

ENGLISH FOR PRE-DIPLOMA MOOC

Iza Faradiba Mohammad Patel, Nora Harun, Nurul Ain Hasni

Academy of Language Studies
Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch
Bandar Baru Seri Iskandar, Perak, Malaysia

Abstract: Over the years, there are numerous effective learning strategies suggested in the area of language learning which are having a clear motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Krashen, 1982), low affective filter (Dulay and Burt, 1977; Krashen, 1988) and continuous language practice or drills (Gass and Selinker, 2008). On the contrary, conventional language lessons fail to address the gap in increasing learners' motivation, overcoming anxiety during peer-to-peer interactions and discussion, which result in frustrations among the learners. In addition, an exorbitant number of students in a class makes it impossible for the instructor to focus on individual learners. English for Pre-Diploma MOOC helps to create fun and engaging learning experience for learners to increase their motivation in learning the language. It also facilitates the learners especially the introverts to discover and explore the language in a more interactive and less threatening setting. Furthermore, it attempts to promote critical thinking skills and knowledge of the world through the activities and online discussions. The extended activities in the MOOC elicit high order responses from the learners while the teaching module consists of appealing themes and interactive teaching videos that cater to the interest and unique individual learning styles. Some of the noticeable impacts on learners are they become more active and responsive as learning happens at any time, at their own pace and convenience. Moreover, they benefit from interactions with students of various backgrounds and maturity levels. As a result, they become highly motivated, independent, critical and reliable learners of the language

Keywords: English for Pre-Diploma MOOC, English for Pre Diploma, Engagement, Low affective filter, Motivation.

1. Introduction

English for Pre-Diploma MOOC is a university initiative project started in April 2017. In this project, developers are required to transform the ELC030 English for Pre-Diploma course content which is a university required course into a Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) mode. This is in line with the university's policy to strengthen the usage of e-learning among UiTM students and increase the number of UiTM MOOCs and e-content as a whole.

Generally, the course is designed to improve the language of pre diploma students whose proficiency is at elementary level. It focuses on four language components which are reading, writing, listening and speaking. It offers a fun language learning experience and at the same time facilitates basic learners to discover that language learning

is alive and dynamic with full of interesting exploration of life.

There are a variety of interactive and engaging language activities which will enrich and enhance students' language learning experience, retention rates, autonomy and critical thinking skills. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate improved language skills for participation and success within the particular topic area.

2. Problem Statement

Over the years, there are numerous effective learning strategies suggested in the area of language learning which are having a clear motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Krashen, 1982), low affective filter (Dulay and Burt, 1977; Krashen, 1988) and continuous language practice or drills (Gass and Selinker, 2008). On the contrary, conventional face-to-face language lessons fail to address the gap in increasing learners' motivation, overcoming anxiety during peer-to-peer interactions and discussion, which result in frustrations among the learners. In addition, an exorbitant number of students in a physical classroom makes it impossible for the instructor to focus on individual learners. English for Pre-Diploma MOOC helps to create fun and engaging learning experience for introvert learners. Thus, it helps to increase motivation and promotes critical thinking.

3. Objectives

There are several objectives outline for this MOOC which are mainly to:

- create a fun and engaging learning experience for the participants
- facilitate the learners to discover and explore language in a more interactive setting
- promote critical thinking skills and knowledge of the world in the activities created
- improve the students' language ability from elementary level to intermediate level of proficiency

4. Novelty

The best interest of the elementary learners is the basis and the priority in developing the MOOC. Hence, the elements of novelty are evident in the followings:

- Extended activities which are created to promote critical and higher order responses from the learners.
- Wall of Fame to recognize, motivate as well as honour active, responsive and thoughtful learners.
- Thematic Activities Page which consists of various types of fun and challenging activities to suit the learning objectives with additional links to online practices and references.
- Infusion of Web 2.0 applications such as Powtoon, Kahoot!, Quizizz and Blendspace makes it more appealing and relevant to the younger group of learners.

Based on the data gathered from an online questionnaire in Table 1, majority of the respondents gave high rating on all the features in the MOOC. Therefore, it can be concluded that English for Pre-Diploma MOOC has actually fulfilled the standard requirement of a quality MOOC. Furthermore, positive feedbacks from the respondents shows that the MOOC is able to give huge impact on learners learning experience.

Table 1: Overall Ratings English for Pre Diploma MOOC by UiTM Perak Branch Lecturers

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
<i>1.Interface</i>	16	8.25	8	8	0.86
<i>2.Content</i>	16	8.31	8	8	0.95
<i>3. Accessibility</i>	16	8.81	9	9	0.91
<i>4.Design</i>	16	8.31	8	8	0.87
<i>5 .Assessments and activities</i>	16	8.5	9	9	1.03

5. Usefulness

The usefulness of the MOOC is outlined in the followings:

- The comprehensive modules can be used as supplementary materials for basic English course
- It is a complement for blended learning
- It promotes interaction and responses from the learners where both introvert and extrovert learners can benefit from this style of learning
- Learners can learn at any time at their own pace and convenience
- It is interactive, user-friendly and engaging.

6. Impacts On Learners

Learners can benefit the MOOC in many ways among them are:

- Learners are exposed to current style of teaching and learning
- It bridges the interaction gap between the learners and the instructors
- Learners can benefit from interactions with students of various backgrounds and institutions
- Learning process is utilized to the maximum level as the participation of the learner is voluntary
- Learner autonomy is promoted which consequently creates a more independent, critical and reliable learner

7. Figures



Figure 1: Homepage



Figure 2: Guidelines for students' page

The homepage (Figure 1) consists of Introduction video, Course Introduction and List of Administrators of the course. The Introduction video summarizes the course content of English for Pre Diploma MOOC. The Guidelines page (Figure 2) generally provides steps on how to navigate the MOOC and rules and regulations for learners to adhere in using the MOOC.

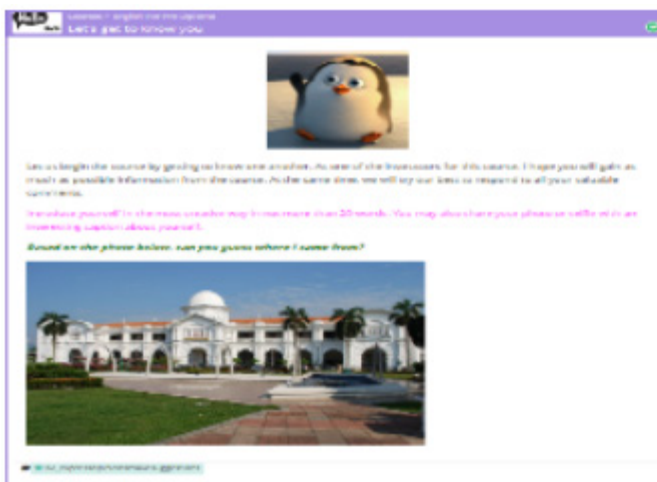


Figure 3: Ice Breaking

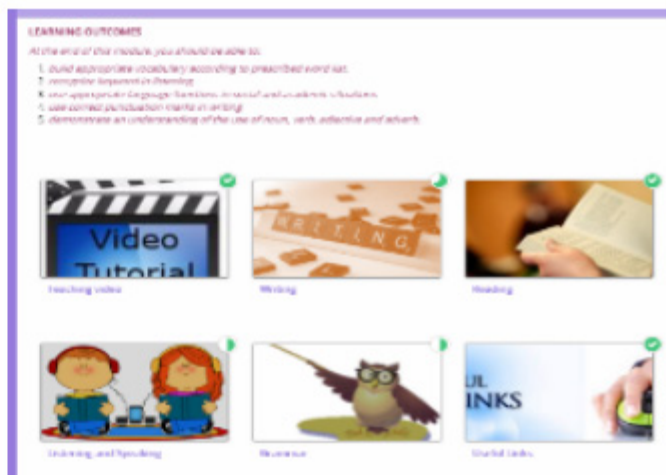


Figure 4: Course Module

The Ice Breaking page (Figure 3) helps students get to know the community who has also joined the course. They may share pictures of themselves and interact with the rest of the community by either liking the pictures shared or commenting on them. The course modules (Figure 4), on the other hand, consist of teaching videos, notes for different skills and links for extra practices and references. The interactive i- spring teaching videos include set inductions to activate learners' prior knowledge to the themes of each modules. They are presented via Kahoot! and Quizizz online games to infuse the element of fun and excitement. In addition, additional useful links are provided via Blendspace. Games, interactive links and images are elements that are valued most by learners with visual learning style. Such presentation makes this MOOC less intimidating and appealing to the elementary learners. As a result, the affective filter of the learners will be reduced and they are more willing and motivated to learn and communicate actively.

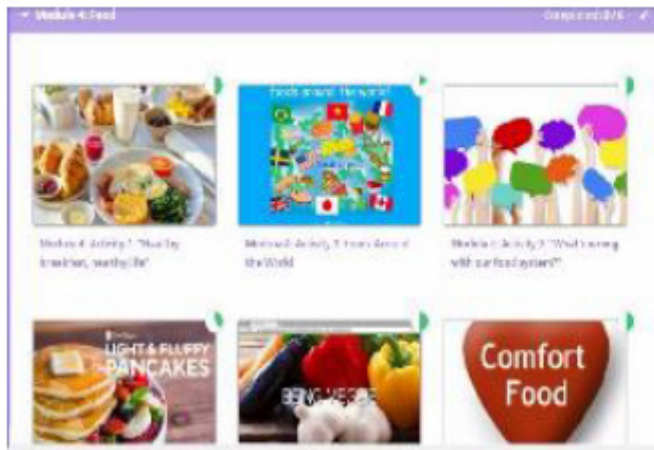


Figure 5: Activities page

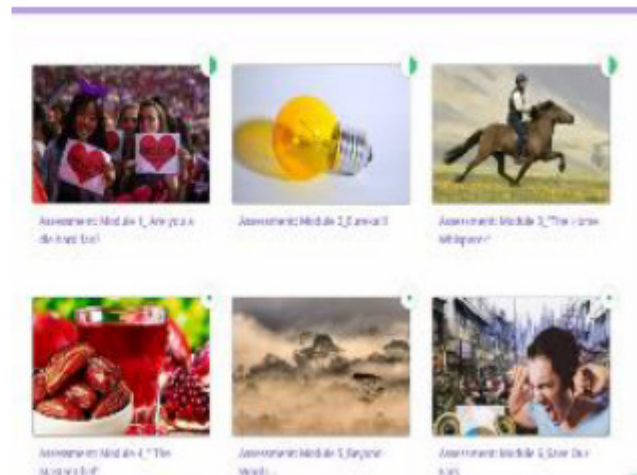


Figure 6: Assessment page

Activities page (Figure 5) with emerged themes are catered for students to consolidate the skills they have learned in the Course Modules. There are also creative and challenging assessments (Figure 6) designed in order to observe the outcome of the learning that have taken place among the learners.



Figure 7: Course Evaluation Survey

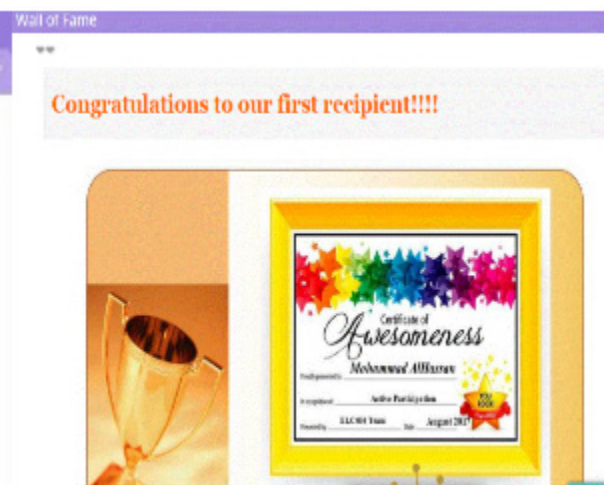


Figure 8: Wall of Fame

The Course Evaluation Survey (Figure 7) serves to help instructors know students' feedback for further improvement of the content, activities and instructions. Wall of Fame (Figure 8) works as a reinforcement and motivational page for students to stay connected and motivated in the learning process. It attempts to recognize and appreciate the efforts made by the students in completing the activities and in sharing their valuable thoughts.

8. Conclusion.

In conclusion, English for Pre Diploma MOOC is developed for students with elementary level of proficiency. This MOOC is an influential platform for students of diverse age, country of access, prior knowledge of the MOOC content, and comfort and confidence levels to learn, discuss and share ideas with individuals who have a wide range of experience, knowledge, and skills. Given appropriate interface, design and content, students who participate in this virtual learning environment will exhibit improved retention, higher interest and better engagement in language learning activity which eventually lead them to be motivated in the learning process and become successful learners of the language.

9. References

- Anderson, T., & Dron, J. (2011). Three generations of distance education pedagogy. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 12, 80-97.
- Dulay, H. & Burt, M. (1977). Remarks on Creativity in Language Acquisition. In Burt, M., Dulay, H. & Finnochiaro, M. (eds), *Viewpoints on English as a Second Language*. New York: Regents.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-language Learning*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers.
- Gass, S. M. & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. Taylor and Francis.
- Hauck, M & Hurd, S. (2005). Exploring the link between language anxiety and learner self-management in open language learning contexts. *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-learning*. Retrieved 25 September 2017 from http://www.eurodl.org/materials/contrib/2005/Mirjam_Hauck.htm
- Krashen, S.D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon
- Krashen, S.D. (1988). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. London: Prentice- Hall International.