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Conference or Workshop Item

Title: Mixing MOOCS and modules

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Mixing MOOCs and Modules

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Professor Philip Schrag suggests that legal education has not yet engaged with MOOCs, and also outlines three views of the future for Law School MOOCs:

1) Law Schools might resist MOOCs to the Death (of most law schools);

2) A small number of elite schools will serve nearly all law students through MOOCs; or

3) Law schools may survive... by incorporating MOOCs
Pistone and Hoeffner in 2013 expressed a similar view to Schrag:

“We predict that traditional law schools will share [a] sad end... should the schools fail to understand that technology will enable—indeed, is now enabling—new legal education competition to emerge.

The new competition will be highly flexible, unencumbered by expensive legacy costs and, because it will reside mainly online, so scalable that no traditional law school will be immune from its impact.”

One of the approaches they advise for law schools to adopt is “experiment, experiment, experiment”
ILOOC
International Law
Open Online Course
MIXING MOOCS AND MODULES

Choose a subject to start

- Nature & Sources of International Law
- Settlement of disputes & use of force
- Conflicts of Law
- Sovereignty
- Jurisdiction

ILOOC
International Law
Open Online Course
Designed to be much more than a simple online resource, or “xMOOC” – the “glorified correspondence course”

Rationale was facilitation of P2P discourse, thus encouraging the creation of a network of learners so that learners become actively engaged with each other and the content

In other words, it is a “cMOOC”

Non-linear course, no set order for subjects, though completion of some does unlock new areas
Downes set out four key design principles for a cMOOC in 2014:

**Autonomy**
People make their own choices, select their own path;

**Openness**
Content in and out, people come and go;

**Diversity**
A mosaic not a melting pot. Overt recognition that people have multiple motives, objectives, values. Includes but not limited to culture, language, technology etc.; and

**Interactivity**
Knowledge that scales. Not a transmission model of learning, but learning as the result of growth and development
Siemens, 2005:

Connectivism has implications for the design of learning environments.

Siemens (2011)

“content is easily duplicated and has no value”

Stephenson:

“Experience has long been considered the best teacher of knowledge. Since we cannot experience everything, other people’s experiences, and hence other people, become the surrogate for knowledge”

What is valuable then is the creation of a community of learners, and that is why ILOOC was developed the way it was – using various online platforms
Siemens’ 8 Principles of Connectivism:

• Learning & knowledge rests in diversity of opinions.

• Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources.

• Learning may reside in non-human appliances.

• Capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known
Siemens’ 8 Principles of Connectivism:

- Nurturing & maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning.
- Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, & concepts is a core skill.
- Currency is the intent of all connectivist learning activities.
- Decision-making is itself a learning process. Choosing what to learn & the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality. While there is a right answer now, it may be wrong tomorrow due to alterations in the information climate affecting the decision.
MoocGuide identified five possible challenges that were associated with MOOCs:

- It feels chaotic as participants create their own content
- It demands digital literacy
- It demands time and effort from the participants
- It is organic, which means the course will take on its own trajectory (you have got to let go).
- As a participant you need to be able to self-regulate your learning and possibly give yourself a learning goal to achieve.
ILOOC was not very successful – needed very large numbers for asynchronous cMOOC in order for participants not to lose interest

(Connectivism won’t work if there is no-one to connect to)

New idea...
Year 3, Level 6, optional law module (45 students)
Deconstructed ILOOC, inserted 3 sections into the module
Some mandatory and tasks formed part of seminar work (though closed, not open)
Some voluntary and open
Some voluntary and closed
### Level 6 module
- Closed cohort

### Week-by-week
- Lectures
- Seminars
- Workshops

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# LAW 3021 TERRORISM 2014-15

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![Diagram](image_url)

**Choose a subject to start**

- Nature & Sources of International Law
- ILOOC International Law Open Online Course
- Settled disputes & use of force
- Conflicts of Law
- Jurisdiction
- Sovereignty
Task 1:
Mandatory (part of standard seminar work)
Closed (only available to module students)
5 teams, each a UNSC member
Meeting, plus 15-minute video outlining that country’s response to a fictional draft resolution of the UNSC relating to the conflict between Israel and Palestine
Completed by 32/45
Task 2:
Voluntary
Open (alongside any ILOOC participants who were online at the time)
Public International Law, Private International Law, and knowledge-check (multiple choice test)
Completed by 15/45
Task 3:
Voluntary (same group as Task 2)
Closed
Similar activities to Task 2
Completed by 15/45
Feedback from students:

- Idea & signposting were good
- Limited interaction with network (focus was on content/level at this stage)
- Risk of who is involved outside class group
- Got more of a sense of belonging in a classroom setting. Pychyl:

  “There’s no doubt that not being in a social context changes a learning environment, and you’re going to lose some things”
Feedback from students:

- Online session lonely (some “alone in company”)

- More obvious if people aren’t engaging:
  
  “in a classroom setting, a room full of 25 people may contain 5 participants, but the rest of the group feel, and are felt to be, “present”, whereas in an online environment, even with the same proportion of participation, it feels as though only 5 people are there”

- Lack of contact with tutor – online contact didn’t “count”

- Level was fine – ILOOC was designed partly as one element of a bridging course to M-level
Are Schrag et al right that this is the future of law schools?

In 1968, Norman Dalkey wrote:

“The notion that the future is hidden – that prediction is in the realm of seers, necromancers and other unsavory types – is part of our cultural heritage.

It makes the engineer qualify any comment about twenty years from now with great caution; and when it comes to predicting social change, it keeps the eye of the social scientist on day after tomorrow.

Of course, there are better reasons than the traditional distrust of the fortune teller for circumspection.

Technological breakthroughs, or major social events, involve enormously complex processes for most of which we only have a dim understanding.”
As it was in 1968, so it is today.
The time of the pure MOOC may be now, or tomorrow, though most likely it was yesterday.

Kolowich (2015)

“The MOOC hype has been flagging since mid-2013, when it started becoming clear that this particular breed of online course would not transform the economics of mainstream higher education”

Equally, it seems probable that legal education tomorrow will not be the same as it was yesterday – notwithstanding the LETR.
Can MOOCs be monetized and still MOOCs?

Smith (2015) talks of “freemium” approach – MOOC is free, certificate costs

Also says that Udemy have successfully monetized MOOCs

Have they?

Their courses are massive and online, but are they truly open if they cost?
Conclusion

Small group of students & tailor-made cMOOC – would impact be different with more students and existing xMOOC?

Does not meet Siemens’ 1st principle very well

A blend of MOOC elements alongside more traditional learning and teaching allows students to explore the network from a structured platform – it is a compromise, but a useful one