainly on technology, students' access and dropout rates, e.g. Katy Jordan's (2015) study of completion rates in 221 MOOCs.

There is more research regarding students and less research about teachers and instructors using social media in educational settings (Kilis, Gülbahar & Rapp, 2016) and their identities (Hanson, 2009). This is not surprising as Torrisi-Steele and Drew (2013) found that of the literature addressing issues related to academic practice, five per cent of the 827 articles were about blended learning in HE. The focus is on students' experiences, perspectives, and outcomes in blended education (Brown, 2016). Notably, Ross, Sinclair, Knox, Bayne, and Macleod argue in their position paper that "the current ways of writing and talking about MOOCs are not adequately addressing the complexity of the teacher's role" (2014, p. 66). A small number of studies have explored staff attitudes towards OER (Brown, 2016). This deficiency is also manifested by the distribution of suggested research topics submitted to the MOOC Research Initiative (MRI) 2013, funded by the Gates Foundation, and administered by Athabasca University. The topic of social learning received the greatest interest and had the highest success in attracting funding (Kovanović, Joksimović, Gašević, Siemens & Hatala, 2015). The current study is devised to address this research gap and, more precisely, what the lecturers think about going public.

The research question is, accordingly, what are HE lecturers lived experience of going public in MOOCs. The current study is investigating what the lecturers, developing and teaching in MOOCs experience when going public by publishing material accessible to course participants on a completely different scale when compared with classroom teaching.

The study has some important delimitations. This study is not arguing for lecturers to adopt OER or making use of IT in teaching. It will not analyse any pedagogical issues connected to the design of MOOCs or the role of the lecturers in 'traditional' online teaching. As described in the next section, the result is based on interviewees who have voluntarily joined the MOOC projects. This is an important circumstance for the interpretation of their answers and conclusions in this study.

Method

Given the exploratory nature of the study, I adopted a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis by using systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting data in interviews with twenty academics at six Swedish HEIs. The method made it possible to initiate questions, but also to do a

follow up during the process. This method was chosen in order to construct tentative theories from the data given by the interviewees (Charmaz, 2014). The result from this study will also direct future studies and elaboration as mentioned in the last section. A quantitative method was estimated to not be able to answer the research question as thoroughly as a qualitative approach, i.e. a survey was not considered as only the most enthusiastic of the MOOC lecturers were deemed the most likely to complete such a survey. More importantly, the type of research question also required time for reflection from different viewpoints from the interviewee's side. This could be better achieved by the individual interview sessions.

Before the interviews, the interviewees were informed that they, as individual respondents, would not be presented by name in the article. Likewise, the study was not an evaluation or judgment of the interviewees work or comparison of different work, projects or universities. Their roles as facilitators, mentors or assessors, and other roles when implementing the MOOCs, were not addressed as the focus was on their experience of *going public*.

"Lecturers" or "interviewees" (and in a few places academics) are used in this study, and includes lecturers independent of their research and teaching capacities. Eight are female and twelve are male. All but five are PhDs, including two professors. It is, however, not meaningful to compare these categories based on their research or teaching activities as lecturers, senior lecturers, and professors; normally all conduct teaching, albeit to a different extent. Enrolment in different kind of projects, which varies in scope over time, makes the roles even more complex, therefore it is not feasible to draw such conclusions from the existing data. More important for the current study is the role of teachers' identity in MOOC context. Even in the simplified description of the different kinds of MOOCs the teacher's roles are multifaceted. "(...) perhaps there is more complexity and variation in the notion of the teacher than MOOC debates and literature have yet engaged with. Indeed, the way MOOC teachers see themselves may sometimes be at odds with these categorizations (...)" (Ross et al., 2014, p. 61).

All lecturers in the study have been involved in the planning, production and delivery phases of MOOCs, and have joined the project voluntarily, albeit with different motives. They all have joined with curiosity but a few with some ambivalence as well. The interview sample has representation from a range of disciplines and experience levels.

The interviewee's contribution to the MOOC design and production varied from one minor 'part' of a larger course to a teacher/producer of all of the material in a course. The degree of external support and the organization around the design and production also varied. Four of the HEIs have invested 'strategic' money in the MOOC projects and two HEIs have received external funding to cover the costs of developing the MOOC respectively. The interviewees have got combined experience from 10 MOOCs.

Interviews lasting from 40 to 100 minutes were conducted with 20 lecturers. The interview questions also included some issues about personal incentives not reported here. Thirteen interviews were conducted face-to-face at the teachers' respective university and seven by using Skype. Fifteen interviews were conducted in Swedish and five in English. Any translated citation below is indicated. During the interviews, I avoided questions about the chosen pedagogy from a participant perspective so as not to limit interviewees' responses by raising any critical perspectives. The interviews took place in 2016 and were recorded and transcribed. Interview data was analysed inductively, going back and forth between data and analysis, by using MAXQDA11 and emergent codes. Some initial codes stand out, when other codes may take form during the analysing process.

It is important to notice that the interviewed lecturers belong to the category of academics that have chosen (for any reason) to be involved in the MOOC project and "go public". The result is therefore not representative of other lecturers.

The courses in itself were not analysed or categorised. The categorisation in e.g. cMOOCs and xMOOCs may be useful to have a dichotomous understanding of different perspectives on their design. It is also easy to relate epistemic foundation to these categories of MOOCs, but this is an oversimplified discourse that has been questioned and elaborated by Conole (2014) and others.

Ninety-seven (97) per cent (N=103) stated that their MOOCs contained videos when 184 professors were asked in a survey conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education (Kolowich, 2013). The requirement to be recorded and go public is thereby valid regardless of how the MOOCs are labelled. The MOOCs in this study contain recorded material and other material produced with the purpose of being seen and used by as many course participants as possible. The MOOCs in the current study are, therefore, not categorized.

Results

The lecturers' views on going public ranged from lecturers who think that it is not a big issue, represented by the quote *"Actually, like your party pictures in facebook, that is actually not a concern"* [211], to the lecturer who expressed that it's hard to figure somewhere public on a video or somewhere on the Internet. However, going public is not a one-dimensional challenge as being in front of the camera was just one aspect mentioned by the interviewees. Questions the lecturers put to themselves were: "Is the content up to date?"; "Will it be used in any improper ways?" and "Are the most important parts of my teaching still understandable in the compressed material?" It is also about whether or not to give away material. It was also derived from all of the interviewees' experiences that being public via a MOOC production was more time consuming than expected. The presentation to follow about the interviewees' thoughts about going public starts with their expressed aspects of being in front of the camera and continues with five other issues. Table 1 summarizes the categories.

In front of the camera

Being in front of the camera was an issue. Nearly all lecturers expressed the effort it took to be recorded. *"It takes a lot of effort and also not everybody is comfortable when speaking in front of a camera"* [260]. Very few of the interviewees expressed that they enjoyed the recording sessions. The majority of the lecturers were nervous when presenting in front of the camera, and nearly all those interviewed described the support they received from production companies and other professionals as crucial.

"So, to be honest, in the beginning I was quite nervous because I have never spoke in front of so many people, but [the HEI] offers very good training, so [the HEI] invited some professional speakers to teach us how to speak in front of people, especially in front of a camera. So I got some training, and I think that is helpful. Therefore, in the end, I managed to do that, I don't feel nervous any more" [243].

It was also important to have a good script to use. *"The main thing was to have a good script in front of your nose. If you do have that, at least for me, no problem"* [787]. A common opinion was that lecturers got used to the camera after a while. Altogether, the recordings were quite scary in the beginning, but with the help of professional staff the result was up to the required standard, and after a while, the lecturers became more relaxed. *"At first there was a bit of a mixture of fear and excitement at the thought of 31,000 sitting and watching this. I think of the people who give TED lectures"* [Translated 472].

Several lecturers concluded that those who wanted to be involved in any project or in all education needed to be accustomed to lecturing in front of the camera, even if it is initially uncomfortable.

Table 1: Categories summarised

<p><i>In front of the camera</i> Nervous to be in front of the camera but the lecturer expressed that they got used to it. Several expressed the need for lecturers to get accustomed to this kind of upcoming form of teaching.</p>
<p><i>Language</i> The possibilities to communicate nuances when not talking in a native language suffered, especially when being in front of the camera.</p>
<p><i>Online forever</i> The loss of control of the material was an issue even if the aim was to get as many as possible to use it. The choice of platform mattered in this case.</p>
<p><i>Up to the standard</i> Quality issues are very important as the MOOCs, more or less, are a way to marketize the research group and the institution. It is also an issue for the individual teacher to show that they are competent in what they are doing.</p>
<p><i>Copyright and intellectual property rights of academic staff</i> It was an unclear situation in the relation between the HEI and the individual lecturer. A lot of material was produced in the projects that reduced the need and uncertainty for the use of others' material. Several lecturers argue that the produced material has such a basic character which does not make it useable in commercial settings.</p>
<p><i>Pros and cons</i> Going public is a new situation for lecturers. Many were uncomfortable being in front of a camera and all agreed on the time-consuming activities. However, it was also exciting and fun to try something new and future-oriented. The enthusiasm to keep up with the changing requirements for teaching in higher education was overshadowing the raised concerns.</p>

Language

The language issue was raised as another challenge when going public. As all of the courses that appear in this study were produced in English, and nearly all of the lecturers did not have English as their mother tongue, giving lectures was a challenge even if they regularly spoke in English. One lecturer especially underlined this challenge. *"I practiced, but it was tough. It would have been different if I had done it in my own language, Swedish. Then, I would probably have been able to speak more freely, but anyway I do teach in English, so the language itself [was] not a problem, but just that, this combination was tough"* [Translated 339]. The possibilities to communicate the nuances suffered but the combination of being in the front of the camera and speaking in a second language was, on the other hand, something to overcome.

Online forever

Some lecturers did worry that people could watch the videos and course material online over a long period of time, even when the content became outdated. Several lecturers were concerned about the feeling of not having control over the material. Material that is on the online platforms can be updated or removed when outdated, but the material can also always be copied by others and included in new contexts out of the lecturers' control. At the same time, one of the aims of the MOOCs is to get the produced material used by as many people as possible. Dissemination of materials to course participants and colleagues worldwide as well as at the lecturer's home institutions is important.

"It is more in terms of that as many people as possible should use the material (...). You have put a lot of time and effort in it and you want to see that people use it" [211]. All interviewees agreed that the material should be openly and publicly published, even if the choice of platform differs. One production team chose to put all material on their institution's platform instead of YouTube, having argued that the platform should have a log in function and therefore, to some extent, restrict the possibility to reuse the material. Another insightful comment was about the need to update the course material. *"If you create a MOOC, don't think that it will be there for ever, you need to revise it, you need to update it. It will take more time. This is the challenge"* [611].

Up to the standard

Various lecturers also raised concerns about the standard of the materials presented in MOOCs. As the aims for developing MOOCs are to marketize the research group and institution, the courses' content, recorded presentation and overall design need to be of high quality. *"I feel pressure, is the material I am creating, is it up to the standard? When going public, it must be of good quality"* [603]. The issue of quality is important for the lecturers and includes updated material, good presentations and graphics. One aspect that was mentioned was the need to remove all national connotations due to the international audience of MOOCs. The way lecturers described the demands for a high standard depended on the type of content that was presented. Some MOOCs focus on new research field or topic that is in the process of development and needs to contain the latest research findings. The content of other MOOCs that focus on fundamental and basic knowledge in a subject can be reused for a longer period of time but still be of sufficient quality.

The lecturers were not alone as producers and presenters, and the overall structure and pedagogical principles were not stressed as an individual responsibility of the lecturer. The project groups and several competencies were often referred to when discussing different aspects of quality of both the course material and structure. Several lecturers explain this as a way to overcome the difficulties with going public. The colleagues in the MOOC production teams, mainly composed of a photographer, pedagogical experts and sometimes a speech expert, supported the lecturers in different ways.

Copyright and intellectual property rights of academic staff

The copyright rules were perceived as complex, especially in combination with the intellectual property rights of academic staff. None of the intellectual property rights regulations could be clearly described by the lecturers. They described their initial discussion and how they became more or less familiar with the rules of Creative Commons and some ideas about the intellectual property rights of academic staff. *"But then, once you got going using this license, "common license", then it was over and done in some sense, then it was just sink or swim"* [Translated 341]. One lecturer that had concerns about how to position themselves found that the union did not have any clear advice on the issue. *"I understood that the union was a bit doubtful and didn't really want to have anything to do with that issue, no one wanted to have anything to do with the issue as far as I could see"* [Translated 343].

The unclear situation concerning the intellectual property rights of academic staff was common for all interviewees. The teachers had to allow some intellectual property rights to be shared by the HEI and themselves as individuals. They also learned how the material could be distributed and used by others. Spreading the material amongst the public is the main objective for all of the projects within MOOCs. One lecturer stated that they viewed the spreading of ideas and publications as a loss of control in a way that was positive.

As the videos, texts and other resources were published, copyright and intellectual property became less important as it became an obvious part of their engagement in the MOOC-projects. A key reason for this was summed up by one of the lecturers, who said *“I don’t watch myself if I am not going to update it”* [Translated 464].

One lecturer argued that remuneration was a major factor – if one is well paid they are more likely to not make intellectual property an issue, but this is not the case if the opposite applies. Another circumstance that seems to influence the teachers’ thinking with regards to giving away many ideas and materials was that it was simply a smaller piece of what they normally teach. *“I didn’t devote my full ability”* [Translated 335]. This means that the material is not of any extensive use for a consultant to take advantage of and earn money. Instead, it was mainly teasers and samples, and as some interviewees explained, a way to market oneself as a teacher and consultant. *“I don’t get very much said in 10 minutes anyway, so it doesn’t matter, [it’s] just positive if they use me”* [Translated 854].

The focus of the teaching material differed - Some were traditional lecture notes, and some were up to date research. *“To prepare the teaching material - since there is no established textbook at all - I have to look at the most research papers. I have to look at the most recent research results. Therefore, it helps me to keep up with most recent development in the literature”* [260]. That makes research and the MOOC project go hand in hand. Other lecturers who were developing MOOCs on a basic level raised the problem of the time-consuming activity of developing a MOOC despite good collaboration among the team.

Pros and cons

The majority of the interviewees believed the MOOC experience was an interesting one that had many pros and cons. This came despite the aforementioned fact that most of them didn’t like to be in front of the camera (at least at the beginning of the production phase). The flexibility required in order to run a MOOC was highlighted by an interviewee, who explained the format as being excellent for researchers. In this case, the lecturer was running short webinars and explained that this was his preference as it is possible to be anywhere in the world and not bound to a specific classroom at the campus. The rewarding side was also highlighted in several ways in other examples. The projects have been rewarding both personally and, in some examples, heralded a new start and revitalisation of their ongoing campus courses.

One lecturer explained that some colleagues have difficulties embracing new ideas. *“(…) that those who find it most difficult to share material are the ones who love to speak in the classroom, and that have written three or so lines, ... they are sort of so important, I am a performer in the classroom. I have found that they are the ones who find it very difficult to change forums and to work with digital teaching or online teaching”* [Translated 081]. The academics described have stated different views than those the lecturer quoted. Many of them described her ambivalence that it was both uncomfortable and exciting to be public through a MOOC, and that it was better to be public in front of a camera now when everything is new. That way, everything did not need to be perfect as if one waits until everybody is public and perfect. *“So, yes, that’s sort of both, but I think that we are going to get used to it regardless, soon, at least if we want to keep up, if we aren’t going to carry on doing things in the way we have always done things at the university, which some people do aim at, but not me”* [Translated 893].

It is a new situation and a new role to be a lecturer in an open education setting. If thousands of students follow the course and view your video, a lecturer has to accept that. *“You get recognized down town by a MOOCer, that is a strange thing”* [807].

Conclusions

The lecturers were enticed by the possibility of going public via the MOOC projects even if they were not always keen on being recorded. To be in front of the camera was uncomfortable and more or less scary. However, with practice and advice from other professionals, it was possible to overcome the challenges. Comments like they “(...) almost dictated to us to where to stand, where I was to look (...)” as in the McNaughton and Billot study (2016, p. 651) concerning teachers involved in videoconferencing did, however, not appear here.

Still, it is not advisable for lecturers to try to do everything themselves. Janssen et al. (2016) identified six different roles during the design and early development of their MOOC: owners, teachers, learners, designers, developers, and negotiators. The advice given by Pundak and Dvir (2014) to create an online support center is relevant as a first step to increase the possibility to develop online teaching but also to prepare for and adapt to identity challenges (McNaughton & Billot, 2016). A similar piece of advice is to make sure that different competencies can be combined in an open online course.

Putting material online was also a challenge, as seen through the analogues of Pundak and Dvir's conclusion of going online “(...) the initial stage, when changes in teaching methods are introduced, the difficulties are at their peak” (2014, p. 225). This was also communicated by the interviewees who described all of the issues that needed to be taken care of in the early stages of the projects.

When e-learning and technology is implemented it changes the balance of power between academics and students in knowledge production and influences the nature of academic identities (Hanson, 2009). The enthusiasm of the lecturers in the current study can be interpreted as an expression of the desire to keep their identities as knowledge experts, but this hypothesis needs further investigation. However Hansson's scenario that “(...) introducing e-learning threatens academic identity by removing from academics the intellectual capital created by them, packaging their expertise so that it can be delivered to students without their mediation or replacing them with cheaper teaching assistants” (2009, p. 557) does not seem to be of any concern to the interviewed academics.

The majority of the lecturers expressed a great experience in their working life, although the project has been more time consuming than expected. *“We are not a huge community who has produced MOOCs. We share something. We are special”* [801]. The work has contributed to their personal development, and they now have experiences about going public that they can share with colleagues.

Even if the lecturers' participation in the MOOC production was voluntary and they saw benefits with going public, it was also an adaptation and reaction to the development of higher education they expected to occur. *“We have to do it because the nature of the job is changing. It is no longer an option to have students sitting in class. Now you have an audience that is all around; you need to think about them if you are keen to tutor”* [608]. Very disastrous things do not happen if something is not perfect.

Conducting all the interviews and analyses made it possible for me to accomplish a proper research. Furthermore, the university of which I am active does not currently hold the development of MOOCs or online education as a high priority. Nevertheless, being one researcher, my appearance as a person and any other causes of bias leads to further research.

Further studies

Going public has been an exciting experience for all of the lecturers in this study, even if the majority sometimes felt uncomfortable and worried about standards. Questions and worries the lecturers had

were dissolved following collaboration with the project team. Despite this, we need to remember that the interviewees have all volunteered to be a part of the process. This has an inclination of validity, but also on the reliability as the interviewees might be inclined to give a positive view of the process. Because of this, further studies are needed, even if some indices are given by the remark about difficulties for the “classroom entertainer” (see above) to make use of online pedagogies. That is in line with Hanson’s conclusion of a need for further studies into of academics expressing anxieties and threats to their academic identities. “(...) into the impact of e-learning on academic identity, a factor which has not so far replaced academics, but may be displacing them” (Hanson, 2009, p. 562). The interviewees in this study definitely belong to the category of academics interested in making use of new technology and methods. However, more needs to be known with regards to the more hesitant academics (Weller, 2014).

It was not possible to characterise the lecturers in this study in a reliable way as discussed in the method section. Despite this, two questions should be elaborated by comparing lecturers in MOOC projects at a basic academic level with MOOC projects as a state of the art in a field. Another relevant follow up is what will happen at the department level when a MOOC has been launched? Will the openness and experiences of going public inspire or deter colleagues at the department? Can new projects make use of the experiences and issues raised and solved in the pioneer projects?

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