

The instructional design of MOOC discussion forums: An analysis of the cognitive engagement prompted in the forums.

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Abstract

Forums in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offer learners the opportunity to engage cognitively in significant interactions aimed at the construction of knowledge. These interactions, however, have to be purposefully designed by the MOOC instructors to facilitate the use of different cognitive processes. This study examines the instructional design of the discussion forums of 4 edX MOOCs created by the Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain). It uses two learning taxonomies to pinpoint the different cognitive processes prompted in the forums. Semi-structured interviews with the MOOC instructors verify the findings from the analysis of discussion forums. The goal of this study is to portray the different cognitive processes that MOOC instructors seek to facilitate in their forums. Thus, it contributes to a better understanding of how the instructional design of MOOC discussion forums can facilitate significant interactions aimed at the creation of knowledge.

Keywords: MOOCs, discussion forums, instructional design, cognitive engagement