

Participant Information Sheet

Researchers:

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Project Title:

Effectiveness of student introductions in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

General Outline of the Project:

- This study examines the effect of student introductions on participation and learning in MOOCs.
- It is anticipated that this research will contribute to the understanding of effective engagement in online courses.
- Students in the Introduction to Actuarial Science MOOC will be allocated on one of two groups and invited to introduce of themselves, in text or video format. The introduction is optional and instructions for what to include in this introduction are provided in the Prologue section of the MOOC.
- Student reactions to the course will be collected through a survey embedded in the Epilogue section of the course. Demographic data will be collected through a survey embedded in the Prologue section of the course.
- Survey results will be analysed along with performance in the course which will be obtained from edX. Whether or not a student completed an introduction will be analysed, although the specific content of that introduction will not be analysed.
- Data is collected by the online system (Qualtrics) and will be analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods.
- The results from this study will be published in conference and journal articles.
- Data will be stored and may be used for comparison with future studies at the ANU, at other Australian institutions, and in other edX partner institutions.

Participant Involvement:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the Researchers.

If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following: You will contribute an introduction post in the MOOC, and will complete an online web survey on your computer at the start and end of the MOOC. The pre-MOOC survey asks demographic questions and questions about your motivation for taking the MOOC. The post-MOOC survey asks questions about your experiences

in the MOOC. You will only be asked to complete the activities once, and the total administration should last approximately 5 minutes for each survey, and 5-30 minutes to construct and upload your introduction.

We do not believe there are any direct benefits to the participants for completing this study. There is no payment for participating in this phase of the study. More widely, we do believe this research will lead to a greater understanding of how people participate in online courses.

The risks of completing these activities are believed to be minimal, but might include: being uncomfortable answering the questions and the possible loss of confidentiality by identifying yourself in your introduction.

When posting your introduction, please only include information that you are happy to share publicly as the MOOC is open for all to enrol and access. While completing the surveys, you are free to skip any question that makes you uncomfortable or do not care to answer. With regard to confidentiality, we will minimize risk of identification by omitting usernames from any published findings.

The findings from this study will be distributed to all MOOC participants through the MOOC email list.

Confidentiality:

If you choose to post an introduction it will be accessible to course participants in the MOOC. Survey responses will only be published in aggregated form. Efforts will be made to keep any personal information you provide confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published and databases in which results may be stored.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigators and their research associates, the Australian National University Ethics Committee or its designees, edX or its designees, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies of Australia or the United States of America.

Data Storage:

Data will be downloaded from the online survey system Qualtrics and from edX and will be stored on a password protected account on the Australian National University computer system for at least 5 years from publication. There is no plan to delete the data after 5 years, rather it is anticipated that the data may be used for comparative studies with future surveys of a similar nature.



Australian
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Queries and Concerns:

For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact the researchers:

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Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager

The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee

The Australian National University

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