E-Moderating

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Overview

- What is E-Moderating?
- Role of the E-Moderator
- Access and Motivation
- Online Socialization
- Information Exchange and Knowledge Construction
- Development

Let's get interactive!

- Go to: PINGO.upb.de
- Enter the code 691819
  - Use this to enter your answers to our discussion questions

- Go to todaysmeet.com/competensea_malang
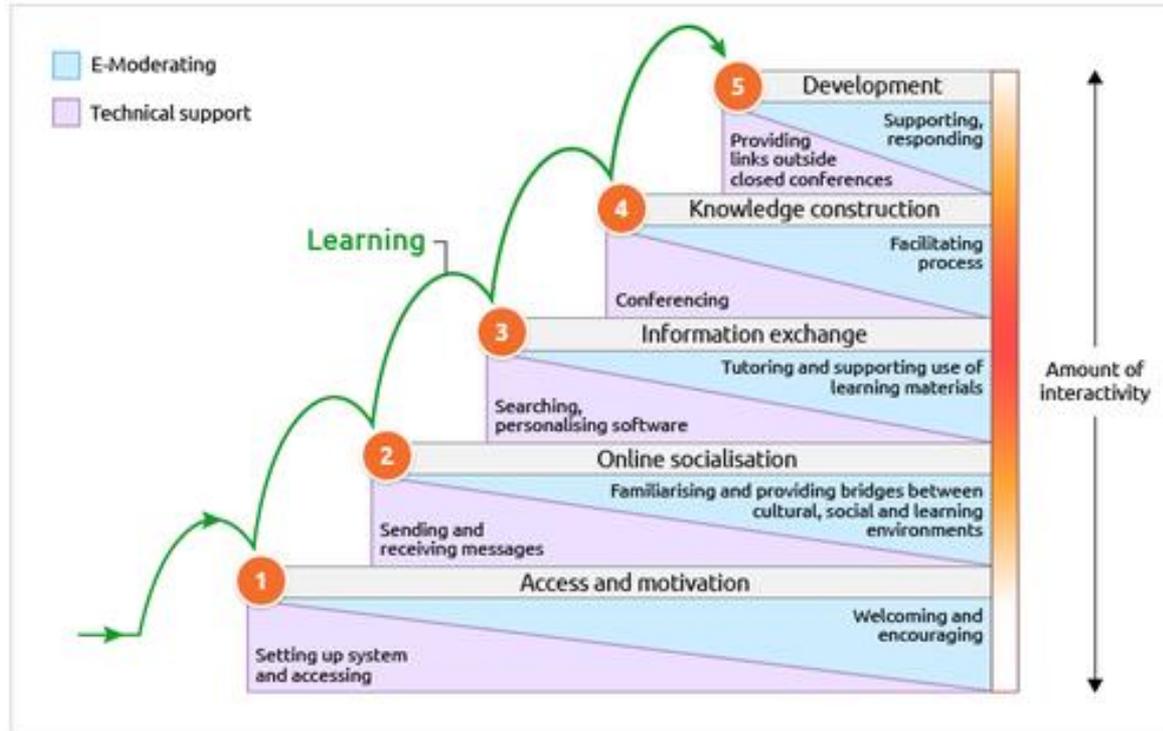 - Use this to explain your choice

What is an E-moderator/E-tutor?

- „E-tutoring can be defined as teaching, support, management and assessment of students on programs of study that involve a significant use of online technologies…The capabilities required can be quite different to face-to-face teaching both in terms of integrating appropriate forms of technology into learning activities and in managing and supporting students' learning online." (Watland, Pirotte, & Verday, 2004)
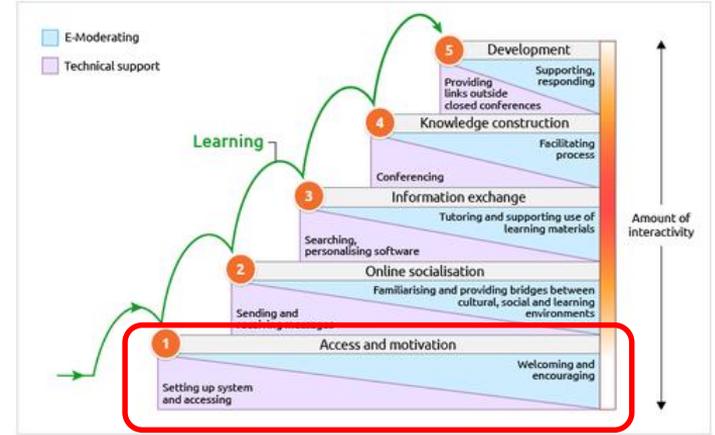
Roles of an E-Moderator(G. Salmon)

Access and Motivation

Technical Support:
- Setting up the System
- Resolving Access issues

E-moderating
- Welcome and encourage participants

Confidence in using the learning Environment

- E-Moderators need to be confident in the value of online learning and be able to reassure participants that the system can be mastered

  – Explicitly state the advantages of taking the course online

  – Mention some of the most useful features of the platform and how the course will benefit from them

  – Encourage participants to view the online tutorials and explore the platform

Set up course expectations and clarify structure

- Use the first few days to make sure the participants have a clear understanding of how the course works including:
  - Where to get general course information
  - Course learning goals and curriculum outline
  - Any standard processes (ex. Weekly peer review)
  - Methods of assessment and deadlines
  - How to use the discussion forum
  - How and who to ask for help

Scenario 1

- The course has been running for a few days and you notice that only about 40% of registered participants have posted something introducing themselves as requested. The deadline for this task is the end of the week.

    A.   Delay the start of the course by a week to give participants more time to get used to the online format.

    B.   Post a message in the MOOC informing participants that if they are unable to complete the task because of technical difficulties they should contact you.

    C.   Send out an Email to all participants telling them some more information about yourself and remind them to introduce themselves by the end of the week.

    D.   Post a message in the MOOC itself reminding participants that in order to pass the course active participation is required.

    E.   At the end of the week, send out an email praising those that completed the task and request full participation in the next task.

Scenario 2

- The deadline for the first assignment has passed and one participant writes to request a two day extension.

  A. Give the extension no questions asked.

  B. Deny the extension because they didn't contact you until after the deadline

  C. Give the extension but ask for proof that they were ill, or had technical problems etc.

  D. Give the extension but warn that there will not be any future extensions

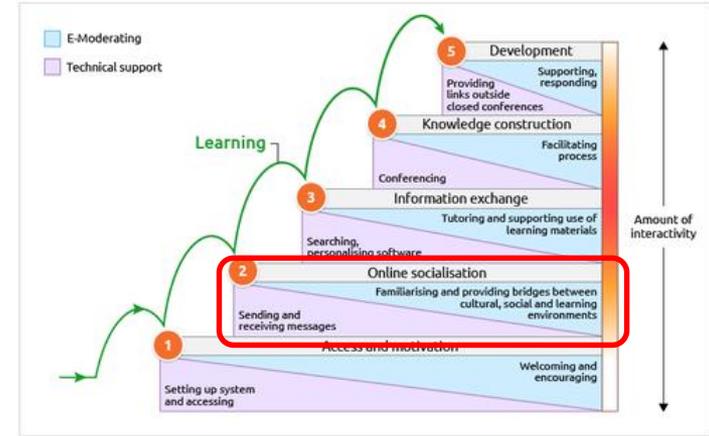 E. Deny the full extension but give them 24 hours to submit the task

Online Sozialisation

Technical Support:
- Sending and Receiving messages

E-moderating
- Familiarizing and providing bridges between cultural, social and learning environments

Creating Presence

E-moderator should be perceived as being present, involved and approachable

- Send out a welcoming E-Mail before the course begins

- Tell participants they are welcome to contact you directly, but remind them that due to the number of participants they may get answers more quickly by reaching out to a peer

- Be consistently, not constantly, available

- Respond to common concerns or misunderstandings all at once

- Don't focus entirely on criticism. Congratulate participants on particularly good work and progress

Promote Active participation

Motivation and „lurking" are two of the biggest challenges in MOOCs

- Promote the benefits of your course- and online learning
- Show that the course is easy to use and that participants can be successful
- Offer support, particularly early on
- Give feedback and recognition
- Build communities
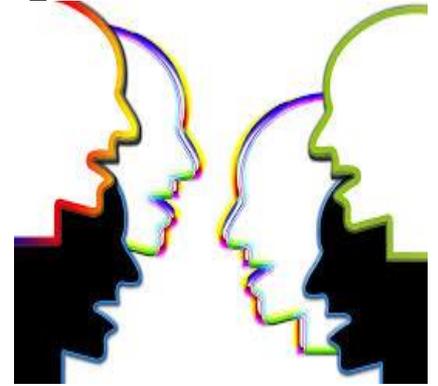
Written Communication

- Communication feels different in an online environment.
  - Lack of non-verbal cues can lead to misunderstandings
  - Humor, irony and sarcasm are often misinterpreted
  - Often „small talk" is not part of online communication
  - Cultural and language difficulties may arise in diverse groups

- Therefore encourage participants to:
  - Give the benefit of the doubt
  - Separate social posts from topical posts
  - Develop a „third culture"

Time in Asynchronous Environments

- Time works differently in online environments and both e-moderators and participants will need to get used to the change in 24/7 availability

- Encourage participants to check in multiple times throughout the week or even the day to keep the discussion lively and up-to-date

- Remind participants to react to comments from peers on their posts or work

- Let participants know how much they can expect from the e-moderator

  - Use „Office hours" for time frames when you can be reached via Chat function (ex. From 13:00 to 14:00 on Thursdays)

  - Set a regular schedule to respond (ex. expect a response within 48hrs)

Scenario 3

- Between when you logged in at 9am on Monday and 9am on Tuesday a participant sends you two E-mails, three messages, and posts in the group forum that you are never available and not doing your job.

  A. Contact the participant and apologize for not having responding sooner and give them your telephone number so this will not happen again

  B. Contact the participant and remind them of your standard working hours and response times

  C. Post a message in the forum requesting participants ask for help from each other before reaching out to you

  D. Post a message in the forum reminding all participants of your response times and how to best contact you if there is an urgent concern

  E. Post a message in the forum asking if others also feel that you need to be more available

Scenario 4

- You notice that some participants are posting off-topic and others are posting very basic responses to complex topics.

    A. Tell participants that these types of posts will not be counted and they may not get full credit for participation

    B. Comment on these posts "This is off topic/too simplistic etc. Please refer
    to   the guidelines before posting."

    C. Rephrase the initial task or topic to make expectations clearer

    D. Start a new thread for off-topic discussions and encourage participants to post there

    E. Only respond to quality posts and ignore the others

Scenario 5

- **You** are overwhelmed by the number of posts and the amount of time E-moderating is taking.

   A. Take a break for a few days and return refreshed

   B. Take an evening to catch up completely, even if it takes all night

   C. Work backwards dealing for the most recent topics first and if you have time look at older issues

   D. Set fixed times to be active in the MOOC and tell participants how much they can realistically expect from you based on this schedule

   E. Allow the discussion forum to self-organize and only actively intervene when you are directly contacted
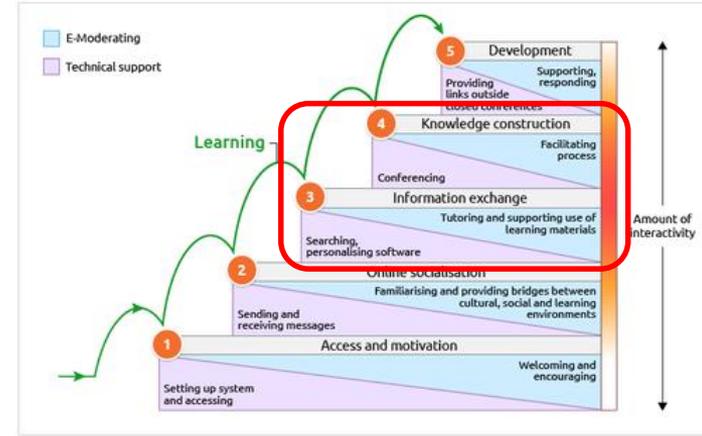
Information Exchange and Knowledge Construction

Technical Support:
- Personalizing software
- Conferencing

E-moderating
- Tutoring and supporting the use of learning materials
- Facilitating process

Group Size

- The large number of participants can be particularly challenging both for participants and moderators

  – If possible create cohorts that work together throughout the course

  – Increasingly use group work and peer review

  – Have participants ask a peer before reaching out to the moderator

  – Do not feel like you need to respond to every post individually

Active Participation Within Groups

- Allow groups to get to know each other early on

- Encourage dominant participants to pull in the less active participants

- Encourage observers to participate

- Structure interactions, especially discussions
  - Use weaving and summarizing to keep conversations relevant and easy to follow

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Skills for promoting and structuring discussion

- Weaving

  – Look for gaps in the discussion and either address them or encourage others to address them

  – Draw connections between postings- quoting when appropriate

  – Pose open questions to further the discussion

Examples of sentence starters:

- It's interesting that you mention this, participant X said something similar…
- The contributions so far have focused on X, but what about Y? Can someone elaborate on Y?
- I think participant X has a really good idea, can someone expand on this topic?
- Participant X, what did you mean when you said…
- The idea presented by participant X is very interesting. Does anyone have some supporting or counter arguments?

Skills for promoting and structuring discussion

- Summarizing
  - Pick out main themes and key points
  - Correct misconceptions
  - Close the discussion- can also close a segment of the discussion. ex. Summarize the first 30 responses

Examples of sentence starters for summarizing:

- The posts so far have focused on…In particular we reached the conclusion…However there are still many criticism of…
- There seems to be a misunderstanding about X. Let's clarify this before moving on…
- It is important to remember the following points when moving forward with the next discussion…
- Participant X summarized the main idea well when she wrote "…"

Scenario 6

- One participant continuously restates ideas from others without giving them credit.

  A. Respond to their posts with "You may not have seen this, but that is very similar to what X wrote…" and quote the original poster

  B. Send the participant an Email and remind them of the importance of quoting and giving credit

  C. Only react if the original poster is upset by the behavior

  D. Contact the participant and warn them that they will be removed from the course if the behavior continues

  E. Post a message reminding all participants of the importance of quoting and giving credit

Scenario 7

- In week three, you notice that a few participants dominate the forum.

    A. Post a message in the forum praising these participants for their engagement and warning others that they are expected to participate as well.

    B. Contact these participants and give them a specific task to do, such as summarizing the activity on each thread

    C. Post a message on the forum reminding the other participants to contribute

    D. Ignore it and be happy that at least some participants are so active

    E. Take more control of the forum- asking questions, responding to posts from the less dominate participants, etc.

Scenario 8

- You get a complaint that one group member is not contributing to the group task. You notice this person is rarely active in the course.

    A. Tell the group that this is part of group work and they will need to handle the situation themselves.

    B. Remove the participant from the group and ask them to complete the task alone

    C. Contact the participant individually and ask if they are having difficulties and ask how you could assist

    D. Write the entire group and emphasize how important teamwork is, and that without everyone's contribution success will be hard to achieve.

    E. Write the entire group and inform them that they will have the chance to evaluate each other's contributions and that negative evaluations could impact their ability to get the certificate.
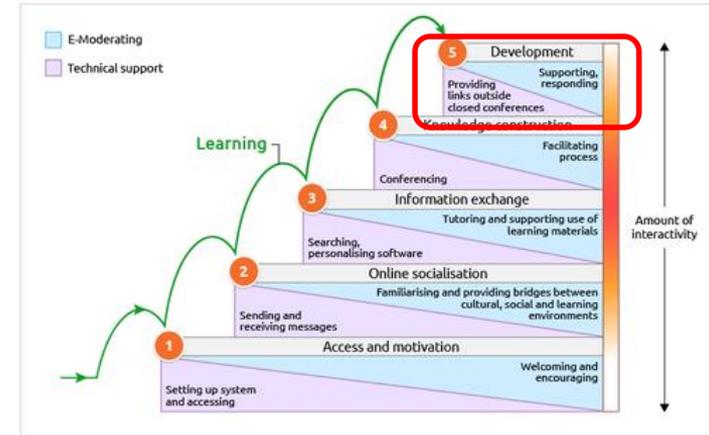
Development

Technical Support:
- Providing links to external resources

E-moderating
- Supporting and responding

Handing over control

- Encourage participants to take control of their own learning
    - Allow participants to open up their own discussion threads
    - Ensure that participants can find and access external resources
    - Urge participants to solve problems on their own-intervene only when absolutely necessary
- Encourage participants to reflect on their learning experience and online learning in general
- Continue to support learners and encourage them to stay involved in online learning
- Be open and self-reflective about the course

Scenario 9

- The course is nearing the end and several participants are showing a great deal of interest in one of the subtopics.

A. Provide links to videos and articles that may interest them

B. Advise them to look for a course on this topic

C. Tell them to move the discussion to another platform

D. Remind them to focus on the main content of the course

E. Encourage them to find and post resources regarding this sub-topic

The importance of reflection and deliberate decision making

- Online teaching can be a big adjustment.

- Thinking through likely challenges and problems can help prepare E-moderators to avoid them or successfully navigate them when they arise.

- Working through potential challenges and problems ahead of time allows you to focus on course content during the MOOC itself.

- Clear and consistent structure and expectations make it easier for both E-moderators and participants to feel comfortable and perform at high levels.

Literature

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