



Thesis project feedback from MOOC learners - a case study

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Case



"An Introduction to Global Health"
(mooc offered since Sept. 2013)

Collaboration with
School of Global Health



Learners on global health mooc:

- From 193 countries
- 57% female
- 60% not students
- 50% full-time working
- 17% part-time working
- 35% between 25 and 34 years old

Case

MSc in Global Health

2 year programme

40-50 students each year

2/3 international students

Final module is thesis project



Danielle (US)

Mental health in Ethiopia



Nick (US)

Non-communicable diseases during emergencies



Larissa (Romania)

Mental health policy in Canada and the EU

Does anyone
know anything
about...?

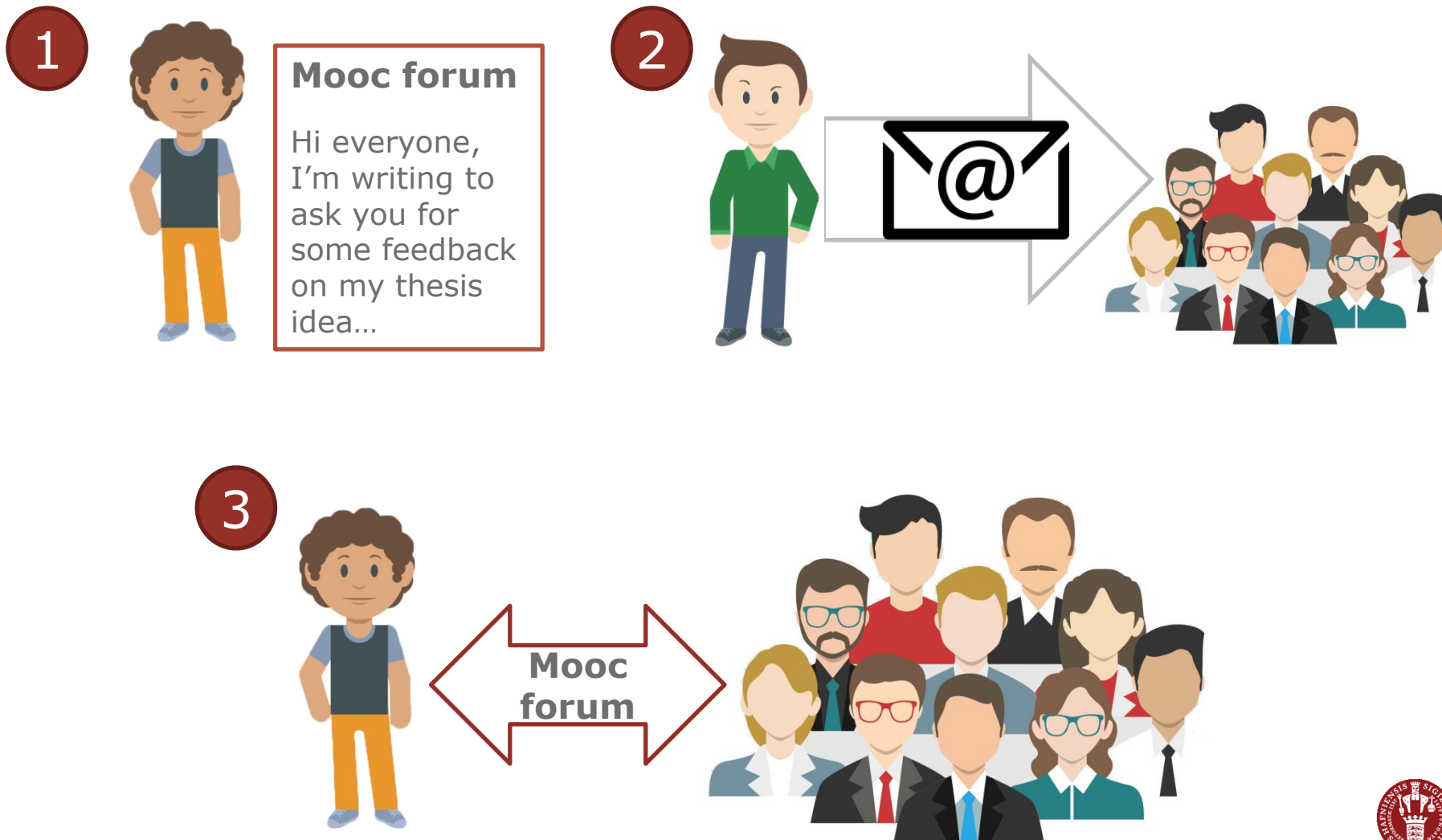
Did
you
try...

There is
this
great
article
...

My brother
works in...



Procedure



Examining the structure and the content

Structure

How was the structure of the communication between student and the learners?

Very limited dialogue

No dialogue between learners

Varying learner participation

- Danielle: 58
- Nick: 25
- Larissa: 13

7-9% of visits led to post

Content

What kinds of feedback did the learners provide to the student?

How much is noise?

- Danielle: 5 (9%)
- Nick: 8 (32%)
- Larissa: 1 (8%)

Noise = anti-science, irrelevant

Categorizing the useful feedback



Content: useful feedback

Categories of useful feedback	Danielle	Nick	Larissa
Suggesting literature or existing data	18	2	4
Suggesting method or research design	12	0	2
Suggesting relevant informant	4	2	2
Giving input to conclusion or discussion	1	2	5
Offering to share personal network	5	0	0
Offering support or collaboration	9	1	2
Sum of useful feedback	49	7	15



Preliminary conclusions

Advantages

- Access to experts and practitioners who are eager to help
- No/low workload for faculty
- Focus on process rather than end product
- Can it be integrated into the supervision process?
- Meaningful and popular use of forums

Challenges

- Will only work for certain disciplines and certain thesis topics
- Increases student workload: opens up the theme
- Not a community but individuals helping out
- No learning for mooc learners



Types of feedback from learners

This is an interesting thesis Danielle.

While Ethiopia may be slightly different than India, there is always something to learn from research on mental health. In South India, close to where I reside, there is a temple called Muthusamy temple. A study conducted here on traditional healers and medicines showed very interesting results too.

There was an observed improvement clinically among patients with psychiatric illnesses. This matched the improvement achieved by many psychotropic agents.

The study was conducted by a psychiatrist and doctors from National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-sciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore and Department of Public Health and Epidemiology, Swiss Tropical Institute, Basel, Switzerland.



The student perspective

"I gained a lot from this. Just the mere fact that I got so many responses, with all of them praising my project and offering support, gave me a lot of confidence that my thesis is headed in the right direction.

I got a list of ~40 articles and books to read, multiple offers of organizations and people that I can contact or collaborate with, and also a ton of feedback that was constructive and useful.



It was very time consuming to follow and to personally respond to each post, which I felt was very important, but each response was valuable and I needed to read all of them.

Time-consuming, but it was worth it."



Thank you

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