THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE ADELAIDEX

DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE CO-CREATION OF ONLINE COURSES

Online & E-Learning

Summit 2019

4th Annual Online & e-Learning Summit 2019

Massive Open Online Courses, commonly known as MOOCs are free online courses available for anyone to enrol. MOOCs provide an affordable and flexible way to learn new skills, advance your career and deliver quality educational experiences at scale .

With technology advancing and connectivity increasing, the popularity of MOOCs has grown exponentially in recent years, which is why the University of Adelaide launched AdelaideX back in 2014. AdelaideX offer a fully flexible, life-long learning opportunity and give learners knowledge and skills which increase their learning and employability and can contribute to real career outcomes.

AdelaideX courses are engaging and interactive and include links to readings, research, videos, quizzes and questionnaires. Crucially, once enrolled in a course, learners are encouraged to join the online course community of learners from around the world, overcoming that engagement and commitment challenge often seen with online learners. Taking this idea of student engagement even further, AdelaideX have been exploring co-creation and collaboration in course development, which, despite only being rolled out in two courses, is already generating great results in terms of student engagement, experience and retention.

Ahead of the **Online & E-Learning Summit 2019** we chat to Ali Ogilvie, Partnership & Portfolio, Delivery Manager at AdelaideX and the University of Adelaide. In this article Ali explores AdelaideX and the impact this function is having on student engagement, and further delves into the opportunities, challenges and benefits of course co-creation with students.

E-LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

Adelaide's online learning offering to date has been provided through a series of 19 MOOCs though it is likely that they will expand their offerings into postgraduate credit bearing programs in the later part of 2019. As part of the Division of Academic and Student Engagement, and in partnership with edX, AdelaideX is an online teaching and learning initiative. Available in a range of topics, AdelaideX courses are free to study, interactive and give learners access to expertise across all faculties.

Offering everything from a MicroMasters – 25% of a full masters degree – in Big Data, to a general interest World of Wine MOOC, the AdelaideX courses, with more than 700,000 registrations globally, from countries including the USA, Canada, India and the UK, have been recognized for their high quality content and interactive learning experiences.

"MOOCs are a very powerful learning tool, and even though there are plans to expand our online learning platform, we will continue supporting   MOOCs through our edX partnership," says Ali Ogilvie, Partnership & Portfolio Delivery Manager at AdelaideX. She adds; "we've realised that in addition to providing great flexibility and engagement benefits for learners and educators, MOOCs are also an ideal marketing tool."

By positioning MOOCs as a 'try before you buy,' AdelaideX and the University of Adelaide are able to create brand recognition and offer today's more discerning student an introduction to University pathways and related degrees from the University of Adelaide.

CO-CREATED LEARNING

Co-creation is a new trend in business contexts aimed at fusing all the stakeholders, especially customers in different phases of creation and production of products and services. While co-creation has been prevalent in the corporate sphere for sometime, it is only in recent years that higher education institutions are beginning to explore the opportunities the process offers.

Co-creation creates solid, positive links between higher education organisations and provides a unique point of difference in today's crowded and competitive market. On top of all this the process provides unique opportunities for students from an employability perspective and encourages optimal experiences through engagement and satisfaction.

"At AdelaideX we value student involvement in the course creation process and understand that their input is key to delivering learning in a way that best appeals to them. We've got two MOOCs in particular that have really utilised student co-creation; the Shakespeare Matters MOOC and the Human Reproduction MOOC," says Ali.

She continues; "these courses listen to, and harness student feedback in regards to expectations, assessments, the learning experience, content itself and the process of online learning. What resulted was a new focus on interactivity and digital media (Shakespeare students have submitted video of them performing soliloquies for example as part of assessment).

While co-creating provides a number of opportunities, in the particular case of higher education institutions, there remain a number of challenges – the key one being a major shift in the traditional method of lecturer-lead learning, to a new perspective focused on students.

"This process is obviously a very different approach to learning and teaching, but our academics have actually been pivotal in driving the transition. Yes it has forced them to rework the teaching methods they've used for 20 or 30 years, but instead of seeing it as a threat, they're treating it as an opportunity to grow and develop new pedagogies that meet modern student requirements," explains Ali.

DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCE

As already noted co-creation yields a number of benefits in both a corporate and higher education sphere with improved insights, better brand recognition and awareness, greater retention, increased engagement and better experiences all a return on investment.

Specifically at the University of Adelaide academics have reported seeing benefits to students from the course content that has been co-designed versus content that hasn't. As Ali explains; "last year was the first year our Faculty of Arts incorporated MOOC content in to their on campus teaching of Shakespeare. In doing so they have reported seeing a decrease in student drop outs as well as a decrease in the number of students not completing courses.

This significant change has been great for our academics too who are really seeing the benefit of their efforts in embracing different content and amending their teaching styles to better align to what the modern student is expecting."

Ali continues; "we're also getting great feedback from students involved in the process who are relishing the opportunity to learn more about learning design and curriculum structure. These are great transferrable skills that are highly sought after in the labour market - inadvertently the students involved end up having fantastic experiences from an employability point of view as well."

With engagement in the two co-created courses high, and feedback positive, the University of Adelaide will be looking to continue encouraging the co-created model of course delivery into the next three MOOCs to be delivered throughout 2019.

"The insights gained through the co-creation and collaboration process are always interesting and rich, so we're definitely going to continue leveraging this strategy wherever possible. The challenge at the moment is figuring out how we can garner these insights and harness them in a way that is meaningful, yet not massively time intensive for our academics or our students," concludes Ali.

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If you're interested in hearing more from Ali about driving student experience, engagement and retention through a course co-creation process, and delving into the realised benefits in more detail, then join us at the **Online and E-Learning Summit 2019.**

The event, to be held in Melbourne on the 7th-8th of May, brings together over 30 online and e-learning experts from the likes of Stanford University (USA), UNSW, the University of Sydney, ANZ, Monash University, the University of Melbourne, TAFE NSW and the NSW Department of Education.

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