MOOC + SYNCHRONOUS SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING: EXPLORING A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

MOOC + APOIO SÍNCRONO PARA O ENSINO DE LÍNGUAS ESTRANGEIRAS: EXPLORANDO UMA EXPERIÊNCIA DOCENTE

MOOC + SOPORTE SÍNCRONO PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS: EXPLORACIÓN DE UNA EXPERIENCIA DOCENTE

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ABSTRACT: In this article, I present my experience of devising, implementing, and evaluating the MOOC + synchronous support pedagogical design. In order to understand what Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) are, I briefly discuss their history and characteristics, highlighting the possibility of complementing this pedagogical model of online courses. I discuss the pedagogical design conceived and implemented on the basis of a pilot experience with a beginner's French course for undergraduates of a public university. I completed my explanation of the MOOC + synchronous support proposal by discussing two experiences of replicating the pedagogical design in English and Portuguese as host language courses when I had the opportunity to do teacher training. I conclude with reflections on the continuum in the process of innovative implementation of a pedagogical design that takes into account linguistic specificities and pedagogical support issues, in addition to the use of digital technologies.

KEYWORDS: Language teaching. Pedagogical design. Teaching experience.

RESUMO: Neste artigo apresento minha experiência de idealização, implementação e avaliação do desenho pedagógico MOOC + apoio síncrono. Para uma compreensão do que se constituem os Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), discorro brevemente sobre seu histórico e suas características, ressaltando a possibilidade de complementação desse modelo pedagógico de cursos on-line. Abordo o desenho pedagógico a partir de uma experiência piloto com um curso de francês iniciante para graduandos de uma universidade pública. Complemento a explicação sobre a proposta MOOC + apoio síncrono discorrendo sobre duas experiências de replicar o desenho pedagógico em cursos de inglês e de português como língua de acolhimento, quando tive a oportunidade de fazer formação docente. Finalizo com reflexões sobre o continuum no processo na implementação inovadora de um desenho pedagógico que contemple as especificidades linguísticas e questões pedagógicas de apoio, para além do uso das tecnologias digitais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino de línguas. Desenho pedagógico. Experiência docente.

RESUMEN: En este artículo presento mi experiencia en la concepción, implementación y evaluación del diseño pedagógico MOOC + apoyo síncrono. Para entender qué son los Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), discuto brevemente su historia y características, enfatizando la posibilidad de complementar este modelo pedagógico de cursos online. Discuto el diseño pedagógico desde una experiencia piloto con un curso de francés de iniciación para estudiantes de una universidad pública. Complemento la explicación de la propuesta MOOC + apoyo sincrónico discutiendo dos experiencias de replicación del diseño pedagógico en cursos de inglés y portugués como lengua de acogida, cuando tuve la oportunidad de hacer la formación de profesores. Concluyo con reflexiones sobre el continuum en el proceso de implementación innovadora de un diseño pedagógico que tiene en cuenta especificidades lingüísticas y cuestiones de apoyo pedagógico, además del uso de tecnologías digitales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Enseñanza de lenguas. Diseño pedagógico. Experiencia docente.

Introduction

In this research text, my objective is to present and discuss the experience of conceptualizing, implementing, and evaluating the pedagogical design I title MOOC + synchronous support for foreign language teaching. I ground my approach in Dewey's conception of experience, which is simultaneously individual and social, situated in a continuum, influenced by the context, and influencing subsequent experiences. Dewey ([1938] 1997) emphasizes that it is the responsibility of educators to understand that experience is shaped by environmental factors and has the potential to promote growth.

As a narrative researcher, I conduct this exploration of a teaching experience considering the three-dimensional space of continuity, interaction, and place. Continuity indicates that the researcher moves retrospectively and prospectively through experiences lived, told, retold, and relived. Interaction relates to the sociability of narrative research, in introspective and extrospective movements, from the researcher's perspective, merging the individual and the social. The third element of this three-dimensional space is the place or situation, or the landscape of the research. In this space, the experience is unpacked, meaning the researcher tries to understand it more deeply, in a process of envisioning possibilities, beyond the lived tensions (Clandinin; Connelly, 2000; Mello, 2020).

Reflecting retrospectively, I identify that both the use of digital technologies in the process of teaching and learning languages, and the search for innovative methodologies for teacher training for the use of digital technologies are part of my experience as a researcher (Souza, 2007; 2011) and as a teacher and trainer of teachers. In line with the objectives of the Brazilian Association of Distance Education (ABED), I understand the importance of digital technologies and different media in the educational field, and the need for educators to focus on innovation and creative experimentation in online teaching. This involves an ethical and political stance that aims to connect the use of digital technologies with reducing inequalities. Arruda (2020) argues that we should invest in public policies of equity in internet access and computer availability to benefit the teaching and learning process in the online context. This search for elements that can help us integrate digital technologies and available media to create innovative ways of knowledge construction is at the core of professionals engaged in distance education practices and teaching with the support of digital technologies.

Even with my extensive prior familiarity with digital technologies, a chronological milestone—the experience of social distancing imposed by COVID-19—made me reflect on

how the use of digital technologies for teaching and learning has gained added complexity and importance. Hodges *et al.* (2020) define emergency remote teaching (ERT) as a temporary shift from in-person instructional delivery to an alternative mode under crisis circumstances, contrasting it with experiences designed to be online. This distinction directly affects implementation, as planning is done quite differently. With little time to plan for ERT, more problems are encountered in the implementation process, and there is no careful anticipation of potential issues and how they might be mitigated.

The term "emergency remote teaching" could have been mobilized and established earlier in specific situations, during the 700 days Pakistani students were out of schools due to flooding in 2019, or during the war between Saudi Arabia, the Arab Coalition, and Yemeni rebel groups when more than 2,500 schools were closed in 2019. Natural disasters like earthquakes and socio-political crises like wars did not bring the necessity for this term as strongly as during the COVID-19 pandemic. This unexpected context impacted my perception of how I should contribute more significantly to pedagogical designs using digital technologies for teaching foreign languages and made me more alert to opportunities to act in this regard, leading me to consider developing courses using the principles of MOOCs (Salas-Rueda *et al.*, 2022).

To present my experience of conceptualizing, implementing, and evaluating the MOOC + synchronous support pedagogical design in a more organized manner, in addition to this introduction, I divide the article into three other sections, followed by the final considerations. In the next section, I address the concept and characteristics of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) and present the need to complement their pedagogical design with synchronous interactions, especially for teaching foreign languages. The following section discusses the pilot experience when I taught a French course for beginners, implementing the aforementioned pedagogical design for the first time. In the third section, I narrate and discuss the experience of monitoring undergraduate and graduate students as they replicate the pedagogical design to offer a basic English course and a Portuguese course as a welcoming language.

MOOCs and Complementary Methods

I begin this section on Massive Open Online Courses by sharing my first experience as a learner in a MOOC, offered through a partnership between COURSERA and Penn University, titled Gamification with Kevin Werbach[2]. I remember learning a great deal from the videos because the instructor discussed gamification and then posed several multiple-choice questions, and I could only continue watching if I answered the questions correctly. Later, I learned to apply the same approach to other videos using the tool https://go.playposit.com/. I took the course to gain knowledge, and the experience unveiled the possibility of learning at my own pace. I felt that I could bring the knowledge from this pedagogical design into my teaching practice. Wouldn't my students also be interested in learning foreign languages in this way?

My experience occurred in 2015, three years after 2012, which was proclaimed as "The Year of the MOOC." Rhoads (2015) presents both negative and positive headlines about these courses issued during the year of the MOOC and highlights their revolutionary potential. In December 2013, 1,200 MOOCs were offered by over 200 universities, involving 10 million students. COURSERA, the platform for the gamification course I completed, a MOOC start-up, attracted 5 million users, a number that underscores the rapid growth of this new methodology for large groups, in the online context.

Complex and dynamic cultural, economic, and technological changes are essential to explaining the emergence of MOOCs, which are defined as courses targeting thousands of students at the same time, in addition to following the format of lectures and automated tests. MOOCs are described as a rare phenomenon, an educational innovation that kept pace with the growth of the Internet and offered opportunities to the general public. They marked a decisive change in the culture of higher education, at a time when institutions were eager to share content with the world (Haber, 2014).

Pomerol, Epelboin, and Thoury (2015) offer a list of reasons to continue offering MOOCs. Some of the reasons include: assisting students who struggle to keep up with classes due to the need to work while studying; serving students in countries where access to higher education is still a severe issue; providing educational resources to anyone who may need them; helping institutions to build and consolidate their reputation; attracting more people to academia; offering corporate training; promoting innovation in teaching and learning; conducting research on teaching and learning; reducing educational costs.

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[2] An explanatory video about the course proposal can be viewed at https://youtu.be/rzihbzxC_6Y.

It is important to note that the benefits of implementing MOOCs extend beyond a conducive digital technological context, encompassing issues of inclusion and expanded access to educational training. Rhoads (2015) lists seven critical ideas for understanding MOOCs that also encompass the political issues of who predominantly offers these courses and with what issues these providers are committed. In summary, the MOOC movement values access through the provision of open educational resources and is supported by a complex set of social actors and organizational systems. However, critical issues must be addressed when considering the possibility of expanding MOOCs to broaden access to universities, especially since elite universities dominate this landscape. Diversity and related issues are largely absent from the policies, practices, and discussions concerning MOOCs, in addition to requiring high levels of self-directed behavior. Nonetheless, the MOOC movement has the potential to reshape the nature of teaching work.

In this regard, the author proposes an analysis that recognizes social movements' importance in advancing educational reform, the impact of MOOCs on higher education, and their interconnection with issues of power and social inequality. According to Porter (2015), in his text questioning the pertinence of offering this type of pedagogical design, the future of implementing these MOOCs is unpredictable. Implementation should consider the demands and preferences of its users and advance at a pace of change that is fast enough to keep up, but not so accelerated that it leaves many potential participants behind.

Bonk *et al*. (2015) highlight the potential benefits and challenges of MOOCs, including issues related to quality, accreditation, and sustainability. They argue that while MOOCs have the potential to democratize access to education and create new opportunities for students around the world, they also present significant challenges and require careful planning and investment to ensure their success. The authors also draw attention to the various pedagogical approaches that have been used in these courses, one of which is their use complemented by other methodological procedures.

According to Haugsbakken (2020), among the principles of MOOC design for language teaching should be the adaptation of teaching materials to a pedagogical matrix that considers self-directed study, the use of a recursive theory-action-reflection model, the use of videos as learning objects, and prompts for social learning activities. The author notes that the challenge of using digital technologies in the implementation process must be considered. Khlaif *et al*. (2021) understand that one way to mitigate the challenges in designing MOOCs for language teaching is to consider previous implementation experiences.

In basing the pedagogical design of MOOCs to conceptualize my proposal for foreign language courses, I considered the advantages of reaching a larger number of students and spending less time, since it would be a more expository methodology with automatic feedback on the Moodle platform. At the same time, with my practical professional knowledge, I understood that the teaching and learning process occurs in the relationship established between teacher and student. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) reinforce this educational need to establish trust and the emergence of a relationship that begins with the teacher listening to and responding to the student's voice. To complement more self-directed activities in the Moodle environment, in addition to activities that would shed light on the context of each student and the prior experiences they bring with them, I understood the importance of establishing synchronous meetings as a complement to activities in the virtual learning environment. In this regard, Amalia, Zamahsari, and Pratama (2021) demonstrated that:

> Teachers and students find that MOOCs have a positive impact, especially as a form of professional development for teachers. MOOCs offer a unique learning experience compared to traditional learning techniques. On the other hand, students stated that they still need the presence of an instructor during the MOOC learning process (p. 147, our translation).

Synchronous meetings prove to be important in foreign language courses, especially so that students have the opportunity to consolidate their speaking skills. Although it is possible to design pedagogical activities on Moodle for the practice of oral skills, both in terms of comprehension and oral production, interacting orally with students for more individualized feedback is crucial. Additionally, these meetings are an opportunity to enhance the instructor's social presence and listen to the students' doubts and opinions. In my career as a teacher, I have learned that my students' voices need to be heard unconditionally so that their central participation can be authentic and secure. It was with this understanding that I realized the pedagogical design could not do without these interactions.

Pilot Experience of Implementing MOOC + Synchronous Support

The pilot experience began with a request from the committee that coordinates the actions of the Tutorial Education Program (PET) at the institution where I teach. The committee represents PET groups both linked to the Ministry of Education (MEC) and those that are institutional, supported by local resources of this federal higher education institution. There are

40 PET groups from various areas of knowledge, coordinated by faculty tutors and consisting of 368 undergraduate members. The demand is related to the linguistic training of these PET students[3] for opportunities in cross-border mobility and to better integrate into the actions of internationalization, as outlined in the documents governing the PETs, which requires knowledge of additional languages. The initial idea of the committee was to offer English language courses, considering its status as a lingua franca, sequentially (basic, intermediate, and advanced levels) and in a face-to-face educational modality.

When they presented me with the demand, as the tutor of the PET group in the field of Letters and coordinator of some internationalization actions at the Directorate of International Relations of the institution, I requested time to pilot a different proposal than what they had initially conceived. My personal and professional practical knowledge led me to question a proposal that limited the offering to just one additional language, recognizing the importance of plurilingual and translanguaging practices. Moreover, the restriction to the face-to-face modality would be problematic, considering there are PET groups located in different geographical regions, which would be excluded from this opportunity.

Although I am an English language teacher, I ventured to design a beginner's French foreign language course, considering my knowledge of the language, even though it is not very deep, and already envisioning the possibility of replicating the pedagogical design for other foreign languages. I suggest having a group of teachers train as students in this course so that they can experience it as students and become more familiar with the pedagogical design. Since the PET students in my group could be this target audience, the French language would be more inviting, as they were at different proficiency levels in English, but most were beginners in French. I checked the interest of the PET students in taking the course and received feedback that 8 of them would be interested in the experience.

In February 2023, I designed the proposal for the pilot course and taught it between March and June, based on the following proposal:

> This is an online French language course for beginners, focused on the PET groups at the Federal University of Uberlândia. It is a course with a workload of 30 hours, from March to June 2023, with asynchronous activities on Moodle and bi-weekly synchronous meetings. By the end of the course, the participating PET students are expected to be able to understand and use familiar everyday expressions and phrases aimed at meeting concrete needs, introduce themselves and others, ask and answer

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[3] Petiano is the term used in reference to students who are members of the Tutorial Education Program (PET) in Higher Education Institutions.

questions about personal details, communicate in a simple way (Souza, 2023, online, our translation).

Thirty-eight students registered to participate in the course, of which thirty-two started the activities, and seventeen completed the course. Below, I present an image that summarizes the topics covered during the 15 weeks of asynchronous activities designed on the Moodle platform and following some principles of MOOCs, as well as the eight bi-weekly synchronous meetings that took place on Google Meet and MConf RNP.

Figure 1 – Moodle Interface for the French for Beginners Course

Source: Moodle Platform.

The selected themes were aligned with the descriptors for the A1, Beginner level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Topics explored included personal introductions, covering housing, clothing, family, and routines; interactions with peers; formulation of questions and answers, instructions, and contexts for meetings and shopping; as well as the exploration of lived and planned experiences. Additionally, cultural topics, such as traditional festivals, were incorporated throughout the course. As can be seen in Figure 1, I attempted to find icons on the Moodle platform that minimally illustrated the themes to be explored, such as a house icon for Unit 7 - Housing and a tag icon for Unit 10 - Shopping.

Each of the 15 units followed the same structure for dividing tasks to be completed, consisting of 5 activities that favored videos and explanatory images, followed by multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank quizzes, assignments, and interaction forums. Each theme's fifth and final activity was a song that students could listen to, study the lyrics, and discuss with their

peers. The design of the first four activities depended on the topic addressed and the material available on the internet, identified in the curatorial process for the course development. Below, I describe the most recurring types of activities posted in the Moodle environment.

One type of activity frequently used in the pedagogical design involved the use of videos available on YouTube followed by multiple-choice or true/false tests. I considered it important to adhere to one of the learning principles in MOOCs proposed by Haugsbakken (2020), namely the use of videos as learning objects. This type of activity, utilizing open educational resources (Rhoads, 2015), aligns with the principles of MOOCs since it allows students to study autonomously, repeating the task to practice the content covered. Specifically, in an activity from *Unité 15 – Vacances*, a video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=2xQLjrUzyHs) from the *Vivre en France*[4], channel was used, which itself constitutes a MOOC and is freely available to beginners of the French language who wish to learn in a self-directed manner. The videos provided on this channel were very useful in the pedagogical proposal of the French course for students of the PET groups. In the mentioned activity, students were required to take an association test about completing sentences from the video where the near future tense was used.

In terms of tools provided by Moodle, besides the self-grading tests, I frequently used assignments, polls, and glossaries. For instance, in one of the tasks, after watching a video about the days of the week, students were asked to complete a puzzle involving the vocabulary studied. They were to post their answers and then receive the standard answer key. Polls were used to collect information about the students' families, asking them to indicate how many brothers and sisters they had, while glossaries were used for the collaborative production of a list of words and images (or translations). All the activities listed contributed to including students who would have time constraints for participating in a face-to-face or synchronous foreign language course, which aligns with one of the advantages Pomerol, Epelboin, and Thoury (2015) noted about continuing to offer MOOCs.

In each of the 15 units, I placed a forum activity intended for sharing personal information and opinions without aiming for linguistic correction. I thought it would be a safe space (Clandinin; Connelly, 2000; Mello, 2020) for students to write about the places they were born, the festivals they enjoyed celebrating, and the vacations they would like to have.

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[4] For more information about the Vivre en France MOOC, visit the link https://www.fun-mooc.fr/fr/cours/vivre-en-france-a1/.

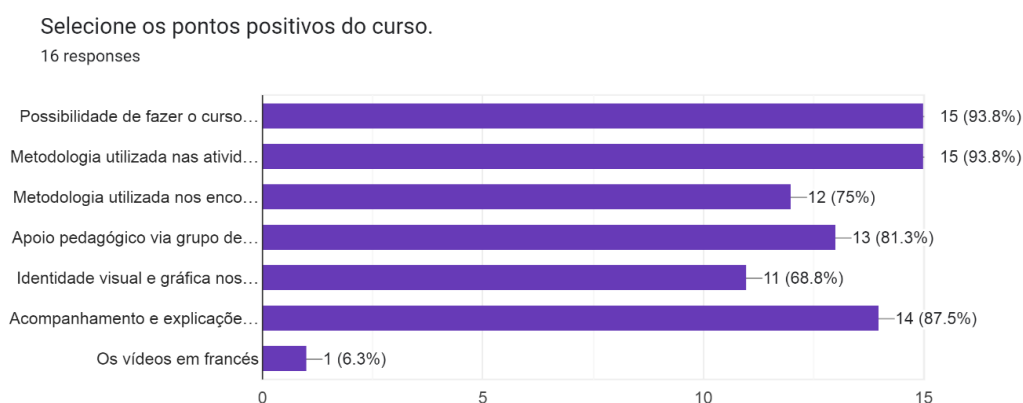**Figure 2** – Activity D of Unit 4: I Wear
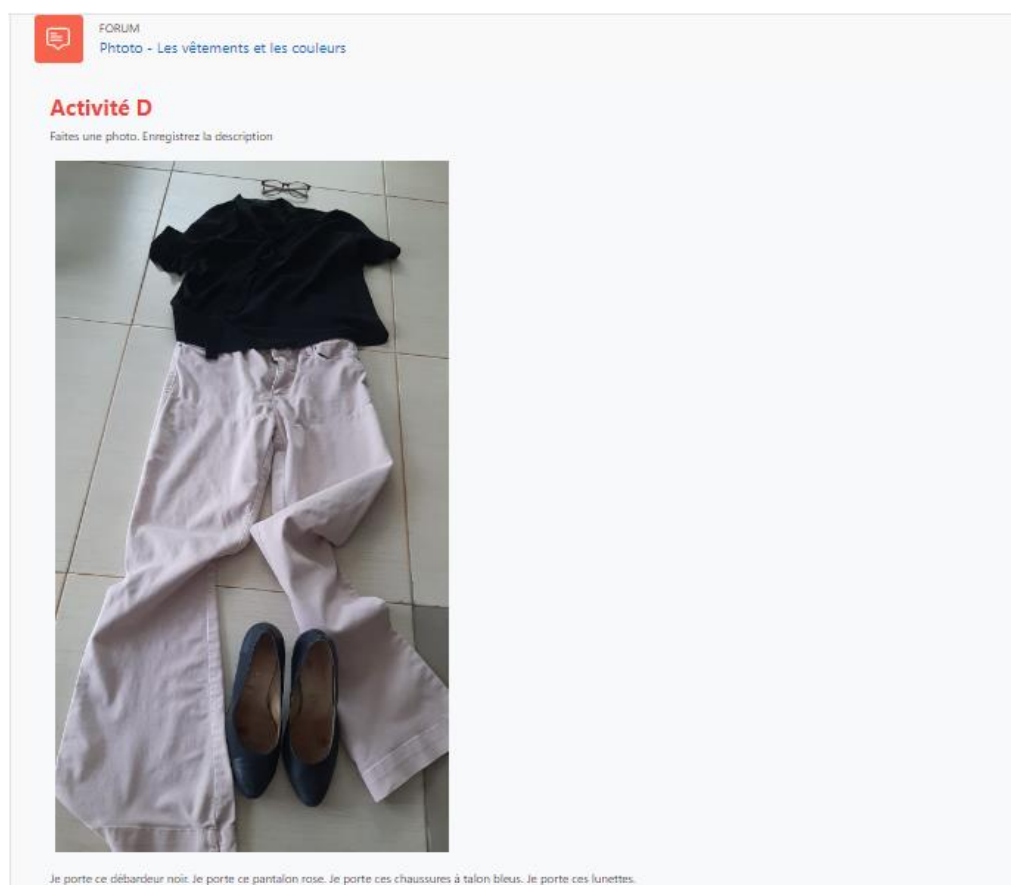
Source: Moodle Platform.

Figure 4 exemplifies a forum activity that garnered significant engagement from students. I posted a look with some clothing items and accessories I would wear and asked them to do the same; the photos varied and generated many comments from peers.

As previously explained, activity E in all units was a music suggestion, with a video clip to be watched, the lyrics of the song, and an interaction forum. In *Unité 9 – Ma routine*, we had an interaction proposal based on the song "Santé" by Stromae. The song features some professions that seem undervalued, and the forum's proposal was for the students to identify these professions and discuss why they are not valued. This music forum provoked engagement from the students, who problematized the issue of marginalized professions. According to Haugsbakken (2020), forums of this nature can be considered prompts for social learning activities. In the forum with Stromae's contemporary song, social learning from everyday experiences was mobilized by the pedagogical proposal.

At the end of the course, an opinion survey was conducted, and 16 students responded to the survey. I asked the respondents to rate their experience in the beginner's French course

on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with one being poor and five being excellent; 15 respondents gave a rating of 5, and one respondent gave a rating of 4. Subsequently, I asked if they would recommend the course to other undergraduates, and the response was that 100% of the respondents would make that recommendation. Regarding the positive aspects of the course, Figure 6 below shows how students reacted to the pedagogical proposal of MOOC + synchronous support.

Figure 3 – Responses to the question about positive aspects of the course

Selecione os pontos positivos do curso.
16 responses

Possibilidade de fazer o curso…	15 (93.8%)
Metodologia utilizada nas ativid…	15 (93.8%)
Metodologia utilizada nos enco…	12 (75%)
Apoio pedagógico via grupo de…	13 (81.3%)
Identidade visual e gráfica nos…	11 (68.8%)
Acompanhamento e explicaçõe…	14 (87.5%)
Os vídeos em francés	1 (6.3%)

Source: Survey conducted via Google Forms.

Fifteen respondents highlighted the positive aspect of being able to take the course in an online environment, as well as the methodology used in the asynchronous activities on Moodle. The pedagogical design following the characteristics of a MOOC met the needs of university students interested in expanding their linguistic knowledge. In general, pedagogical support proved to be very important, as respondents highlighted the monitoring and explanations by the teacher (14 responses), pedagogical support via WhatsApp group (13 responses), and the methodology used in the bi-weekly synchronous meetings (12 responses). Bonk *et al*. (2015) already emphasized the importance of complementing MOOCs with other pedagogical procedures, and the participants' opinions endorse the importance of such complementation.

A crucial procedure in synchronous meetings was to ensure that students understood the cohesion between the MOOC-style pedagogical design on Moodle and the synchronous interactions, which was achieved through the continuous review of their postings. I revisited some activities already designed for socialization, such as personal introductions, presentations

of the city they lived in or their families, and asking them to read their texts. In Unit 13, which dealt with past experiences, I asked them to write three sentences, two of which were true and one false; I asked them to read them out, and we tried to guess what was false or true. An activity that I did not expect to engage in so much, and that I repeated later, was to request that they create dialogues with the themes of the unit. During the meeting, we would perform a dramatic reading and translation of the text. The interweaving of what they produced in the virtual environment, which privileged each one's timing, and the approach to this production in the synchronous meetings proved to be very productive and highlighted to me the importance of synchronous support as a cornerstone of the pedagogical design.

### Replicating the MOOC + Synchronous Support Pedagogical Design

As requested by the representative committee of the PET groups, the goal for the semester following the implementation of the pilot course was to provide the PET students who participated in the French course the opportunity to develop other courses following the same pedagogical model. I refer to the observation by Khlaif *et al*. (2021) about the relevance of considering previous experiences as positive influencers in the development of MOOC courses. The first action, still during the period when the French language course was taking place, was to send a survey to the PET groups to collect the students' demands. In addition to formulating questions to determine the students' availability and conducting a self-assessment of their knowledge of foreign languages, I inquired which language sparked the most interest among them. From this research, I found that English was the language of greatest interest, as indicated by 64.4% of the 104 respondents.

I assigned the responsibility of designing the English course, based on the pedagogical design piloted with the French course, to one of the PET students who had taken the pilot and was a teacher in training in the English Language and Literature course. In addition to my supervision as the coordinator of the action and as a teacher trainer, we had the support of two other team members, who would assist both in the critical reading of the material produced and in the formatting of the virtual learning environment on Moodle.

As in the pilot, we started from the pedagogical and linguistic objectives to carry out the entire process of curating and developing the activities in text files, to later adapt what we had devised in the Moodle environment. It is important to emphasize that digital technologies should be used to facilitate the pedagogical design, not the other way around. Figure 4 below

illustrates the final interface of the Basic English online course following the MOOC + synchronous support design.

Figure 4 – Moodle Interface for Basic English Online Course
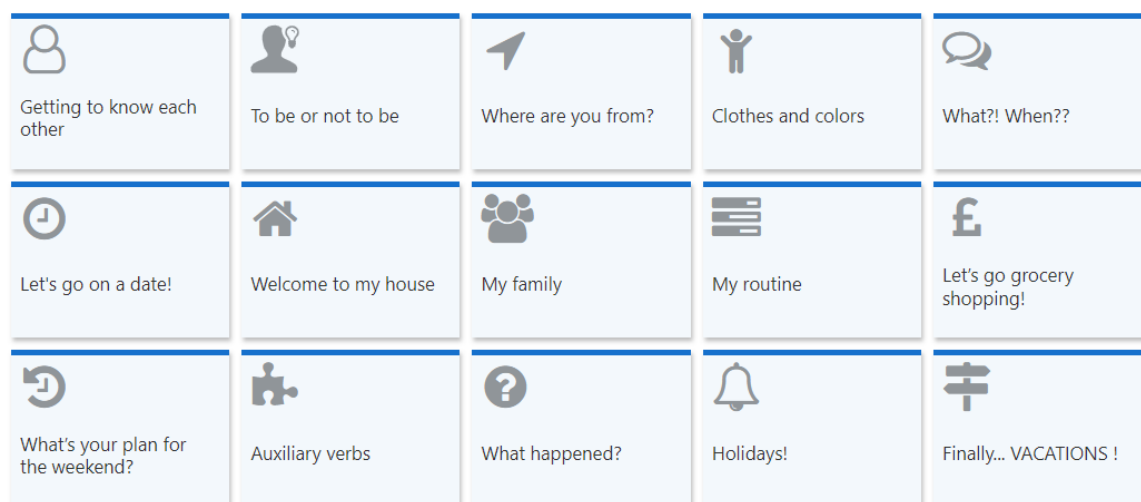
Source: Moodle Platform.

If we compare the iconography and themes of the 15 thematic units of the English course with those of the French course, it is possible to notice similarities, but also some differences in themes. When replicating the pedagogical design, we paid special attention to linguistic issues that are specific to each foreign language. For example, in Unit 2, it was expected that students would talk about themselves in both courses, but in the English course, this theme required a more pronounced approach to the verb 'to be', which can lead to confusion for learners of English as a foreign language, hence the suggestive title 'To be or not to be'. Another example is found in Unit 12, titled 'Auxiliary verbs', a grammatical topic that can also cause much confusion among beginner learners. In summary, it is important to emphasize that replicating a pedagogical design does not mean repeating all activities without critically assessing what is more or less relevant for the particular foreign language.

Concurrently with the production of the English course, I invited two other PET students who had taken the French pilot and who were teachers in training in the Portuguese Language and Literature course to form a more comprehensive team for the production of the course in Portuguese as a host language (PLAc). In collaboration with the postgraduate program in Linguistic Studies of the institution, which included the participation of two master's students

and a doctoral student, and with the Program for Training for Internationalization (ProInt)[5], which included three undergraduates from the Spanish, French[6] and English Language and Literature courses, four PET students, and the coordinator and teacher trainer proposed an online PLAc course as an extension activity. We understand that this would also be a pilot for future expansions, especially because we would not have enough time for extensive publicity to ensure a larger audience that is compatible with MOOC courses.

Again, the iconography and themes of the 15 thematic units are similar to both the English and French courses, as seen in Figure 9, below. Care for linguistic issues specific to each foreign language was prioritized once again. I illustrate this attention with the icon of an umbrella to depict Unit 14, about parties and celebrations, alluding to Brazilian frevo, while the icon chosen for the other two courses was a bell, alluding to Christmas. Another example is Unit 15, which explores different vacation destinations in Brazil and invites international students and participants in the course to choose a destination in Brazil they would like to visit and share their choices with peers and teachers.

Figure 5 – Moodle Interface for the PLAc Online Course

Se apresentar	Falar de si	Meu entorno	Roupas e cores	Perguntas
Encontros	Moradia	Família	Rotina	Compras
Imperativo	Documentos e mensagens	Passado	Festas brasileiras	Planejando as férias

Source: Moodle Platform.

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[6] It is essential to mention that the French undergraduate who represented ProInt also participated in the pilot French for Beginners course as a teacher in training from the French Language and Literature program, and collaborated in the course design and synchronous meetings.

Taking into account the specificities of each foreign language in redefining courses aligns with the understanding that valuing the development of critical and creative thinkers who can contribute to the knowledge society should be at the core of curricular proposals. It is important to challenge the fallacy that innovation is synonymous with technology, since the use of digital tools is just one of the innovative ways to support curricular content (Findikoglu; Ilhan, 2016). Digital technologies can be leveraged as part of innovative educational practices, such as in the pedagogical design of MOOC + synchronous support, facilitating replicability examples. However, pedagogical innovation does not define learning and does not ensure that students will learn more or in a better way. Adopting innovative teaching practices requires that educators develop new understandings and courses of action, take on additional work, and, to some extent, take risks. These challenges should be considered and adjusted throughout the implementation of such practices.

In both courses replicated from the pilot experience, collaboration in teams composed of a teacher trainer and teachers in training, who participated from the beginning, seems to have provided a safe environment for the development of new courses. In addition to making all materials available, both in their text file version and in the Moodle virtual learning environment, we held some initial synchronous meetings where the experience with the pilot was shared. Throughout the course, team members relied on each other to produce activities and format the Moodle environment. Both those who had already experienced the MOOC + synchronous support pedagogical design and those who were starting commented on the relevance of being able to visualize an example for the production of new materials.

One of the challenges experienced in terms of implementing both courses was the low number of participants in both the English course and the PLAc course, albeit for different reasons. Unfortunately, despite the high demand for English courses, as shown in Figure 7, engagement from interested parties was low, which caused dissatisfaction among the team and distanced the context from the characteristics of MOOC courses. I revisit Rhoads' (2015) argument that MOOC courses require a high level of self-directed behavior, and this requirement may have influenced the lack of continuity. In the PLAc course, we did not achieve engagement from the external community, neither from international students interested in future mobility at the university nor from international migrants and refugees in the local community; however, we did manage to attract a small group of students already at the university who were interested in expanding their knowledge of Portuguese, contributing to a pilot extension action.

In this context, as a teacher trainer, I realized the importance of considering the concept of "world-traveling" (Lugones, 1987; Dewart *et al.,* 2020), an exercise in which one moves from the conventional construction of one's life to the position of another person. I traveled to the world of teachers in training and emphasized the importance of setting up foreign language courses in the MOOC + synchronous support pedagogical design so that we could replicate them in future opportunities. It was vital to support the teachers in training and make them aware of the academic contribution and the legacy they were leaving for other opportunities to offer the courses.

Some Lessons from the Experience

I conclude this article by addressing some learnings from the experience and start by noting that although the proposal followed the characteristics of MOOCs, with a pedagogical design of self-directed learning, we still have not managed an experience with large groups. In a prospective movement, I will strive to ensure that the three courses are replicated and that larger groups of students interested in building knowledge of foreign languages benefit. I hope to have the opportunity to write other research texts about the new teaching experiences to be lived with courses following the MOOC + synchronous support proposal.

Considering my teacher training background and the process of training educators, I ask myself: what have I learned? In the continuum of implementing an innovative proposal, I associate my understanding of the term with the etymology of the verb to innovate, in its complementary meanings of modifying and creating. Innovations in the educational context link intervention and research, in a virtuous cycle that values the educational experience, in Deweyan terms. I argue that we experienced an educational moment both for me, as a teacher trainer, and for the teachers in training, since we had the opportunity to work collaboratively, in a safe space and in an experience built gradually, from what we produced for new productions.

Considering that one of the primary responsibilities of educators is to concretely recognize which environments are conducive to carrying out experiences that promote growth, it is observed that the pedagogical design took into account the linguistic specificities and pedagogical issues of support, including the use of digital technologies. This aspect was a relevant point of the experience and the resulting products. The synchronous support to the students participating in the course echoed synchronous and asynchronous support in the

training of the educators involved with the MOOC + synchronous support proposal so that they could envision the planted seed that may yet bear much fruit.

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