A MOOC on How to Address Global Citizenship Education through Digital Storytelling

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Abstract

In this paper we present a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on the topics of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Digital Storytelling (DS) that targets educators and trainers. The educational design of the course aims to effectively address methodological, social and technical issues concerning the implementation of GCE using DS, in two diverse contexts, schools and non-formal education. The MOOC has been developed in the context of the BRIGHTS EU project. Based on a micro-MOOC format, the course consists of 4 weekly modules offered in five languages (English, Greek, Italian, Croatian, Dutch). The educational content is licensed under CC and includes video lectures, readings, Open Educational Resources and self-assessment quizzes. The course was actively facilitated by National tutors in four European countries and it was thoroughly evaluated.

Keywords: *MOOC, Global Citizenship Education, Digital Storytelling, Evaluation;*

1. Introduction

Due to social, political and financial crisis, the current social situation in Europe is marked by increased migration, radical violence, and violation of human rights. This situation demands both formal and non-formal education to establish and enhance learners' critical thinking, social connection, and global citizenship. Education and training policies have a key role to play in fostering social inclusion, mutual understanding and respect among young people and communities. In the "Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education" [1], adopted in March 2015 by the Education Ministers and the EC, it is stated that the primary purpose of education is not only to develop knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes and to embed fundamental values, but also to help young people to become active, responsible, open-minded members of society.

The BRIGHTS project [7] aims to promote Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in formal and non-formal Educational contexts in Europe, addressing concepts such as human rights, peace, social inclusion, democracy, using a powerful and effective learning tool as Digital Storytelling (DS). DS is a powerful and effective learning tool in stimulating creativity, digital literacy and critical thinking. Through the process of creating and publishing a digital story that is based on personal experiences, trying to express a personal message, learners can influence their peers not to remain silent about issues as radicalization and social exclusion. Therefore, learners are transformed to empowered actors who choose to put their stories out in order to raise awareness, promote the democratic values and intercultural understanding [2,3,4,5,6].

In the context of BRIGHTS project a blended course has been designed and developed, aimed mainly to youth educators and trainers. The course is entitled "Addressing Global Citizenship Education through Digital Storytelling", and consists of a MOOC, face to face workshops on DS and a final application with the students. The MOOC includes digital learning content about GCE topics and how to implement DS in educational contexts. During the piloting of the blended course, more than 400 educators and youth workers in 4 European countries (Belgium, Italy, Greece, Croatia) have been trained in the principles of GCE and application of DS. In the next stage, around 100 of these trained educators will be working with their students or trainees (aged 13-19 years old) to collaborative produce digital stories related to GCE topics. Thus, around 1500 young people are expected to be directly engaged in the production of digital stories on human rights, peace and democratic values, intercultural dialogue, active citizenship, etc. The digital stories will be published on the project web

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portal and a contest will be launched by the BRIGHTS Consortium with the purpose of selecting the best digital stories produced by youngsters and award one story per participating country.

In section 2, the development and delivery of the BRIGHTS MOOC is presented. Section 3 describes the experimentation of the BRIGHTS MOOC and preliminary evaluation results.

2. The BRIGHTS MOOC

The BRIGHTS MOOC has been developed on the Moodle platform [8] and consists of 4 weekly modules, each lasting 5 hours. It is offered in five languages (English, Greek, Italian, Croatian, Dutch). Each module has been designed to cover specific learning outcomes and contains a set of learning activities that are supported by specific learning objects, such as videos (lectures and interviews), readings, multiple-choice quizzes as well as Open Educational Resources (OERs) for additional reading. Each OER contributes to at least one of the learning outcomes. The MOOC provides three forums; for course announcements, learners' introductions and discussions related to the course topics. Although the MOOC was facilitated by two National Tutors per country, during the piloting phase, it is designed to be self-contained and can be delivered with no tutor input.

The digital educational material of the MOOC has been designed and developed by the BRIGHTS consortium, according to the best practices for the creation of digital content for online courses and MOOCs, as stated in the international literature. For instance, the MOOC contains numerous videos because they are essential MOOC components which support the development of critical thinking skills, applied knowledge and deep understanding. In order to maximize the learners' engagement and learning, the videos are broken down into segments of short duration, they are subtitled and accompanied with a downloadable transcript. All readings are downloadable, offer concrete information on a topic and references to additional resources. Each module ends with a multiple choice quiz to assess participants' knowledge. The quizzes provide instant feedback and suggestions for further study. To those who successfully complete the MOOC, a Certificate of Attendance is awarded.

The course material covers both GCE and DS focusing on the relevance of this methodology to deal with cutting edge topics. The digital learning objects were first released in English, underwent a double-round internal peer evaluation process and the final versions were translated in all aforementioned languages. The digital educational material is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

2.1. MOOC structure

The MOOC contains four modules (with catchy titles). Each module is divided in three units which fulfill specific learning outcomes as listed in Table 1.

Modules	Units	Modules	Units
1. All you wanted to know about GCE (and never dared to ask)	1. What is GCE	**3. BRIGHTS side story**	1. Story circle methodology in DS
	2. Frameworks within GCE		2. Learn about group processes
	3.GCE in the European educational and societal contexts		3. The 21st century skills in GCE
2. 50 shades of GCE (with digital stories…)	1. GCE in formal and non-formal contexts	**4. Do the BRIGHTS thing**	1. How to realise a storyboard
	2. Contemporary challenges for GCE		2. Collection and production of materials for digital stories
	3. Discover DS		3. Promote learning through online communities

Table 1. BRIGHTS MOOC structure

2.2. MOOC implementation

The BRIGHTS MOOC is available through the DAISSy MOOC platform [9]. It is accessible using personalised credentials that are awarded following a registration phase.

Part of the welcome screen of the course (learner's mode) is shown in Fig. 1. The learner can access the discussion forums or press any of the numbered buttons to access the relevant module. For example, when pressing button 1, the first module introductory screen opens (Fig. 2.). The titles of the units are links to the unit contents. The learner has to review all learning objects in a unit in order to complete it. A module is considered completed when all its units are completed. Only then the learner is allowed to take the self-assessment quiz.

The tutors are granted permission to see information about the learners, to produce reports and define the badges awarded to the learners.
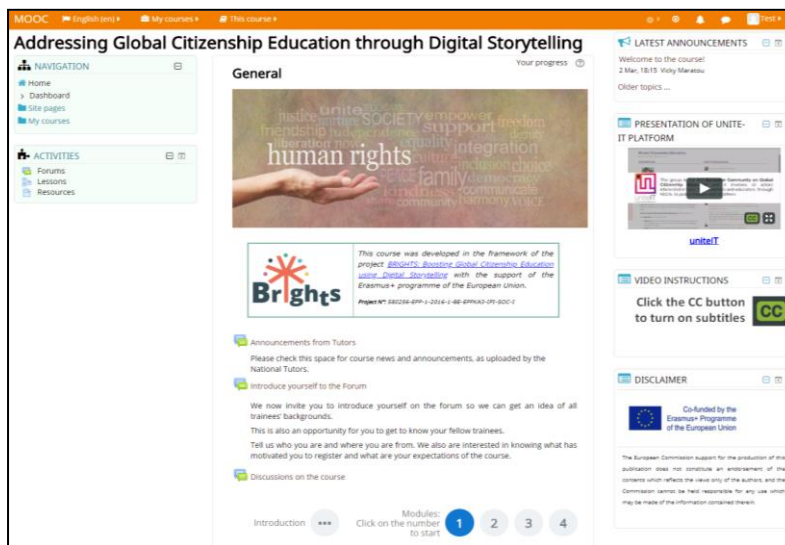
Fig. 1. Welcome screen of the MOOC

Fig. 2. Introductory page of a Module

3. Experimentation and preliminary results

The BRIGHTS MOOC was released in the beginning of March 2018, initially for the period of one month. A total number of 1159 learners from the four participating countries, expressed interest in attending the MOOC. A total of 480 completed the online course (Table 2). A two-step evaluation procedure was designed in order to assess the educational impact of the MOOC in terms of knowledge acquired and skills developed.

MOOC	Total number of registered learners in the MOOC	Total number of learners that completed the MOOC (incl. quizzes)	Drop-out rate (%)
Croatian	162	75	54
Greek	768	339	56
Italian	122	46	63
Dutch	107	20	72
Total:	**1159**	**480**	**59**

Table 2. Registered students per MOOC and drop-out rate

Upon entering the MOOC, learners were asked to complete a pre-evaluation questionnaire in their respective language. This questionnaire aimed at capturing the expectation of the learners from the course and their current knowledge status. The results were to be compared to those of the post-evaluation questionnaire survey, designed to be released upon completion of the online course.

Preliminary results discussed hereafter concern the Greek MOOC, which had the most participants (with more than 700 learners expressing interest, 339 participating and completing the online course - a drop-out rate of about 56%). Results from other countries were similar in percentage values, as shown in Table 2.

The pre-evaluation survey (321 participants) was completed mainly by Secondary Education teachers (36.1%) and trainers that work with young people (20,8%). Most of the participants had a very good knowledge social inclusion, cultural diversity, human rights issues and digital citizenship but little experience with digital storytelling. The main expectations as stated by most participants were firstly to acquire knowledge that could be applied to their work and secondly to improve their current work practices.

The post-evaluation survey (156 participants) showed that major expectations were indeed satisfied by the online course in terms of new knowledge and skills acquired, as shown in Fig. 3. However, there was little optimism on how these new assets could have a positive impact in the way the organisation of the learners is operating. It was difficult to create communities of practice during the MOOC, although many students pointed out that there was a need for more cooperation amongst peers. The short duration of the online course and time limitations of most learners seemed to be a barrier to social learning through group collaboration, although MOOC facilitators continuously encouraged collaboration.
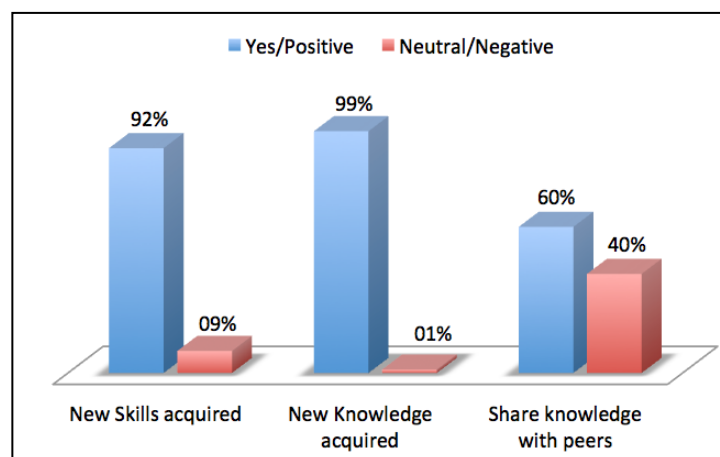

Fig. 3. Views on course impact

The use of the Moodle platform to implement the MOOC, was praised for its simplicity and ease of use from most of the respondents. Overall, the strong point of the MOOC were the extensive use of videos produced by a professional crew with dialogues that were carefully prepared. Content and information that was simple and to the point was considered as a very positive aspect.

Acknowledgements

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